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A

COMMENTARY,

CRITICAL, EXPOSITORY, AND PRACTICAL,

ON THE

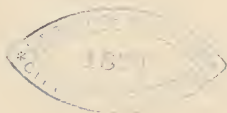
GOSPEL OF JOHN,

FOR THE USE OF

MINISTERS, THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS, PRIVATE CHRISTIANS,
BIBLE CLASSES, AND SABBATH SCHOOLS.

BY

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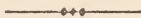
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PREFACE.



THE Commentary on John here presented to the Christian public, constitutes the third volume in the contemplated series, the one on Acts alone remaining to be published. The same general plan and principles of interpretation, which in the preface to the first volume were referred to as characterizing this series, have been closely adhered to in the preparation of the present volume. The author has taken unwearied pains not only to evolve the true sense of every word and passage, but also to render it plain and easy of comprehension to the common reader. This however he has found to be a task of no ordinary difficulty. So elevated and spiritual are the themes of this Gospel, that it requires incessant watchfulness on the part of the expositor, against the use of technical and scholastic forms of expression, understood only by the learned, or those who have made the science of exegesis a professional study.

In the preface to the first volume, special mention is made of the works to which I have had access in the preparation of this Commentary on the Gospels. Through the kindness of a highly valued ministerial friend, I have been enabled to avail myself of that rare and excellent old work, "Hutcheson's Exposition of John," London, 1657; which for richness of exposition and profound views of the doctrinal features of this Gospel, has in my judgment no superior in any of the commentaries on this portion of Scripture.

Prof. Howard Crosby's Scholia on the New Testament, yet in manuscript, but soon I hope to be published, have furnished me valuable hints and suggestions, all of which, as well as those derived from other commentators, I have aimed in every instance to duly acknowledge. If at any time I have failed in this recognition and

acknowledgment of the labors of others, it has resulted from inadvertence and not design. It has given me unfeigned pleasure to introduce to my readers the names of those who have won for themselves an honorable distinction, as sound and able expositors of divine truth. The names of Henry, Doddridge, Scott, Stier, Tholuck, Alford, Stuart, Hodge, Barnes, Alexander, Jacobus, and others, are dear to the church of Christ, as those whose labors have been directed to the elucidation of God's word, and the rendering of it more plain and familiar to His people.

It is the author's sincere prayer that his humble labors in this department, may not be wholly useless, and especially that this volume upon which he has spent so many toilsome but pleasant hours, may contribute its mite to the better understanding of the Gospel of John, of which Chrysostom says, that "it conveys such good things that those who receive and guard it with diligence and earnestness, are no longer men, no more abide upon earth; they have placed themselves above the things of time, they are partakers of the state of angels, and thus dwell upon earth, as if it were heaven."

JOHN. J. OWEN.

NEW YORK, *May* 10, 1860.

PREFACE TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

JOHN was the son of Zebedee a fisherman of Galilee (Matt. 4 : 21). The place of his residence was probably Bethsaida, the birth place of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (John 1 : 44). His mother's name was Salome (see Mark 15 : 40 ; 16 : 1, compared with Matt. 27 : 56). It is quite evident from what is related in Mark 1 : 20, that Zebedee was a man in good circumstances. This appears also from the fact, that Salome was one of those women of Galilee who ministered of their substance to Jesus (compare Luke 8 : 2, 3, with Matt. 27 : 55, 56 ; Mark 15 : 40, 41). John also is said to have taken the mother of Jesus to *his own home* (John 19 : 27), which, while it furnishes no evidence that he had a house in Jerusalem, indicates beyond question, that he was in a condition to receive and support her. His social position may also be inferred from the fact which he records of himself (18 : 15), that he was known to the high priest. This family distinction may have been the inciting motive for the request made by the mother of John and James, that Jesus would assign them the highest place of dignity in the kingdom which he was about to establish (Matt. 20 : 20, 21 ; Mark 10 : 35-37).

It is generally supposed that John was himself the disciple, whom he records in 1 : 35-40, as walking with Andrew and seeking an interview with Jesus, in reference to whom John the Baptist had just before pronounced so high a testimony, as he was walking on the bank of the Jordan. If so, he must have been with Jesus from the very beginning of his ministry, and was therefore an eye-witness of almost every thing which he relates of his Divine Master. From the time of his call to the discipleship, he became the devoted friend and follower of his Lord, and most zealously, although sometimes in a way which met with a slight rebuke from Jesus (Mark 9 : 38 ; Luke 9 : 54-56), espoused his cause and manifested a jealousy for his honor and dignity. There must have been in him a rare combination of moral excellence and personal amiability, to have received

and merited the appellation, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13 : 23 ; 19 : 26 ; 20 : 2 ; 21 : 7, 20).

His public discipleship, although as above stated he probably attached himself to Jesus at Bethabara beyond Jordan (1 : 28 ; 35-39), commenced at the same time with that of Peter, Andrew, and his own brother James (Matt. 4 : 18-22 ; Mark 1 : 16-20 ; Luke 5 : 1-11). Subsequently to this he was chosen with eleven other disciples to the apostleship (Matt. 10 : 2-4 ; Mark 3 : 14-19 ; Luke 5 : 13-16). He was one of the three favored ones admitted to the most confidential intercourse with Jesus, being present with Peter and James at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5 : 37 ; Luke 8 : 51), on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17 : 1 ; Mark 9 : 2 ; Luke 9 : 28), and in Gethsemane (Matt. 26 : 37 ; Mark 14 : 33). His boldness and devotion to his master were evinced in the fact, that although at first he fled in company with the other disciples (Matt. 26 : 56 ; Mark 14 : 50), he nevertheless returned and followed Jesus into the palace of the high priest, and was present during his examination and condemnation. He was the only one of the apostles recorded as having been present at the crucifixion, and to him was committed by his dying Lord the care and support of his mother (19 : 26, 27).

On the report of Mary of Magdala (20 : 2), in company with Peter, he repaired to the sepulchre, and was the first of the apostles who came to the tomb of Jesus, although in entering it he gave precedence to his elder and leading companion (20 : 6-8). He was one of the seven to whom our Lord made his remarkable appearance at the sea of Tiberias (21 : 1, 2), and was there honored by Jesus with a prophetic intimation, that he should tarry on earth until he came, as we have shown in the comments on that passage, to take vengeance upon his Jewish enemies and close up the old ceremonial dispensation (21 : 22).

After our Lord's ascension from Olivet, in the company of his fellow apostles, he returned to Jerusalem and there remained awaiting the descent of the promised Spirit. In company with Peter, a short time after the day of Pentecost, he repaired to the temple, where they performed a miracle (Acts 3 : 1-8), not only intrinsically great, but of much relative importance, in that it furnished occasion for the first hostile movement on the part of the priests and rulers against the infant church planted at Jerusalem. No further mention of John by name is made in the Acts, until we find him sent with Peter on a mission to Samaria, to confer upon those who had been baptized as the fruits of the great awakening under the preaching of Philip (Acts 8 : 5-12), the gift of the Holy Ghost (vs. 14-17). After they had discharged the duties of their mission, and preached the gospel in many of the Samaritan villages (v. 25), they returned to Jerusalem. From this time his name disappears from the Acts, ex-

cept in 12 : 2, where it is incidentally mentioned. That he remained however for some time at Jerusalem, is evident from Gal. 2 : 1, 9, where we find his name mentioned in connection with Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 15 : 2). After this no further mention is made of him in the sacred narration, and in regard to his subsequent history in common with that of the other apostles, we are wholly dependent upon the traditions of the church.

It is evident from Gal. 2 : 9 as above cited, that John was in Jerusalem as late as A. D. 50 or 51. That he was not present on the occasion of Paul's last visit to the city, is equally evident, for in that case his name would most unquestionably have been associated with that of James (21 : 18), as on the former visit special mention had been made of him in connection with James and Peter. It is uncertain, however, whether his absence was a temporary or permanent one, on the occasion of Paul's visit here referred to. The latter is the more probable conjecture, and it is the general opinion that he left Jerusalem and Judea and went abroad among the Gentiles, soon after Paul's second visit to the ecclesiastical metropolis. The best modern chronologists think that he went into Proconsular Asia, about the time when the war broke out in Judea. If so, it must have been about the year A. D. 66, or the time when Paul and perhaps Peter suffered martyrdom. That previous to this time he did not take up his permanent residence in Asia, is quite evident from the fact, that no mention is made of him, or any salutation sent him by Paul in his Epistle to the Asiatic churches. A reason also may be found for his making at this time Proconsular Asia the field of his labor, in the fact that the martyrdom of Paul had deprived those important churches of his spiritual guidance and oversight, at a time when they preëminently stood in need of one having the spiritual gifts and official dignity of an apostle of Jesus Christ. He abode in Ephesus, at least a considerable part of the time, until the fourteenth year of the reign of Domitian, at which time he was banished by a decree of the emperor. According to Eusebius, he returned to Ephesus in the time of Nerva, where he died of extreme old age, A. D. 101, in the third year of the reign of Trajan.

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. I can see no evidence which Tholuck and some others find, that John's disposition 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 manlike. 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. The epithets *liar, antichrist, murderer, devil*, are hurled against the enemies of truth, with a momentum increased ten-fold by the spirit of love and tenderness, which like a soft and sunny atmosphere bathes all his utterances. Neander styles him "a man of burning love and burning hate," of which Dr. Jacobus well remarks, that it "was the same disposition showing itself in opposite directions."

As might be expected in a writer of such an ardent and impetuous temperament, the style of John is singularly direct, plain, and simple. There are no involved constructions; no complex and long extended sentences, with clauses elaborately arranged, adjusted, and bound together by logical connectives; no line of argumentation which lies so fairly exposed to the eye of the reader, that he may pursue it step by step, through premise and deduction with undeviating accuracy to the conclusion. The sentences are short, and so simple of construction as to be almost colloquial in style. The sentiment at first glance would seem so clear and apprehensible, as to be fully open to the feeblest intellect. But the more these great utterances are pondered upon, the more evident does it appear, that to fathom their depth requires the most patient, protracted, and intense application; and even then unless taught of the Spirit, no exertion of intellect will suffice to attain to their full meaning. In this very feature consists a remarkable peculiarity of the Gospel by John, as well as of many other portions of God's Word, that such is its adaptation to persons of all classes and grades of intellect, that the learned and unlearned alike find the highest pleasure and profit in studying the truth therein revealed. The announcement in 1:1, is expressed in language which may be comprehended by a child of ordinary capacity and intelligence, and yet the most towering human intellect will never penetrate the mystery of that sublime revelation. The same may be said of many other doctrines and declarations of our Lord recorded in John's Gospel. They are spread out to the eye of the

reader, calm and placid as the summer's sea, but their vast and mysterious depths are wholly beyond the soundings of human reason.

In regard to the time when John published his Gospel, there has been a great diversity of views. Some have affixed to it as late a date as A. D. 97 or 98. Such was the opinion of Chrysostom and Epiphanius. Against this view it is argued, that the Gospel possesses in its style too much vigor to be the production of one who has entered upon extreme old age. Alford cites Lücke, as remarking that the style is that of a *matured*, but not of an *aged* writer. This criticism perhaps leaves too much out of account the agency of the Holy Spirit, in quickening, strengthening, and inspiring the sacred writers for the work assigned them. It is nevertheless true, that, unless we take the ground that the sacred penmen were mere amanuenses of the Spirit, their respective mental habits and characteristics as influenced and modified by age as well as other circumstances, are not to be left out of account in settling a question like the one before us. No one can read this Gospel, and not see in its style, if not the vivacity of youth, yet the vigor and clearness of detail which mark the years of full manhood, rather than the imbecility of extreme old age. On the other hand, it appears very clear that its publication followed that of the Synoptic Evangelists. He evidently wrote for Gentile Christians; he adds explanations to Jewish names and customs; he opposes errors, which were not rife until after the publication of the other Gospels. All this indicates a date of publication, some time after John came to Ephesus; which as we have shown was not until Paul had been withdrawn by martyrdom from that important field, or about A. D. 66. That he did not publish his gospel while a resident in Palestine, is very evident from the internal and external evidence that it was written for Gentile readers. That he should publish it immediately on his arrival at Ephesus (A. D. 66), is not at all probable. We are justified therefore in referring it to a date at least as late as A. D. 70, probably as Alford and others conjecture, somewhere between the years 70-85.

Attempts have been made by skeptical and infidel writers to disprove the genuineness of John's Gospel. It is alleged that no mention was made of it by Polycarp the disciple of John, nor by Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, or Ignatius. But not to say that the silence of these writers proves nothing conclusive as to the canonicity of the Gospel or its authorship, being negative testimony, a slight examination will suffice to show, that it did not fall within the scope or design of these writers to refer to John's Gospel or make citations therefrom. Arrayed also against the silence of these writers, we find the names of Irenæus—who in his youth had conversed with Polycarp, the disciple of John, and in whose writings are frequent quotations from this Gospel—Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian,

Clemens Alexandrinus, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Eusebius, all whose writings abound with allusions and citations, proving beyond all doubt, the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospel. The adversaries of Christianity, Porphyry and Julian, refer to John's Gospel. Its canonicity is also proved from the ancient Syriac version, the Peschito. The voice of antiquity is therefore almost unanimous in assigning its authorship to John. The argument from these ancient writers is presented in detail by Tholuck, and is so conclusive as to remove every doubt as to its authorship and time of composition. The internal evidence that it was written in the apostolic period and by John, is of the most irresistible nature, but it is too vast a subject to be here entered upon. The attempt of Baur to prove that the Gospel is spurious, and was foisted upon the church in the latter part of the second century, has been fully and satisfactorily answered by Ebrard and more recently by Luthardt.

It is the unanimous testimony of tradition that this Gospel was written in Greek, at Ephesus, 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. I have taken occasion to refer to the extraordinary power of some of his prepositional forms of expression, in the Notes on certain passages. On the whole we think that none of the New Testament writers approached nearer to classic Greek, than did John.

It remains to say a few words in regard to the design of this Gospel. This has been so fully descanted upon in the comments on 1 : 1, that comparatively little need here be said on the subject. It appears that about the time when John came to Ephesus, the Gnostic heresy was beginning to creep into the churches, and under the heresiarch Cerinthus and others, to assume an organized and rampant position. This heresy arose from the union with Christianity of the fanciful elements of Grecian philosophy, especially in regard to the

Deity and the emanations or *æons*, which were supposed at different periods of time, to have proceeded from the Infinite and Supreme God. Prof. Burton, in his Bampton Lectures, very clearly sets forth the principles of the Gnostic theology: "The supreme God, according to the Gnostics, had dwelt from all eternity in a pleroma of inaccessible light; and beside the name of first Father, or first Principle, they called him also Bythos, as if to denote the unfathomable nature of his perfections. This Being, by an operation purely mental, or by acting upon himself, produced two other beings of different sexes, from whom by a series of descents, more or less numerous according to different schemes, several pairs of beings were formed, who were called *æons*, from the period of their existence before time was, or *emanations*, from the mode of their production. These successive *æons* or emanations appear to have been inferior each to the preceding; and their existence was indispensable to the Gnostic scheme, that they might account for the creation of the world without making God the author of evil [which in their estimation was an intrinsic and essential element of matter]. These *æons* lived through countless ages with their first Father. But the system of emanations seems to have resembled concentric circles, and they gradually deteriorated as they approached nearer and nearer to the extremity of the pleroma. Beyond this pleroma was matter, inert and powerless, though coëternal with the supreme God, and, like him, without beginning. At length one of the *æons* passed the limits of the pleroma, and meeting with matter, created the world after the form and model of an ideal world, which existed in the pleroma, or the mind of the supreme God."

This Creator of the world or Demiurgus, as he was called, was not therefore the supreme Deity, although proceeding from him as an *æon* or emanation. Hence as the creator of the world, on the principle that matter was evil, he was regarded as the author of evil, and it was to remedy this evil which even the supreme God could neither destroy or reduce to its primeval and inactive form, that Jesus Christ, who together with the Holy Ghost, were the two last *æons* produced, made his advent on earth. The principal object of his mission was to reveal the true God to men, and acquaint them with the way of securing his favor, so that they also in due time might enter the sacred precincts of the divine pleroma. The knowledge of God through Christ being the principal object to be sought after, the authors of this theory assumed the name of *Gnostics*.

It was to oppose and counteract this insidious and fatal heresy, that John seems to have composed and published his Gospel. He commences by a declaration in his bold, simple, straightforward manner, that Jesus Christ, so far from being an *æon* or emanation, was in the beginning with God, and was himself God; that the creation

was to be attributed to him and not according to the Gnostic theory, to Demiurgus, or any other of their so called æons. Prof. Burton remarks, that John was by no means the first to apply the term *Logos* to Christ. He considers the term to have been borrowed by the first Christian converts from the Gnostics, and to have been applied by them to Christ, and that it is one of the peculiar objects of John's Gospel to show in what sense the term *Logos* can be applied properly to Christ.

It will be remembered that one of the tenets of Gnosticism, was the inherent evil of matter. Hence the Gnostics denied that Jesus Christ was possessed of a truly human body, inasmuch as this would have allied him to evil, and incapacitated him to free men from the bondage of matter. They clothed him therefore in an unsubstantial or phantasmical form, physical only in appearance; and hence they took the name *Docetæ*, from a Greek verb signifying *to seem*. In opposition to this heresy, John affirms (1 : 14), that the *Logos* became flesh and dwelt on earth, and that his body possessed all the physical properties which belong to the bodies of men (1 John 1 : 1 ; 4 : 2).

John's design in composing his Gospel was evidently twofold, to prove Christ's supreme divinity and complete manhood or humanity. This will appear manifest to every intelligent reader, especially in those great discourses of our Lord recorded in chaps. V.-X. and in his farewell discourse to his disciples and his prayer in chaps. XIV.-XVII. This feature of his Gospel is more fully brought to view in the comments which accompany the text. Alford well and succinctly expresses the subject-matter of the Gospel in the single proposition: "that the Eternal Creator Word became Flesh, and was glorified by means of that work which he undertook in the flesh."

Of the subdivisions of this Gospel, Alford cites that of Lücke as the simplest and most satisfactory: (1) the prologue I : 1-18; (2) the first main division of the Gospel, I : 18-XII. : 50; (3) the second main division, XIII. : 1-XX : 31; (4) the appendix, chap. XXI. Luthardt's general division is: (1) Jesus the Son of God, chaps. I.-IV.; (2) Jesus and the Jews, V.-XII.; (3) Jesus and his own, XIII.-XX.; (4) the appendix, XXI. Under these leading heads, he arranges the subdivisions with much skill and minuteness. It is very difficult, however, to construct a syllabus of this Gospel, which shall be based on divisions designated by chapter and verse, for the simple reason that the thoughts and utterances are so blended and interfused, that the argument under no one head or general division is so exhausted, that it does not receive additional confirmation and illustration in other portions of the Gospel.

It seems to me therefore preferable, both in a logical and æsthetical point of view, for the reader, instead of relying upon any abstract

or compendium of the Gospel, to possess himself first of the great and leading theme, which is: *Jesus Christ, the Eternal and Incarnate Son of God, the Light and Life of the world.* Then with a reliance upon the aid of the promised Helper and Comforter (see N. on 14: 16), let him slowly, patiently, carefully, read the Gospel through in course, weighing, sifting, and comparing the great truths and facts which meet his eye, and aiming as far as possible to map out their true and relative position in regard to the central and pervading theme of the Gospel. Let this reading of the whole Gospel in course be repeated again and again, until the great outlines are indelibly impressed upon the mind, and an eminence is gained from the summit of which this divine Scripture may be surveyed at a glance, with its lines of thought all converging to one common centre, JESUS THE SON OF GOD AND SAVIOUR OF MEN,—let this process, I say, be entered upon and faithfully carried out, and it will be found far better than a blind reliance upon artificial helps and tables of contents, which, as above said, from the very structure and composition of the Gospel must prove inadequate and defective.

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."

May it ever be studied by God's people with a prayerful spirit, and with a becoming zeal to enter into the full sense of its great utterances. May the Spirit of light illuminate the mind and guide the

labors of all who now or hereafter seek to explain this portion of divine truth. It is a deep, exhaustless, fresh-flowing fountain, from which the loving and obedient disciples of Christ may draw water as from the well of salvation—even the living water which springeth up in the soul unto everlasting life (John 4 : 14 ; 7 : 37, 38 ; Rev. 21 : 1).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN.

THE exposition of the gospel of John is attended with far greater difficulties than that of the other gospels. This arises not so much from the style, which is remarkably clear and simple, as from the subject itself, which may be concisely expressed in the twofold proposition: *the Eternal Word became incarnate, and is the Light and Life of man.* Around these great central truths of John's gospel, other important truths revolve, such as the rejection of Christ by the Jews, the fulfilment in him of the ceremonial law, the necessity and inexplicableness of the new birth, the union of the believer with Christ, his body and blood the spiritual sustenance of the soul, the certainty and universality of the resurrection and final judgment. These themes and others kindred and subordinate to them, are descanted upon by John, so that his gospel is not to be regarded as designed to fill up chasms in the history of our Lord, which were left by the other Evangelists, but to teach the realities and nature of the interior and hidden life of the believer, and the union of the soul by faith with the Eternal Son of God. The external acts of our Lord were the main theme of the Synoptic gospels; the spiritual essence and life of Jesus—apprehended and received into the soul by faith, and raising it to fellowship and communion with God—constitute the principal burden of John's gospel. Both these aspects of the mission of Christ are important, and even essential, to a full and right understanding of the relation subsisting between Him and the believing soul.

The order in which these two phases of our Lord's life and ministry, as found in the gospels, are presented, is worthy of notice. It would have been unsuited to the wants of the infant church, had John's gospel been written before

those of the other Evangelists. The first three gospels were needed to meet the general inquiry which everywhere would be made, as to the circumstances of the birth, life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. After the church had become conversant with these historical facts, the way was prepared to enter more deeply into the spiritual nature of his mission, to develop more fully and explicitly his eternal and divine nature, and to show the respective offices and functions of each Person of the blessed Trinity, in the great work of man's redemption. John's gospel therefore very appropriately followed those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in which were recorded more especially the acts and sayings of our Lord.

CHAPTER I.

1-18. PREFACE TO JOHN'S GOSPEL. The position assigned by Dr. Robinson and other harmonists to these opening verses which relate to our Lord's divinity, is immediately after the Temptation. It has always seemed to me, that the appropriate place for this preface would be the very commencement of the Harmony. The section in which the pre-existent nature of Christ is so fully made known, should most surely stand in the very forefront of the gospels, when arranged in accordance with the probable order and sequence of events. But this is, however, a matter of comparatively little consequence. The great fact of his divinity, as here taught, stands forth conspicuous, and like a sun irradiates not only the gospel of John, in which it is found, but also the other gospels, where this truth is less distinctly revealed, and is to be gathered from the divine works of Jesus rather than from any formal doctrinal statement.

CHAPTER I.

IN the beginning ^a was the Word,
and the Word was ^b with God,
^c and the Word was God.

^a Pr. 8: 22, 23, &c.; Col. 1: 17; 1 Jo. 1: 1;
Re. 1: 2; & 19: 13.

1. This verse is the great proof-text of the supreme divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore has been subjected to the ordeal of more severe criticism, than perhaps any other portion of God's Word. In the limits assigned to these notes, I cannot make extensive reference to the different expositions of this verse, or the conflict of opinions and fierce discussions to which it has given rise. I must content myself with a brief and simple statement of the truth, which I deem to be here taught, and which, although one of the sublimest that can challenge the attention of man, yet lies so conspicuous on the very face of the passage, that it can emphatically be said, that he may run that readeth it (Hab. 2: 2). The doctrine of the eternal divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, seems impossible to be expressed in clearer and more emphatic terms than here made use of; and every attempt to refute or throw discredit upon it, must be abortive, so long as this great text stands, as it does, on an immovable foundation, proof against all the shafts of criticism, or charges of absurdity, with which the opponents of Christ's divinity are ever ready to assail it. When we take into consideration its conspicuous position in John's gospel, standing as it does in the foreground of his evangelium, as the great key to the right understanding of the sublime and spiritual truths therein contained, we cease to wonder that the opponents of the supreme divinity of the Son, have endeavored in various ways to set aside its authority, by boldly denying its genuineness, or frittering away its power by mere verbal and shallow criticisms. Against all these efforts to impugn its authority, it has ever stood and will continue to stand, in its unassailable integrity, giving clear and calm utter-

2 ^d The same was in the beginning with God.

^b Pr. 8: 30; ch. 17: 5; 1 Jo. 1: 2.

^c Phi. 2: 6; 1 Jo. 5: 7.

^d Ge. 1: 1.

ance to one of the most sublime and mysterious truths ever revealed to mortals, and one which lies at the very foundation of every hope of salvation through the atoning blood of Christ.

In the beginning, i. e. at the time of the creation of the universe. Compare Gen. 1: 1, where reference is had to the same great time-period. But here the expression has necessarily a more enlarged signification, comprehending the whole eternity past, when as yet no created being or thing had been called into existence. *Word*. The ancient heathen philosophers were in the habit of regarding the Supreme God in two aspects, one as existing in himself, and the other as developing himself by his operations. This was especially a favorite notion with the Platonic school. Creation was ascribed by them to the *Nous* or Divine Intelligence, which they went so far as to call the *Second God*.

This twofold aspect in which the Divine Mind, in its uncreated and unseen essence, and its active development or manifestation, was regarded, found its place also in the Jewish writings, and became a favorite dogma of the Jewish Rabbins. After the return of the Jews from Babylon, the Scriptures were translated into the Chaldee language, because the Jews from their long residence in Chaldea, had forgotten their own tongue. This Chaldee version, about the time of our Saviour's advent, was translated into Greek. Amongst other singularities introduced from the philosophical speculations of the age, was this, that every place in the Hebrew version, where it is said "God appeared," &c., the translators say "the Word of the Lord appeared." Prof. Stuart remarked once in the hearing of the writer, that such instances

occur no less than 600 times. This singularity is to be traced to the Oriental philosophy, which pervaded the Jewish mind after the captivity, and tinged all their writings and speculations.

The early Christian Fathers were influenced in no small degree by this view of the Deity, as a Supreme Intelligence, acting through and developing Himself by the Word which proceeded from Him. They received this from the Platonic notion of God, as sustaining the twofold relation of *Theos* and *Nous*, *God* and *Intelligence*, above referred to. In adopting this view, or at least in seeming to conform to the Platonic school by employing these terms in relation to God, they hoped to recommend themselves to the heathen philosophers, and thus do an essential service to the cause of Christianity. Justin Martyr says that the Logos anciently appeared to mankind, because the great God could not be manifest to man. This philosophy was in full vogue in the time when John wrote his gospel. In the latter part of his life he went to Ephesus, and there resided for a number of years, and could not but have been conversant with the Greek philosophy, and its influence in modifying the doctrinal views of the church, especially in relation to the mode of the Divine existence.

It was then a wide-spread and general belief, that God could only be known by his outward manifestation or expressed Word. As a very natural result, this Word came gradually to be personified in Hebrew usage, and especially in the Chaldee Targums. This was still further developed in the idea of this Word as an emanation from God, but not a distinct personality, which view gradually assumed the form of the Gnostic series of emanations or *Æons*, having a real personal existence, of whom Jesus Christ was the chief *Æon*, and was sent down from heaven to rescue lost men from the power of evil, and restore them to the favor of the supreme God.

Now it was in reference to this notion of the unseen and supreme God, displaying or developing himself by his

Word as an emanation of himself, which notion was incorporated into all the philosophical speculations of the day, that John began his gospel by a simple and sublime announcement, that this Word or emanation was a distinct, independent, personal existence, dwelling from eternity with God, and being himself the true and supreme God. This great text was designed to controvert and demolish every existing theory, that Jesus Christ was an inferior deity sent from God, or that he was an emanation in any sense whatever, or that he was the personified Word or power of God. It claims for him nothing short of supreme divinity, coeval, coexistent, and coessential with God. This explicit declaration of his divine nature and independent existence, is very properly placed at the beginning of John's gospel, because the whole gospel scheme is bereft of its power and vitality, unless correct views are taken of the person and dignity of Christ. This verse constitutes as it were the text of the gospel, all which follows being but the expansion and illustration of the great truth that Jesus is the Eternal Word, who became incarnate, and suffered and died for the sins of the world.

The Word was with God. The distinct personality of the Logos is here affirmed. He was not a mere emanation or personified attribute of God, but a distinct, living, self-existent person, who was with God in the whole eternity past in substantial, inseparable, and ineffable union. The proposition rendered *with*, is not the usual one expressive of accompaniment or connection with, but one which denotes the closest proximity, *at, with, by the side of*. When, as here, it is followed by the Greek accusative, it signifies a continual cleaving or adherence to the object towards which the relation of union is expressed. It therefore denotes the closest and most indissoluble union, together with distinct and independent personality, which latter idea would have been obscured, had the form of expression been *was in God*, that is, included in the Godhead. See

N. on 16, 27, where this great idea is expressed under the form, *I came out from God*, i. e. from a state or condition of the most intimate union and companionship with God.

And the Word was God. The supreme divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ is here declared in the plainest and most unequivocal terms. No criticism has availed to destroy or impair the testimony of these few simple words, as to the dignity of Jesus Christ, and the place he should occupy in our idea of the great and eternal God. Alford remarks, that the form of the words is strictly parallel with "God is a spirit," in v. 24. The absence of the article in the original, has been seized upon by some critics in justification of the translation, "the Word was a God." But aside from the grammatical fact, that the omission of the article was necessary to mark *God* as the predicate, and no more invalidates the application of the term to the supreme God, than it does in vs. 13, 18, where the article in the original is wanting and yet the reference is plain to Jehovah—the criticism is refuted by the well-known fact, that the Jews believed in only one God, and John therefore would not have asserted what he knew to be false, that the Word was a God, showing himself thereby to have been a polytheist. As it regards the structure of the sentence, it conforms to the preceding clause, where distinct personality, and at the same time essential union with God, is attributed to the Eternal Word. Had the words before us been *and God was the Word*, there would have been, as Alford remarks, an obvious contradiction to his previous assertion, by which he had distinguished between God and the Word. The three clauses of this verse have a well-marked correspondency, the first teaching the eternity of the Word; the second, his personality and companionship with God; the third, his supreme divinity. The clauses are climacteric, or rather rounded to such complete fulness, as to leave no doubt in regard to the true nature of the Logos. Each clause teaches a sublime

and glorious truth, and at the same time confutes an error; the first, that the Logos was not eternally pre-existent, but was a creation or emanation from God; the second, that the Word was the manifestation or development of the unseen and infinite God, and as such had no distinct personality; the third, that the Word was a second or inferior God, a derived being, and therefore subordinate in his essential nature to the supreme God. All these errors, which, in one form or other, were prevalent when John wrote his Gospel, are confuted by the terms of this grand and simple annunciation. It hardly need be remarked that the word *God*, in the second clause, must of necessity be referred to the Father, with whom the Word has dwelt from eternity, while in the third member, it refers to the Godhead or to the substance and essence of God. To sum up then the doctrine of this great passage, the first clause teaches the uncreated and pre-existent nature of the Logos; the second, his distinct personality; the third, his supreme divinity. Such an amount of truth, and of such vast and sublime import, is condensed nowhere else in so brief a compass.

2. *The same was in the beginning, &c.* This is an emphatic repetition of the sentiment of the first and second clauses of the preceding verse. As the writer was about to ascribe to the Word a creative work (v. 3), and in v. 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 v. 1. *The same*; literally *this*, that is, the *Logos* spoken of in the preceding verse. The writer seems to anticipate an objection, that it might possibly have been some other being than the Incarnate Logos, who was thus essentially one with God. But the strong demonstrative affirms that it was the Logos and no other, who was with God in the beginning.

3. The Evangelist now proceeds to

3 ° All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

α Ps. 33: 6; Col. 1: 16; ver. 10; Ep. 3: 9; He. 1: 2; Re. 4: 11.

ascribe to this Being, whom he has declared to have been with God from eternity, and to be himself verily God, the works of creation, thus furnishing additional and confirmatory truth of his supreme divinity. By *all things* is here meant, not the Socinian idea of a moral creation or the gospel dispensation which was inaugurated and established by our Saviour, but the whole universe both moral and physical. This was called into existence by the creative power of the divine Logos, who in the first verse is declared to be God. The worlds that fill the immensity of space, the suns and systems of the universe, the countless intelligences that stand in God's immediate presence, or dwell in those portions of His dominions assigned to them, are all the work of his omnific and creative power.

Were made; literally, *began to be, came into existence*. The verb here implies not such origin as results from natural causes, or what is termed the laws of nature, but that which is produced by a special and efficient agency, declared here to be the divine Logos. The nature of the subject forbids our referring it to a mere change from one form of existence to another, the idea being most evidently the production or creation of the universe out of nothing. In this same sense the verb is used in v. 10. *By him*. The scriptural representation is that the universe was created by the Father through his Son (Eph. 3: 9; Heb. 1: 2); not in such a sense, however, as to make the latter a mere instrument or agent. The idea seems rather expressive of a concurrent unity of purpose in the work, the decree of creation, so to speak, being issued by the Father, and the Son carrying it into execution. This concurrent unity of purpose in calling the material and intellectual universe into being, by which the Father is said to have performed

4 ° In him was life; and ° the life was the light of men.

† Ch. 5: 26; 1 Jo. 5: 11.
g Ch. 8: 12; & 9: 5; & 12: 35, 46.

the work of creation through the Logos, is not to be lost sight of in the text before us; but yet both here and in the passages above cited, the context refers it to an independent creation, furnishing the very highest proof of the supreme divinity of the Word. To regard it as teaching that the Word performed the work of creation by derived or delegated power, would bereave it of all pertinency, as confirmatory proof that the Logos, the Creator of the universe, is the true and supreme God. The pronoun *him*, refers to the Logos as a distinct personality, and thus furnishes additional proof that the *Word* was not a mere external manifestation of God.

And without him, &c. The ascription of creation to the divine Logos is here repeated in a most emphatic negative form. It is quite usual with John to employ both forms in the expression of weighty and emphatic truths. This negative portion of the sentence is a denial of the Gnostic idea of the eternity of matter. "They set matter, as a separate existence, over against God, and made it the origin of evil; but John excludes any such notion." Alford. See Isa. 45: 7. *Without him*, i. e. apart or separate from him. *Not any thing*; literally, *not one thing*. Of course matter is included in the creation here referred to. *Was not any thing made, &c.* The translation might be, *not any thing exists which does exist*. Every thing in the whole universe of mind and matter which exists, was brought into that state of existence by the Logos. Language could not be made to express with greater definiteness and comprehensiveness this great truth.

4. To this same Eternal Word is here assigned the authorship of life, for *in him was life*, cannot be explained to teach that the Word was simply a living being, or had merely the principle

5 And ⁴ the light shineth in

λ Ch. 3:19.

darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

of life in himself, which, after the previous assertion that he was God and the Creator of the universe, would be to the highest degree trifling. The sense must be that *in him was the source of all life*, that is, that in Him resided that vivifying power by which life was communicated to the universe of being. This of course implies that life was in Him in its original and essential state. It is a disputed point, whether *life* is here to be taken in its widest sense of all life, including that which is natural as well as moral; or in the more special sense of *spiritual* life. I can hardly have a doubt that while the former view is in itself true, yet that here the sole reference is to spiritual or moral life. This appears to be placed beyond a doubt by the next clause, where this *life* is declared to be the *light* of men. There can be no question, that moral illumination or instruction and guidance is here referred to (see N. on Matt. 5:14). To refer it to the general and well-known fact, that in the vegetable and animal world light is essential to life, is too low an idea for the grand argument which is here being carried on. That law of nature in regard to the animal and vegetable kingdoms, may furnish an analogy by which we may see how essential is moral light to spiritual life. But it here does nothing more. The whole context onward shows that as the Teacher and Giver of spiritual life, the Logos is here declared to be the *light* of men. This may furnish a reason why the term Logos or Word, is employed to designate the Person in the blessed Trinity, through and by whom the moral universe which He had called into being, was to be made acquainted with the being and attributes of the unseen God. The article is employed in the original with *light*, and designates this as the *light*, that is, the only true light (see v. 9), given to be possessed by man. This is not however to be placed in the same category with the omission of the

article, referred to in Note on v. 1. In the Jewish belief there was but one God, and the absence of the article would not destroy or impair that fundamental doctrine of the Jewish faith; whereas there are many sources and forms of light, and it was necessary to point out the light here spoken of as inhering in the Logos, as that only which deserved the name. Besides the article was omitted in v. 1, to mark distinctly the word *God*, as the predicate, but here such a distinctive omission was unnecessary.

5. The general effect of this shining light upon the darkened world is now brought to view. The argument that *moral* light is referred to in the preceding verse, is here corroborated beyond the shadow of doubt. *And the light*. The article in the original refers it to the light just spoken of. *Shineth*. The same word is used of the shining of the sun in Rev. 1:16; 8:12; and of a lamp in 1 Pet. 1:19. It is here employed figuratively of the Sun of Righteousness, whose rays alone can dispel the moral darkness which rests upon the earth. *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. The whole world lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19), and so gross and impervious is this moral darkness, that it does not comprehend or admit the light, and hence is not benefited by its rays. The present tense is here employed of a general or universal truth. It denotes what has been, and will continue to be, the reception which the world gives to the heavenly light, which falls in such brightness and purity from the great Source of light. *And* is here equivalent to *yet*. The word *comprehended*, is not to be interpreted of an intellectual insight into the nature of the light or truth here spoken of, but the *taking hold of* or *admitting* it into the mind,

6 ¶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

7 ^k The same came for a wit-

† Mal. 3:1; Mt. 3:1; Lu. 3:2; ver. 33.

so as to apprehend and realize its power. The imagery of the word is founded upon such darkness as results from fogs, or a hazy, murky atmosphere, which will not admit the rays of light, and hence is a more impervious darkness than that of night. In v. 11, the rejection of Christ by the Jews is spoken of in almost the same terms, in which the rejection of divine truth by the world at large is here referred to. Unbelief and sin are generically the same, whether manifested in the rejection of the light of revelation or that of nature. See Rom. 1:21; 2:12-16.

6-17. The Evangelist now proceeds to speak of the manifestation of the Light by the incarnation of the Eternal Word, of whom John the Baptist was the forerunner and witness. 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. In vs. 19-36, this same train of thought is resumed, and the mission of John as the forerunner of Jesus, more fully brought to notice. After the brief reference made to John in vs. 6-8, the writer reverts again to the Word, as being the true Light, believed on by those who were born of God, although unknown to the world and rejected by his own chosen people (vs. 9:13). Of the superiority of the Incarnate Logos (v. 14) John bears witness, proclaiming at the same time the richness and fulness of grace which came through Jesus Christ (vs. 15-18).

6. *There was a man.* A common formula in the commencement of a narrative. See Luke 1:5. The word *sent*, belongs in construction to *man*, and not to the verb *was*. The phrase *sent from God*, signifies one who was divinely commissioned. See Mal. 3:1. The same prepositional construction in its highest and most literal sense, is employed of the coming forth of Jesus

ness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

‡ Ac. 19:4.

from God, in 16:27, on which see Note. Whose name, &c. See Luke 1:13, 63.

7. *The same* (i. e. John) *came for a witness*, &c. This denotes the purpose for which he had been sent from God. The words *for a witness*, are more fully expressed in the next clause, *to bear witness of the Light*. This shows how subordinate was the position and office of John, compared with that of Christ. He was nothing more than a herald and witness of the Messiah; and yet such was the dignity of the Logos as declared in vs. 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. This denotes the end for which he was to bear witness of Christ, namely, that men might believe on him and acknowledge his claims when he appeared. The public ministry of John began several months before Christ came to be baptized by him. Ample time and opportunity was therefore given to the nation, to reflect upon the testimony which he gave of the approaching advent of the Messiah. At the same time, the interval between John's annunciation and the public appearance of Jesus, was not so great as to permit his message to be effaced from their mind. *Might believe*, i. e. might have the most indubitable evidence that Jesus was the promised Messiah. While it was a fact that comparatively very few yielded to the testimony of John in regard to Jesus, yet there was a general preparation of heart through the earnestness and power with which he proclaimed the duty of repentance, which rendered the subsequent preaching of Jesus far more successful, we have reason to think, than it would otherwise have been. The wisdom of the arrangement by which John was to precede Jesus and prepare the way for his ministry, is not to be impugned, because it did not result in the acknowledgment by the whole people

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

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

of Jesus as their Messiah. A great preparatory work was accomplished, admirably suited to the nature of the mission of Jesus, which was to lay the foundation of a kingdom of peace, purity, and righteousness, to be coeval with the history of man.

8. *He was not that Light*, i. e. the Light spoken of in the preceding context. In his own sphere he was, however, "a burning and a shining light" (5: 35), yet only as he reflected the light of truth, as it shone from the face of Jesus Christ. *But was sent*, &c. An emphatic repetition of the object and purpose of John's ministry. The verb *was sent*, is very properly supplied by our translators. A similar ellipsis is found in 9: 3; 13: 18; Mark 5: 23. *To bear witness of that Light*. The same words translated in v. 7, *to bear witness of the Light*.

9. *That was the true Light*; literally, *the Light*, (viz.) *the true*, *was that which*, &c. The emphasis is imparted to the word *true*, by its being thus placed after the noun to which it belongs as an attribute. This clause explains why John himself was not the Light here spoken of. He was indeed a light, but not the *true* (i. e. the original or underived) *light*. *Which lighteth every man*, &c. The construction of this clause is such, that the word *cometh*, may refer to *man* or *which* (i. e. the Light). The former reference is adopted in our English version, but it seems so unnecessary an appendage, that I am induced to prefer the latter mode of construction. The translation would then be: *this is the true Light, which coming into the world lighteth every man*. Alford constructs and translates: *the true Light which enlighteneth every man, came into the world*. But this is too harsh a construction to suit the original, and less in accordance

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

l Ver. 4: Is. 49: 6; 1 Jo. 2: 8.
m Ver. 3; He. 1: 2; & 11: 3.

with either the previous or subsequent context than the more usual method of explanation, which regards the sentiment of the verse, as an emphatic reassertion that Christ was the true light of mankind, rather than an anticipation of the declaration soon to follow, that the Light here spoken of came into the world, or in other words, that the divine Logos became incarnate. *Which lighteth* is expressive of a general fact, referring to the past as well as the present and future. The present tense is employed in the enunciation of general or universal truths. The words *every man*, refer the declaration here made to Gentiles as well as Jews. It does not follow however from this, that all men so receive the Light as to be saved thereby. This is expressly denied in v. 5, where the darkness or moral ignorance and insensibility of men, is declared so gross as to be impervious to the rays of divine truth. The being and perfections of God are revealed in the clearest light in His word and works, and yet men are heedless of His claims upon their love and obedience, because, as our Lord himself informs us (3: 19), they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. In regard to the Light here spoken of, while it must be referred primarily to the personal advent of our Lord into this world (see 8: 12), yet it includes all the manifestations which, as a part of the redemptive economy, He makes of himself, by his works, providence, moral government, the voice of conscience, and the like. See Rom. 1: 19, 20.

10. *He was in the world*. The pronoun is wanting in this clause, but is very naturally supplied from the clause which follows. The word *Light*, and the pronoun referring to it in the preceding verse, are neuter; but now the masculine pronoun is employed to

11 ⁿ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

ⁿ Lu. 19:14; Ac. 8:26; & 13:46.
^o Is. 56:5; Ro. 8:15; Ga. 3:26; 2 Pe. 1:4;
 1 Jo. 3:1.

denote the personality of the Light spoken of. *He was in the world* does not here refer to the providential presence of the Word, but to his real personal presence in his state of incarnation. As has been remarked (Note on v. 9), we may include in the personal advent of Jesus Christ, as a part of the redemptive economy thereby established, all the manifestations of God to man by his works and word, yet the incarnation of the Word is that to which special reference is here made. The *world*, both in this and the following clause, refers to the created world, the abode of men, who in the last clause under the same term *world*, that is the world of mankind, are charged with ignorance of Him who was their Creator, and whose incarnate presence was among them. *And the world* (i. e. and although the world) *was made by him*. See v. 3. This clause heightens the perverse ingratitude and rebellion of the world, in not receiving and acknowledging its Creator. *And* (i. e. and yet) *the world knew him not*, that is, did not recognize and acknowledge him, as the Messiah or one sent of God. *World* in this member refers to *man*, the only created being on earth made capable of knowing God. It does not, here, refer of necessity to the wicked or unbelieving world, as opposed to believers, there being no antithesis expressed or implied, by which the righteous are designated as receiving the Incarnate Word, in a manner befitting his high dignity and benevolent mission. It must therefore mean the world of mankind, not so strictly inclusive of all, however, as to embrace such persons, as Simeon and Anna and others who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. In regard to the ignorance here referred to, it was by no means excusable. The incarnation of Jesus Christ was accompanied by such

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

abundant proof, that none could reject the evidence of its truth and reality, unless blinded by a wicked and perverse heart.

11. *His own*, i. e. the Jews, who were his own people. This verse is an advance on the preceding one. Even his own covenant people, who were his peculiar possession, *received him not* as the long expected and promised Messiah. This rejection of him by his own countrymen, was not however universal, as appears from the next verse.

12. There is a slight chasm of thought between this and the preceding verse, which is readily filled up by the reader: (some however received and acknowledged him as their Messiah) *and as many as did receive him, &c.* *Power* is here a very comprehensive term, implying not only right and privilege, but power to attain to the filial relation here spoken of. This power was conferred upon men by the atonement of Jesus Christ, which removed all the obstacles in the way of man's salvation arising from a violated law. The idea of freedom, license, liberty of choice, is also implied in this word. See Acts 1:7; 5:4; Rom. 9:21; 1 Cor. 7:37. The right of sonship here spoken of, is secured by faith in Jesus Christ, by which the believer is justified and adopted into God's family, and made an heir with Christ of the glory which is to be revealed. See Rom. 8:14-18. *Sons of God*, i. e. true worshippers of God; those who have been born of the Spirit. See v. 13. *Even to them, &c.* An emphatic expansion of the idea contained in the first clause, *as many as received him*. This reception is declared to be a *belief in his name*, i. e. faith in him as the Redeemer of mankind. The original is so constructed, that the words *on his name*, are the object and end of the faith spoken of.

13 ^r Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 ^r And the Word ^r was made

^p Ch. 3:5; Ja. 1:18; 1 Pe. 1:23.
^q Mt. 1:16, 20; Lu. 1:31, 35; & 2:7; 1 Ti.
 3:16.

13. The new birth, by virtue of which those who receive him in faith become the sons of God, is here declared to be apart from and above all human conditions, alliances, or descents. Hence the Jew even, the natural descendant of Abraham, could have no claim or title to this heavenly adoption, only as he was born of the Spirit of God. The tense in *were born*, does not limit this annunciation to those who received Christ while he was on earth, but includes all who in every age should believe on his name. *Not of blood*, i. e. not by virtue of natural descent, as for example, because they were descendants of Abraham. The original has the plural *bloods*, but this should furnish no difficulty to any one, as literal blood is most manifestly out of the question, the reference being to ancestral descent or lineage, which is put in the plural to conform to the plural *them*, in the preceding verse. Webster and Wilkinson refer the plural *bloods*, to the Hebrew idiom, and cite Ezek. 16:6, 9, but the cases are hardly parallel, and the explanation I have given seems the most natural and pertinent. *Will of the flesh*, i. e. carnal desire or natural generation. *Will of man* in the next clause, is thought by many critics to refer to human adoption. But it is better to regard it as a compendious expression of the preceding terms, blood and flesh being that of which man is composed. The sense might then be paraphrased: 'not by descent from Abraham or any renowned ancestor; nor by virtue of any earthly parentage; [in a word] not from any human act or volition whatever.' There is another interpretation that some may regard preferable, which seeks for no essential difference in the

^r flesh, and dwelt among us, (and ^r we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) ^u full of grace and truth.

^r Ro. 1:3; Ga. 4:4. ^s He. 2:11, 14, 16, 17.
^t Is. 40:5; Mt. 17:2; ch. 2:11; & 11:40; 2
 Pe. 1:17. ^u Col. 1:19; & 2:3, 9.

last two clauses, but regards them as an emphatic euphemism for the natural mode of descent by procreation, as opposed to the spiritual birth of those who are adopted into the family of God. Such is the explanation given to the passage by Bloomfield and others. A third method of explication is worthy of mention, which takes the first clause as referring to filiation by lawful marriage; the second, to filiation by concubinage; the third, to sonship by adoption. This would embrace all the phases of human descent. But such a division and arrangement is too minute and far-fetched to command our assent. The verse has ever been regarded as very difficult of interpretation from the nature of the terms employed, and I cannot flatter myself that I have been able to throw much light upon it. The explanation which I have given, seems to be the least embarrassed with difficulties.

14. In the process of his argument in regard to the divinity and office of Jesus Christ, the Evangelist has now reached that point in which he reveals the great and stupendous truth of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. This great text is parallel and co-ordinate with v. 1, in which the supreme divinity of the Word is declared. Here his complete and perfect manhood is revealed, a truth as sublime and mysterious as that relating to his divinity, and one of equal importance in the great scheme of human redemption. To deny in the face of this text that Jesus Christ had a human soul, is as great a heresy and as fatal to all correct notions of the object of his mission to this world, as the denial of his supreme divinity. Indeed the one involves that of the other. See N. on 5:27. The

incarnation of the Word had been intimated in v. 10, but is here reaffirmed in the most plain and express terms. There his advent into the world was simply declared; here we are told that he took upon himself a human body, and dwelt among men, and was seen of those among whom he dwelt, and especially by the apostles who were privileged on the mount of Transfiguration to behold his glory. *The Word* is resumptive of the title given to this divine Personage in v. 1. There his supreme, personal, undervived divinity was expressly affirmed. Here the incarnation of this Word is declared in no less plain and simple terms. This verse might well have followed v. 1, but the writer in ascribing creative power to him in v. 3, diverges a little from the direct train of thought, and descants upon his life-giving and enlightening power. The verb *was made*, would be more appropriately rendered *became*, inasmuch as a change or transition from one state to another is all that is intended to be designated. It is a different verb from that employed in v. 1, which was simply the verb of existence, *was*. The word *flesh*, is figuratively used here for *man*, and denotes Christ's human body and nature in contradistinction from the divine Logos, of whom the incarnation is affirmed; but no one can be so absurd as to suppose that the Eternal Word became essentially changed into a man. The true idea of the incarnation is expressed in Col. 2 : 9, "In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." There was such a union of divinity with humanity, that the Incarnate Word was verily God and verily man, having two distinct and complete natures ineffably united in one person. This sublime truth could not be expressed in more explicit terms, than it is in this verse taken in connection with v. 1, which declares the supreme divinity of the Logos here affirmed to have become incarnate and to have dwelt among men. John seems to have had reference in this declaration to the Docetæ, who maintained that the connection of the Logos with the human body, was not a reality but only

an appearance. This error he opposes not only here, but in his first epistle (1 : 1, 2 ; 4 : 2, 3), by a simple and unequivocal declaration, that the Word actually became flesh—one of the strongest terms which could be employed for a real corporeal existence—and dwelt on earth, and was seen by him and his fellow-apostles. The verb *dwelt*, is literally *sojourned, tabernacled*, and is beautifully illustrative of the fact that heaven was his peculiar and permanent dwelling-place, and that this world was only his temporary abode for the particular purpose of his mission. This clause furnishes additional proof that the incarnation of the Word was real, and that Jesus Christ in a true and veritable body lived on earth. The word *us*, is not to be restricted to the apostles and followers of Christ, but to all mankind generically referred to in the word *flesh*.

And we beheld, &c. This is introduced to show that Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word, was more than a mere man, and is logically connected with the preceding context, as confirmatory proof of his higher divine nature. In the words *we beheld*, the nature of the affirmation limits the pronoun to the apostles and disciples who were in the company of Jesus. The verb rendered *beheld*, signifies *to see with the eye, to distinctly see*, in opposition to discerning a thing mentally, or forming its image in the imagination. The verb has much the same emphatic positiveness, as our common form of expression, *I saw him with my own eyes*, to denote personal knowledge obtained by one's own sight. *His glory*. The writer adduces his testimony as an eye-witness of his miracles, teachings, and especially of his glory on the mount of Transfiguration. *The glory as of the only begotten of the Father*, is introduced to show the excess of glory which invested Jesus Christ, who was declared to be the Incarnate Word. The words *the glory as*, is equivalent to *the very glory*, and looks back to the equality of the Divine Word with the Supreme God which was declared in v. 1. *The only begotten of the Father* is explained by

15 ¶ " John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, " He that

20 Ver. 32; ch. 3: 32; & 5: 33.

such passages as Luke 1: 15; Ps. 2: 7; Heb. 1: 5; Acts 13: 33. See N. on Matt. 28: 19. *Full of grace*, &c. The parenthesis, found in our common version, would refer this clause to *the Word* in the first member of the sentence. But it is better to remove the sign of the parenthesis, and refer the words *full of grace*, to the pronoun *his*, the concord in the original being founded on the implied sense, rather than on strict grammatical agreement. The general sense remains the same, but the awkwardness of the sentence, as it stands in our version, with a long parenthesis between the noun and its adjective, is thereby removed. *Grace and truth* are generally interpreted as equivalent to *gracious truth*, but I like Alford's suggestion, that these two words set out the two sides of the divine manifestation in Christ; *grace*, as the result of love to mankind; *truth*, as the unity, purity, and light of His own character. Webster and Wilkinson take them in the sense of *grace*, or divine favour in pardon and salvation, and *truth*, in the full and perfect revelation of God as explained in v. 18.

15-18. John the Baptist is now again brought forward as furnishing concurrent testimony with the writer of the gospel, as to the character of Jesus Christ. This reference to John's testimony is therefore closely allied in thought to the preceding verse. There it was said that the Word, declared in v. 1 to have been in the beginning with God, and to be God, *became flesh* and was seen by them among whom he dwelt on earth. Here John the Baptist is represented, as declaring in the most express and positive terms the pre-existent nature of Jesus Christ. The Evangelist then resumes in vs. 16-18 his own testimony to the exalted grace and dignity of Christ, expanding and confirming the sentiment of v. 14.

cometh after me, is preferred before me; " for he was before me.

20 Mt. 3: 11; Ma. 1: 7; Lu. 3: 16; ver. 27, 30;
ch. 3: 31.
21 Ch. 8: 58; Col. 1: 17.

Thus these verses carry forward in an unbroken chain of thought, the argument of the dignity and condescending grace of Jesus Christ, as evinced on the one hand, by his supreme divinity, and on the other, by his becoming flesh and dwelling on earth among the sons of men.

15. *Bare witness*; literally *bears witness*, the present tense being often used for the preterite, when the thing spoken is well authenticated and of general notoriety. *Cried*, i. e. publicly proclaimed. *Of whom I spake*. Reference is had to words spoken by John, before he saw Jesus approaching him to be baptized. See Matt. 3: 11; Mark 1: 7; Luke 3: 16. Now as he draws near to receive baptism (Matt. 3: 13; Mark 1: 9), John points him out as the one of whom he had previously borne such high testimony. *He that cometh after me*, &c. These are the words of John's previous testimony. *Cometh after me*, i. e. whose official appearance was subsequent to that of John. *Is preferred* (literally *has become*) *before me*, i. e. has been advanced to be my superior in point of dignity. *For he was before me* refers to the pre-existent nature of Christ, and furnishes the reason why Jesus, although younger than John, was yet his superior. The verb in the original refers to a fixed and permanent state of existence, and not to one upon which Christ entered, which is expressed by a different verb in the preceding clause. The employment of the two verbs, *to be* and *to become*, in their distinctive significations, is well observed in these verses, the one being used of our Lord's pre-existent and unchanging state as supreme Logos; the other, of his becoming incarnate and dwelling among men. *Before me* is literally *first of me*, the superlative being used for the comparative, when it is intended to express a very high degree of

16 And of his ^a fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

^a Ch. 2: 34; Ep. 1: 6, 7, 8; Col. 1: 19; & 2: 9, 10.

superiority arising from a comparison. See N. on 15: 18.

16. Here the Evangelist resumes the subject in his own words. It is very unnatural to take these words as those of John the Baptist, who was only cited in regard to what he had said of the superiority and pre-existence of Jesus, previous to his coming to him to be baptized. *Of his fulness*, i. e. the fulness of his divine perfections, or of his being and essence. Reference is probably had to the words *full of grace and truth*, in v. 14. From that fulness of grace and truth residing in Him, as the fountain of all good, believers are supplied in increasing measure with all the gifts and graces, which assimilate them to Jesus Christ as the children of his love. *Have we all received*. The use of the plural shows that these are not the words of John the Baptist as some suppose. *We all* refers to believers in the world when John wrote his gospel, and by implication to all in every age of the church, who are the true followers of Christ. *And* (i. e. even or in particular) *grace for grace*, i. e. grace upon grace; continual accessions of grace, or abundance of grace. So *Winer* explains the preposition here rendered *for*: "*Grace over against, in equal measure with grace*; a subsequent portion of grace *in the place of* that which preceded—and thus grace, uninterruptedly, unceasingly renewed." Webster and Wilkinson translate, "*Grace in the room of grace*, a greater for less, higher for lower, as when a man attains successive degrees of rank." There is no essential difference between these two interpretations. Some erroneously refer this to the two dispensations, Mosaic and Christian, both of which were founded on grace, but the latter in this respect being far in advance of the former. This, however, is far-fetched and unsuited to the gene-

17 For ^a the law was given by Moses, *but* ^b grace and ^c truth came by Jesus Christ.

^a Ex. 20: 1, &c.; De. 4: 44; & 5: 1; & 33: 4.

^b Ro. 3: 24; & 5: 21; & 6: 14.

^c Ch. 8: 32; & 14: 6.

ral train of thought. There is no comparison, either expressed or implied, between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations in this verse, that being introduced in the next verse. The simple idea is the inexhaustible fulness of grace and truth which dwells in Jesus Christ, and the lavish bestowal of these blessings upon all true believers. Besides this general objection to such an interpretation, a special argument may be advanced in the persons referred to by *we*, many of whom had been heathens, and never therefore in any sense had been under the Mosaic dispensation, and received or enjoyed its gracious provisions. Nor is that dispensation spoken of as one of grace, but in the New Testament, especially in the Pauline Epistles, is contrasted with the gospel, as a dispensation of law bringing condemnation and death. See Heb. 10: 1; Acts 13: 9; Rom. 3: 20, 28; 4: 15; 5: 13; 7: 5, 6; Gal. 2: 16, 21. This contrast between the stern and inexorable demand of the law and the merciful provisions of the gospel, is distinctly brought out in v. 17, where grace and truth are said to have come by Jesus Christ, while all that came from Moses was simply the law. Verse 17 is most manifestly therefore a proof or illustration of what is asserted in v. 16, and shows that no reference whatever in the words *grace for grace*, is made to the law.

17. This verse, as has just been remarked, serves to confirm and illustrate the previous assertion, that the source of all grace and truth is in Jesus Christ. Moses, who was made the chief medium between God and man in the old dispensation, and therefore the most eminent of all the ancient saints and prophets, was simply a lawgiver, and could hold out no proffer of peace and pardon to those who were guilty of the violation of God's holy law. But it was

18^d No man hath seen God at any time; ^e the only begotten Son,

d Ex. 33: 20; De. 4: 12; Mt. 11: 27; Lu. 11: 22; ch. 6: 46; 1 Ti. 1: 17; & 6: 16; 1 Jo. 4: 12, 20.

the province of Jesus Christ to introduce a dispensation of love and grace, and to extend the most free and unlimited forgiveness to all who believe in him as the Son of God and Saviour of men. The preposition *by*, in the first clause refers to agency or instrumentality; in the second, to Christ as the efficient cause. Grace and truth came from Jesus as from its original source, inasmuch as in Him dwelt the Divine fulness; but the law was promulgated through the agency of Moses. This is referred to by *was given*, which also represents that which has bounds and limitations; whereas, grace and truth came in unlimited degree, because proceeding from the fulness of Jesus Christ. As Moses acted under the Divine guidance and direction when he gave the law, the superiority which is here claimed for that which came by Jesus Christ, can only be justified by the truth of what is asserted in v. 14, that he was the Incarnate Word, and therefore in his nature and being infinitely superior to Moses, who was a mere subordinate agent in the promulgation of the law. The relative superiority of Christ is here proved and illustrated, by the transcendent excellence of the gifts of grace, which were conferred upon men in and through him. Thus the argument of his high dignity and mission is twofold, from his divine pre-existent nature, and the rich and heavenly blessings conferred through his Incarnation upon men. Thus this verse is closely connected with the great proposition which this Preface of John's Gospel is designed to prove and illustrate, that the Eternal Word, who was the Supreme God, became incarnate; and that Jesus Christ is the Being in whom resides this fulness of divine grace and love, of which all those who believe in Him are partakers.

18. The same general thought is

which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

e Ver. 14; ch. 3: 16, 18; 1 Jo. 4: 9.

continued in this verse. Moses could only declare the will of God, as it was made known to him; but the only begotten Son, in his eternal and ineffable union with the Father, has in himself all the knowledge requisite for a full and complete manifestation of Him. *No man*, not even Moses. *Hath seen God*, i. e. has seen the Deity as such in his essential and incommunicable glory. Moses saw the glory of God as it was objectively revealed to his vision, but he had not that intuition and perfect knowledge of the divine essence and perfections, declared here to be possessed only by the Son. It seems fit here to remark, that the *theophany* or divine appearance in the Old Testament, was most undoubtedly that of the Eternal Word, the *Jehovah-Angel* or *Angel of the Lord*. See Isa. 6: 1-4 compared with John 12: 41. This makes the declaration literally true, that no man hath seen God (i. e. the Father, or God as such) at any time. Jesus Christ was the only manifestation of God, the Deity being in Him so veiled or adumbrated, that human eyes could behold the manifested glory, which would otherwise be unendurable to mortal vision. How far the same may be true of the angelic intelligences who were created by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3: 9; Col. 1: 16), we have no means of knowing; but that it is so, at least to some extent, seems quite probable from Isa. 6: 2, where the seraphim are represented as covering their faces before Jehovah, as though unable to endure the excessive glory of His presence, which glory is declared by John (12: 41), to have been the glory of Jesus himself. It is probable that Jesus Christ is the Revealer of God, not only to this world, but to all the intelligent universe called into being by his creative word. See Eph. 3: 10.

In the bosom of the Father, indicates the intimate communion and love sub-

19 ¶ And this is^f the record of John, when the Jews sent

^f Ch. 5: 33.

sisting between the Father and Son, and is a varied repetition of the expression *the Word was with God*, in v. 1. Olshausen advances this as a proof-text, that the expression *only begotten Son*, cannot refer to the incarnation of the Word (see my Note on Matt. 28: 19), but must be taken of the eternal existence of the Son with the Father. But the words *in the bosom of the Father*, are not based on the idea of a child held in the paternal arms, but on that of affectionate embrace, or the drawing of a friend to the bosom with encircling arms, whence is derived the term *bosom friend*, expressive of the strongest friendship and attachment. See Robinson's Lexicon, Art. *Kolpos*. This idea is indicated also by the preposition, which is not *in* but *into*, and conforms to the use of the preposition in the second clause of v. 1, on which see Note. The same idea of independent personality is taught in both passages, except that the word *bosom*, brings out more fully the love union between the Father and Son, than is done in v. 1, where the essential and supreme divinity of the Logos is the thing specifically taught. Winer refers the preposition to one who has been placed *upon the bosom* and continuing there. Webster and Wilkinson derive the figure from the ancient custom of reclining at meals, the place of honor and affection being in the bosom or in front of the chief person who reclined at the table. (See 13: 23, 25.) But this strikes me as less natural, than to found the expression on the idea of embracing a friend with the arms encircling him, and thus straining him to the bosom. The idea of such a repose in the bosom, as an infant enjoys when cherished in its mother's arms, is too gross to entitle it to a moment's consideration. It is sufficient for us to know, that the passage teaches the essential and inseparable union of the Father and Son, and we do well to dismiss from our mind all

priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?

analogies and explanations of the mode of this ineffable union, drawn from the forms and expressions of human love, since all such devices of reason to understand or illustrate the relation to one another of the divine Persons of the Godhead, must ever be fruitless, if they do not tend to erroneous conceptions of God.

Hath declared him. The pronoun *him*, is rightly supplied by our translators. But reference is had not so much to the attributes of God in general, for these had been revealed in the Old Testament, as to the benignity and condescending love of the Father in sending his Son Jesus Christ into the world (see 3: 16; 1 John 3: 1), to bestow the blessings of grace and salvation upon men. This does not preclude the idea, that to the Son, as the Revealer, we are indebted for all the inspired records of God's being and attributes found in the Old Testament Scriptures. But the special idea here is that the more peculiar and glorious manifestations of God's love and mercy, were made through Jesus Christ, in his own personal advent and ministry on earth. This verse connects the love of Jesus Christ with that which is felt also by the Father, and manifested by Him in the gift of His dear Son.

Professor Stuart thinks that the revelation of God by Christ, which is here referred to, was that of the doctrine of the Trinity, for which we are indebted to the overwhelming light of the New Testament, which, shining back upon the Old Testament, displays the foundation there laid for it, although not in distinct terms revealed. While this is true, I am yet inclined to think that the revelation here spoken of, must be the one above referred to, since it accords so well with the context, in which grace and truth are declared to come by Jesus Christ; and since the union between Him and the Father is such that all the provisions of redeeming

20 And ⁹ he confessed, and de-
 9 Lu. 3: 15; ch. 3: 28; Ac. 13: 25.

love, are in accordance with the Father's will and pleasure.

19-34. TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO JESUS. *Bethabara*. Vs. 19-28 contain the testimony which John bore to the deputation from the Sanhedrim, sent to inquire whether he was the Christ; vs. 29-34 refer to the testimony borne by John to his own disciples respecting Jesus. The design of these verses is to substantiate and illustrate by the testimony of John, the truth of the declaration respecting the dignity and pre-existent nature of Jesus, which the writer had made in the foregoing Preface to his gospel.

19. The Evangelist now introduces in full the testimony of John, to which reference was made in v. 15. The pronoun *this*, refers forward to the testimony which he bore to the comparative dignity of Jesus and himself, recorded in the following verses. *Record* has here the sense of *testimony*. The clause *when the Jews sent*, &c. is to be constructed with *this is the record of John*, and not with the following clause commencing with *and he confessed*. The punctuation in our common version is correct. This deputation seems to have been sent about the time when Jesus made his public appearance (see v. 29). John had been engaged in his public ministry about six months, and the great numbers who flocked to him from all parts of the country, and even from Jerusalem (see Matt. 3: 5), excited the attention of the Sanhedrim, so that they deemed it proper to send messengers to make the inquiry here specified. *The Jews*. In John's gospel this expression refers generally to the Jewish Sanhedrim, or those persons who belonged to the interest of the chief rulers, and were their advisers and abettors in the persecution of Jesus. The particularity of this reference would seem to imply, that when John's gospel was written, the Jewish nation, politically considered, had ceased to be. The words *from Jerusalem*, are to be constructed with the verb *sent*. Web-

nied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

ster and Wilkinson construct them with *the Jews*, in the sense of *the Jews of Jerusalem*. The deputation was one of weight and dignity, being composed of priests and Levites. This shows that they regarded John's ministry, and its remarkable effect upon the nation at large, as seen in the great numbers who came to his baptism, to be an affair of very grave importance, and demanding that the delegation sent to inquire into the matter, should be composed of some of their wisest and ablest men. The union of the two classes, *priests and Levites*, is frequently found, especially in the Old Testament. See Deut. 17: 9; 24: 8; Josh. 3: 3; 1 Kings 8: 4; 2 Chron. 23: 4, from which passages, without extending the quotations, we see that these two classes were employed about the temple service (see N. on Luke 10: 31, 32), and would be the persons to whom the message of the Sanhedrim might be properly intrusted. *Who art thou?* i. e. what personage do you claim to be? The spirit and terms of this message were highly unbecoming. Instead of ascertaining the nature of John's mission from his public ministry, and comparing his doctrines with the word of God, as it was their duty as religious teachers and guides of the people to have done, they rudely demand of him an open and distinct avowal of his character and position as a public teacher. Thus afterwards they ignored the abundant evidence, which our Lord gave of his Messiahship in his stupendous miracles and pure and heavenly instructions, and clamored for an explicit and open avowal of his high character and mission as the Christ (see 10: 24; Luke 22: 67), or at least a sign from heaven, to place the truth of his claims beyond doubt.

20. The twofold repetition of the verb *confessed* (i. e. held the same language, did not vary in his assertion), and the negative form in which the same idea is expressed, impart the highest emphasis to John's denial. He

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou ^h Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou ⁱ that Prophet? And he answered, No.

^h Mal. 4: 5; Mt. 17: 10.

would not permit the deputation to think for a moment, that he presumed to arrogate to himself the high office of Messiah. He denied in the most positive terms that he was the Christ. It is worthy of remark, that John was careful to remove every impression that he claimed for himself the office of the Messiah, before he answered the question of the deputation as to who he was, or what was the nature of his office.

21. *What then?* i. e. What is to be gathered from this denial? What are we to think of you? *Art thou Elias?* John had denied in the most positive terms his title to the Messiahship. Instead of repeating therefore their interrogation in the general form in which it was first proposed, they give it a more definite shape, and inquire whether he claims to be 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 1: 8), together with the burden of his proclamation (see Matt. 3: 2, compared with Mal. 4: 5), suggested the idea that he might be the reappearance of that Old Testament prophet. On John's prompt and positive denial that he was Elijah, they proceed to inquire whether he was *that prophet* whom, from Deut. 18: 15, 18, the Jews were expecting as the precursor or attendant of the Messiah. Some commentators suppose that Jeremiah is here meant (see Matt. 16: 14), but it seems rather improbable that this well-known prophet should be referred to in such indefinite terms, when Elias had just been named. I should rather regard it as put generically for any prophet, who might be supposed to reappear in the time of the Messiah, to grace his advent and prepare the way

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?

ⁱ De. 18: 15, 16.

for his elevation to the Messianic throne. When John denied himself to be this prophet, the deputation proposed their question in its original form, with the exception of the omission of the pronoun, which changed the emphasis from *who art thou?* to *who art thou?* (literally *who art?*) The first question was designed to draw from John an open and distinct avowal as to who he was, and what were his credentials for assuming the office of a religious instructor and reformer. Upon his denial that he was the Christ, or any one of the distinguished prophets whom they named, in a sort of impatient manner, they put their inquiry in terms which they think he cannot evade, *who are you then?* All this is implied in the omission of the pronoun. *That we may give,* &c. This clause depends upon an omitted clause, such as *tell us*, or *answer us*, which the construction would readily suggest. It is appended as a sort of apology for thus pressing John to give them a definite answer. They are acting under orders, and it is made imperative upon them to convey to their superiors who sent them, a reply to the question here proposed. *What sayest thou of thyself?* You have denied that you are the Messiah, or any of these Old Testament worthies, whom the nation expect as the forerunners or attendants of the Messiah. Tell us then who you are, and what is your office and mission. The varied form and directness of the question, show the persistent determination of these men to obtain an explicit answer to their inquiry, before they returned to Jerusalem.

In regard to John's denial that he was Elias, it may be remarked that he was not Elias in his actual personal appearance, as the question implied; and it seems very clear also that John

23 ^k He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as ^l said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

^k Mt. 3: 3; Ma. 1: 3; Lu. 3: 4; ch. 3: 28.

himself was ignorant, that in him was fulfilled that prophecy, which spoke of the appearance of Elijah as the forerunner of Christ (Mal. 4: 5). Our Lord himself revealed this fact. See Matt. 11: 14; Mark 9: 12, 13.

23. *I am the voice*; literally *I the voice*, &c. The ellipsis of the verb so readily permitted by the Greek language, gives great vivacity to the sentence. It is worthy of notice that John does not tell them in direct terms who he is, but simply his office work. In him was the fulfilment of the prediction in Isa. 40: 3. His office was to proclaim the advent of the Messiah, and prepare the way for his approach. John the Baptist here claims for himself what the Evangelists (Matt. 3: 3; Mark 1: 2, 3; Luke 3: 4) say of him, as the person referred to in Isa. 40: 3.

24. It is not clear for what purpose this parenthetical verse is introduced. The most probable conjecture is that which refers it to the following question, as a reason why it was proposed. The Pharisees were great sticklers for the observance of all the rites pertaining to ceremonial washings and ablutions. They were quick to detect any infringement of the rules and usages pertaining to this branch of the Mosaic ritual. The Pharisees of that age believed that in the Messianic reign, none would baptize but the Messiah himself and some of the attending prophets, such as Elijah, Jeremiah, and others who were to reappear upon the earth. Hence the annunciation that the members of this deputation were Pharisees, will naturally account for the following question which they proposed to John, the design and nature of which I shall refer to in the note below. Alford and some others would reject the article in the original, according to the various

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?

^l Is. 40: 3.

reading, and translate, "*and they* (i. e. the whole deputation) *were* (or *had been*) *sent by the Pharisees*." But this is little more than a flat repetition of v. 19, and makes the parenthesis harsh and useless.

25. *Why baptizest thou then*, &c. The nature and purport of this inquiry will readily appear from the Pharisaic notion of baptism, in the times of the Messiah referred to in the preceding Note. If John was neither the Messiah nor one of his attending prophets, they as Pharisees questioned his right to administer baptism. Prof. Stuart remarks that the Jews anticipated a general baptism or purification in the time of the Messiah. If so, it would be admissible to base the question of the deputation, on the idea that John was engaged in a needless and untimely work, in administering so extensively the rite of baptism, when the Messiah had not yet appeared. It is very clear that the question arises either from their denial of his right to baptize, or the incongruity, if not uselessness of the rite, when the Messiah had not yet come. *That Christ*; literally, *the Christ*, the promised Messiah. *That prophet*; literally *the prophet*, i. e. the one, whoever he might be, who was to reappear in the time of the Messiah's advent. See v. 33.

26. The connection of this verse with the preceding context is somewhat obscure. Olshausen seems, however, to have hit upon the train of argument. By announcing unto the deputation that the Messiah had already come and was then walking among them, John showed himself to be the true prophet of God. He vindicated in this way his right to baptize, which had been virtually called in question by the deputation. It was in reference to this testi-

26 John answered them, saying, ^m I baptize with water: ⁿ but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27 ^o 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

^m Mt. 3: 11. ⁿ Mal. 3: 1.

^o Ver. 15, 30; Ac. 19: 4.

^p Ju. 7: 24; ch. 10: 40.

mony of John, that the Pharisees hesitated to admit his claim as a true prophet (Matt. 21: 25), lest our Lord should ask them why they did not then believe in his testimony respecting Jesus. *I baptize*, &c. The presence of the pronoun in the original, establishes a strong contrast between John's baptism with water, and the baptism of the Spirit which was the prerogative of the Messiah (see Matt. 3: 11). The superiority of our Lord's baptism is expressly affirmed in v. 33. *There standeth one among you*; literally, *in the midst of you standeth (one) whom ye know not*. The omission of the antecedent imparts a becoming mystery to the announcement. *Ye know not* in his character as Messiah. The profound ignorance of the members of the deputation and all the people, of the exalted Personage who stood among them, was a remarkable illustration of what is recorded in v. 10.

27. This verse is declarative of the Messiahship of Jesus, the clause, *he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me*, being equivalent to, *he it is, who is the Messiah*. The circumlocutory form in which this fact was announced, suits well the time and occasion of its utterance. *Coming after me*. This participial clause is concessive, and requires the translation, *although coming after me* (in point of time). *Is preferred before me*. See N. on v. 15. It is to this public testimony of John the Baptist to the Messiahship of Jesus, that reference is made in v. 15. *Whose shoe's latchet*, &c. See N. on Matt. 3: 11; Mark 1: 7.

^p Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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

^q Ex. 12: 3; Is. 53: 7; ver. 36; Ac. 8: 32; 1 Pe. 1: 19; Re. 5: 6, &c.

^r Is. 53: 11; 1 Co. 15: 3; Ga. 1: 4; He. 1: 3; & 2: 17; & 9: 28; 1 Pe. 2: 24; & 3: 18; 1 Jo. 2: 2; & 3: 6; & 4: 10; Re. 1: 5.

28. The testimony was so full and explicit, that the Evangelist deemed it worthy to mention the name of the place where John was then baptizing. *Bethabara*, the house or place of the ford, perhaps the same as Bethbarah (Jud. 7: 24). Some of the best MSS. and later editions read Bethany. Such also is the reading of the Syriac version. If this is the true reading, we see the use of the adjunct, *beyond Jordan*, to distinguish it from Bethany near Jerusalem, where dwelt Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. There is no objection to referring Bethabara to its more ancient, and Bethany, to its more modern name.

29. A question of some importance here arises as to the point of time in this narrative, in which our Lord's temptation is to be placed. There is, as Alford remarks, such an unbroken sequence in the events here detailed, that so long a time as forty days cannot well be interposed between any of them. In 2: 1, the expression *third day* (i. e. the third from the calling of Nathanael, 1: 45-51), connects the marriage in Cana of Galilee closely with the events just before related. I can see, therefore, no place for the temptation subsequent to the arrival of the deputation from Jerusalem (v. 19), and must believe that Jesus returned to Bethabara from the scene of the temptation previous to that time. The testimony borne by John to the character of Jesus, took place after his baptism, which will reconcile the apparent discrepancy between this passage and v. 33 (on which see Note). At the same

time, it must be admitted that the testimony in Luke 3 : 16, was before his baptism, but there it was predictive, and did not as here point to Jesus as one who was actually present.

The next day after the interview with the deputation from Jerusalem. *Coming unto him.* Many interpret this of the coming of our Lord to Bethabara after the Temptation. But the inference is clear from what is said in v. 26, that he was in Bethabara the previous day. The expression *coming unto him*, is rather to be referred to a return of our Lord to John from his lodging place (see vs. 29, 38, 39). *Lamb of God.* As the lamb was sacrificed upon the altar, as a symbolical atonement for the sins of the people, this epithet is applied figuratively to our Lord Jesus, to denote the sacrifice which he made for the sins of men. That John so intended the expression to be understood, is evident from the words which follow, *which taketh away*, &c. This shows that Jesus was not called a *lamb*, to denote merely that he was an innocent and harmless man, or from any analogy existing between him and the paschal lamb, which was the sign of deliverance from Egyptian bondage ; nor, as Alford well remarks, was he thus called, with any reference to the lamb of the daily evening and morning sacrifice, for this was only one of the several animals which were offered on such occasions, and never, with two exceptions (Levit. 4 : 32 ; Numb. 6 : 14), was offered as a sin-offering. Christ was indeed typified in the paschal lamb and in all the sacrificial ritual, but *the Lamb of God* is here used in a higher and more significant sense, as *the Lamb* previously referred to in the Messianic prophecies. Who can doubt that the reference, in part at least, is to Isa. 53 : 7, where it was predicted that the Messiah was to be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter?" This reference to the prophecy which disclosed with such fulness of detail the sufferings and death of the Messiah, is then aptly followed by the words, *which taketh away the sin of the world.* It is as though John had said, 'there is the Lamb of God, who

according to that great Messianic prediction in Esaias, is to be brought to the slaughter—to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows—to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities—to bear the chastisement of our peace and heal us with his stripes—in a word *to take away the sin of the world.*' This interpretation by no means denies or overlooks the other aspects and relations, in which our Lord may be called the Lamb of God. But the direct reference seems to be to the above-mentioned prophecy of Isaiah, where the suffering, dying Messiah is compared to a lamb led to the slaughter.

Which taketh away the sin of the world, as has been virtually remarked, is a condensation of the prophecy above referred to. The evidence from this passage of the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings and death, is so plain that it would seem no one could hesitate for a moment to receive it as one of the most clearly revealed facts in the Word of God. 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 the careful reader of the Bible needs not to be informed, that this great truth is taught in the clearest and most ample terms, in many other portions of God's Word. The epistle to the Hebrews would have no significance, if this doctrine of a vicarious atonement through Jesus Christ were taken away from it, as its great and fundamental idea. The same may be said of the Epistle to the Romans, in which Paul's great argument of justification by faith is founded upon the fact, that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The verb rendered *taketh away*, refers to the removal of sin or its penalty, by an atonement or expiation. It is the word chosen by the LXX. to translate *pardon* (i. e. put away) *my sin*, in 1 Sam. 15 : 25, and *to bear the iniquity*, in Levit. 10 : 17. How could the sin of the world be removed in any other manner? Could it be effected by the death of a merely

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

^s Ver. 15, 27.

† Mal. 3: 1; Mt. 3: 6; Lu. 1: 17, 76, 77; & 3: 3, 4.

good man? Surely not. Strict and perfect obedience is required of every created intelligence, and no one therefore, however good he may be, has any stock of merit which can be transferred to the account of another. But a suitable expiation has been made, and Jesus Christ, who a little before was averred to be the Incarnate Word, who in the beginning was with God, and who was God, and by whom all things were created, is here declared to be the Being, through whose blood shed like that of the lamb upon the altar, the expiation has been effected. *The world*, i. e. the world of mankind. See N. on v. 10.

30. *Of whom I said*, in reply to the deputation of the Pharisees (v. 27). This is the testimony referred to in v. 15.

31. *I knew him not*. Some interpret this as a denial on the part of John, that he had any personal knowledge of Jesus. But this is hardly supposable, when the relationship and friendly intercourse of the families of Joseph and Zacharias are taken into consideration. It is better therefore to refer it to the knowledge of our Lord's Messiahship, of which John was comparatively ignorant, until divinely enlightened in reference thereto, by the revelation referred to in v. 33. "From Matt. 3: 14, it appears that John knew Jesus to be the Messiah before he baptized him; so that the declaration here made by him, and repeated in v. 33, must be understood to imply, that his knowledge of Christ, which was communicated by divine afflatus on the instant before he baptized him, was forthwith confirmed by the promised sign." Trollope. *But that he*, &c. These

that he should be made manifest to Israel, 'therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 ^u And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

^u Mt. 3: 16; Ma. 1: 10; Lu. 3: 22; ch. 5: 32.

words stand as the reason why John came baptizing with water, or in other words, preaching the duty of repentance and reformation, of which baptism with water was the ratifying seal. John's work was therefore a preparatory one. Although ignorant at that time of the Messianic claims of Jesus, yet he was made the instrument of preparing the way for his approach, to the end *that he might be made manifest to Israel*.

32. In this and the following verse, we have John's recorded testimony by what special sign he was divinely informed of the Messiahship of Jesus. This passage therefore stands connected with vs. 29-31, denoting the source of John's knowledge that Jesus was the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world. "From this cursory allusion to the Baptist's testimony, we see that John supposed his readers to be acquainted with the earlier Gospels, or with the facts disclosed in them. The same appears from 3: 24; 11: 2." Webster and Wilkinson. *I saw the Spirit*, &c. See N. on Matt. 3: 16. We have no means of knowing whether John heard the voice, which accompanied the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus. But from v. 34 we should think it highly probable that he did. *The same said unto me*, &c. There is no necessity, either from the language here made use of, or from the nature of the case, of supposing John to have been addressed by an audible voice. A revelation from God is as easily and clearly made to the internal man, as through the medium of the external organs of sense. *And remaining on him*. Some have erroneously supposed that the Spirit had descended visibly to

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^s same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

æ Mt. 8:1; Ac. 1:5; & 2:4; & 10:44; & 19:6.

John's eye, upon others who had come to his baptism, but did not remain upon them as upon Jesus. But it was the Spirit's *descent*, as well as permanent *rest* upon Jesus, which indicated his Messiahship. John had previously been enabled by divine illumination to know that Jesus was the promised Christ (see Matt. 3:11, 12, 14), but here he has ocular demonstration of the fact, not so much, however, to strengthen his own belief, as to make him a more credible witness of the fact to others. *Baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*. John has not referred before to this office of Christ. But his qualifying words, "I baptize with water" (v. 26), imply another baptism of a very different nature. Here that baptism is made known. The Jews thought that in the time of the Messiah, baptism would be administered by him and his attending prophets, such as Elias, Jeremias, &c. See N. on v. 24. John, in reference to this opinion, avers that Christ would baptize, but it would be a baptism not with water but with the Holy Ghost, not an external and symbolic rite, but one internal and effectual to the purifying of the soul from all moral uncleanness. It is worthy of note, that we have no instance recorded in which our Lord himself baptized with water, although his disciples administered the rite (see 4:1, 2). He was indeed a Baptizer, but not in the sense in which the Jews believed that the Messiah would baptize.

34. John here reiterates the testimony which he had borne respecting Jesus Christ. The nature and importance of the subject rendered it necessary that

35 ¶ Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, ^y Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

y Ver. 29.

the testimony should be full and explicit. *I saw and bare record*; literally, *I have seen and borne testimony*. The tenses of the verbs although the same, yet refer to acts viewed under different relations of time. The first *I have seen*, refers to one past act, the sight of the descending Spirit upon Jesus; the latter, *I have testified*, refers to an act which remains in full force and validity to the present time of the speaker. "It is a reference to his testimony at the time, as a thing on record in their memories, and as still continuing." Alford. *That this is the Son of God*; i. e. the Incarnate Logos (vs. 14, 18). The expression *Son of God*, is not a varied repetition of the dignity of Jesus as disclosed in v. 33, but refers rather to what was proclaimed by the voice from heaven, which accompanied the descent of the Spirit upon him (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).

35—51. JESUS GAINS DISCIPLES. *The Jordan. Galilee.*

35. *Again* in reference to the repetition on this occasion of John's testimony that Jesus was the Lamb of God. See v. 29. *The next day after* the one spoken of in v. 29, and two days after the deputation had visited him from Jerusalem. The sequence of events is here distinctly marked. *John stood* (literally *was standing*) in his usual place as a public teacher.

36. *As he walked* "for exercise or meditation." Webster and Wilkinson. *Behold the Lamb of God!* John repeats the declaration he had made on the preceding day. It seems to have produced such an effect upon two of his disciples, that they immediately follow-

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

ed Jesus. Some commentators have supposed that these disciples were absent the previous day, and therefore heard this testimony of John now for the first time. But it is more natural to suppose, that the solemn reiteration of this testimony to the divine mission of Jesus, was what influenced them to leave John and attach themselves to him as his disciples. *Followed Jesus*, not in the special sense in which afterwards they left all and followed him, but, in order to learn something more from his own lips concerning himself.

38. *What seek ye?* i. e. 'what is your business with me that you thus follow my steps?' They probably followed him at some little distance, the awe and reverence inspired by the mysterious words of John (v. 36) preventing them from drawing near to him. Observing that they were following him as if wishing to accost him, our Lord turned and addressed them as here related. The question, which he put to them in regard to their purpose in thus following him, should not lead us to suppose that he who knew the hearts of all men (see 2: 24, 25), was ignorant of their motive, and proposed this question to obtain information thereof. It was rather intended to inspire them with confidence, and place them upon an easy and friendly footing with him. *Which is to say*, &c. This, together with the interpretation of Rabboni in 20: 16, shows that John's gospel was written primarily for those who did not understand the Hebrew language. *Where dwellest thou?* i. e. where is thy lodging-place? Their intention was to obtain permission to call upon him at a suitable hour the next day, as it was now about four o'clock, P. M. (see v. 39). But in the

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 ² Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

≈ Mt. 4: 18.

style of Eastern simplicity, *come and see*, Jesus invited them at once to accompany him to the place of his abode, which they did.

39. *They came and saw*, &c. i. e. they went with him to his lodging-place. The multitudes in attendance upon John's ministry, rendered it necessary for them to dwell in temporary booths or huts, or disperse themselves round about in the adjacent region. *That day*, i. e. that portion of it which remained after the tenth hour. Their visit may have been prolonged even into the evening; but there would be three or four hours for them to converse with Jesus before night came fully on. *For it was about*, &c. The word in the original translated *for*, is *and* or *but*, either of which would be the better rendering, as the sentence is not a dependent but co-ordinate one, intended simply to specify the time of the day when these disciples visited Jesus, in order to give prominence to the fact of his readiness at all hours to receive those who came to him for instruction, even at a late hour of the day. It furnishes also a reason why they spent the whole remainder of the day with him.

40. The name of one of the disciples is here given. Why the name of the other disciple was omitted to be given, we have no means of knowing. The most probable conjecture is that it was John himself, whose modesty forbade his referring to himself by name in other portions of the gospel. See 13: 23, 25; 19: 26; 21: 20.

41. *He first*. The word *first* is not an adverb but an adjective, the sense being that while both the persons mentioned went to seek Peter, Andrew

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 : ^a thou shalt be

^a Mt. 16 : 18.

was the first to find him. *His own brother* ; literally, *his brother* (viz.) *his own*, the last words being added, as Alford conjectures, not merely as a possessive pronoun, but as a reason why he sought to find him. Webster and Wilkinson think that some family circumstances unknown to us may account for its use here. *The Messias*. See N. on Matt. 1 : 1. *The Christ*. Dr. Robinson, after the best MSS., omits very properly the article, the word being the translation of *Messias*, not *the Messias*. *And he brought him to Jesus*. How beautifully expressive is this of the solicitude which Andrew felt, that his brother Simon should also enjoy the privilege and pleasure of Jesus' conversation.

42. *He brought him unto Jesus*. The conduct of Andrew on this occasion shows him to have possessed the same energy and promptness of action, which so eminently characterized Peter. *Beheld him*. The word implies an earnest, steadfast gaze, as though our Lord was reading Peter's most hidden purposes and character. The new and expressive name which he gave to Peter, after looking so intently upon him, must have gone far to convince him of our Lord's extraordinary character. Indeed no one can read this, and not see upon the very face of the narration, that it was a prophetic annunciation of that which no mere man, at first sight of a stranger, could have understandingly uttered. "I own I cannot but think with Bengel, Paulus, Strauss, that the knowledge shown by the Lord of Simon is intended to be miraculous." Alford. Stier also refers

called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

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

44 Now ^b Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

^b Ch. 12 : 21.

to this knowledge as supernatural: "I know who and what thou art from thy birth till thy present coming to me. I name thee, I give thee a new name, I know what I will make of thee in thy following of me and for my kingdom." *Thou art Simon*, i. e. thy name is Simon. *Cephas* is the Hebrew for *rock*. The Greek equivalent is *Peter*, by which name the Apostle is usually designated in the New Testament. On the significancy of this name, see Ns. on Matt. 4 : 18 ; 16 : 18.

43. *The day following* the calling and naming of Peter. The sequence of events is here distinctly marked. *Would go forth*, i. e. was purposing to go forth ; or was on the point of setting out, in accordance with previous intention or purpose. *Galilee*. See N. on Matt. 2 : 22. *Findeth*, i. e. falls in with, or meets with. *Follow me*. This was the usual form of direction to become one's disciple. He had not thus addressed Andrew, or Peter, or the other disciples. They of their own accord attended upon his instructions. None of the disciples, however, were inseparably attached to him as followers, until after they had received their second call. See Matt. 4 : 18 ; Mark 1 : 17.

44. *Now Philip was of Bethsaida*. This was his native place. Andrew and Peter were also born there, although, as it appears from Matt. 8 : 14 ; Mark 1 : 29, they had removed to Capernaum. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 32) places Bethsaida at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake of Galilee, on both banks of the stream. As that portion of the town on the western bank would fall within the lim-

45 Philip findeth ^c Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom ^d Moses in the

^c Ch. 21: 2.

^d Ge. 3: 15; & 49: 10; De. 18: 18; see on Lu. 24: 27.

its of Galilee, Dr. Thomson thinks that one object which Philip the Tetrarch had in rebuilding the part on the east side, and changing its name, was to detach it entirely from its former relations, and establish his own right over it. He thinks, therefore, that there was but *one* Bethsaida at the head of the lake, and that it was at the mouth of the Jordan.

45. The incidents now related took place most likely after the return of our Lord to Galilee. *Findeth Nathanael.* As Jesus tarried a short time at Cana of Galilee, where he attended a wedding with his disciples, it is probable that Nathanael was found of his brother, and introduced to our Lord either at or near this village. Nathanael is thought by some to be the proper name of Bartholomew. See N. on Matt. 10: 3. Webster and Wilkinson refer as proof of this to the fact, that Nathanael is mentioned here and in 21: 2, in connection with the apostles, but his name does not occur in any list of the Twelve; whereas Bartholomew's name is in every list, but is not mentioned elsewhere. The fact that Bartholomew's name in every list is joined to that of Philip, would seem to indicate that intimacy between the two, which is implied here of Philip and Nathanael. *We have found*, i. e. met with. The verb in the previous clause, *Philip findeth Nathanael*, indicates search or inquiry. *Him of whom Moses in the law*, &c. This is a circumlocution for the Messiah. The construction of the original is well suited to the joyous excitement of Philip at having found the Messiah, and the intentness of his thoughts upon that personage, the relative clause being placed first: *whom Moses in the law wrote about*, and (also) *the prophets, we have found, Jesus of Nazareth*, &c. The expression *Moses in the law*, is to be re-

law, and the ^e prophets, did write, Jesus ^f of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

^e Is. 4: 2; & 7: 14; & 9: 6; & 53: 2; Mi. 5: 2; Zec. 6: 12; & 9: 9; see more on Lu. 24: 27.

^f Mt. 2: 23; Lu. 2: 4.

ferred to such direct prophecies as Gen. 49: 10; Numb. 24: 17; Deut. 18: 15, and to the covenant promise made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob. See Gen. 12: 3; 22: 18; 26: 4; 28: 14. *The prophets.* See Isa. 7: 14; 9: 5; 40: 10, 11; 53: 1-12; Jer. 23: 5; 33: 14; Ezek. 32: 23; Dan. 9: 24; Micah 5: 2; Zech. 6: 12. *Jesus.* The etymological significance of this name (see Matt. 1: 21), could not well have been overlooked by these pious and reflective men. *Of Nazareth* or *the Nazarene*, is added for the sake of definiteness. The order of the original is quite peculiar: *Jesus the son of Joseph, him (or the one) from Nazareth.* Prominence is thus given to the place of his residence, as though what might have been objected by some to his Messiahship from the obscurity of his family and place of abode, had no influence whatever upon the mind of Philip. *The son of Joseph.* Such he was by general repute; but how absurd to draw the inference from this, that John the Evangelist was ignorant of the miraculous conception of Mary, as related by Matthew and Luke. These are not his words, but those of Philip, who speaks here in accordance with the facts of our Lord's history, as they appeared to men to have taken place. It seems quite evident from this passage, that both Philip and Nathanael had some previous acquaintance with Jesus and his family connections.

46. *Can there any good thing*, &c. See N. on Matt. 2: 23. As Nathanael was himself a Galilean, these words show that the Galileans themselves shared in the contempt in which Nazareth was held by the Jews. While referring thus to the universal sentiment of the Jews, he gave utterance to his own doubts that so exalted a personage as the Messiah should come from so

46 And Nathanael said unto him, ^g Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming

g Ch. 7: 41, 42, 52.

obscure a place, and one held in such ill repute. The allusion is to something more than the smallness and insignificance of the town, as Alford supposes. The words *any good thing*, most evidently refer to the low repute in which the Nazarenes were held throughout the land. *Come and see*, i. e. come and judge for yourself. The words are expressive of confidence, that Nathanael would concur with the speaker in his opinion of Jesus. The phrase *come and see*, seems to have been an ordinary mode of speech, when a personal investigation as to the truth of an allegation is challenged. See 11: 34; Cant. 3: 11; Rev. 5: 1, 3, 5, 7; Ps. 66: 5; 46: 9. "It was at the same time the common saying of the Rabbi to his disciples, as frequently in the Talmud, 'come and let it be explained to thee.'" Stier. In regard to these words of Philip and Nathanael, it is well said by Webster and Wilkinson, that they furnish an exemplification of prejudice, and the right method of dealing with it. Philip did not attempt to argue with his friend, in reference to his prejudice against recognizing Jesus the Nazarene as the King of Israel, but simply requests him to come and see for himself. This Nathanael unhesitatingly did, and his doubts and prejudices were all removed by the overwhelming evidence which Jesus gave of his divine mission and character.

47. *Jesus saw*, &c. This is to be referred not only to Nathanael's bodily approach, but to the object and purpose for which he sought Jesus. He came as a sincere inquirer after truth, and ready to do whatever duty might require. *Saith of him* in his hearing, as is evident from Nathanael's reply in the next verse. *Behold an Israelite indeed*, i. e. a true descendant of Israel, one who is such in spirit, as well as in name.

to him, and saith of him, Behold ^h an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

^h Ps. 32: 2; & 73: 1; ch. 8: 39; Ro. 2: 23, 29; & 9: 6.

The words do not imply that Nathanael was absolutely without sin or imperfection, but that he was a true, honest, and upright man, who sought and obtained from God the pardon of his sins, and to whom his iniquity was not imputed, his transgressions being covered. See Ps. 32: 1, 2. Some expositors very erroneously find in these words, an ironical reproof of Nathanael's prejudice against the claims of Jesus, on the ground of his being a Nazarene. The words *in whom is no guile* (i. e. deceit, hypocrisy), prove the truth of the interpretation above given. Reference is had, as some think, to the crafty character of Jacob; *behold an Israelite indeed*, but not one in whom cunning and craft predominate as in his ancestor Jacob's character. But such a reference, and on such an occasion, to that point in Jacob's character in which he appears the least worthy of praise, would be far-fetched and incongruous to the purpose of Jesus, which was to give Nathanael the very highest meed of praise in denominating him a true descendant of Israel, who had power over the angel and prevailed; and by his strength had power with God (Hos. 12: 3, 4). It was rather the delineation of the character of a good man (Ps. 15: 2; 32: 2), and therefore added in confirmation of the declaration that he was an Israelite indeed. Our Lord was not slow to praise such as were worthy of commendation. See Matt. 8: 10; 15: 28; 16: 17; Mark 12: 34.

48. The words of Jesus presumed such an intimate knowledge of Nathanael's character, that in a tone of surprise, he asked him whence he had derived his knowledge of him. The idea seemed not yet to have entered his mind, that Jesus was supernaturally acquainted with his heart and disposition. In

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.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, ' thou art the Son of God; thou art ^k the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said

i Mt. 14: 33.

order to enlighten him in regard to this divine feature in his character, and as a preponderating weight against the objection which had arisen in Nathanael's mind from his low and obscure condition as a Nazarene, our Lord refers to an incident which took place in such secluded circumstances, that his knowledge of it must have been drawn evidently from no ordinary source. *Before that Philip called thee*, &c. Our Lord refers to a fig tree, under which Nathanael was sitting when he was found by Philip. This could have been known to those two persons only, as Jesus was probably at a considerable distance from the place referred to. His knowledge of the transaction was so evidently supernatural, that Nathanael yielded at once to the evidence, and acknowledged him to be the Son of God and King of Israel. So overwhelming and sudden a conviction of this great truth could not have been wrought in Nathanael's mind, unless the reference to the fig tree had involved a supernatural knowledge, which Nathanael knew belonged to no mere man. Stier thinks that our Lord with his bodily eyes saw Nathanael under the fig tree; but at the same time read the thoughts of his heart, with eyes opened by the Father. But would the evidence of our Lord's supernatural character have been so sudden and conclusive, had Nathanael supposed that his position under the fig tree had been seen with the bodily eyes of Jesus? He rightly argued the omnis-

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.

k Mt. 21: 5; & 27: 11, 42; ch. 18: 37; & 19: 3.
l Ge. 28: 12; Mt. 4: 11; Lu. 2: 9, 13; & 22: 43;
& 24: 4; Ac. 1: 10.

cience of Jesus from this supernatural external vision, and having been fully convinced of this great and wonderful truth, he is not slow to admit that he is the Searcher of hearts, the Son of God and King of Israel.

49. *Son of God*. The more usual Messianic appellation among the Jews was *Son of David*, but the spontaneous application of the term *Son of God* by Nathanael, shows that it was also in vogue. The feeling that prompted Nathanael to its use, was much like that which possessed the mind of the Psalmist in view of God's omniscience (Ps. 139: 1-12). The addition of the words *King of Israel*, shows that the speaker was imbued with the common sentiment of the nation, that the Messiah was to erect a temporal kingdom.

50. Our Lord's reply to Nathanael was not one of blame and censure, but of approval and encouragement. A slight reference is made to his frank and honest expression of belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, while at the same time a promise is given of still greater proof of that, which he had so readily admitted on comparatively slender evidence. *Believest thou* in my Messiahship? *Greater things*, i. e. more open and wonderful manifestations of divine power.

51. This verse is explanatory of the *greater things*, promised in the preceding verse. *Hereafter ye shall see*, &c. The language is highly figurative, being borrowed from Jacob's vision (Gen. 28: 12). It was both

CHAPTER II.

AND the third day there was a marriage in "Cana of Galilee";

and the mother of Jesus was there :

a See Jos. 19 : 28.

symbolical of Divine protection, and of remarkable interpositions on the part of God, which would be openly manifested. It was a declaration, that his disciples should see in the numerous and stupendous miracles wrought by Jesus, such intimacy of connection between the Son of man and heaven, that it would be as though the heavenly messengers were continually passing to and fro, showing the most intimate relationship between him and his heavenly Father. Some take this in a literal sense, and refer it to the Transfiguration and the Ascension. But on neither of these occasions, were the heavens visibly opened, and angels seen to descend and ascend as here stated. The Transfiguration, moreover, was not witnessed either by Nathanael or Philip. Such an event, however, had occurred, but not in presence of the disciples. The heavens were opened above him on the occasion of his baptism (Matt. 3 : 16; Mark 1 : 10; Luke 3 : 21), and angels ministered unto him in the desert of temptation (Matt. 4 : 12), and in the agonies of the garden (Luke 22 : 43). The literal reality of what is here said was not then wanting in the life of Jesus; and his miracles evinced that there was a continued opening of heaven over him, and an angelic service, such as might be expected to wait upon the Incarnate Son of God. The expression *heaven open*, is explained in N. on Matt. 3 : 16.

CHAPTER II.

1-12. THE MARRIAGE AT CANA OF GALILEE. Alford remarks that in the miracle here recorded, was the first fulfilment of the announcement in the last verse of the preceding chapter.

1. *The third day* after Nathanael's call. Some interpret it as the third day after the arrival of our Lord in Galilee. But it is more natural to refer the time-point of reckoning, to the

events just related in the preceding chapter. Dr. Robinson says that Cana was not over fifty miles from Bethabara, and the journey in returning to Galilee did not require more than two days. *A marriage*, i. e. a marriage feast. See N. on Matt. 22 : 2. *Cana of Galilee*, so called to distinguish it from Cana in Asher, not far from Tyre (Josh. 19 : 28.) It was situated seven miles north of Nazareth, and about three miles north-east of Sepphoris. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 124) says that "there is not now a habitable house in the humble village, where our Lord sanctioned, by his presence and miraculous assistance, the all important and world-wide institution of marriage." Dr. Thomson very impressively and pertinently refers to the fact, that the proudest and largest of the cities of the earth may pass away and be forgotten, but not so Cana of Galilee, which shall be remembered to the end of time and to the end of the world, whenever and wherever there shall be the voice of the bride and the bridegroom. "Some names we pronounce with honor, some with shame and sorrow, many with cold indifference, but Cana will mingle in the song of the happy, to symbolize the peace and purity of domestic happiness—the bliss of wedded love." All around Cana the country is so wild, as to be the favorite hunting grounds of the inhabitants in the vicinity. *Mother of Jesus*. It is remarked by commentators that John never mentions her by name, probably for the reason that she was so well known, and perhaps to give emphasis to the fact, that Jesus had an earthly mother, but no earthly father. Alford refers it to John's intimacy with her, in pursuance of the injunction in 19 : 26, 27, remarking also that he never names his own brother James.

2. *Was called*, i. e. was invited. *His disciples*. There were five who are

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

3 And when they wanted wine,

the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

mentioned in the preceding chapter, as having attached themselves to his company. Jesus seems to have been invited on the ground of previous acquaintance, if not relationship. His disciples were doubtless included in the invitation, as being his particular friends, for we cannot well suppose that being called as they were from different towns, they would all have been acquaintances of the family. Our Lord here in the very outset of his public ministry, honored, by his sacred presence, the institution of marriage, and taught his followers that asceticism was not an element in the religion he was about to establish. The Son of man came eating and drinking (see N. on Matt. 11:19), thus participating in all the innocent gratifications of our nature, and leaving an example of cheerfulness and freedom from all singularities and eccentricities of character, worthy of our closest imitation.

3. *When they wanted wine*; literally, *their wine having fallen short*. The mother of Jesus, &c. The general interest and direction of affairs which she seems to have taken on this occasion, lead us to suppose that she was a near relative, or a very intimate friend of the family. It is a far more difficult question to answer, why she came to Jesus with the intelligence that the wine had failed. Bengel suggests that it was intended as a hint, that they all should leave, and thus be the means of breaking up the assembly, before the embarrassment of their host should appear. Calvin offers as a reason for this suggestion of Mary, that by some pious exhortation he might make the time pass pleasantly and profitably to the guests, and at the same time relieve the bridegroom from embarrassment and shame. The usual mode of explanation is to refer it to an expectation and implied wish on the part of his mother, that he should miraculously remove the difficulty. But we

can hardly suppose that she expected through him a miraculous supply. It is rather to be attributed to a readiness, in moments of embarrassment or perplexity, to communicate the cause of anxiety to one's friends. Sympathy, if not relief, in such cases is sought for. The mother of Jesus may have come to him on this occasion the more readily, from the probable fact that the wine fell short, through the unexpected presence of his disciples whom he brought with him to the marriage festival. There may indeed have been some vague reliance upon his wisdom in extricating the family from the unpleasant predicament in which they found themselves, yet, as has been remarked, we can hardly imagine that she expected the interposition of his miraculous power.

As it regards the use of wine at this marriage feast, and the miracle by which our Lord changed water into that beverage, the reader needs hardly to be informed, that wine was as common a drink in Palestine, as cider is 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. In France, Germany, Italy, and other wine-producing countries, very seldom is drunkenness found to result from the use of the pure juice of the grape. This must be taken into consideration, in judging of the moral aspect of this miracle of our Lord. No plea whatever can be justly drawn from it, for the use of such adulterated and poisonous wines, as are generally imported and vended in this country. See further N. on v. 8.

4. The answer of our Lord to his mother, is not without some difficulties of explanation. That it is not one of censure, much less of disrespect, is very clear. The term *woman*, as used here and on that most tender and solemn occasion, when he was about to bow his head in death on the cross (19:26),

4 Jesus saith unto her, ^b Woman, ^c what have I to do with

^b Ch. 19: 26.

^c So 2 Sa. 16: 10; A 19: 22.

thee? ^d mine hour is not yet come.

^d Ch. 7: 6.

contains in it nothing disrespectful, every such idea being what is transferred to it, from the manner and intent with which the word is sometimes spoken in our own language at the present time. It is to be noticed that in the original, the word *woman*, is placed after the words *what have I to do with thee?* This position diminishes much of its apparent abruptness and harshness. *What have I to do with thee*, is translated by some, *what is that to you and me?* which might imply that it was the bridegroom's province to furnish wine for the guests, and not his or his mother's. But this not only overlooks the Greek idiom, but to apply the softest term which it deserves, makes the reply of our Lord one of careless trifling and selfishness. "What concern is it of ours that they have no wine? Let them look to their own affairs, and make provision for the exigency as best they may." I cannot for a moment adopt such an explanation. Besides it does not at all comport with the recital which follows, in which it appears that he did make it a concern of his, and by a most stupendous miracle supplied the deficiency, which had thus so suddenly and unexpectedly embarrassed his kind host. Trench and others give it this explanation: "Let me alone; what is there common to thee and me? we stand in this matter on altogether different grounds." See Judg. 11: 12; 1 Kings 17: 18; 2 Kings 3: 13 (LXX.), where the same elliptical phrase is used. This interpretation undoubtedly is the true one, although Trench does not in my opinion carry out its application to the present passage, with his usual perspicuity and good judgment.

I prefer to so explain it, as to bring out this as the prominent idea: 'What have I now to do with the cares and perplexities of time, having already entered upon the spiritual work for which I came into the world. You,

my friends, are engrossed in the things which pertain to this life; but I have henceforth a higher mission, and one which you cannot share with me. Why then do you come to me with such matters?' This meets the exegetical wants of the passage, which evidently denies the presence of any common bond of interest between the parties here represented. See N. on Matt. 8: 29; Mark 1: 21; Luke 8: 28. The sentiment in brief is this: 'with such worldly matters as these, I have no longer any thing to do. It is your province to attend to them and not mine.' This exposition of the passage is corroborated by the next clause, *my hour*, (i. e. my time for working miracles) *has not yet come*, which stands as an additional reason why he could not properly be applied to in this emergency. The answer is brief and sententious: 'It does not belong to my mission to supply the temporal wants of men; and besides my hour for working miracles has not yet come.' This is the whole scope and tenor of the reply of our Lord to his mother. It is no objection to this view, that he at once proceeded to work the required miracle. He did this in his love and wisdom, although in circumstances where there was no claim, so to speak, upon his miraculous interference. Alford thinks that our Lord had intimated to his mother his intention, and that her fault was, "the too rash hastening on of what had been his fixed purpose." He deduces this from v. 5, where it appears that Mary was confident that a miracle would be wrought, and therefore bids the servants to scrupulously follow his directions, which would seem to indicate, that she anticipated the very method of its performance. Such an inference may be justly drawn from v. 5; but may not the words of Mary have been founded on some remark of our Lord which is omitted? A great truth is contained in the words, *what*

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

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.

have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come, and it is therefore recorded; but there was no equal necessity of reporting the subsequent conversation, on which the direction given to the servants in v. 5, may have been founded.

5. Mary, as has been remarked in the previous Note, drew the inference from some words of Jesus not recorded, that although his hour for commencing the procession of miracles, by which his divine character and mission were to be proved, had not fully come, he would yet condescend to relieve their host of the embarrassment, which resulted from the failure of wine. She therefore gives directions to the servants to render exact obedience to his commands, even if they should be somewhat strange and inexplicable.

6. *Six waterpots*. These were large stone jars, in which water was kept for the various washings prescribed at feasts. The selection of these jars, as the repository of this miraculous wine, prevented every appearance of collusion or imposition, since no one would look for wine in large and common waterpots. *After the manner of*, i. e. in accordance with the custom of. *Purifying* or washing before meals. *Two or three firkins apiece*. On the supposition that they contained $2\frac{1}{2}$ firkins each, and reckoning the firkin at $8\frac{1}{2}$ gallons, the capacity of the whole would be about 133 gallons. This large quantity of wine made the miracle the more striking and apparent. It does not follow from this, that the wine thus miraculously made was all drunk on this occasion, although the report of the wondrous miracle, doubtless, drew great numbers to the feast, all of whom would wish to

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.

e Ma. 7:3.

drink, if for no other purpose than to satisfy themselves of the truth of the affair.

7. *Fill the waterpots with water*. Had our Lord created the wine in empty vessels, some might have denied that they were empty, or avowed that in some way or other, wine had been conveyed into them. But the testimony of the servants, that they had themselves filled the vessels with pure water, would preclude all such objections to the reality of the miracle. The minuteness of the directions here given, reminds us of the caution practised by Elijah (1 Kings 18: 33-35), to preclude every appearance of imposition in his contest with the priests of Baal. *Up to the brim*, so that no space was left for the reception of any wine, had there been an attempt to pour it in. The miracle was thus defended on all points against cavils and objections.

8. Between the act of filling the vessels with water, and the direction here given, the creative process, by which the water became wine, is to be placed. This miracle, which was one of the most stupendous on record, and wrought without the utterance of a word or any physical contact, led the way in that numerous train of miracles, which established beyond doubt that our Lord Jesus was what he claimed to be, the SON OF GOD. The moral aspect of this miracle has furnished serious difficulties, even to sincere inquirers after truth. But a brief reference to the facts of the case, will relieve the subject of all embarrassment. Here was a marriage-festival, one of the most joyous and time honored of all feasts. On such occasions the wines of the country, which, as we have before remarked,

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted^f 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,

^f Ch. 4:46.

were wholly free from the alcoholic stimulant which forms an ingredient of our imported wines, were freely and harmlessly drunk. This wine which was the pure juice of the grape, had failed on the occasion of this marriage-feast, either through accident, or an unexpected increase of the guests. There were then no circumstances anterior to the miracle, to render its performance untimely or improper. The question is then narrowed down to this simple point, whether it was proper for our Lord to perform a miracle to furnish that beverage for the feast, which was a common and universal drink, and had been so for centuries—which would cheer and enliven, but unless drunk in very large quantities, would not intoxicate. This turns on the point, whether a festival of this sort was in itself sinful. If so, then it was wrong for our Lord or any one of the other guests to be present. But it was not in itself sinful. Moses established festivals; Jesus Christ attended them. If it was not wrong for those who gave the feasts to furnish the usual entertainments; it was not wrong for our Lord to provide from the stores of his infinite bounty, any article, which, as in the present instance, had fallen short from inadvertence or some unforeseen contingency. It was from his exhaustless stores that every thing pertaining to the feast had been provided, and his miraculous supply of wine was simply an open and palpable display of his providential bounty and love, which in secret was going on in uninterrupted process for the supply of the wants of all mankind. Besides no one will venture to affirm that the use of such wine, as was drunk in Palestine, the pure expression of the grape, was sinful. It is the abuse and not the use of such wine, which is to be avoided as sinful. But as has been remarked, this abuse was far less likely

to happen in a wine-producing country like Palestine, than here, where so little of it is found in its purity. There was a moral too in this the first of our Lord's miracles. His disciples had previously been in attendance upon John's ministry, and two of them at least had been his disciples (1:35), and had doubtless imbibed many of his rigid and ascetic principles. Our Lord by his attendance upon this marriage-feast, and the miracle which he wrought, showed that his dispensation was in this respect different from that of John, and thus corrected any tendency to asceticism, which might have arisen from a desire to imitate the stern and self-denying habits of the Baptist. See N. on Matt. 11:18, 19. *Draw out.* This word is used primarily of bailing out the hold of a ship. Hence it has here the implied signification *draw out freely*, and is expressive of the large quantity of wine which they now had on hand, in contrast with the stinted measure with which the wine, as it gradually decreased, had probably been passed around to the guests, evincing the fear that it would not hold out to the end of the feast. *Governor of the feast*, i. e. the one who arranged the guests, saw that the wants and wishes of all were gratified, and in a word, exercised a general superintendence over all things pertaining to the feast. Such a person is referred to in numberless instances by the Greek and Roman writers. From the fact that the governor of the feast here tasted of the wine, it is probable that he himself was a guest, being some relative or intimate friend of the family.

9. *Had tasted.* The construction in the original refers this to a good hearty draught, and not to the mere sipping or tasting, which would have been followed by a different case. The wine was of that rich and mellow flavor which needed not

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.

a close and critical exercise of the power of taste to discern its excellence, but which was apparent even when taken in large draughts, and with no particular reference to the trial of its virtues. This construction of the original incidentally furnishes, therefore, additional proof of the superior excellence of the wine thus miraculously provided for the feast. *Knew not whence it was.* This made his testimony to the superior quality of the wine the more valuable, for it proved that there was no collusion between him and Jesus. It also shows that it was not the province of the ruler of the feast to provide for the entertainment, but only to regulate and superintend the ordering of the feast. It would seem here that the ruler had not been made aware of the deficiency of the wine, much less of the wondrous miracle which had been performed by Jesus. *Which drew the water*; more literally, *who had drawn the water*, which had been made wine. Some very erroneously refer this drawing of the water, to the act of bearing it from the jars to the governor of the feast. These expositors would make the creative change from water to wine, to have taken place after it had been drawn from the vessels, and while it was being borne to the governor of the feast. But this not only detracts from the grandeur of the miracle, but is opposed to all the circumstances of the transaction. What was the necessity of filling to the brim these huge water-pots, if what was drawn from them was water and changed to wine on its way to the master of the feast? How useless the recorded number of these stone jars and their capacity, if the water with which they were filled was not wholly converted to wine, but only such portions as were drawn out to be served up to the guests? How inconclusive would be the miracle, if thus made dependent upon the evidence that the change was wrought in the

water, while borne along in the vessels with which the servants distributed it to the guests, and which in such a case might have been attributed to some collusion between the servants and Jesus or his mother, by which they substituted, on the way to the governor of the feast, wine for the water which they had drawn from the stone jars—I say, how inconclusive would this miracle have thus been, when compared with the miraculous change taking place in the jars, which had been in the sight of all the servants filled with water, and now stood exposed to the most scrutinizing examination of all the guests, full of good wine, evincing its quality by its delicious flavor and rich and sparkling color. We may dismiss all fear or apprehension, as to the unfavorable inferences which infidelity may sneeringly draw from so large a quantity of water changed into wine. The miracle requires no apology for its performance. Its grand proportions should not be thrown into dim outline, through fear of any assault which may be made upon its moral tendency by the enemies of truth. The wine so miraculously produced was not tasteless, insipid, weak, but of such life and flavor, that the governor of the feast spontaneously called the bridegroom, and with an expression of astonishment at the departure from the usual custom in bringing forward the best wine at the beginning of the feast (see v. 10), attested to its superior excellence. There was not so small an amount of water thus converted into wine, that room was left to cavil and doubt whether, after all, such a miracle had been performed; but the large water jars, filled to the brim with wine, diffusing flavor all over the house, and exposed to the sight and taste of every guest, bore the most complete and irrefragable testimony that the miracle had actually been performed. *Called the bridegroom.* This indicates how

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee,^g and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his moth-

^g Ch. 1:14.
^h Mt. 12:46.

great was his surprise that wine of such fine flavor had been reserved to the close of the feast. This serves to heighten and confirm the greatness of the miracle.

10. *Every man who gives a feast.* General usage or custom is here referred to. *At the beginning of the feast.* Doth set forth for the use of his guests. *Have well drunk*; literally, *have become drunk*, but here from the very nature of the case, *have freely drunk*. The same verb is used by the LXX. in Gen. 43:34, rendered very properly by our translators, *were merry*. So in Cant. 5:1, the same verb is used, which in our English version is *drink abundantly*. What the governor here says, is not to be referred to the guests who were then present, but to a general fact. The sense of taste as one approaches the state of drunkenness becomes blunted, and fails to discriminate accurately between good and bad wine. 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." The word *worse*, literally signifies *less*, and then *minor*, *inferior*, *worse*.

11. *This beginning of miracles*; literally, *this the beginning* (i. e. the first) *of his miracles*. This cuts off all those apocryphal miracles, which in some of the spurious gospels, he was said to have wrought, even in his infancy. *Miracles*; literally, *signs*, referring to the tokens or proofs, which miracles furnished of the divine mission of Jesus. The word is commonly used by John in this sense. See N. on Matt. 12:38. *And manifested forth* (i. e.

er, and ^h his brethren, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days.

13 ⁱ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

ⁱ Ex. 12:14; De. 16:1, 16; ver. 23; ch. 5:1; & 6:4; & 11:55.

made an open display of) *his glory* by the performance of this great miracle. The *glory* here referred to, is that spoken of in 1:14. Such a miracle as the one here recorded, evinced superhuman power, and substantiated his claim as being the only begotten of the Father. *Believed on him*, i. e. their faith in his Messiahship was confirmed by this miracle.

12. *Went down*. Capernaum was situated on the lake shore, while Cana was higher up in the country. *His brethren*. See N. on Matt. 13:55. They had been invited also to the marriage-feast. The family ties were not yet so fully sundered, as when Jesus advanced still further in his public ministry. See Matt. 12:48, 49; Mark 3:33, 34; Luke 8:21. *His disciples*. They followed him to Capernaum, although, as has been stated (N. on Matt. 4:18), they did not wholly give up their secular avocations, until some time afterward. *Not many days*, i. e. a very short space of time. "This is less a mere chronological design, than one to show that he lost no time after his first miracle, in publicly manifesting Himself as the Son of God." Alford.

15—35. JESUS ATTENDING THE PASSOVER DRIVES THE TRADERS FROM THE TEMPLE. Jerusalem.

13. *The Jews' passover*. Such expressions show that John was writing his gospel for those who lived at a distance from Palestine, and were comparatively ignorant of Jewish customs and observances. John speaks of three Passovers as occurring during our Lord's ministry, one here; another in 6:4; and a third in 11:55. The feast mentioned in 5:1, was probably also the passover. *Was at hand*. This is the reason, doubtless, why he staid

14 ^k 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

^k Mt. 21 : 12 ; Ma. 11 : 15 ; Lu. 19 : 45.

not many days at Capernaum (v. 12). Went up, &c. See N. on Matt. 20 : 17.

14. *Found in the temple* (i. e. in the outward court of the Gentiles. See N. on Matt. 21 : 12) *those that sold oxen, &c.* This purification of the temple was repeated during the passion week (see Matt. 21 : 12, 13). *Oxen* is here used for any animals of the beeve kind. These with the sheep and doves, were sold to the worshippers, who coming from a distance were obliged to purchase the animals to be offered in sacrifice. It will readily be imagined what noise and confusion, would attend this sale of animals, not to speak of the chafings and disputes resulting from the fierce competition, which of necessity must have characterized this sacrilegious traffic. The number of animals offered in sacrifice was immense. Josephus says that Cestius, who was desirous of informing Nero of the strength of the city, devised a plan with the chief priests to take the number of the whole multitude. This was done by ascertaining the number of lambs slain in sacrifice, which was found to be 256,500, and allowing the average number of ten persons for the company which partook of one paschal lamb, it would make the number gathered together at Jerusalem on that occasion, to have been two and a half millions (see Jewish Wars, VI. 9 § 3). If to these lambs, the sheep, oxen, doves, &c. be added, it will be seen what a mass of animals were here collected, and what a profanation it must have been to the order, stillness, and decorum, which should have characterized the temple worship. Such a traffic must have been subject to great abuses, and rendered the precincts of

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 ^l my Father's house a house of merchandise.

^l Lu. 2 : 49.

the temple, a great mart of merchandise. *Changers of money.* See N. on Matt. 21 : 12 (end). *Sitting* refers to the money-changers, who sat by their tables, to exchange foreign coin into Jewish. It refers also to those who sold animals, in the slightly varied sense of *having taken their stand* in the temple.

15. *A scourge of small cords, or of rush cords.* These rushes from which Jesus twisted his whip, were used both for litters and for tying up the cattle. It is quite unlikely that our Lord used this whip, except as a symbol of his authority, since if the traders had been disposed to make resistance, a small whip in the hand of a single person, would not have availed to drive them out. But conscious of the unlawfulness of their traffic within the precincts of the temple, and awed by his dignified manner, they made no resistance to his authority, but suffered their business to be wholly broken up. Traders and animals were all driven out together ; the money which lay in heaps of small coin to be exchanged for the larger foreign coins, in order to pay the half shekel temple-tax (see N. on Matt. 21 : 12), was scattered upon the ground, and the tables overturned. Our Lord by this cleansing of the temple avowed his Messiahship, and fulfilled the prophecy in Mal. 3 : 1-3.

16. *These things* refers grammatically to the doves. Stier says that by design, he here softens his utterance, and passes, after sparing the doves (in which He sees not mere sacrifices, as in the sheep and oxen, but also the symbol of the Holy Ghost), to that word which illustrates and explains the deed, *make not my Father's house a*

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, ^m The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, ⁿ What sign

^m Ps. 69:9.

ⁿ Mat. 12:28; ch. 6:30.

place of merchandise. The tense of *make* requires the rendering *be not making, continue not to make*, the reference being had to an action commenced and still going on. *My Father's* in the high sense referred to in 1:14, 18. Alford points out the coincidence between this and Luke 2:49. There can be no doubt but that our Lord, in using this form of expression, intended in the very outset of his ministry to appropriate to himself a relationship with God, which could be assumed by no mortal man or created being.

17. *His disciples.* See N. on v. 2. Remembered not in subsequent time, but on that very occasion. His conduct and language brought forcibly to their mind, the inspired words of Ps. 69:9. *Zeal of thy house*, i. e. zeal for the honor of God's house. *Hath eaten me up.* The reference in the original is unquestionably to the grief, with which the Messiah was prophetically declared to be consumed, through his zeal for the honor of the house of God. Thus it harmonizes with the parallel sentiment in the next clause, "and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." But here it refers not so much to grief, as to a holy indignation, which our Lord felt at the profanation of the temple. The general sentiment is, that the zeal of the Lord had taken such entire possession of the Saviour, that his indignation so burned as almost to consume him. By a somewhat similar metaphor, we say of a man, who is very much devoted to any object or pursuit, that *he is eaten up with it*. Some expositors find this meaning, that his zeal had well nigh consumed him, because in cleansing the temple, he had exposed himself to great personal peril. But this is less apposite and natural.

shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, ^o Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

^o Mat. 26:61; & 27:40; Ma. 14:58; & 15:29.

There was not even a show of resistance on the part of these men, and if there had been, so potent were our Lord's presence and reproving words, that it immediately ceased, and the disciples thought only of the fervid zeal, with which he expelled these polluters of the sacred house of God.

18. The Jews in amazement at this assumption of authority on the part of Jesus, an obscure Galilean, and the submissive obedience of these rough and irreligious men, whom single handed he had driven forth from the precincts of the temple, demanded his credentials for the office of public reformer which he had thus taken upon himself. Their demand for a miraculous attestation to his authority, may also have been attributable in part, to the remarkable words *my Father's house*, which they very properly regarded as a virtual claim to the Messiahship. A similar demand was made by them upon him in Matt. 21:23. *What sign* (see N. on v. 11), in proof of your commission to act thus as a public reformer. The Jews—by which term John refers to the priests and rulers—did not justify the profanation of the temple by these traders, nor find fault with the act of expulsion by which the sacred place had been relieved of their desecrating presence; but were piqued that he should assume an authority, which, as the constituted guardians of the temple, belonged rightfully to them. They do not therefore blame him for what he had done, but as their question implies, for assuming functions that were not his. *Seeing that* (or *in that, forasmuch as*) *thou doest these things*, as though divinely commissioned.

19. The time was not come for an open declaration of our Lord's mission and character. His reply was there-

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in

fore couched in mysterious terms, which were afterwards sought to be used to his disadvantage, when examined in the palace of the high priest. The incident is here recorded by John, which was only referred to by Matthew and Mark, in their account of his trial and condemnation. It is thus that a comparison of the gospels enables the reader to obtain a complete and circumstantial view of the whole life of Jesus, so far at least as all the essential facts of his ministry are concerned. *Destroy this temple, &c.* The construction may be resolved thus: *if ye destroy this temple, in three days I will raise it up.* The imperative has here its usual hortatory sense, and is a much stronger expression of confidence in the result, than though the conditional form *if ye destroy, &c.* had been adopted. Our Lord has been charged by the enemies of truth, as here prevaricating or using equivocation. But it is evident that the disciples understood him as referring to his own body; for when he was risen they called to mind what he had said. It is also evident that the Jews understood him rightly; for when he was arraigned, the witnesses, who swore that he said he would destroy the temple and within three days build it again, were called false witnesses (Matt. 26 : 60; Mark 14 : 57), and were most unquestionably suborned. They were guilty of double perjury in misstating his language, and also in referring his words to the literal temple, which perversion from the truth they endeavored to make still stronger by adding "that is made with hands," words which he never uttered (see Mark 14 : 58). His words were dark and obscure, not by any means as to what they referred, whether to himself or the temple in which he stood, but from the fact of their reference to his own death and resurrection, which even when plainly foretold, his disciples were slow to understand (Mark 9 : 32; Luke 9 : 45); but the Jews wilfully misunderstood him, or their excess of

building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

rage might have prevented them from properly understanding what he said. We may infer that Jesus used some gesture, or in some other way gave intimation that he alluded to his own body. Alford approves of Stier's remark, that our Lord in this saying comprehended in the reality His own Body, its type and symbol, the temple, then being before them. This is true, but Stier seems to be at variance with himself in saying, "that it is equally certain, on the other hand, that the Lord must have spoken of that temple, of that desecrated house of his Father, about which the question then was." Our Lord's language was undoubtedly borrowed from the theme of thought and conversation, the temple, but did not in any sense whatever refer to the demolition and rebuilding of that sacred edifice. His words had primary and sole reference to his own body. His life was henceforth to be in constant jeopardy, and his remark seems to have been based on the murderous designs, which were already forming against him by the Jewish rulers.

20. *Forty and six years, &c.* There is some difficulty in reaching the exact number of years, in which the temple is here said to have been in building. Josephus (Antiq. XV. 11 § 1) says that it was begun in the eighteenth year of Herod's reign; but in his Jewish Wars (I. 21 § 1) he dates its commencement in the fifteenth year of his reign. In the former case, he dates Herod's reign from the death of Antigonus; in the latter, from his appointment as king by the Romans. Making this latter date the basis of calculation, we have twenty years to the birth of Christ; to which add thirty years, the age of our Lord, and we have fifty years. From this take four years, as our era is four years too late, and it leaves a period of exactly forty-six years. This is Alford's mode of explanation, and is more satisfactory than that of Webster and Wilkinson, who compute from the eigh-

21 But he spake ^r of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, ^r his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the

p Col. 2:9; He. 8:2; So 1 Co. 3:16; & 6:19;
2 Co. 6:16.

teenth year of Herod's reign, and leave out of the calculation the difference of four years above referred to. *Wilt thou rear it up?* i. e. build it, a sense which the verb here takes from its correspondence to *was building*, in the preceding clause.

21. *But he spake of the temple of his body.* The words *of his body*, are in explanatory apposition with *temple*, showing that he referred to his own body, under the figurative expression of the temple. In a certain sense, his body, as that in which was enshrined, not only his human, but also his divine nature, was a temple far more glorious, than that which stood on Mount Moriah in its most palmy days of splendor. In a similar but far inferior sense, our bodies are also declared to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. See 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16.

22. Our Lord's resurrection brought this observation to mind, and the disciples then understood its full import. Thus it was doubtless with many other incidents of his history, and remarks which fell from his lips. They were obscure at the time, but when pondered upon, in the light which was shed upon his life by the effusion of the promised Spirit, became clear and striking. *The Scripture.* This word as used in the New Testament, refers to the Old Testament writings. As our Lord's resurrection from the dead is made the subject of no distinct prophecy of the Old Testament, reference must be had to the tenor of prophecy, which, under the teachings of the Holy Ghost, the apostles were enabled to rightly interpret, and apply to the great fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Such passages as Ps. 16:10;

Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

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.

q Lu. 24:8.

Ios. 6:2, may serve as an illustration of this point. See N. on 20:9. *And the word, &c.* This refers not only to what was said in v. 19 (see N. on Matt. 27:40), but to all the predictions of our Lord in regard to his resurrection.

23. "This verse should begin a new chapter, being introductory to the account of Nicodemus." Webster and Wilkinson. But vs. 23-25 are manifestly as independent of the following, as of the preceding context. They are, in a measure, parenthetical, being designed to show that, while many believed in Jesus because of his miracles, their faith was not so well grounded as to warrant his fully confiding in them, knowing as he did the hearts of all men. *At the passover in the feast day* is equivalent to the *feast of the passover*, in contradistinction to the general season of the feast. In such a connection the word *passover*, is the more general, and *feast*, the more special designation of time. So Webster and Wilkinson refer it to the actual feast days; "during the continuance of the feast." *Many believed, &c.* That true believers are not here referred to, appears clearly from the next verse. Reference is had rather to the general impression favorable to our Lord's Messiahship, produced upon the people by the miracles which he wrought. They were compelled, in view of the overwhelming testimony furnished by his wonderful works, to acknowledge the truth of his claims, but did not yield their hearts in obedience and love. *When they saw, &c.* It would seem from this that many miracles, not recorded by the Evangelists, were performed by Jesus at the time of this

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 ^r he knew what was in man.

passover. See 4: 45; 6: 2. Our Lord, in his discourses with the Jews at Jerusalem, often appealed to his works as furnishing testimony of his Messiahship (see 5: 20, 36; 7: 31; 10: 25, 38). We have only two recorded miracles of our Lord at Jerusalem, the one wrought upon the diseased man who lay at the pool of Bethesda (5: 5-9); and the other upon the man who was born blind (9: 1-7). But from this passage, and inferentially from the others above cited, we see that our Lord wrought many miracles in the metropolis of the nation, which are passed over in silence by the Evangelists. A reason for this may have been to avoid the appearance of magnifying his miracles performed at Jerusalem, as though any additional importance was given them by having been wrought there. The two miracles above referred to, seem to have been recorded principally, if not solely, on the ground that they were the occasion of two great discourses of our Lord. In this, as in all our Lord's ministry, we see a verification of the fact, that his mission was to the poor and humble, rather than to the rich and haughty; and that the Spirit of inspiration took more delight, so to speak, in bringing to the notice of men, his miracles wrought in the towns of Galilee than in the metropolis of the Jewish nation.

24, 25. *Did not commit himself*, i. e. did not trust his person to them, nor confide in them as his true followers. The pronoun in the original, imparts an antithetic sense: *but Jesus for his part did not trust himself to them*. The reason is given in the next clause, *because he knew all men*, i. e. knew their secret purpose, and the prevailing disposition of their heart. This is a strong proof-text of our Lord's divinity. *Omniscience* is here ascribed to him in the plainest

CHAPTER III.

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

^r 1 Sa. 16: 7; 1 Co. 28: 9; Mt. 9: 4; Ma. 2: 8; ch. 6: 64; & 16: 30; Ac. 1: 24; Re. 2: 23.

and directest terms. This attribute is often adduced in the Old Testament, in proof that Jehovah alone is God. See Isa. 40: 14; Ps. 139: 1-12. *And needed not*, &c. This and the following clause are added to confirm and illustrate the assertion of our Lord's omniscience; and the whole passage is corroborative of the declaration made in 1: 1, that the *Word was God*. The repetition is not unlike that in 1: 20. The use of the singular, *man* and *in man*, is more emphatic than the plural form, it being generic, and therefore including all mankind. This generic sense is strongly marked in the original, by the accompanying article. The words *what was in man*, show in what sense the assertion *he knew all*, in the first clause, is to be taken. Reference is had to absolute knowledge of what lies in the heart of man, and is concealed from the human eye. It should be noted that our Lord is referred to, as having that knowledge in himself, and not receiving it from the Father. This idea is fully developed in the second clause, *and needed not that any* (i. e. any being created or divine) *should testify of man*, i. e. communicate to him what was passing in the mind of man. Language could not be selected to declare more distinctly and emphatically his divine and universal knowledge. The gospel of John abounds in proofs and illustrations of this great and cardinal doctrine of our Lord's omniscience.

CHAPTER III.

1-21. OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE WITH NICODEMUS. *Jerusalem*. Perhaps there is to be found in the New Testament no passage of more fundamental importance and interest to us as moral and accountable beings, than this discourse of our Lord with Nicodemus. The spiritual nature of Christianity, and the

necessity of regeneration, as a prerequisite to its privileges and rewards, are brought out with a directness and force, that no ingenuity of argument or sophistry has been able in the slightest degree to weaken or evade. Our Lord shows himself on this occasion to be the great Moral Teacher, sent into the world to enlighten it, and reveal the ways of God to men. The disclosures here made to Nicodemus were infinitely above the devices of human wisdom, and yet were expressed in such clear and simple terms, that the most untutored intellect finds no difficulty in grasping the great idea of the new birth, and applying it to his fallen and helpless condition by nature. The declaration, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," with its brief and emphatic repetition, "ye must be born again," has been received in all its depth and power by thousands and thousands, to whom many other passages of God's word are comparatively dark and obscure, from the dimness of their intellectual vision. This great central doctrine of the new birth has been to them a living reality, the power of which they have felt in their own experience, and on the basis of which they have reposed in all confidence, their hope of a blissful immortality beyond the grave.

1. *There was a man*, &c. The original is so connected with the preceding context by a continuative particle, which does not appear in the English translation, that there can be but little doubt that Nicodemus belonged to the class of persons referred to in 2:23. That he was however a person of such prompt, decided, reflective habits, that he could not long occupy a neutral ground between a full and saving belief in Christ, and open unbelief, this visit of inquiry to our Lord furnishes ample testimony. *A man of the Pharisees*, i. e. who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. *Nicodemus* is composed of two Greek words signifying *the victory of the people*. "Greek names had become common among the Jews, in consequence of the subjugation of Syria and Egypt to Greek authority under the successors

of Alexander." Webster and Wilkinson. Nicodemus is referred to again in 7:50; 19:39. It appears from a comparison of these passages with the one before us, that he was a member of the Sanhedrim, and became a sincere although timid disciple of Christ. He came, however, to Jesus at this time, not as a professed disciple, but an inquirer after truth. His discipleship was doubtless the result of the plain and faithful instructions, which he received at this time from the lips of Jesus. If he is the same person referred to by this name in the Rabbinical writings, he was a man in high repute for his learning, wealth, liberality, and strict conformity to the Jewish law. As it regards his motive in coming to Jesus, he had probably seen his miracles, and become well-nigh convinced of the correctness of his claims to the Messiahship. But when he took into consideration the humble origin and rank of Jesus, and the obscure and disreputable town in Galilee in which he had been brought up, his mind was troubled and perplexed in regard to the subject. He determined to have all doubt removed by a personal interview, and with that intent he came to Jesus by night, in order that his character might not be compromised in the estimation of the Jews.

If we keep this character of Nicodemus in view, and the purpose for which he sought an interview with our Lord, it will greatly help us to understand the drift of the conversation which took place. On the one hand was a rich, learned, influential member of the highest court in the Jewish nation, fluctuating between apparently conflicting evidence in regard to the character of the man whom he came to visit, and whose wonderful works seemed to fully point him out as the Hope of Israel, the long expected Messiah, but whose lowness of birth and social position seemed to interpose an insuperable objection to his claims. He had come to Jesus in the shades of night, resolved on plying him with questions, until he should come to a satisfactory conclusion in regard to his

2^a The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher

a Ch. 7:50; & 19:39.

true character. On the other hand was One who knew all that was in the heart of Nicodemus (see 2:25), his hopes, his doubts, his imperfect views of the true nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and the points on which he needed special instruction. This will account for the apparent abruptness of our Lord's reply to the complimentary salutation of his visitor. He laid down a great truth, which, if properly received and carried out to its legitimate consequences, would prove, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the moral renovation spoken of, which, from the very nature of the imagery made use of, was beyond the reach of man to effect for himself, demanded not a temporal but a spiritual Deliverer, an Almighty Redeemer, just such a one as in the process of the argument (vs. 14-18), God is declared to have sent into the world, in the person of his only-begotten Son. If we keep in view this object of Nicodemus in visiting Jesus, and the great point which our Lord designed to bring out in his reply, the particular parts of the conversation will be easy of interpretation.

2. *By night*, in order to avoid public observation. Some think that he chose the night time, in order to secure a more uninterrupted interview with Jesus than could have been enjoyed during the hour of day. But the prominent reference made to this feature of his visit to Jesus in 7:50 (on which see Note), seems clearly to refer to his fear of compromising himself in the estimation of the Jews, as he would have done, by openly approaching Jesus to inquire into his true character and mission. *Rabbi, we know*, &c. This address must not be regarded as simply complimentary; much less that it was only a pretended respect of Nicodemus for the character of Jesus as a teacher of religion. The solemn and important nature of his errand forbade

come from God: for ^b no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except ^c God be with him.

b Ch. 9:16, 33; *Ac.* 2:22. *c* *Ac.* 10:38.

all empty compliments; nor would he have come to Jesus to receive instruction or have his doubts solved, unless he had entertained all the respect for his character which these words indicate. As to the question how John the Evangelist became acquainted with this conversation, so as to narrate it, for any thing we know to the contrary, he may have been present on this occasion; or our Lord may have related to him the circumstances of this interview. When men are proved to have written under a full and promised measure of divine inspiration, it were worse than useless to suffer the mind to become perplexed, as to the particular means by which they became acquainted with any given event. We are assured that the thing took place as here narrated, and that is all with which we are especially concerned.

We know. I cannot agree with Alford that Nicodemus uses the plural as "expressive of the true conviction respecting Jesus, of that class to which he belonged (*viz.* the rulers);" and that evidence is thus furnished that they crucified Jesus, knowing that he was what he professed to be (see N. on Luke 23:34). The more natural solution is that Nicodemus wished to shelter his own personal convictions under the more general form of the plural, but not for the reason which Stier gives, that he might be able to draw back again, if necessary, but rather from a modest withholding of his own individual sentiments. He would not presume to come on his own personal responsibility, but rather in the name of others who, like himself, were inquirers after truth. In estimating the purpose of Nicodemus in this visit to have been honest and ingenuous, we do not lose sight of the fact, that he became a real and devoted disciple of Jesus, and manifested his courage and devotion to his master, at a time when

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto

d Ch. 1:13; Ga. 6:15; Tit. 3:5; Ja. 1:18; 1 Pe. 1:23; 1 Jo. 3:9.

it required no ordinary courage to avow an attachment to him, or to bestow even upon his dead body the customary funeral rites (see 19:39). *A teacher come from God*, i. e. a divinely commissioned teacher. This might be true of Jesus, and yet he might not be the Messiah. It was to remove this doubt, as to whether he was any thing more than a divinely appointed teacher, that Nicodemus came to Jesus. *For no man*, &c. He reasoned correctly that the miracles wrought by Jesus attested his divine commission. Our Lord himself often referred to his works, in proof of his being sent from God. See 10:25, 37, 38; 14:11; 15:24. *Except God be with him*. Nicodemus had not attained to the simple and sublime faith of Nathanael (1:49), yet he admitted the evidence furnished by our Lord's works, that he was an extraordinary person upon whom rested the divine favor.

3. The reply of Jesus, as has been remarked (N. on v. 1), although apparently abrupt and disconnected, contains the direct answer to what was probably the sole object of Nicodemus in visiting him—the solving of his doubts in regard to our Lord's Messiahship. The radical moral change, here styled a new birth, declared to be necessary to a participation in the Messianic kingdom, showed the spirituality of that kingdom, and disabused the mind of Nicodemus of his false notions in regard to the Messiah. The sentiment is not unlike the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount, where the blessings of Christ's kingdom are promised to those only who are spiritually poor, meek, humble, thirsting after righteousness. This at once destroyed all hope or expectation of temporal power and aggrandizement from the advent of the Messiah, and disclosed to Nicodemus his true character as a spiritual deliverer, whose mission it was to effect an entire

thee, ^d Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

change of heart and life, and thus restore men to the favor of God, which they had forfeited by sin. If the mind of the Jewish ruler became fully impressed with the true nature and object of Christ's mission, it would matter little whether Jesus were a native of Galilee or Jerusalem, whether his social position were low or exalted, provided he possessed those marks of the Messiahship, which this spiritual insight into his true character enabled one to discern. *Verily, verily*. This repetition, designed to give emphasis to the truth about to be spoken, is often found in John, but not in the other Evangelists. *Unto thee*. Nicodemus had employed the plural *we know*: but our Lord directs his reply especially to him, thus individualizing him, and bringing him into personal contact with the truth about to be communicated to him.

Except a man be born again. The word rendered *again*, literally signifies *from above*, and commentators from the early ages of the church down to the present time, have been divided as to which of these meanings it should here take. The word is employed in another connection in v. 31, where its manifest sense is *from above*, and I can see no valid reason against affixing to it that sense in the present passage. *From above* signifies *from God*, and is synonymous with *born of the Spirit* in vs. 5, 8. It is opposed to the carnal birth referred to in v. 6, by the words *born of the flesh*. Hence this new heavenly birth is spoken of by Nicodemus (v. 4), as a second birth, which doubtless suggested to interpreters the translation *again*, found in our English version. Against the translation *from above*, it is urged that Nicodemus would hardly have used the language he did in v. 4, had the more obvious and natural signification been other than a new or second birth of a physical nature. But may we not sup-

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?

pose that he purposely understood it in the sense of a physical birth, in order to press upon Jesus the absurdity of such a requirement, as a prerequisite for entering the kingdom of heaven? May not this have been the purport of the reply, 'Can a man be born from above when he is old and his habits are all confirmed? It is as incredible as that a man can enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born.' We have hardly a doubt that Nicodemus rightly understood Jesus, as speaking of a radical moral change, and that his reply in v. 4, did not proceed from a misapprehension of our Lord's words, so much as from a disposition to quibble and parry off the force of the truth, which had reached his conscience, and shown his present unfitness to participate in the blessings of the Messiah's reign. To suppose him to have seriously imagined that our Lord referred to a second natural birth, would be to attribute to him a want of understanding or a dulness of comprehension, wholly unsuited to his character and station. As it regards the expressions *new birth*, *regeneration*, and *being born again*, they are the legitimate outgrowth of this passage. Whether we translate the phrase *born again*, or *born from above*, it denotes a new and second birth, as truly the commencement of a new moral life, as the natural birth of man is the beginning of his physical existence.

4. The explanation of this verse has been anticipated in v. 3. Suffice it to say, that the reply of Nicodemus must not be taken, as some think, in a moral but a physical sense. He purposely seized upon the physical impossibility of a second natural birth, to press our Lord with an insuperable difficulty, and thus to soften the terms of his proposition, that a man must be born *from above*—which is virtually the same as the *being born again*,—in order to participate in the Messianic blessings, or cause him to withdraw it altogether.

This, as I have remarked, does not imply that Nicodemus really misunderstood our Lord's true spiritual meaning, but that he affected ignorance, and based his reply on a gross conception of a new physical birth. But at the same time that he did not misapprehend the general truth, which was here couched under the figurative language of a *new birth* or a *birth from above*, he was in great ignorance as to the nature of moral regeneration, and possessed of still greater unbelief of its necessity, especially in a person of such unimpeachable morals as himself. Dr. Jacobus remarks that the general idea of a new birth was already in use, as proselytes were spoken of as *new born*, when they came into the Jewish church by baptism. Nicodemus supposing that our Lord used the term in this sense, could not see how it should be made a prerequisite to a Jew for entering the Messiah's kingdom. It seemed to him just as absurd, as to think of a man when he is old, entering again into his mother's womb and being born. This furnishes a good explanation of the passage, and is not inconsistent with the exposition which I have given. Both interpretations make Nicodemus to understand our Lord's words, as referring to some great change which every man must undergo, so that in a sense, he shall become a *new man*, before he can attain to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. The only question is whether his reply is one, in which he pretends to understand our Lord as referring to a new physical birth; or asserts that it were as reasonable for a man advanced in life to be subject to a second physical birth, as to expect that a Jew would require such a moral change, as our Lord hinted at. The latter view gives a good and appropriate sense, yet I cannot but think that the reply of Nicodemus is one, in which he purposely misunderstands our Lord's great meaning, and refers his words to an actual

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.

e Ma. 16:16; Ac. 2:88.

physical birth, in order to draw him out more fully, or show that he had affixed terms of admission to the Messianic kingdom, which seemed to border on what was unnecessary, if not absurd, when applied to the Jews, God's chosen, covenant people. *When he is old.* It is quite probable that Nicodemus was himself somewhat advanced in age at this time, which circumstance would give more point to his exclamation of astonishment.

5. Our Lord takes no notice of this quibbling objection of Nicodemus, but proceeds to restate his first proposition in such definite and unmistakeable language, that his visitor had no power to escape its force, but was compelled to exclaim in amazement and unconcealed ignorance of the great subject revealed to him: 'How can these things be (v. 9)?' *Verily, verily.* This verse being a reaffirmation of the truth contained in v. 3, is introduced by the same emphatic adverbs. *Of water and of the Spirit* is explanatory of the word *again*, in v. 3. Calvin takes the phrase *of water*, in an adjective sense with the words *of the Spirit*, making it significant of the purifying influence of the Spirit. But while this sense is both true and apposite, referred simply to the operations of the Spirit, yet when this passage is compared with Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16, where baptism with water is joined with the baptism of the Spirit; and also with Mark 16:16, where baptism is connected with faith in Christ as a prerequisite to salvation, I cannot think that Calvin's view is tenable. 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*, &c. It may be objected to this interpretation, that it seems to make baptism a saving or-

dinance. But not so. It is expressly affirmed that there must also be a baptism of the Spirit, or there can be no admission into the kingdom of God. The terms are in harmony with the great promise annexed to the proclamation of the gospel, "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), where it is clear that baptism is of no saving efficacy, unless accompanied by a living faith in Jesus Christ. Nor does this interpretation imply that one who is born of the Spirit, cannot be saved unless he is baptized. There are doubtless many instances, where a true believer has never received this rite, yet this does not invalidate the rule of Christ's house, that Christian baptism, the outward sign of induction to its privileges, is a duty of binding obligation, and intimately connected with salvation through Christ. The phrase *born of water*, as has been above remarked, was used of proselytes, who had been publicly inducted into the Jewish religion by the ceremony of baptism. Hence our Lord may have used the phrase in its more generic sense, of a public profession of religion, in reference to this private visit of Nicodemus; at the same time annexing the essential qualification *born of the Spirit*, to show that a public profession of religion is of no avail, unless the soul have been regenerated by the Spirit. Alford and Stier refer the phrase *born of water*, to John's baptism, which Nicodemus had probably slighted (Luke 7:30), not however limiting it to that baptism, but having a life and meaning for all ages of his church. But if the primary reference is not to Christian baptism but to John's baptism, we can hardly see how it can be applicable to all subsequent time. *Cannot enter* is varied from *cannot see*, in v. 3, being apparently suggested by the words *can he enter*, just uttered by Nicodemus. There is however a slight advance in the sentiment, inasmuch as

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

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

f Ec. 11:5; 1 Co. 2:11.

entering precedes seeing, and is therefore in this connection the stronger term. "There is no such thing as attaining to a knowledge of the kingdom of heaven from without, a theoretical acquaintance with the domain of the Spirit by chart without travelling in it; the *coming* indeed in a certain sense must precede the *seeing*." Stier.

6. The connection of this verse with the preceding context seems to be this: 'The first or natural birth introduces to sin and death. Every descendant of Adam is by nature "carnal and sold under sin (Rom. 7:16.)" There is no exception to this law that like begets like. In the same manner, those born of the Spirit have the moral likeness of the Spirit. They are spiritually minded, and this gives them life and peace.' Thus the necessity of the new birth announced by our Lord to Nicodemus, is shown by the laws of generation, by which a clean thing cannot be brought forth from an unclean (Job 14:4). Alford thus makes out the connection: 'If a second natural birth were possible, it would not accomplish the birth necessary to entrance into the kingdom of God.' But this would imply that Nicodemus really understood our Lord in v. 3, to speak of a natural birth, and that the present declaration is a rectification of that error; whereas, as has been remarked (N. on v. 4), the ruler purposely misunderstood him for the sake of eliciting more fully his meaning, or what is more likely, to parry off the force of the truth, so sententiously and pointedly addressed to him. It is better therefore to make v. 6 indicative of the absolute necessity of the new spiritual birth spoken of. Hence in the next verse, which is an inference from this, our Lord bids him to cease wondering at this doctrine of the new birth,

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.

founded as it is upon the necessary laws of our spiritual being. *That which.* The neuter is employed in the original, as Alford after Bengel asserts, because reference is had to the very first beginnings of life in the embryo, before sex can be predicated. But it is better to regard it as the neuter, denoting a truth of general application. *Of the flesh is flesh.* This refers to man's carnal, sinful nature, as opposed to the spiritual, which is declared to be essential to salvation. The natural or physical birth of man is followed invariably and universally, by a carnal course of conduct; but the new spiritual birth introduces to a new and spiritual life. Thus our Lord illustrates and confirms the necessity of a radical change of heart, in order to a participation in the spiritual blessings of the Messiah's reign. It is worthy of notice that the words of *water*, are here omitted, showing that the rite of baptism is not essential to the new birth here referred to.

7. The necessity of regeneration having been thus proved and illustrated, our Lord tells Nicodemus, not to marvel at a truth so clear and fundamental. The plural *ye*, refers to *men* as used collectively in v. 3. *Born again* or *born from above*. It is a second birth, but one heavenly in its origin and wholly spiritual.

8. This verse is connected with the preceding, both as a proof and illustration of what is there affirmed. Nicodemus was not to wonder at this great truth, because it was above his comprehension, for there were many things even in the natural world, of which he had no knowledge save of the facts themselves. This is illustrated by man's ignorance of the laws which regulate the wind, although one of the

9 Nicodemus answered and said

g Ch. 6:52, 60.

most palpable facts of which the senses are cognizant. Bengel following Origen and Augustine, interprets the word rendered *wind*, by *the Spirit*. But in that case, the comparison *so is every one that is born of the Spirit*, would be without meaning. It could hardly be said that as the operations of the Spirit were mysterious, so was every one born of the Spirit. Such a sense would involve the absurdity of virtually comparing a thing with itself. But if we adopt the translation of our version, and explain it as referring to the mysterious and unseen movement of the wind, we have a beautiful and pertinent illustration of the point in hand. Nicodemus was not to marvel at the truth announced to him, for in the natural world, he was surrounded by mysteries equally beyond his comprehension. The original word for spirit is literally, *a breathing, a breath*, and is used of air put in gentle motion, *a breath of air, a gentle breeze*. How pertinent the illustration thus drawn from a word having this two-fold sense, must be obvious to all. As the natural spirit (i. e. the wind), which breathes over the earth, is only seen and known from its effects, so the Eternal Spirit, which breathes a new moral life into the soul of man, can be seen and understood only from the wondrous effects thereby produced. *Where it listeth*, (i. e. pleaseth), so far as human agency is concerned. *Thou hearest the sound thereof*, i. e. thou art made sensible of its operations. *But canst not tell*, &c. Many philosophers have attempted to account for the phenomena of the winds, and lay down the laws which regulate their motion and direction, but all their efforts have proved abortive, so far as any practical or reliable results have been reached. Thus doubtless we shall ever remain in comparative ignorance of the laws which regulate the winds, their currents and cross-currents, and all their shifting and uncertain movements. Their effects are all that we

unto him, ^g How can these things be ?

see, and we are thus made certain of their presence and power. *So is every one that is born of the Spirit*. Thus also with the spiritual birth. We know not the manner in which it is effected, but of its reality we are as certain, by its effect on the life and conduct of a man, as we are of the movement of the wind. This change of heart is represented in the New Testament by three very striking illustrations. John calls it *a new birth*. Paul speaks of it as *a new creation* (2 Cor. 5:17); and again as *a resurrection or a quickening of the dead to life* (Eph. 2:1). These terms are all significant of a radical moral change, and although the manner in which it is accomplished, is concealed from mortal sight or consciousness, yet the effect is so marked and permanent, that one would as soon doubt his own existence, as the presence of this almighty and transforming agency. *So is every one*, &c. The similarity consists in the inexplicable nature of both the agencies here referred to. The clause, *every one that is born of the Spirit*, is to be taken in the sense of the mystery which accompanies the spiritual birth of the new-born soul. Stier most unaccountably supposes that our Lord first of all means Himself, "using a condescending expression, which ranks Him as originally and first born of the Spirit among those who are born again," and that "every one who believeth on Him and receiveth His Spirit, becomes like Him in his humanity, restored into that condition in which Jesus was from the beginning as the first-born among many brethren." But I cannot think that our Lord would for a moment interrupt this great discourse on the necessity and inexplicable character of the spiritual birth here spoken of, to even allude to his own wonderful introduction into the world, as the Son of Mary. The term *every one*, is besides too generic to bear the sense which Stier assigns it. The subject of discourse is man in a fallen,

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

^a Mat. 11:27; ch. 1:18; & 7:16; & 8:28; & 12:49; & 14:24.

lost condition, standing in infinite need of the transforming, renewing influences of God's Spirit, and when made the subject of this heavenly birth, as ignorant of the mode in which it was effected, as of the concealed power which sets in motion the air, and regulates its shifting and apparently fitful changes.

9. Nicodemus no longer manifests the quibbling, cavilling spirit implied in his previous words (v. 4), but now in unfeigned surprise, but yet, as we may gather from our Lord's reply in vs. 11-13, with some remaining unbelief, exclaims, *how can these things be?* How is it possible that there can be a change, so radical and mysterious as the one here denominated a new birth? The verb rendered *can be*, is more literally *can be accomplished, can happen or take place*. The words are not therefore expressive of doubt as to the reality of the fact declared by Jesus, but of amazement in view of its apparent impossibility of accomplishment.

10. Our Lord in reply first expresses his wonder, that Nicodemus being *a master in Israel*, should be ignorant of the things here spoken of. *A master*; literally, *the teacher*, which Winer refers to the pre-eminence of Nicodemus over the other rulers or members of the Sanhedrin, as though in him all erudition was concentrated. But the article denotes not so much his individual pre-eminence, as that of the class to which he belonged, the members of which were the acknowledged guides of the people in all that pertained to the law. Our Lord by thus referring to the official character of Nicodemus, gives a well directed blow to his pride, and places him at once in the position of a disciple sitting at the feet of his master to receive instruction. Stier remarks that Jesus

11 ^a Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

ⁱ Ver. 32.

terms Nicodemus *the teacher*, for the sake of contrast between himself and his own ignorance, "at the same time, however, including the universal contrast in which the order of which Nicodemus is the representative, stands with the Saviour." It is as though he had said: 'does the teacher now acknowledge his ignorance, and condescend to sit at the feet of one who is officially so much his inferior?' Perhaps the contrast is rather between Nicodemus *the teacher*, and the spiritual ignorance indicated by the following clause, *and knowest not these things*. Some find here a certain tinge of irony, but if so, it is in the very slightest degree. The nature of the subject forbids us to suppose, that our Lord would taunt his visitor with undue assumption in holding the office of public teacher, while professedly so ignorant of one of the most fundamental truths of religion. The question was intended rather to put him in the proper attitude of one, who, notwithstanding the high official rank which he occupied, was dependent, like all others, upon the Great Teacher, for light and guidance on those points which pertained to the kingdom of God, and the qualifications necessary to an entrance upon its privileges and blessings.

11. *Verily, verily*, repeated here the third time. The subject is one of such weighty and heavenly import, that these emphatic adverbs may well be repeated. Our Lord condescends to confirm the faith of Nicodemus, and to remove all lingering unbelief, by an emphatic and positive assertion, that he knew whereof he affirmed, having both known and seen what to human eyes and consciousness was not cognizable. The plural *we*, has needlessly furnished much trouble to commentators, some referring it to the Father and the Son;

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

others, to the Son and Spirit; and again others, to our Lord and John the Baptist. Alford takes it as a proverbial saying: 'I am one of those who speak what they know, &c.' Stier in accordance with his method of interpreting *so is every one that is born of the Spirit* (see N. on v. 8), refers the plural *we*, to those who are born of the Spirit, comprising believers in every age of the church, including of course the Lord Jesus himself, the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8: 29). But the most simple and natural interpretation is to refer it to our Lord and his disciples, some of whom were doubtless present at this time, and were listening to the conversation here related. Jesus and his disciples, in reference to the new dispensation, about to be inaugurated, are contrasted with Nicodemus, and the persons, whoever they might be, represented by the plural *we*, in v. 2. In v. 12, our Lord employs the first person singular, which shows that the plural of this verse is not, as Bloomfield thinks, the *plural of authority*; much less that reference is had to the united persons of the Trinity. But the reference of the plural to him conjointly with his disciples, makes the transition to the singular of the following verse natural and easy. The superhuman knowledge here referred to as shared with Jesus by his disciples, resided in him alone, and hence as the discourse progresses in the following verse, Jesus speaks in the first person. The words and *testify that we have seen*, are an emphatic repetition of the clause immediately preceding. *And* has the force of *yet*, the clause which it introduces being adversative. *Ye receive not*, &c. Nicodemus represented the unbelieving Jewish rulers, and is therefore included with them in this charge of unbelief. There can be no doubt, however, that every vestige of doubt as to our Lord's Messiahship, was removed from his mind by this visit.

12. The general connection of this

verse may be seen by a reference to v. 7, where Nicodemus was told not to wonder at the necessity of the new birth. But although he no longer openly rejected the great spiritual truth which had been disclosed to him, yet he was unable to comprehend its full import, and was possessed of much doubt in regard to what our Lord had so directly and unequivocally asserted. Such being his state of mind, in respect to a change of heart which was to take place on earth, and the effect of which was to be apparent to human observation, of how little avail would it be for our Lord to disclose those deeper mysteries, which pertained more directly to the unseen and heavenly world? The things connected with regeneration were *earthly things*, taking place in this world, and made the subject of revelation to man in his present state. But what are the *heavenly things* here spoken of? Obviously those things which belong more especially to the unseen and heavenly world, such as the Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation, the atonement, his office of Intercessor, justification by faith, and similar truths, for the full revelation of which, neither Nicodemus nor his own disciples were yet prepared. The sentiment may be paraphrased: 'I have told you of the necessity of a change of heart that you may have eternal life, and you do not believe; how can you be expected to believe, if I unfold to you the more heavenly and spiritual mysteries connected with human redemption?' The figure is based upon the obvious fact, that things upon the earth are more plain and comprehensible, than those which pertain to the upper or heavenly regions. In like manner, truths which are palpable to the external senses, as the change of habits and conduct in a man who has experienced the new birth, would be more readily understood and admitted, than those which lie exclusively in the domain of faith, and are not at all cog-

13 And ^k no man hath ascended

& Pr. 30:4; ch. 6:33, 38, 51, 62; & 16:28; Ac. 2:34; 1 Co. 15:47; Ep. 4:9, 10.

nizable to the external senses. So Webster and Wilkinson: "the things in the heavens of which the ark, altar, &c., in the temple were patterns." Heb. 9:23. The reference in a word, is to the higher truths of Christianity, revealed by the Son of God, as contrasted with the first rudiments of the divine life in man, such as the nature and necessity of regeneration, with which our Lord began his discourse to Nicodemus. *If I tell you*, i. e. when I tell you.

13. The knowledge of the *heavenly things* just referred to, can never be attained by the unaided powers of the human mind. Hence our Lord as the Revealer of these great truths, proves his heavenly descent, since no one of earthly origin can claim to know things which belong to another and higher sphere. The *and*, with which this verse commences, implies an ellipsis: *and* (you have no means of knowing these heavenly things, for) *no man* (literally *no one*) *hath ascended up into heaven*, to penetrate the divine plan and purpose in regard to human redemption, and bring down intelligence thereof to man. The tense of the verb in the original is the present perfect, the action being considered as embracing the whole past period of man's history, down to the time of the speaker; *no one has ascended or is now ascending*, as would be necessary, in order for one of the human race to be admitted to the councils of the Deity, so as to declare from personal knowledge the heavenly realities here referred to. Stier makes the action of the verb to run also into the future, and include especially the ascension of Jesus after his resurrection. It is true that the clauses so correspond, that what is denied of a mere human being, is asserted as true of Him who came down from heaven; yet the scope of the argument throws the main emphasis upon the fact, that Jesus

up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

had previously descended from heaven, which no earthly being could do without having first ascended, and that therefore the Son of man was the only Revealer of the things pertaining to the heavenly world. *But* (i. e. except) *he that came down from heaven*, and has full and perfect knowledge of the heavenly world. But who is He that has thus descended from heaven, and of whom it is affirmed that he also ascends to the place whence he came? The angels are said to ascend and descend, but manifestly no one of those celestial beings is here referred to. The next clause answers this question, *the Son of man*, Jesus of Nazareth, the very person who was then conversing with the Jewish ruler. With what appropriate modesty and yet explicitness, does our Lord thus assert his heavenly origin and pre-existent state. *Which is in heaven*, or more literally, *the one being in heaven*, i. e. whose dwelling place is in heaven, and who has intimate knowledge of all its mysteries. The Son of man as God was in heaven during the whole time of the incarnation, as this passage definitely asserts, and as we might infer from the very nature of his essential deity. Bengel very erroneously takes the original in the sense of, *who was in heaven*. The participial construction is what grammarians call the general or universal present, and refers to heaven as our Lord's fixed and permanent abode. *Was in heaven*, would also be a tame repetition of the idea contained in *descended from heaven*, whereas *is in heaven*, in reference to the incarnate Son of God, expresses most emphatically his omnipresence, and thus proves his supreme divinity. See N. on 1:18.

14. The connection between this and the preceding verse is not very apparent. Stier remarks that "hitherto the transition had been from the person of the man needing regeneration and coming to Jesus, to the matter of re-

14¹ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so ^m must the Son of man be lifted up:

7 Nu. 21:9.

generation itself; and this again leads back the discourse to the person of the Son of man, through whom regeneration comes to us: that now the discourse begins to deal with the central mystery of the kingdom of God, the being who between heaven and earth, earthly-heavenly, mediates between both, that is, with *redemption through the death of Christ*." This is true, but yet leaves the connection of thought unexplained, and I am inclined therefore to adopt Bloomfield's suggestion, that the lifting up of the Son of man is adduced as an example of the *heavenly things*, which the Lord Jesus Christ came to reveal. It was a mystery which the Jews of that day did not understand, and which they as a nation have to the present time refused to receive. Hence it was an example directly in point, to illustrate the truth contained in vs. 12, 13. This makes the connection with the preceding context obvious and natural. *And* with which this verse begins, is not a connective, but has the explicative sense of *to wit, namely*. With the following particle, it may be rendered *even as Moses lifted up*, &c. The point of the comparison lies not in the brazen serpent and Christ, but in the elevation of the former in sight of the people, and its healing influence on such as looked upon it, compared with the elevation of Christ on the cross, and the salvation from sin and death, which results from faith in a crucified Saviour. This appears evident from v. 15, which denotes the purpose for which the Son of man was lifted up. The brazen serpent was a type of Christ, only as it was lifted up for the healing of those who had been bitten by the fiery serpents (Numb. 21:9). But as the brazen serpent represented in its form and appearance, the fiery serpents whose sting was death, so Christ took upon himself the form of those whom

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but ⁿ have eternal life.

m Ch. 8:28; & 12:32.

n Ver. 36; ch. 6:47.

he came to redeem, and made himself a sin-offering, thus showing in his sufferings and death how dreadful was the sting of sin, the removal of which was effected at such an infinite expense. Many analogies may be discovered between the brazen serpent and Christ, yet the passage before us is to be restricted to the *lifting up* of both, the one, as a remedy for physical, the other, for spiritual death. The brazen serpent was a type of Christ's elevation on the cross, combining, as Webster and Wilkinson well remark, besides the mode of his sacrificial death, the benefits of it, and the condition on which they are obtained. *Must be lifted up*. The necessity existed in the eternal purpose of God, thus to effect the salvation of the world from sin and death. Alford remarks that the expression *must be lifted up*, looks also to something beyond the elevation of our Lord upon the cross, even to his elevation to kingly dignity. This reference, if it be allowed, must be secondary and subordinate to the main feature of the comparison, which is the elevation of Christ on the cross.

15. As none but those who looked upon the brazen serpent, experienced its sanitary influence, so faith in Christ is essential to salvation through his atoning blood. This sense corresponds to the clause, which is omitted in the former member of the comparison. Fully expressed it would be: *as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness* (that whosoever had been bitten might look and live), *even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever*, &c. The word *whosoever* in the original, is *every one*, salvation through the cross of Christ being declared to be accessible to all who believe on him. The saving result of faith is given in the twofold form, the negative, *should not perish*, and the positive, *should have eter-*

nal life. This is in accordance with the emphatic fulness with which John often expresses great truths. *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. Indeed we may affirm that the great and primary signification, which God attached to these words in his intercourse with man, was eternal happiness resulting from obedience to His holy law, and eternal misery as the penalty of disobedience. Adam was threatened with death upon the very day that he should eat of the forbidden fruit. But Adam did not die a natural death on the day of his fall. Death then in this instance, which we may presume to have been the first time of its presentation to the human mind, must have been used in the higher sense of the penalty of disobedience to God's law, *eternal death*, of which natural death was but a type and precursor. It is probable that Adam thus understood the penalty, and that the natural dissolution of soul and body, as being a part of the condemnation, was also called death. Of similar origin and usage was the word *life*. A tree of life was planted in the midst of the garden. After the fall, Adam was expelled from Eden, and the reason given was "lest he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever." Mere continuance of existence is not here referred to, for in that sense all men will live forever; but the expression undoubtedly means the favor of God, and the eternal happiness consequent thereon, of which this tree was an emblem or pledge. In respect therefore to the Scripture use of the words *life* and *death*, the primary meaning would seem to be eternal happiness and eternal misery, and the subordinate or derived signification, natural life and death. We do not therefore wrest these words from their primary signification, when we make them representative of the soul's

condition beyond the grave. *Should have* (even in the present state) *eternal life* abiding in them. So the brazen serpent, the emblem and pledge of physical life, imparted this life to the people, while they were yet in the midst of serpents, from the effect of whose deadly bite, they had frequent necessity of turning their eyes to the brazen pledge of safety. The comparison between the brazen serpent and Christ, is very forcible and pertinent.

16-21. It is strange that such able commentators as Olshausen, Tholuck, Neander, and De Wette should make the discourse with Nicodemus end with v. 15, and refer vs. 16-21 to the Evangelist's own words. The continuity of thought is so close and apparent, and so incomplete would be our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, were it to break off at v. 16, that we cannot for a moment believe that vs. 16-21 are not the words of Jesus himself. They are designed to expand and illustrate the great truth, which now fell for the first time upon the ear of the Jewish ruler, that the Messiah was to be a spiritual Deliverer, and not a temporal prince. He was to save from death and give eternal life, and it was for this very purpose that God had sent his Son into the world, that he might be manifested for the salvation of all who believe on him. It is no argument against this part of the chapter being the continuation of the discourse of Jesus, that Nicodemus henceforth has no apparent part in the conversation. There was no necessity of recording any further remarks or inquiries of his, if he made them, the previous references to what he said in vs. 2, 4, 9, being made for the sole purpose of bringing out the points of the conversation, and rendering it intelligible to the reader of the sacred narrative. The past tenses in which the discourse is now carried on, are employed to bring out more clearly and definitely the great fact, that the advent of God's Son was not fortuitous, or the result of a sudden and fitful impulse, but was in accordance with the eternal counsel and infinite love of the Father, by which he freely surrendered

16 ° For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten

o Ro. 5:8; 1 Jo. 4:9.

his Son to death. We are not, however, to suppose from this, that there was really a particular period in the ages of eternity, when the work of redemption was planned. The eternity of God is not measurable like man's existence, by successive periods of time. Forms of language however are made use of that would seem to imply this, for the simple purpose of bringing the subject down to our partial comprehension at least, and to impress us fully with the great fact, that such a redemptive arrangement between the persons of the adorable Trinity has actually taken place.

16. This wondrous verse, which so fully and sublimely discloses the gift of God's Son, as proceeding from the Father's eternal and infinite love, and the freedom and fulness of salvation for a dying world through faith in Jesus Christ, is called by Luther "the Bible in miniature." Indeed it would be difficult to find elsewhere, even in God's own book, words of such a comprehensive sweep, and so fully expressive of the moving cause of redemption through the atoning blood of God's own Son. *For*. This particle connects the verse with what precedes, and can be accounted for on no other ground, than that the passage is the continuation of the words of Jesus to Nicodemus. *So*, i. e. to such a degree. *Loved*. This was the love of benevolence and sympathy. *The world*. John uses this word in two senses, one as here to denote the whole race of man lying in wickedness, exposed to God's wrath, yet in their very helplessness and abject misery so loved of God that he sent his Son to die for them; the other, the unbelieving portion of mankind, as opposed to those, who have forsaken their sins and are justified through faith in a crucified Redeemer. In this latter sense, our Lord very frequently employed the expression in the last discourse which he had with his disciples,

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

as given in chaps. XIV.—XVII. *That he gave*, &c. This is the effect of God's love, and serves also to denote the manner in which it displayed itself. On the one hand, there was love; on the other, the greatest sacrifice of which a created intelligence could have any conception—the giving up of God's only begotten Son to shame, humiliation, suffering, and death. Great as was this sacrifice, the love for a dying world was still greater, so that God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. Rom. 8:32. There could be no higher manifestation of God's love to man than this. Hence the words *so loved*, have a peculiar emphasis, the adverb in the original being placed at the very commencement of the verse. The verb *gave*, is to be taken in the sense of giving up to humiliation, suffering, and death. Great emphasis is given to this word from the connection in which it stands. The expense of parental feeling with which the Father showed his great love for the world, is expressed in the simple word *gave*, *gave up*, or *resigned*, leaving the mind to supply the low condition to which the Son of God descended, and the sufferings he underwent for human redemption. The language is expressive of the most tender and intimate relation between the Father and Son; but this did not suffice to prevent on the one hand, the giving up of God's beloved Son, and on the other, the voluntary offer of the Son to leave the bosom of the Father to achieve the work of man's salvation. *Only begotten Son*. Another heightening circumstance, introduced to give emphasis to God's love in sending his Son into the world. We see where John got this term, which is found so often in his writings, and applied in so peculiar a sense to the Messiah. In respect to the Sonship of Christ, see N. on Matt. 28:19. *That whosoever*, &c. This is an emphatic repetition of v. 15, and identifies the lifting up of the Son of man

17^p For God sent not his Son

p Lu. 9:56; ch. 5:45; & 8:15; & 12:47; 1 Jo. 4:14.

with the giving of the only begotten Son of God, by the identity of the result in both cases, viz. eternal life through faith in Christ. The *lifting up*, and the *giving up*, both refer to one and the same scene of suffering and death; the prediction is of one and the same personage designated by the two-fold appellation, *Son of man*, and *only begotten Son of God*. The heavenly and the earthly, the divine and the human, are here joined in mysterious and indissoluble union, in the person of Jesus Christ, who took upon himself our nature, and yet was over all, God blessed for evermore. Rom. 9:5.

17. The Jews not only supposed that the advent of the Messiah was to be for their sole benefit, but that he was to judge and punish the Gentile world. Our Lord corrects this erroneous view; first by declaring that it was God's love for the whole race of mankind, which caused him to give up the Son of his bosom to die for their sin; and then, by a positive denial that it was the mission of God's Son to condemn or destroy any portion of the human family, the design being rather that all might obtain salvation. This verse therefore stands connected with the preceding, as confirmatory of the truth there asserted, that the giving up of God's Son was for the salvation of the world. The verb *sent*, is here substituted for *gave* in v. 16, and indicates the official subordination of the Son as Messiah and Redeemer of men. *To condemn* (literally *to judge*) responds to *should perish* in v. 16, and signifies to pass sentence of judgment and condemnation. But how is the assertion that Christ was not sent to judge the world reconcilable with these texts, where it is said that He is to be the final Judge of mankind (see 5:22; 9:39; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1)? Stier seeks to remove the difficulty by averring that "the Lord Jesus Christ is not to be *sent* a second time; this expres-

into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

sion never being used of his coming to judgment, for the Son is sent as a servant, not in the majesty of the Father." This is well, but does not reach the full meaning of the texts referred to, and besides lays too much stress on the verb *sent*. The sole mission of Christ was one of mercy and love. It was to save mankind from sin and death, that he came into the world. It was not then to pass a condemning sentence upon the Gentile world according to the Jewish notion, that he as Messiah had made his advent, but to proffer salvation to them, as well as to the Jews, through faith in him. It is no contradiction to this, that he shall come again at the final consummation of things, to take vengeance upon his enemies, and banish from his favor all who have refused to receive him as the Saviour of men. His work of judgment is a necessary appendage to that of salvation. He first provides eternal life for the slaves of sin and death; but it is meet that he shall make strict inquisition, as to the manner in which his gracious overtures have been received, and visit with merited punishment those who are proved to have been incorrigibly rebellious and impenitent. *But that the world through him might be saved*. The positive form of assertion enforces and illustrates the preceding negative, as in vs. 15, 16. The antithesis which lies here between *might be saved* and *to condemn*, shows clearly that our translators were right in thus rendering the verb, the literal sense of which is *to judge*. Alford notices the change from *that he might save the world*, which would be in exact correspondence with the preceding clause, to *that the world through him might be saved*, the free will of the creature being by this strikingly set forth in connection with vs. 19, 20. *Through him* as the only and sufficient Saviour.

18. This verse is in part an emphatic repetition of the preceding sentiment,

18 ^r 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.

q Ch. 5:24; & 6:40, 47; & 20:31.

and in part the ingrafting of another sentiment upon the foregoing thought, that while the mission of God's Son was not one of judgment and condemnation, yet upon those who did not believe on him rested the sentence of condemnation, enhanced in its severity by their unbelief in the only begotten Son of God. Not having availed themselves of salvation through Christ, they were still under the curse and condemnation of God's law, and thus stood in no need of being condemned by God's Son. The general terms employed in vs. 16, 17, are here followed by the specific application of salvation through faith, or condemnation through unbelief, to every one whether Jew or Gentile. *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. It should be noticed that the act of faith here spoken of is the believer's own act, and in this the parallel is preserved between believers in Christ, and those who by their own act looked at the brazen serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness. *Is condemned already*, i. e. remains under the condemning sentence of God's law. The word *already*, refers here to present condemnation, as opposed to that which is future. The reason is given in the next clause, *because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*. This is an expanded reaffirmation of the preceding clause, *he that believeth not*, and points out in the most express terms, the ground on which condemnation rests upon men. Mankind are brought under condemnation from having violated the law; they are referred to here as remaining under that dread sentence, because they reject the Being, who came into the world for the express

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

r Ch. 1:4, 9, 10, 11; & 8:12.

purpose of saving them from the penalty of the law. The general sentiment of the verse is, that the Messiah had not come into the world, as the Jews supposed, to condemn and destroy a part of mankind, but to save all of every nation who would believe on him. Upon those, however, who rejected him the wrath of God would still abide, so that in fact they were condemned already. "If in the appearance of Christ, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, are offered to men, and if faith be the channel through which these blessings are conferred upon men, unbelief is a judgment of one's self." Tholuck. *In the name of the only begotten Son of God*, is a periphrasis for *the only begotten Son of God*. See N. on Matt. 28:19.

19. Our Lord proceeds to denote more fully the ground of the condemnation, which rests upon those who do not believe on God's Son. The connection will be seen by briefly recapitulating the preceding train of thought: 'You Jews think that an important part of the mission of Christ, is to take vengeance upon the Gentile world. But God sent his Son to *save*, and not to *condemn* the world. Salvation from the curse of God's violated law depends not upon nation, condition, or privilege, but simply upon faith in the Son of God. *This* (then and no other) *is the* (ground of) *condemnation*, namely the obstinate perverseness of the heart of man, which leads to darkness and unbelief, instead of light and salvation.' *Light*; literally, *the Light*, i. e. the Messiah. See 1:4, 7-9. The omission of the article in our common version, is quite infelicitous, as the reader is in danger thereby of referring the light here spoken of, to the light of truth revealed in the Scriptures and in

20 For * every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither

s Job 24: 13, 17; Ep. 5: 13.

the book of nature. The reference is to Jesus Christ, the great Revealer of the ways of God to man. Moral light, as it radiates from God's Word and the works of creation around us, is indeed implied in the expression, because, as has been remarked, Christ is the author and source of all the moral light which beams upon the pathway of men. Opposed as it is in these verses to *darkness*, it is to be taken in its abstract sense of *light*, yet not to the overlooking of the great truth, that it proceeds from Him who was both the Light and Life of men.

And men. The copulative conjunction is used for *but*, because the advent of the Light, and the preference which men give to darkness, constitute together the ground of condemnation. Had the Light not been manifested, the sin of unbelief would never have been chargeable upon men; and had the Light been fully received and acknowledged, every ground of condemnation would have been removed. But as the Light was both manifested, and rejected by men, the condemnation is sure and irremediable. *Loved darkness* (literally, *the darkness*) *rather than the light*, or *more than the light*. The form of the comparison, which is the same as in Matt. 18: 13, is intended to show that men see something to admire in the Light proffered to them, but yet prefer *the darkness*. This accords with experience and observation. It is not uncommon to hear wicked men extol the Founder of the Christian religion, and yet evince their supreme preference for the very opposite to what He inculcated while on earth, and laid down His life to make accessible to lost men. The language of the comparison seems to be framed to meet this inconsistency in men. But this preference of darkness to light is so deep and abiding, that it effectually shuts out from the heart of men, the light in all its renovating and saving influence. Hence this preferment of darkness, in full

cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

view of the glorious light which God in the gift of his Son has vouchsafed to men, is the very ground and evidence of their condemnation. More than this, while the violation of God's holy law brings all men into a state of condemnation, the aversion which they entertain for the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, both enhances that condemnation, and precludes all hope of its removal in the way provided in the gospel of God's Son. Such seems to be the fulness of meaning of this great text, which vindicates God from the charge of necessitating men either by his eternal purpose or by his providence, to remain beneath the condemning sentence of his law, while through his infinite love a Saviour has been provided and fully offered to them for the remission of their offences. *Because their deeds were evil.* This stands as the cause of men's preference of darkness to light. The word rendered *evil*, is of stronger import than the one thus rendered in v. 20, the idea of the inveterate and malignant evil of sin being referred to in the one case, and wrong doing in all its varied shades and degrees of guilt, in the other. The one is the principle, the other the practice of evil. It is the former which obstructs the light of truth, the latter which, as the outgoing or expression of this evil principle within, gives strength to it, and hardens the soul against every holy and heavenly influence. So Tholuck well remarks: "the more man abandons himself to evil, the more does he regard it as his proper self and loves it as himself."

20. *For every one, &c.* This verse expands and confirms the reason given in the preceding verse, why *men loved darkness rather than light* (viz.) *because their deeds were evil*. Evil doing is now declared to be so paralyzing to all right action, and to the desire for that which is good, that it causes men not simply to prefer darkness to light, but to absolutely hate the light. The specific

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds

reference in the words *every one*, to the individuals of the whole human race, is aimed at the Jewish notion, to which allusion has been made, that the Gentiles alone were evil doers and subject to condemnation. *That doeth evil*. The original verb, as was remarked in the preceding note, refers this to the habitual practice of evil, such as results from an active evil principle within, or what is more usually denominated, a depraved nature. The word is employed of what one does repeatedly, continually, habitually. *Hateth the light*. In v. 19, the form of expression was such as to denote simple preference of darkness to light. Here it advances to positive hatred of the light. But as this verse is confirmatory and illustrative of the preceding one, it shows that the preference of darkness to light there spoken of, was in reality a positive love of the one and hatred of the other. This does not militate, however, against the well known fact, to which reference has been made, that the habit and practice of doing evil, gives depth and strength to the hatred of good, which arises from a depraved heart. *Neither cometh to the light*, &c. A general and well established principle is here laid down, that a course of wrong doing stands in the way of all honest inquiry after truth. The reason is given in the next clause, *lest his deeds should be reprov'd* (or rebuked). The language partakes of the metaphorical, being based on the exposure to the natural light of defects, which otherwise would not have been detected by the eye. Thus the light of truth reveals the odious character of man's acts, and subjects him to the reproof of God's law and his own conscience. So terrible are the upbraidings of conscience when thus enlightened and stimulated to action, and so terrific are the denunciations of the divine law, that men prefer to remain in darkness, rather than to expose themselves to such mental distress by coming to the light of God's truth. The rendering

may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

lest, does not quite reach the full import of the original. *In order that his deeds may not be reprov'd*, is the more literal and accurate translation. This brings out the idea of deliberate purpose in not coming to the light, more clearly than our common version. There is an antithesis between *should be reprov'd*, and *may be made manifest* in v. 21, which imparts to the former the idea of exposure to the light, as well as reproof.

21. Contrasted with the spiritual darkness and condemnation of those who practice evil and shut their eyes to the truth, is the conduct and condition of the man who does well, and puts himself under the influence of the truth. The verb translated *doeth*, is a different one from that employed in *doeth evil*, in v. 20. That verb refers, as has been remarked, to the continued and habitual wrong doing of the man who hateth the light; this verb brings out more prominently the *doing good*, as resulting from a fixed principle of rectitude within. Webster and Wilkinson thus distinguish between these verbs: the former (in v. 20) denotes what we do naturally and easily; the latter (v. 21), what is done with difficulty and effort. The one involves the idea of practice; the other, performance. Action is the predominant idea in the one; the accomplishment of a result, in the other. Alford takes the verb in v. 21, as referring to the true doing of good, what we call *good fruit*, or good which remains. There is besides this antithesis of the verbs, another strong point of contrast between the word rendered *evil*, in v. 20, which literally signifies *worthless, vain*, and the solid, substantial, abiding fruit of well doing, spoken of in this verse. This double antithesis may be briefly expressed, in the practice of all that is worthless and vain on the one hand, and the accomplishment of that which is true, real, and abiding, on the other. No language could better express this radical difference between the children

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, ¹ and baptized.

¹ Ch. 4:2.
^u 1 Sa. 9:4.

of darkness and of light, than that which is employed in the original Greek, but which loses much of its condensed force in our translation, being obliged as we are, to employ for both verbs the same word *doeth*, or else weaken the force of the passage by a periphrastic translation. *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. The sentiment is illustrated in Ps. 19: 12; 139: 23, 24. Our Lord here teaches Nicodemus that the great cause of man's alienation from God, is his deep and abiding hatred of the light which discloses to him his true moral character. The very reverse of this reluctance to come to the light, is declared to be characteristic of one who wishes to obtain a clear view of his spiritual state. He seeks to test his acts in the searching light of God's word, knowing well that he who covereth his sins shall not prosper (Prov. 28: 13).

22-36. JESUS REMAINS IN JUDEA AND BAPTIZES. FURTHER TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

22. *After these things*. The expression of time is indefinite, and we may suppose, therefore, that several days elapsed before Jesus left Jerusalem for the district of Judea. *Land of Judea* is here put simply for Judea in contradistinction to Jerusalem, where the conversation with Nicodemus was held. See N. on Matt. 2: 1. Bloomfield thinks that our Lord went to Bethabara, John having gone to Ænon for the greater convenience of the Samaritans. *With them*, i. e. his disciples. *Baptized* by the agency of his disciples. See 4: 2. This

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to " Salim, because there was much water there: " and they came, and were baptized.

^u Mat. 3: 5, 6.

baptism was not like John's baptism, simply *unto repentance* (see Matt. 3: 11), but was doubtless attended by a profession of belief in the Messiah, as having already come. This does not imply that the candidates had those clear and spiritual views of the office work of the Messiah, which they had after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We see in many instances how imperfect were the views of Christ's chosen apostles, previous to his resurrection and ascension, and it cannot be supposed that these persons who were baptized by them, had more correct or enlarged views than they themselves. The disciples and those whom they baptized, were educated gradually into the mysteries of the kingdom of Christ; and all that was required in the outset, as terms of admission into the visible church, were penitence and faith in a present Messiah.

23. *John also*, &c. As our Lord entered more fully upon the work of his ministry, John seems to have retired from his leading position, as a Baptizer and Reformer. "As John's commission was now on the wane, so our Lord's was expanding." Alford. John, however, continued to baptize such as came to him. We have no evidence that he modified the terms on which he administered the rite, after the public appearance of Jesus, so that faith in a Messiah already come was added to repentance and reformation of life; much less, that he attached himself in any way to the company of Jesus. Alford in reference to the baptism administered at this time by John, and also by the disciples of Jesus, remarks that they stood very much in the same position, both being "preparatory to the public ministry of our Lord properly so called, which began in Galilee after the imprisonment of

24 For ^v John was not yet cast into prison.

25 ¶ Then there arose a ques-

y Mat. 14: 3.

John." But it seems very improbable that such was the nature of the baptism administered by Jesus's disciples, after their Master had professed himself to be the Messiah (see 1: 36, 45, 49, 51; 2: 23; 3: 12-18). *Ænon* 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 S. of Bethlchem. *Because there was much water there.* There can be no doubt that this stands as the reason, why John chose that locality for the administration of the rite of baptism. The only question is, as to the use or purpose to which the water was applied. Some refer it to what was required for the rite of baptism, and claim it as proof that the rite was administered by immersion. Others aver that nothing more is meant, than that water was supplied in abundance for the multitude of people with their beasts of burden, who flocked to John's baptism. The word translated *much water*, is literally *many waters*, and is used of a sea or lake, the surface of which is agitated and broken up by the wind. It is the dashing and roaring of these waves, which furnishes the simile in Ezek. 19: 10; Rev. 1: 15; 14: 2; 19: 6, denoted by "the voice of many waters." The phrase is also used of *many rivulets* or *streams*, and also of a river, which is supposed to contain in its bosom many streams. That the signification here is *many fountains* or *streamlets*, seems quite clear from the fact that the place was called *Ænon*, i. e. fountains, or a place of fountains. If the necessities of the rite of baptism are referred to, it would seem that a single rivulet, by excavating a place into which its waters might flow, would have sufficed for the administering of the rite, even supposing it to have been performed by immersion. But *one* small stream would hardly have supplied the wants of the

tion between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

multitudes, who came with their beasts of burden to attend upon his ministry. I am inclined, therefore, to believe that this place of *many fountains* was chosen, not so much in reference to the water required for baptism, as for the wants of the great multitudes who attended John's preaching and baptism. So Webster and Wilkinson: "many streams probably or pools of water, convenient for the distribution of the multitudes into parties. In no other sense would much water be an advantage, or *Ænon* preferable to Bethabara." *And they came and were baptized.* The subject in the original is omitted, but is very naturally supplied from the context.

24. *For John was not, &c.* This seems to have been inserted by the Evangelist, to show that our Lord's public ministry, for a time at least, was concurrent with that of John, the idea also receiving prominence from this simple announcement, that John did not cease from his public ministrations, until he was compelled thereto by his imprisonment. Webster and Wilkinson regard this as one of the proofs, that the Evangelist wrote some time after the publication and circulation of the first three gospels, or of one or other of them in Asia Minor. He speaks of John's imprisonment as a well-known fact, although he gives no account of its cause or of his death.

25. *Then* connects this with v. 23, the narrative having been broken by the parenthesis in v. 24. The particle is also slightly illative, introducing the dispute which follows as a consequence of the fact previously recorded, that Jesus and John were baptizing at the same time. The word rendered *question*, has here the sense of *disputation*. *Between some of John's disciples.* This translation is not good. The original clearly indicates that the dispute began on the part of John's disciples, and was

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jor-

dan, * to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.

≈ Ch. 1 : 7, 15, 27, 34.

not restricted to a part of them, as the word *some*, supplied in our common version, would imply. The literal translation is, *there arose* (i. e. was started) *from John's disciples a disputation with the Jews*, i. e. it commenced with John's disciples. Many MSS. have the singular *with a Jew*, supposed to have been one who had just been baptized by the disciples of Jesus, and the reality or necessity of whose baptism was questioned by the disciples of John, in their zeal for the honor of their master. That this was the exciting cause of the dispute, seems clear from the words of John (vs. 28—30); and if the plural *Jews*, is the correct reading, it only shows that instead of one, several of the persons baptized by Jesus' disciples were present and engaged in the dispute. *About purifying*, i. e. about the nature and efficacy of baptismal purification. Each party doubtless strove to prove the superior validity of their baptism, by an appeal to the nature and design of the ordinance in the Messianic annunciation and subsequent development. That it was not a question confined to John's baptism, as relating to the legal purifications of the Jews, is evident from the report made in v. 26 by his disciples to their master, in which there is clearly an intimation, that Jesus was assuming a function which belonged rightfully and solely to John. Baptism as administered by his disciples, was in their estimation an encroachment upon the rights and privileges of their master, against which they felt bound to utter their strong protest.

26. *They*, i. e. John's disciples. *Came unto John*, in order to refer the question of dispute to his decision. It would seem from this appeal to John, that they had been worsted in the discussion; or that difficulties had been started which they were unable to remove. They manifested a hasty, petulant,

fault-finding temper, and this makes the rebuke they received from their master very appropriate and significant. *Rabbi*. This was the usual term of respect with which a teacher was addressed. It is the only place, however, where John the Baptist is thus addressed. *He that was with thee*, &c. They do not refer to Jesus by name, either because they wished in this way to show their sense of his inferiority to John; or because, after the high testimony which John had borne to Jesus, they thought it would be displeasing to him, for them to refer to Jesus by his simple name. The use of the pronoun, which although not here employed in its contemptuous sense (see N. on Matt. 26 : 61), is nevertheless slightly disrespectful, shows that the former sense is probably the correct one. *Beyond Jordan*, i. e. at Bethabara. See 1 : 28. This shows that Ænon was west of Jordan. *To whom thou barest witness*. See 1 : 29, 36. The comparatively low estimate, which this whole transaction shows that John's disciples placed upon the official character of Jesus, proves clearly that they had not yet reached the full import of the testimony here referred to. It was doubtless in their view, simply a testimony to Jesus as a public religious teacher, but by no means raising him to an equality with their master, to whose extraordinary zeal and piety, the whole nation were doing homage. This erroneous view of the comparative worth and dignity of John and Jesus, makes the reply of the Baptist very pertinent and striking. *Barest witness* : literally *hast borne witness*, i. e. testified in his favor. *Behold* indicates their sense of the important intelligence, which they are about to communicate. *All men come to him* to receive instruction and baptism. The exaggerated terms in which they speak of the growing popularity of Jesus, shows to what a pitch of excite-

27 John answered and said,
^a A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ^b I am not the Christ, but ^c that I am sent before him.

^a 1 Co. 4: 7; He. 5: 4; Ja. 1: 17.

^b Ch. 1: 20, 27.

^c Mal. 3: 1; Ma. 1: 2; Lu. 1: 17.

ment John's disciples had been wrought up, by what they deemed an infringement upon his official rights. Webster and Wilkinson compare the expression *all men*, with Mark 1: 5; Luke 3: 21, but there the language is that of the Evangelist; here, of men in a highly excited state, wishing evidently to prejudice John against Jesus, or at least to awaken his jealousy at his increasing fame.

27. John replies to this report of the increasing reputation of Jesus, that no one can transcend the limits of official influence appointed him of God. Each one has his gifts, graces, and spheres of influence, and with these he must be content. *A man* is here put in contrast with the *Son of God*, which John by divine illumination had declared Jesus to be (1: 34). It denotes therefore in this connection, weakness and imperfection, and introduces with strong emphasis the low estimate which John placed upon himself when compared with Jesus. *Can receive nothing*, i. e. can arrogate to himself no honor or official rank. *From heaven*, i. e. from God whose dwelling place is heaven. John's reply in the very outset, is a disclaimer against the high notions, which his disciples entertained of his official rank compared with that of Jesus.

28. In this verse John avers that he had made no concealment of his views in regard to the character of Jesus, and in proof of this refers to the testimony which he had publicly borne at Bethabara, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he was simply his Forerunner (see 1: 23, 29). *Ye yourselves bear me witness*. John's disclaimer of the

29 ^a He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but ^c the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

^d Matt. 22: 2; 2 Co. 11: 2; Ep. 5: 25, 27; Re. 21: 9.

^e Cant. 5: 1.

Messiahship was made in the hearing of his disciples, and hence they could bear witness not only to what he had asserted in reference to the character of Jesus, but also in relation to his own official position. *I am sent before him*, i. e. as his Forerunner. The pronoun *him*, in the Greek, is not the one which would have been employed, had reference been made directly to the word *Christ*, but refers to the more remote antecedent *he* (i. e. Jesus) in v. 26. But this clause follows in such close connection the preceding words *I am not the Christ*, that it makes the person to whom the pronoun refers, and *the Christ*, one and the same. Thus this becomes an additional attestation on the part of John, that Jesus was the Christ.

29. *He that hath the bride*, i. e. whom the bride follows, or who has the bride under his particular and tender charge. Such a person would be distinguished in the company, as *the bridegroom*. In like manner as all men were coming to Jesus, his relation to the church as bridegroom, was beginning to be fully manifest. *The friend of the bridegroom*. Alford says that this person was the regular organ of communication in the preliminaries of the marriage feast. He was called the *paranymphe*, from his attendance on the bridegroom. *Which standeth and heareth him*, i. e. remains at his side and within the sound of his voice. No reference is had in the form of this expression, to his attendance as a servant, but as a friend. *Heareth him* conversing with his bride, and expressing his joy in her possession. *Rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice*,

30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

31^f He that cometh from above^g is above all: ^h he that is of the

^f Ver. 13; ch. 8:23.

^g Mat. 28:18; ch. 1:15, 27; Ro. 9:5.

i. e. because his voice is indicative of affection for his bride, and of satisfaction in the marriage arrangements. He was a happy bridegroom, and his friend shared his happiness. The application is simple and obvious. Christ being the bridegroom and the church his spouse, it became John as his friend and forerunner, to rejoice in his increasing glory and fame. It is worthy of remark, that God declares himself in the Old Testament Scriptures to be the husband of his people. In like manner in the New Testament, Christ is revealed as a bridegroom, the church being his spouse. There can be no doubt that this relation of Christ to his church, forms the groundwork of this comparison, as well as the one employed in Matt. 9:14. See Luke 5:35; Rev. 21:9. The inference from this is irresistible, that the bridegroom of the church in the Old Testament dispensation, and of the church in the New Testament, must be one and the same Being; and this passage therefore furnishes strong collateral proof of the great declaration in v. 1, that the incarnate Logos is God. The attentive reader will not fail to perceive that the great utterances, with which John's gospel abounds, all converge towards, or spring from this fundamental truth of Christ's supreme divinity, which was announced so clearly and emphatically in the very outset. *This my joy therefore is fulfilled*, i. e. in a similar manner my joy is now consummated, in the evidence of a present Messiah, before whom I rejoice to take a subordinate position. John, to use the language of the illustration, had acted in the capacity of a friend to the Bridegroom, arranging the preliminaries, and preparing the way for his introduction to his spouse; and having finished his allotted task, he rejoiced in witnessing the superior honor accorded to one,

earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: ⁱ he that cometh from heaven is above all.

^h Co. 15:47.

ⁱ Ch. 6:33; 1 Co. 15:47; Ep. 1:21; Phi. 2:9.

whom he acknowledged as his Lord and Master.

30. *He must increase, but I must decrease.* While reference is specially had to the increasing numbers who attended upon our Lord's ministration (see v. 26 end), and the proportionate decrease of those who came to John for religious instruction, yet the expression covers other parts of their respective ministry. The language is borrowed from the waxing and waning of the heavenly bodies. As in the beams of the sun the stars disappear, so before the Sun of Righteousness, shall all the lesser luminaries, even the morning star itself the harbinger of day, fade away and disappear from sight.

31. Expositors have not been wanting, who would break up the continuity of this discourse, by attributing the words from this verse to the end of the chapter to the Evangelist. Among the modern critics who maintain this view, we may mention Bengel, Olshausen, and Tholuck, not to speak of others, equally acute, but not equally evangelical. But such a transition, so sudden and unannounced, is abrupt, unnatural, and at war with the most common principles of interpretation, which forbid such a change in the person of the speaker, unless one is forced thereto by the wants of the passage. There is nothing in the language which implies such a change; and the sentiment, notwithstanding what the above named critics aver, is as appropriate in the mouth of the Baptist as of the Evangelist. Grant that the sentiment is in accordance with the style of the Evangelist, did not he obtain this conception of the relation of the Son to the Father from Christ's own lips, and probably at an early stage of his ministry? Was not John the Baptist—enlightened as he was by the Spirit to declare of Jesus, that he was the Lamb of God which taketh

32 And ⁴ what he hath seen and

& Ver. 11; ch. 8:26; & 15:15.

away the sin of the world (1:29, 36), and again that he was the Son of God (1:34),—one who might well be inspired to add the more full testimony of the relation of the Son to the Father here recorded? No argument drawn from the diction and sentiments of the passage against its being a continuation of the Baptist's discourse, is entitled to any weight, when opposed to the obvious and natural coherency of thought which unites it to the foregoing context, as furnishing a reason why John must continue to wane before the Messiah, who had now appeared on earth, and whose origin was divine. *He that cometh from above*, i. e. whose advent is from heaven to earth. See v. 13. *Is above all* in knowledge, power, holiness, and official station. The sentiment is that John's rank was low in comparison with that of the Messiah, even as the earth is lower than heaven. Hence it was not strange that he should increase, while John should decrease. The word *all*, includes of necessity John himself, who is still further referred to in the general term, *he that is of the earth*, as opposed to *he that cometh from heaven*. Thus under these general expressions, John shows his own inferiority to Jesus. *Is earthly*. The original is here a verbal repetition of the words translated *of the earth*, so that the literal rendering would be, *he that is of the earth is of the earth*. The first as opposed to *he that cometh from above*, denotes the origin; the second *of the earth*, denotes the state, condition, aims, and pursuits of one who is earth-born. There is therefore no tautology, when regard is had to the sense demanded by the antithesis between the one of heavenly and the one of earthly origin. *Speaketh of the earth*. As all his pursuits and sources of knowledge are confined to earth, he can speak only of earthly things. He has no knowledge of heavenly things, only as they have been revealed to him. This finds its antithesis in the words, *that he testifieth* in v. 32. *From*

heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

heaven is a varied and emphatic repetition of *from above*, in the beginning of the verse, and like that clause is antithetic to the preceding words, *of the earth*. The collocation and repetition of the words are highly emphatic, especially as contrasted with the declaration, that *he that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth*, which indicates human ignorance and weakness.

32. *What he hath seen and heard* in heaven whence he came down to earth. The verbs *seen* and *heard*, refer to full and perfect knowledge. *Testifieth* is a stronger term than *speaketh* in v. 31, which renders the unbelief, with which the testimony from such a source was received, the more strange and inexcusable. The general idea is that when men speak of earthly things, they find enough who are willing to listen and give credence to their words; but when one comes down from heaven, with full credentials of his divine origin and heavenly mission, and discourses to men of heavenly things, and testifies to the truth of what he relates, he finds no one to believe his words, so earthly, sensual, and inappreciative of divine things are they. The words *no man*, are rhetorically put for *few men*, *scarcely any men*, the speaker having in mind the exaggerated language, "all men come to him," made use of by his disciples in v. 26.

33. The sentiment of this verse is that he who receiveth this testimony, vouches thereby that God is true. The testimony is of that which has been seen and heard above, and refers here especially to the Messiahship and divine character of Jesus. He who believed this on the testimony of Jesus himself corroborated by John's declaration (1:34), was a believer in the truth and veracity of God. The opposite was inferentially true, that whoever rejected the testimony of Jesus, denied at the same time the truthfulness of God, so indivisibly and essentially united were the Father and Son. See 12:44. The great truth of Jesus Christ's supreme

33 He that hath received his testimony ¹ hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 ^m For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit ⁿ by measure *unto him*.

35 ^o The Father loveth the Son,

^l Ro. 3: 4; 1 Jo. 5: 10.

^m Ch. 7: 16.

ⁿ Ch. 1: 16.

divinity underlies all this reasoning; for how otherwise would the rejection of Christ's word be a denial of God's veracity? *Hath set to his seal*, i. e. has attested, as when one affixes a seal or mark upon any thing to denote its genuineness. Compare 2 Cor. 1: 22.

34. This verse shows why it is that belief in Christ's testimony is belief in God also. *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. *If the words of God* are believed as spoken by Jesus Christ, God is thereby declared to be true. The next clause *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him*, is designed to prove and illustrate the absolute truth and divinity of him, who came from above and speaketh the words of God. The expression *by measure*, refers to that which is dealt out sparingly, like food in a besieged city. The opposite to this is *unlimited measure*, a measure *having no circumscribing limits*, and this is declared to be the fulness of the gift of the Spirit, as bestowed upon Christ. This fulness of the Spirit which Christ at all times possessed, made his words the words of God. As it regards the fact that God is said to *give* the Spirit to Jesus Christ, it is to be referred like other similar expressions, to the subordination to the Father, which Jesus had as God-man, the Messiah, and not to his essential divinity.

35. *For the Father loveth*, &c. This denotes the ground or reason why the Spirit was given to Jesus without measure. Such was the love of the Father to the Son, that not only the fulness of the Spirit, but all things else had been

and hath given all things into his hand.

36 ^p 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.

^o Mat. 11: 27; & 28: 18; Lu. 10: 22; ch. 5: 20, 22; & 13: 8; & 17: 2; Jhe. 2: 8.

^p Hab. 2: 4; ch. 1: 12; & 6: 47; ver. 15, 16; Ro. 1: 17; 1 Jo. 5: 10.

given into his hand. On the expression *hath given all things*, see N. on Matt. 11: 27, where the same sentiment in a different connection is found. *Into his hand*, i. e. under his control and power. See Eph. 1: 22; 1 Tim. 6: 15; Ps. 2: 6; 45: 1.

36. If the Son be exalted to such dignity and power, the result of belief or unbelief in his words, is the possession on the one hand of eternal life, and on the other, of the eternal endurance of God's wrath. In this verse we have, therefore, the consequence of the exaltation to which, in the preceding verse, Christ is declared to have been elevated. *Hath everlasting life*. The present tense here employed shows that the believer is in actual possession of eternal life, by the very act of faith in Christ, in reference to which it is bestowed. The verb rendered *believeth not*, carries with it also the sense of disobedience and rebellion against the rightful authority of God's Son. *Shall not see life*. The eternal banishment of the finally unbelieving and impenitent from God's presence and favor, is here taught beyond the possibility of doubt. The proof does not depend, as in other places, upon the words *everlasting* and *eternal*, which some wrest from their true meaning, to denote that which is of immense but not unlimited duration. The form of expression is one which no ingenuity of sophistry can divert from its true and simple meaning, *shall not see life*, that is, shall never partake of the blessedness of heaven. This is rendered still more emphatic by the twofold form of expression, the negative and posi-

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and^a baptized more disciples than John,

tive, after the manner of John, when he would assert a thing, so as to leave no doubt or mistake as to its truth. The wrath of God *abideth* on the unbeliever. It does not *come upon* him, for *he that believeth not, is condemned already* (v. 18). The condemning sentence and wrath of God *remains* upon him, and as he has rejected the only means of its removal, it will abide on him for ever. Dreadful result of impenitence and unbelief!

CHAPTER IV.

1-3. JESUS DEPARTS INTO GALILEE.

This journey took place soon after the imprisonment of John. See Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14. Dr. Robinson says that this journey of our Lord must have been made in the latter part of November or December, about eight months after the preceding Passover. If John the Baptist commenced his labors about the time of the Passover in the preceding year, his public ministry prior to the time of his imprisonment, must have continued a little more than a year and a half.

1. The narrative is here resumed from 3: 22. *The Lord*. This appellation of our Saviour is given to him by the Evangelist in its highest sense, and the article as in 11: 2, gives the sense *our Lord*, a form of tender affection, made use of by the apostles and early Christians, and retained as we know to the present time. *Knew* by his omniscience, and probably also by information received from others. *That the Pharisees had heard*, &c. It is very clearly implied here, that the enmity of the Pharisees was already excited against our Lord, probably from what occurred at Jerusalem (see 2: 13-21). "His appearance as a reformer excited the opposition of the Pharisees, more than did the Old Testament activity of

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

a Ch. 3: 22, 26.

the Baptist; as Christ, however, regarded it as yet too soon to arouse more violently the spirit of persecution, he repaired to Galilee." Tholuck. *That Jesus*. The use of this name after *the Lord*, and its repetition in v. 2, are in accordance with the simplicity and perspicuity of the writer's style. See Webster and Wilkinson. Winer says that *Jesus* is repeated, because the Evangelist wished to quote the express words which the Pharisees had heard. *Made and baptized*; literally, *is making* (i. e. gaining or acquiring) *and baptizing*, the tense conforming to the very terms in which the report was made. This is in accordance with the Greek idiom, which allows the direct as well as the indirect quotation to be introduced by the conjunction *that*, and imparts life and vivacity to the style. *More disciples*. See 3: 26. It seems that the report of the increasing celebrity of Jesus, reached the Pharisees as well as John the Baptist, but was received by them in a far different spirit than by him.

2. *Though Jesus himself*, &c. Our Lord refrained from personally administering the rite, either because he wished to give himself wholly to the work of teaching; or in order that those who were baptized might be on an equality in this respect, none afterwards having occasion to boast that they had received the rite at the hands of Jesus himself. The former is the more probable reason. The reverse of this was true of John, who, as far as we know, always administered the rite of baptism himself. *Departed again*, &c. See 1: 43.

4-42. OUR LORD ON HIS WAY TO GALILEE DISCOURSES WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN. MANY OF THE SAMARITANS BELIEVE ON HIM. *Shechem* or *Neapolis*.

4. *Must needs go through Samaria*, (i. e. the region of Samaria), because it

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of

Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground^b that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

^b Ge. 33 : 19 ; & 48 : 22 ; Jos. 24 : 32.

was the shortest route to Galilee, from the place where Jesus had been preaching. The Jews, in order to avoid going through this hated country, were accustomed to make this journey through Perea, on the east side of Jordan. Our Lord had no such prejudice, and it is to be noted that in passing through the Samaritan country, and especially in holding converse with the woman of Samaria and her townsmen on the subject of his mission, he did himself what he expressly forbade his disciples to do, when he sent them forth as related in Matt. 10 : 5. This is to be referred to his wise sovereignty, which chose this method to impress upon his followers the great truth, that salvation through his name was not confined to the Jews, but was provided for others, even the despised Samaritans. At the same time, the restriction imposed upon his disciples not to enter any city of the Samaritans, gave that honor and precedence to the Jews, to which as descendants of Abraham, and heirs of the promises, they were entitled. Christ's visit therefore foreshadowed the universal proclamation of the gospel, which was subsequently to be made by his followers to the Samaritans and Gentiles as well as to the Jews; the restriction in the first commission of the apostles, as given in Matt. 10 : 5, was to render prominent the fact, that in this proffer of eternal salvation through Christ, the Jew was to have the precedence, so far as the order of time was concerned.

5. *To a city*, i. e. as far as the city. *Of Samaria*, belonging to the country of Samaria. The city of Samaria was about eight miles to the northwest of the place here referred to. *Sychar* is generally supposed to be a name given to the ancient Shechem, in contempt by the Jews, Sychar by derivation signifying *a lie, a falsehood*; or perhaps the name gradually became changed

without any design. Its modern name is Nâbulus or Nablûs. From the abundant supply of water in Nablûs, Dr. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 206) thinks it incredible that the woman of Samaria would go two miles from the delicious fountains of the place, to draw water out of an immensely deep well, and therefore comes to the conclusion that Sychar was not the ancient Shechem, but must have been a small Samaritan town not far from the spot, perhaps the village north of it now called Aschâr. Tholuck seeks to avoid the difficulty here started by Dr. Thomson, by supposing that the woman came from the neighborhood of the city, the expression *woman of Samaria* meaning only a *Samaritan woman*. But in vs. 28, 30, it is clearly indicated, that the woman was a resident of the city to which she returned, and well known to its inhabitants. Even if she lived a short distance from the city, would it not have been easier for her to have filled her vessel from some one of the numerous springs there, than to have resorted to a well, from which water had to be raised nearly one hundred feet to the surface? The difficulty is not therefore removed by Tholuck's suggestion, which of itself, as above stated, is quite improbable. *Near to the parcel of ground* (i. e. field) *that Jacob, &c.* It appears from Gen. 33 : 19, that Jacob bought a field of the family of Shechem, and there spreading his tent remained for some time. As this was the place where Joseph's bones were buried, it became the inheritance of the sons of Joseph (Josh. 24 : 32). From this circumstance, doubtless, arose the tradition that Jacob gave the parcel of ground to Joseph; although some attribute it to the mistranslation by the LXX. of Gen. 48 : 22.

6. *Jacob's well*. This well is about nine feet in diameter, and nearly one

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.

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.

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.

c 2 Ki. 17: 24; Lu. 9: 52, 53; Ac. 10: 28.

hundred feet deep. Dr. Jacobus says that when he visited it, he found the well's mouth closed by a huge stone, and it was quite dry. When Maundrell visited it, however, in the month of March, it had fifteen feet of water. All who visit the well wonder at its having been dug, when there is a fine fountain a little to the west of it; besides that the whole vale of Nablûs abounds in fountains beyond almost any other part of Palestine. It is difficult to go back however several thousand years, and argue from the present state or appearance of things, what were the wants and necessities of those large families like that of Jacob, who with their numerous herds and flocks, were removing from place to place, and staying only so long in one locality, as the pasturage would suffice for the wants of the animals in which their wealth principally consisted. The springs in the vale may have been so appropriated, that Jacob could have no access to them; or perhaps he chose to sink a well on his own ground, near by his own tent, both for convenience, and as a monument of his ability to obtain water, independent of the usual sources of supply. *Being wearied* by the long journey which he had performed on foot. *Sat* would have been better rendered *sat down*, or *seated himself*. The word *thus*, has reference to the weariness just spoken of, and may be taken in a causal sense, *on this account*, in consequence of being thus fatigued. The words *upon the well*, are usually referred to the well curb, upon which a weary traveller might sit; or we may render the passage *by or near the well*. As the *sixth hour* (i. e. noon)

was an unusual hour of the day for a female to come for water, in the present instance it may have resulted from some accident, by which the morning's supply had been consumed or lost. John seems to have designated the particular time, in order to show that there was sufficient space of time left for the occurrences referred to in the narrative, especially the one spoken of in vs. 29, 30.

7. *A woman of Samaria*, i. e. a Samaritan woman. *To draw water*. See v. 11. *Give me to drink*. This is another evidence of the weariness and faintness of Jesus in consequence of the journey.

8. 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. *Were gone*; literally *had gone*. *Unto* (more literally *into*) *the city of Sychar*. See N. on v. 5.

9. These words were doubtless spoken before she complied with his request. Stier however thinks that she had already drawn her water, before Jesus addressed her as here related. In her surprise, she at once exclaimed, *how is it that thou being a Jew*, &c. Inter-course between the Jews and Samaritans was not absolutely forbidden, as is evident from the request of Jesus and this reply of the woman. There was, however, so little intercourse, and so seldom were any favors asked, especially on the part of the Jews, that when Jesus simply requested from her a drink of water, it was so unusual a thing as to fill her with surprise. Alford thinks that her speech was also one of triumph.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith

d Is. 12:3; & 44:3; Je. 2:13; Zec. 13:1; & 14:5.

that a Jew was reduced to such straits, as to be obliged to ask a favor of one who belonged to a people so despised. *Being a Jew.* She doubtless knew him by his speech and dress. *For the Jews,* &c. These are the words of the Evangelist, and show why she asked the question. The article is wanting in the original, and should have been omitted in our translation, *for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.* The verb *have no dealings* (literally, *do not use together or at the same time*, i. e. have no intercourse), must be understood rather of familiar and friendly intercourse, than of business and trade, for the disciples had gone at this very time, into the Samaritan city to buy provisions. Intercourse even in the way of business, was doubtless restricted to that which resulted from necessity. See Ns. on the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10 : 30-42.

10. How easy and natural does our Lord make the transition from water for the body, to that which is required for the soul. If the question of the woman was one of triumph (see N. on v. 9), that a Jew was compelled by circumstances to ask a favor of a despised Samaritan, it called forth a reply, which put her in turn, had she known the office and character of the Jewish stranger, in the position of a suppliant for a boon, much more inestimable than a drink of water, even to one parched and dying through thirst. The imputation of ignorance, on the part of the woman as to a gift of such value, was well adapted to excite her curiosity, and thus further the benevolent end which our Lord had in view. The form of the hypothetical *if thou knewest the gift*, is, in the original, one which implies that the woman did not know the greatness of the gift which Jesus had in his possession. *Gift of God.* This expression has been variously explained. Some refer it to the Messiah, who

to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee ^d living water.

was then present and conversing with her. The expression in that case, would be equivalent to, *if thou knewest who I am.* Others give it this sense: 'if you knew the favor you enjoy in the present opportunity of conversing with me.' The connection refers it evidently to the gift of living water, which was emphatically the gift of God bestowed through the agency of His Spirit. The words *gift of God*, are placed here in evident contrast with that which was in the gift of the woman, namely, water from the well; and must refer therefore to what is declared in the latter part of the verse to be *living water*. The sentiment clearly deducible from the antithesis is this: 'You are now priding yourself on the conferral of a small favor upon one who is a Jew; but if you knew that the water of life, which is the gift of God, was in the possession of him who addresses you, you would become the eager suppliant, although by thus doing you would ask a favor even of a Jew.' Water was the gift of God, yet it was bestowed through human agency; salvation from sin was directly and solely the gift of God, and hence is here so denominated. So Webster and Wilkinson refer the gift here spoken of to salvation, and all its blessings in and through Him. See Rom. 5:15, 17; 2 Cor. 9:15. *Who it is*, &c. refers to what the woman had said *thou being a Jew*, and intimates that he was more than an ordinary person, which is followed in v. 26, by an open avowal of his Messiahship. The condescension of our Lord, in thus making known to this Samaritan woman, what he left others to gather from his miracles is worthy of note. The gradual and progressive method of instruction and spiritual illumination, should serve as a model for all his followers, when called to combat with ignorance and prejudice, in those whom they seek to bring to the knowledge of

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?

Christ. Two things are here brought especially to this woman's notice, *the gift of God*, and the divine character of the one who was addressing her, inferred from the fact, that in his possession was this gift. Here in the very outset was an avowal of his Messiahship, hardly less plain and explicit than the one made in v. 26. The woman however did not yet understand its full import. *Who it is* is a modest form of expression for *who I am*, and comported well with the humility of our Lord, which never appears greater than when, as here, he is revealing the great truth of his supreme divinity. The pronoun in *thou wouldst have asked of him*, is emphatic and implies an omitted antithesis: whereas *I* have asked of you. *Living water*, i. e. running water as opposed to that which lies stagnant in pools, cisterns, &c. As antithetic here to the water of the well on the curb of which he sat, our Lord uses it in a figurative sense of that which is spiritually refreshing or life-giving. The woman, however, caught only its common and literal sense, and hence referred in her reply to the water in the well, which in her estimation was the best specimen of living water. Apart from the main contrast between the water, which it was in the respective power of the woman and of Jesus to grant, there is in the original an emphasis in the pronoun *thou*, which implies that if the woman had known the value of the gift in his possession, she would have been the first to break through the bounds of non-intercourse between the Jews and Samaritans, and ask the boon of him. The readiness to grant this gift in his possession, is presented in contrast with her hesitation, if not unwillingness, to give him water from the well, in the words *he would have given thee living water*. Thus this verse establishes the pre-eminence of the gift in Jesus' possession, the dignity of the donor, and the fact that his being a Jew did not prevent its being

conferred upon a Samaritan even, in case it was applied for with a due sense of its importance to the welfare of the soul.

11. *Sir*; literally, *Lord*. The dignity and solemnity with which our Lord uttered the preceding words, impressed the woman with a sense of respect, which she had not felt, or at least manifested at the commencement of the conversation. She has not yet reached, however, the full depth of his meaning, either in regard to his own personal dignity, or the nature of the living water which he claims to have in his gift. She therefore resorts to a sort of inquisitive quibbling, as to the impossibility of his making good what he had averred. She does not honestly and frankly ask him what he means by the words he had just uttered, but seeks to draw him out, by proposing the difficulties in the way of his obtaining water from the well, to which she purposely restricts his promise to supply her with living water, on condition of her asking for it. In this whole interview, the woman shows herself to be shrewd and observing, and in no wise disposed to yield a point, unless compelled thereto by arguments and reasons which admitted of no reply.

Hast nothing (literally *no vessel, bucket*) *to draw with*. As has been remarked (N. on v. 8), the disciples had in charge all the vessels suitable for drawing water from wells or fountains. *The well is deep* (see N. on v. 6), which would prevent the obtaining of any water thence, unless by means of a bucket. She proceeds, therefore, to inquire whence he had (i. e. was able to obtain) the living water of which he spoke. With the utterance of the question, her pride is aroused at the bare supposition that better water could be furnished than from the well, which had supplied the wants of the patriarch Jacob and his family. In language savoring of reproof, she asks our Lord, if he pretends to be superior to Jacob,

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

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

14 But 'whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him^s shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

e Ch. 6: 35, 53.

f Ch. 7: 38.

by supplying better water than that which sufficed for his wants. The original form of expression is *the water, that* (which is) *living*. It seems to denote the indecision of the woman as to attaching the qualifying word *living*, to the water of which the stranger had spoken; but not feeling satisfied with the rejection of so important an epithet, she finally utters it, and thus unwittingly gives it that position which in the Greek is most emphatic. See N. on 1: 9.

12. The pronoun in *art thou*, is emphatic, and contrasts the unknown Jewish stranger, with the illustrious and well known patriarch who is here named. *Greater* in worth and dignity. Her eye may have been on our Lord's words, *who it is*, &c. in v. 10. *Our father Jacob*. She arrogates to the Samaritans a direct descent from Jacob, and by the pronoun *our*, which is here emphatic, she virtually excludes the Jews from all family membership. Some expositors, however, find nothing more in *our*, than a community of the Samaritans with the Jews, in the honor and privilege of calling Jacob their father. According to Josephus (Antiq. IX. 14 § 2; XI. 8 § 6), they pretended to have derived their descent from Joseph. *Which gave us this well*, as his lineal descendants and rightful heirs. Here again she brings out her strong Samaritan nationality. She refers perhaps to the reputed gift of this field and well to Joseph (see N. on v. 5), from whom, as above cited from Josephus, the Samaritans claimed to have descended. *And drank thereof himself*, thus showing his sense of the excellency of the water. 'Now art thou a greater or better judge of what is good water, than Jacob, who at such pains dug this

deep well, and drank thereof *both he and his children*, and as an evidence of its abundant supply, *his cattle* also?' This was intended as a final and unanswerable argument, as to the superior qualities of this well over any well, fountain, or cistern, to which the Jewish traveller might have access.

13. Our Lord in his reply does not depreciate the excellence of Jacob's well. He simply remarks what the woman, with all her zeal for the honor of the well, could not but admit, that its water would only temporarily quench thirst; whereas the water which was his to give, if once taken, would ever after prevent thirst, and be a perennial fountain springing forth to everlasting life. Thus graciously did our Lord condescend to enlighten this woman, as to the object of his mission, to give spiritual life to all who should believe in his name.

14. *Whosoever drinketh*, &c. In the corresponding phrase in v. 13, the present participle is employed denoting habitual or customary action, *he that drinketh from time to time* of the water of this well. But here the participle is changed to a verb, and the tense is that which in Greek is employed of an act considered as only once performed, *he that once drinks*. Our English translation overlooks this important and significant change of construction. *I shall give him*. The third person now gives place to the first, the conversation having reached that point which demanded the most open freedom and directness. The pronoun is emphatic: 'I whom you regard as so inferior in dignity to your father Jacob.' A recurrence to v. 12 will show that in a tone of remark, which might almost be characterized as rude, Jacob's

15^o The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I

q Ch. 6:34; & 17:2, 8; Ro. 6:23; 1 Jo. 5:20.

dignity had been referred to by the woman, as proof of the superiority of the water which he had provided for his posterity, over that furnished by any one, who had no more claims to station or pre-eminence than the stranger with whom she was conversing. *Shall never thirst*; literally, *shall not at all thirst forever*, the expression being one of great emphasis. "It is equivalent to saying that he should always be capable of satisfying his spiritual need (6:35; Matt. 5:6), as is explained in the next sentence, where the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the source of all spiritual blessedness, is denoted by the expression *in him a well of water*; see 7:38; 14:17." Webster and Wilkinson. *But the water that I shall give him*. This is not an unmeaning tautology, but is designed to give pre-eminence to the fact referred to in v. 10, that Jesus was the one in whose possession was this living water. *Shall be in him*, &c. The idea is, that when once received into the soul, this water becomes a perennial fountain, whence issue living streams to gladden and refresh God's children forever. Hence there is no occasion for a second supply, the soul being incapable of further thirst by the never-failing fountain of spiritual life within. This does not imply that the soul that has been refreshed with this wondrous water of life, is thereby rendered independent of God's continued and gracious assistance. The idea is simply that the reception of this water secures to the soul eternal blessedness, becoming as it does through the grace of God, a perennial fountain of life, which effectually prevents the soul of the believer from relapsing into its previous state of thirst and spiritual death. *Springing up*; literally, *leaping, bounding*, applied generally to the motion of living beings, but here metaphorically employed of the flowing forth of the water of life. So the words *unto (into. Winer) everlasting life*, are conformed to the idea of a

thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

stream of water, which rests not until it has reached the great ocean. Thus the water of salvation has a heavenward current, so that all who drink of the living stream, will eventually reach that place and be happy in the presence and love of God. This shows that *never*, in the preceding clause, is not to be explained simply of this life, but reaches forward to the life which is to come, and is a blessed negation of all spiritual thirst throughout the ages of eternity. So Tholuck: "*Springing up into everlasting life* expresses, that death not only does not interrupt this life, this communion with God (11:25), but that it rather brings it to perfection."

15. With this declaration of the wonderful virtues of the water which the Jewish stranger professed his ability to give, the Samaritan woman was so carried away, that she seemed no longer disposed to panegyricize Jacob's well, but exclaimed, as did the Jews in reference to the bread of heaven (7:34), through a similar misapprehension as to its nature, *Sir, give me this water*. Had she stopped here, we might have hoped that she had obtained some insight into the spiritual import of our Saviour's words. But when she adds, *that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw*, she makes it manifest that she understands its reference to some spring or well, of whose hidden virtues this stranger had in some way been made acquainted. In view of this she in turn becomes the suppliant, and our Lord might have retorted upon her the reply which she had made (v. 9) to his request for water to allay his thirst. But he is too magnanimous to make any allusion to her previous discourteous reference to his request—a matter too trivial to interrupt a conversation tending to such high spiritual results—and in order to give her a more perfect knowledge of his mission, directs her to go and call her husband. She had asked for this water of life, although with little or no conception of its real nature

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

and efficacy, and our Lord turns her not away. He commences to instruct and prepare her for the reception of the spiritual gift, which he was about to bestow upon her. The first step was to convince her of her personal ill-desert, and to show her that He who was thus dealing with her conscience, was One, who could read her heart, and was intimately acquainted with all the sins of her past life. Such we see from v. 29 was the effect produced upon her mind, by the searching exposure of her secret life, in the way here related.

16. The design of our Lord's direction in bidding the woman call her husband, as has been said, was evidently to probe her conscience, and prepare the way for her reception of the truth, by bringing to light her past sinful course of life. The woman may at first have thought, that this direction was designed to let her husband share in the labor of bearing home this water so valuable in its properties. *Come hither.* She had expressed her wish to possess this wondrous water, in order that she might not be under any further necessity of repairing to the well to draw, yet here was the place whither she was to come for the water of life. How gradually was she conducted by her divine instructor, from her low and material views of the blessing in his possession, to a spiritual conception of his office and mission. As to what some allege, that our Lord was ignorant that she had no husband, his language by no means indicates this, but he assumes temporarily the fact, that she was not living out of lawful wedlock, in order to bring her to see and acknowledge her guilt. "He may have uttered the word with such a look and tone, as to convict the woman at once, and this is to us most probable." Stier.

17. The woman's reply was literally true, and yet was not a full and ingenuous confession of guilt. One who had

been lawfully married, and was afterwards a widow, might have made the same reply. But our Lord by a single word, convinces her that deception of no sort can be practised upon him. *Thou hast well said*, i. e. thou hast spoken the literal truth. Tholuck and Stier find a slight shade of irony in the word *well*, showing to the woman that he perceived the hesitating falseness of her half-confession. The word here rendered *husband*, literally signifies *man*, and hence involves an ambiguity, which the woman seized upon in her reply. Her answer might have been interpreted, that she had no husband, or that she had no man with whom she was living in unlawful connection. In his reply, Jesus holds her to the first sense, and reaffirms the truth of her declaration that she had no husband, proceeding, however, at once to show her in what sense he took the word *man*, by asserting that she had already been married to five husbands. In the repetition of the words of the woman *I have no husband*, Jesus changes the order to *a husband I have not*. This with a slight emphasis on *husband*, was designed to show the woman, that he was not ignorant of the relation which this man sustained to her.

18. This verse contains the reason why the woman had *well* said she had no husband. *Thou hast had five husbands*. These had been her lawful husbands, but in some way, either by their death, or by divorce, she had become free to marry again, and eventually formed the unlawful connection, in which she was now living with one who was not her husband. That there was some guilt attaching to her from the frequency of her marriage, is quite evident from the general scope of our Lord's conversation with her, as well as from what is implied in her own words in v. 29. If her husbands died natural deaths, she evinced great and

hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, ^a I perceive that thou art a prophet.

^h Lu. 7: 16; & 24: 19; ch. 6: 14; & 7: 40.

unbecoming haste to exchange her widowhood for a renewed marriage state. Such a providence, as that which deprived her of these husbands so soon after marriage, would have led to retirement and reformation of life in a female of good repute, rather than to contracting in such eager haste new marriage alliances. The argument against her good name gathers still greater force, from the probability that she had been separated from some at least of her five husbands by divorce. "It is likely that many methods of dissolving the nuptial bond had concurred here; in any case there is indicated an immoderate passion in this woman, which could not be extinguished by any separation or widowhood." Stier. However all this may have been, it was just here that our Lord probed her conscience, and aroused her to a sense of sin and ill desert, from which she found no relief but in his pardoning love. *Whom thou now hast*, i. e. with whom thou art now living. *Is not thy husband*. There is no positive evidence that the woman was living with this man in adulterous intercourse, as all her husbands may have been dead. The connection was certainly an illicit one, and referred to as it was in such pointed terms, by one who showed himself conversant with all the things she ever did (v. 29), it served greatly to deepen the convictions of guilt, which the review of her past life had awakened. *In that saidst thou truly* (literally, *the truth*). Alford takes notice that our Lord employs *the truth*, instead of *truly*, because reference is had to the one thing referred to, and not to the more general expression or spirit of her reply. So Winer: *this hast thou spoken true*.

19. *Sir, I perceive*, &c. She inferred correctly that from no source short of a

20 Our fathers worshipped in ⁱ this mountain; and ye say, that in ^k Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

ⁱ Ju. 9: 7.

^k De. 12: 5, 11; 1 Ki. 9: 3; 2 Ch. 7: 12.

divine revelation, could he, a stranger and a Jew, have become so intimately acquainted with the leading events of her life. See v. 29. The pronoun *thou* in *thou art a prophet*, is emphatic in the original, the woman recurring to the disparaging use she had made of it in her question *art thou greater*, &c. in v. 12. The original Greek brings out all these shades of emphasis, beyond the power of the English to express without circumlocution.

20. Expositors are by no means agreed, as to the spirit and intent of this apparently abrupt change of the subject on the part of the woman. Some attribute it to a desire on her part to dismiss a theme, so unpleasant as the retrospect of her past life would furnish. So Ebrard: "Profoundly ashamed, and brought to a piercing sense of sin, she is disposed in the natural whirl of her thoughts, to break off the present subject." Others think that her natural love of discussion was awakened by finding that she had fallen in with one, who gave such evidence that he was a prophet or religious teacher of no ordinary rank. But her acknowledgment of him as a prophet, in view of the intimate knowledge he had of her past life, does not justify us in supposing that she would have been so rude, as to change the whole tenor of the conversation, or seek to engage in a controversy with one, who in the brief words he had uttered, gave evidence that he knew well the most secret acts of her life. For her to suppose that she could divert the mind of this grave stranger from her sinful life, by starting captious questions in regard to the religious differences of the Jews and Samaritans, would argue not only that she was a hardened and thoughtless person, but destitute also of ordinary discernment.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this

mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

7 Mal. 1:11; 1 Ti. 2:8.

I prefer therefore to assign to her words a more worthy motive, than, either a desire to evade the rebuke to which she was exposed from her past misconduct, or to indulge in her natural love of controversy. She sought to be enlightened on a point, which in her present state of mind, stood directly in the way of her intelligent worship of God. If the Jews were right in maintaining that worship acceptable to God, could be performed only at Jerusalem, how could she, a Samaritan, perform those acts of devotion, which were the necessary accompaniment of a life of piety? She wished to be instructed on this point, and she honestly made known the difficulty under which her mind labored. Had her language evinced a disputatious spirit, or a desire to ward off convictions of sin, she would have been rebuked by our Lord. But there is not the least indication of censure in his reply. It was the kind language of instruction, adapted to remove the very doubts and difficulties, under which, as has been remarked, her mind must have been laboring. There can be little doubt, that her attitude, at this time, was that of a convicted sinner, inquiring the way to God, and how He might be acceptably worshipped. The preceding verse was a virtual confession to Jesus, that her life had been such as he had briefly described it, and she proceeds to inquire how she may come to God, whose prophet the Jewish stranger has shown himself to be.

Our fathers undoubtedly refers to the ancient patriarchs, although some expositors think that the expression denotes their more immediate Samaritan ancestors. But this would be an abandonment of the vantage ground, which the Samaritans had in the greater antiquity of their place of worship, compared with Jerusalem; which city did not come into the full possession of Israel, until the reign of David (2 Sam.

5: 6-9). It should be remembered also how readily the woman referred to Jacob, whom she had styled *our father* (v. 11), as having honored the well by partaking of its water, and bequeathed it to his descendants. *In this mountain*, i. e. Mount Gerizim, on which the Samaritans maintained that Abraham and Jacob had built an altar, and offered sacrifices upon it to God; which was the reason why it was selected as the mountain, where blessings were to be pronounced (Deut. 27: 12). It lay to the south of the vale of Nablûs, and Mount Ebal, to the north. Dr. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 203) says that "near the eastern end the vale is not more than sixty rods wide, and that just there the tribes may be supposed to have assembled, to hear the blessings and the curses read by the Levites. On Gerizim was erected the temple of the Samaritan people, where officiated a high priest, after the manner of the temple at Jerusalem. See Joseph. Antiq. XI. 8 §§ 2-4. This temple was destroyed by Hyrcanus (B. C. 129), after it had stood 200 years. The ruins of this temple are still to be seen, and sufficiently attest its magnificence and greatness. *Ye say*, in opposition to our claim for the sanctity of this mountain. *Is the place* referred to in Deut. 12: 5. *Where men ought* (according to the passage just quoted) *to worship*. The verb rendered *to worship*, signifies *to adore*, but in so general a sense as to embrace every form of religious adoration.

21. Our Lord replies to the woman that a dispensation is now about to be ushered in, in which ceremonial forms and prescribed places of worship, are to give place to a spiritual worship confined to no particular people or place. In this gracious annunciation he professes his claim to the title of prophet, which the woman had given him. *Woman*. He thus bespeaks her earnest attention. *Believe me*. This is the only

22 Ye worship^m ye know not what: we know what we wor-

m 2 Ki. 17: 22.

instance in which our Lord makes use of this expression, his weighty declarations being usually introduced by *verily I say unto you*. His annunciation would fall so strangely on the ears of this woman, that he condescends to ask her full belief in what he was about to say. The truth here announced is one, with which in the light of God's word we are so familiar, that we are in danger of not appreciating the great demand, which it made upon this woman's faith. *The hour cometh*. The time is at hand. See v. 23. *Shall neither in this mountain* (i. e. Gerizim), *nor yet in Jerusalem*, where was Mount Zion, and the temple on Mount Moriah. The idea is that these were not to be exclusive places of worship, all local distinctions being about to be removed under this new and spiritual dispensation. The Samaritans were not to be compelled to go to Jerusalem (see Acts 8: 14); nor on the other hand, were the Jews to resort to Mount Gerizim, as being the only acceptable place of worship. *The Father*. There can hardly be a doubt that our Lord employs this word, which shows the peculiar relation subsisting between Him and the Son, primarily to unfold a great Messianic truth to the woman; and perhaps also as a gentle hint, that there was one common Father, towards whom there subsisted relations of a much higher nature, than those to which she took such pride in referring (vs. 12, 20). The word has almost the sense of *my Father*, but is so expressed as to denote his paternal relation to all, Jews and Samaritans, and his being the only true Father, all earthly relations in comparison with this being of no account.

22. Having thus announced the approach of a dispensation which would subvert all local claims of pre-eminence, even of Jerusalem itself, our Lord takes occasion to correct the erroneous views of the Samaritans, in regard to the question concerning which they had so long been at variance with the Jews.

ship; forⁿ salvation is of the Jews.

n Is. 2: 3; Lu. 24: 47; Ro. 9: 4, 5.

In v. 21, our Lord, as an arbiter between the parties to the dispute, takes a position apart from either, and embraces in the pronoun *ye*, both the Jews and Samaritans. But now he speaks as a Jew, and in reference to the point at issue, employs the pronouns *ye Samaritans*, and *we Jews*. As Tholuck well remarks, Jesus could not be *man* in fact, without belonging to a distinct nationality. *Ye worship*. This pronoun and the *we* following, are emphatic and in strong contrast. *Ye know not what*, i. e. you have no distinct conception of the object or proper mode of worship. The views of the Samaritans in regard to the Messiah, were in some respects very erroneous, inasmuch as that personage was declared in prophecy to spring from the tribe of Judah; a prophecy which they wholly ignored in claiming him to be of Samaritan origin. The word *what*, which in the original is neuter, and is therefore opposed to a personal Deity, is to be taken in a very general and extensive sense, referring not only to their erroneous conceptions of God, but to the whole religious views of the Samaritans, which were very defective. They received as their Scriptures only the Pentateuch, and hence had precluded themselves from the religious instruction, which the Jews derived from the remaining books of the Old Testament. This together with the superstitious and false views of God and his worship, which they had inherited from their heathenish ancestors, rendered true to the very letter our Lord's declaration, that they knew not what they worshipped. *Salvation is of the Jews*. This is advanced as a proof that the Jews were intelligent worshippers of God. The argument is that the Jews had precept, in regard to their object and form of worship; and as a proof of this, from them was to come the Messiah (Gen. 49: 10, Isa. 10: 11), which necessarily implied their knowledge and worship of the true God. *Salvation*; literally,

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in

o Phi. 3: 3.

the salvation with reference to the Messiah, expected alike by Jews and Samaritans, and hence here put, the abstract for the concrete, for *the Saviour, the Messiah*. See Ns. on Luke 1: 69; 2: 39. It is employed doubtless in opposition to the low views, which the Samaritans entertained of the coming Messiah, that he was to be merely a Prophet or great Teacher. In the use of this single word, our Lord poured a flood of light upon this woman's mind, in regard to the nature of his mission, and thus prepared her for the work of spreading the news of salvation among the inhabitants of her city. It is remarkable that in view of this revelation, which our Lord condescended to make of his office and mission into the world, the Samaritans seem to have reached higher and more spiritual views of his character, than his disciples themselves, at least until the closing days of his ministry. The Samaritans were in gross ignorance compared with the Jews, but yet their prejudices against a spiritual Messiah were trifling, compared with those which blinded the Jews to the evidence, which our Lord so abundantly furnished, that his mission was to save men from their sins. See N. on v. 42. *Of the Jews* is stronger than *from the Jews*, the idea being *out of the midst of*, the expression being equivalent to a positive declaration, that the Messiah was to be a Jew and not a Samaritan.

23. Jesus now recurs again to the spiritual worship, which God demands from all his creatures. *But the hour cometh*. See N. on v. 21. *And now is*. This is added to show that the spiritual worship was already established. The woman is kindly informed, that there is no necessity of her resorting to Jerusalem to render acceptable worship to God, which she may have inferred from what was stated in the preceding verse that salvation was of the Jews. Our Lord declares that henceforth God

° spirit^r and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

p Ch. 1: 17.

would have all his worshippers approach him in the sincerity of spiritual devotion, without regard to external forms or prescribed places of worship. The hour was coming, when this great truth would be illustrated and confirmed by his death for the salvation of the world, and would be publicly proclaimed by his followers, as the gospel of good tidings for all mankind. *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 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 the worship here spoken of is exercised. This imparts to the passage a deep significancy, and shows what constitutes the sincere worship of the heart, as opposed to every thing formal and pretentious. It need hardly be said, however, that our Lord does not here or elsewhere decri any such forms and observances, as are suitable and necessary to the wants of orderly religious worship. But these are never to be substituted for that true and humble devotion, which has its seat in the heart renewed and sanctified by the indwelling Spirit of God. *For the Father seeketh, &c.* This is both confirmatory of the preceding sentiment, and an encouragement to all who are timid in appropriating to themselves the glorious and fundamental truth here uttered. The discourse is not here of the relations between God and his creatures, which form the ground and necessity of this spiritual worship; or of God's requirements that his worshippers shall thus approach him. This would make the spiritual worship here spoken of one of simple duty. But *the Father seeketh* this spiritual approach to him. He earnestly desires that his worshippers shall possess this character. The woman need not fear in thus wor-

24 ^r God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh,

shipping God, that she would do other than what was in accordance with his infinite pleasure. The inference is however clear, that if God seeks such to worship him, He will reject all who refuse to come to Him in the way here proposed. *Such* spiritual worshippers. *To worship him*; literally, *as his worshippers*. The character of God's true worshippers, rather than any specific act, is referred to.

24. This verse denotes the great and fundamental reason, why God desires and demands spiritual worship. He is Spirit, not matter. His all-pervading presence renders one place as suitable as another for his worship. His omniscient eye sees the heart of man, and discerns its most secret motives, thoughts, and purposes. If the sincerity of the heart be wanting; if "truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51 : 6) does not characterize his worshippers, their approach to Him is a mere sham and vain pretence. The Great Spirit can be worshipped only by the *spirit* of man. Where this is wanting, mere external devotion is as ineffective, as though the worshipper were a clod of inanimate matter. Hence the essential relation of God as a Spirit to man, possessed also of a spirit, is such that man's spirit is the only part of him, which can approach God in true worship. From the spiritual essence of God, the inference then is irresistibly drawn, that *they that worship him MUST worship him in spirit and in truth*. The original of this great passage is very striking, *Spirit (is) God*. The contrast is thus rendered very emphatic, between Him and every thing gross and material, having fixed and local habitations, like the heathen divinities. A similar sentiment is found in Acts 7 : 48 ; 17 : 25. *They that worship him*, &c. This is an inference from the spiritual essence of God, asserted in the preceding clause. It is

which is called Christ : when he is come, ^r he will tell us all things.

g 2 Co. 3 : 17.
r Ver. 29, 30.

a repetition of what was declared in the preceding verse, and rendered strongly emphatic, by its being a deduction from the very nature and essence of the divine mind.

25. The reply of the woman was not one of unbelief, or a desire to divert the conversation from her own individual condition, but of joyful anticipation of the times of the Messiah, when all these matters should be explained, and whatever was obscure cleared up. The Samaritans in common with the Jews, believed in a coming Messiah, but regarded him less in the light of a temporal king, than of a great prophet (Deut. 18 : 15, 18), who would settle all points of controversy, rectify that which was wrong, revise and reconstruct the social organization, and, in a word, introduce a new order of things. It is thought by some expositors, that the woman had some suspicion awakened in her mind, that he who was thus conversing with her was the Messiah, and that she addressed him with these words, in order to draw from him some expression, which would solve her doubts on this point. But I can hardly think, that she had yet surmised that he was more than an eminent prophet or religious teacher. It cannot be denied, however, that the turn of conversation had awakened in her mind thoughts of the Messiah. So Lange : "His words had quickened the miserable germ of Samaritan Messiah-hope into life." *Which is called Christ*. These words which are wanting in the Syriac version, are regarded by many critics, as those of the Evangelist, added for the sake of explanation to his Gentile readers. But I agree with Alford, that in that case, we should have expected in v. 29, *the Messias* instead of *the Christ*. His explanatory clauses are also introduced in a different way. See 1 : 42 ; 19 : 13, 17. It

26 Jesus saith unto her, I * that speak unto thee am *he*.

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?

s Ch. 9: 37; Mat. 26: 63, 64; Ma. 14: 61, 62.

is quite probable that the Greek word *Christ*, had begun to be used in common parlance for *Messias*, of which it was the translation, and that the woman employed both forms, in the usual verboseness of free conversation. *Will tell*; literally, *will announce, declare* as an authorized interpreter of the will and purpose of God. It conforms to the Samaritan idea, that new revelations were to be made by the Messiah. *All things* in regard to the object and forms of religious worship. The revelation of the Messiah in the Pentateuch, was simply that of a Prophet. Hence the Samaritans, who acknowledged the authority of this portion of the Scriptures only, did not fall into the error of the Jews in supposing, as they did from the prophetic writings, that Christ was to be a great temporal conqueror and king. But from their possession and acknowledgment of only a portion of the Old Testament, they fell into the opposite and almost equally great error, of making the functions of the Messiah only those of a prophet or religious teacher, ignoring altogether his kingly and priestly character.

26. Our Lord now condescends, in the plainest and most unequivocal terms, to declare himself the Messiah. It is useless for us to inquire why at so early a stage of his public ministry, he thus made himself known to this Samaritan woman, and in directness of language, such as he scarcely at any time employed with his disciples. There were reasons for this probably in the peculiar position of the Samaritans, who with far less light than the Jews, in whose possession were the whole scriptures of the Old Testament, had more spiritual views of the Messiah, and were in a more advanced state to receive the annunciation of his advent. But the reason for this open declaration of his Messiahship to this poor sin-laden woman, must after all be referred

to his infinite and sovereign pleasure, which chose her and her fellow-townsmen to be the depositaries of this great truth, not yet openly revealed to his own beloved disciples. *I that speak unto thee am he*; literally, *I am (he) who am speaking unto you*. The pronoun in the original, refers this great declaration and profession of Messiahship most emphatically to Jesus himself. 'I, a stranger to you, one who in his weariness and thirst asked of you a drink of water, with no retinue, pomp or display, a plain man, am He the Messiah.' Some think that our Lord hastened to make this annunciation, on account of the near approach of his disciples (see v. 27). But there is no abruptness in the discourse, indicating that he hastened to declare a truth, which would have been approached in a more gradual and orderly manner, had he not been in danger of interruption from his disciples. All that can be said is, that it so happened, that just as he made this sublime declaration of his Messianic office to the woman, his disciples came up as here related. This leaves the discourse uninterrupted and complete, and makes no unnatural chasm or sudden breaking off, through any premature disclosure of the great truth, which our Lord was gradually preparing the woman to receive. The words *who am speaking to you*, evidently are designed to refer to what the woman had said in v. 25, respecting the Messiah, as the Revealer of great religious truths. Our Lord informs her that she has been all this while receiving from his lips, the very revelation which she was expecting from the Messiah.

27. *Upon this*, i. e. at the very time he said this. It does not necessarily imply, that they heard the declaration of his Messiahship. The woman may have received this annunciation in profound and wondering silence; and be-

28 The woman then left her waterpot, 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?

z Ver. 25.

fore she had so far recovered herself as to make any reply, the disciples came up. This is the most natural view of the case. *Marvelled*. The tense of this verb denotes their remaining fixed in silent astonishment. *With the woman*. The absence of the article in the original, has led some to translate *with a woman*. Such expositors find the principal ground of surprise, that our Lord should have so far transgressed the laws of general decorum, at least according to Rabbinical propriety, as to converse with a woman alone at a public well. This seems to be the view of Tholuck and Stier. But in the first place, the criticism overlooks the well-established grammatical law, that the omission of the article after the governing preposition, imparts no indefiniteness to the noun. The translation of our common version is therefore correct. It was not that Jesus was with *a* woman, which excited the wonder of his disciples, but that he should hold familiar converse with this particular woman, who was evidently a Samaritan, with whom the Jews had such dealings as resulted only from absolute necessity. They had caught only his very last words if any, and therefore had no positive knowledge of the subject of their conversation; but there was doubtless an earnestness in his address, and a deep, fixed, wondering attention on the part of the woman, which arrested their attention and excited their surprise. *Yet no man* (literally, *no one*) *said*, &c. There was no doubt a majesty and dignity in the aspect of our Lord, who had just revealed to the woman his Messiahship, which awed his disciples into silence, and restrained them from proposing such questions to the woman, as *what seekest thou*, or to Jesus, *why talkest thou with her*. The phrase *what seekest thou*, which refers most probably to the woman, is equivalent to our *what is your*

business? or *what is your object?* Some expositors refer both questions to our Lord, in the sense, what business can you have with this Samaritan woman, and why are you thus conversing with her? But this appears to be less natural. Such was their reverence to their Master, that they did not presume even to ask the woman, why she had conversed with Jesus, or what was her business with him.

28. *Then* is not here temporal, but inferential *therefore*. The presence of the disciples gave the woman opportunity to leave Jesus, for the purpose of communicating this strange intelligence to her townsmen. *Left her waterpot*. How does this simple incident illustrate the ardor and haste, with which she flew with the strange and joyful news to her city. She lost sight altogether of the object for which she had come to the well. As Jesus preferred the doing of his Father's will to temporal food (v. 34), so this woman regarded the conveying of water from the well as of no account, in comparison with being the bearer of such news to her townsmen. *Into the city* of Sychar. *To the men*, i. e. her fellow-citizens. They were probably the leading men of the city.

29, 30. *Come, see a man*, &c. "Come, see, and experience like myself, whether this man be like other men, whether he be not what he declares himself to be—the Messiah." Stier. *Which told me all things*. In the excitement under which she labored, she speaks as though every circumstance of her life had been unveiled, although the leading events only were referred to by our Lord. These few words, however, had served to convince her, that no event of her life was concealed from his view; and what she reported to the men of her city was therefore virtually true. It is worthy of notice, that her first words have reference to the exposure

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 In the mean while his dis-

ciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

thus made of her sinful life; and that she says nothing of what our Lord had declared respecting himself, but refers the proof of his Messiahship solely to his supernatural knowledge of her history. Thus the Samaritans are induced to visit the stranger, not from the testimony which he bore of himself, but from that of the woman respecting him. The Messiah, when he came, was to tell them all things (v. 25). The Jewish stranger had evinced his power to do this, by his revelation of her past history; therefore he could be no other than the Christ which was to come. *Is not this the Christ*, is that form of question in the original, which implies a negative answer. The woman did not adopt this form, because she had any doubt herself as to the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, but as a modest disclaimer of being so presumptuous as to decide this question independent of the judgment of her townsmen. It also indicates that the report which she brought of a present Messiah, was too good news to be true. Thus it might be translated, like our suggestive form of interrogation, '*this is not the Christ, is he?*' Can it be possible that the Messiah has come, and that I have seen and conversed with him?' *Then went they out*, &c. There seems to have been no delay on the part of these Samaritans. As they went forth on the mere testimony of this woman, it shows that she was a person of some influence and standing, despite her notorious character. Stier attributes the impulse which actuated the people, to the idea of following *such* a woman to see *such* a man. "A man who could tell them all their sins, and yet make them so happy, as they already see this woman to be." *Came*; literally, *were on their way*.

31. While the woman was thus absent on her mission to the men of her city, the disciples who had returned with provisions, urged him to refresh himself with food, previously to their

resuming their journey. He had become, however, so interested in the work of love thus providentially devolved upon him, that he was for the time insensible to hunger and thirst. Stier calls the offering at this time of their earthly bread, "a very unseasonable interjection of the disciples." So Tholuck: "the disciples here display precisely the same incapacity of soaring from the sensuous to the spiritual, which had been displayed by the woman." But while this was doubtless true, do we not see in their solicitude that he should refresh himself with food, the most tender devotedness and care for his physical wants? Would not something have been wanting to this scene of love and spiritual ecstasy in the enjoyment of God's favor and the doing of His will, if the disciples had not, in their tender concern for his welfare, "*prayed him, saying, Master, eat?*"

32. *I have meat to eat*, &c. The pronouns *I* and *you* are emphatic, and bring out in strong antithesis the peculiar mission of Jesus, which was above and beyond any thing which his disciples could share, or at that time comprehend. There is no blame in this reply, but only the declaration of a great principle, that while natural food is necessary, it is to be regarded as subordinate to the higher spiritual nourishment, derived from obedience to God and activity in his service. The word rendered *meat*, literally signifies *an eating*, and refers rather to nourishment for the time being, than the food itself, the means of that nourishment (see N. on v. 34). It is often employed, however, in a metaphorical sense for that which is eaten. See 6 : 27; Rom. 14 : 17; Col. 2 : 16. *Know not of* refers not only to the source whence this food was supplied, but to its essential properties. The disciples were at this time ignorant of the essential union of the Son with the Father, and the ineffable delight which Jesus experienced in

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 *ought* to eat?

34 Jesus saith unto them, " My

u Job 23:12; ch. 6:33; & 17:4; & 19:30.
w Mt. 9:37; Lu. 10:2.

doing his Father's will. Stier says that these words were uttered with a designed and exciting tone of mystery, which would prepare the way for a future disclosure.

33. *Therefore* in consequence of this declaration, that he was in possession of nourishment of which they were in ignorance. *Said the disciples*, &c. Even in this early stage of his ministry, there was a dignity in the bearing of our Lord, which repelled undue familiarity, and checked all vain and frivolous questions. Hence they do not propose the question to him, whether any one in their absence had given him food to eat, but address the inquiry in low tones to one another. But our Lord knowing their conversation, condescended to enlighten them on the nature of this heavenly food, with which he had been refreshed during their absence. *Hath any man*; literally, *any one*, there being a covert allusion to the woman. The word *any one*, in the original, is both masculine and feminine. The form of the question in the original, presupposes a negative reply, inasmuch as they were in the country of the Samaritans. See N. on 8:22.

34. Our Lord now shows his disciples, that his words are to be taken in a spiritual, and not in a material sense. *My meat*. A different word is here employed, from that found in v. 32. There reference was had to the reception or partaking of food; here, to the food itself as the means of nourishment. *Is to do*, is literally *that I may do*, the reference being not only to his actual doing, but his governing purpose to do his Father's will. "The fundamental thought is the joy which is experienced in doing with prospect of

meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

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.

continually doing; the looking forward from the beginning, and at every step to the consummation of all labor." Stier. The word *will*, is here used in the sense which it has in Matt. 7:21, on which see Note. *To finish* (literally, *that I may finish*), i. e. to bring to a full end or completion. The sentiment is parallel to that of Luke 12:50, on which see Note. Our Lord had a work to accomplish, voluntary indeed on his part, yet, as related to the plan of redemption, rendering him subordinate to the Father who sent him, and indeed in the language of Scripture, reducing him to the condition of a servant. See Isa. 42:1, 19; 52:13; Zech. 3:8; Matt. 12:18; Phil. 2:7. Hence the work or service in which Christ was engaged, is called *His work*.

35. Our Lord now illustrates the necessity of activity and zeal in his Father's service, from the analogies of a harvest, which when ready to be gathered in, must receive the prompt and undivided attention of the husbandman. The words *say not ye*, refer to a common and proverbial saying of a four months' waiting time between the sowing and the harvest, intended to designate for the encouragement of the husbandman, the short but fixed time which would intervene between the seed time and harvest. It is not necessary to the purpose for which this proverbial saying is here introduced, to suppose that when our Lord uttered it, there wanted four months to the harvest. The simple idea embodied in this very common saying, is that the natural harvest was to be waited for in patience, since until it had fully come, the sickle could not be thrust in. But not so the spiritual harvest. There wanted

36 ^y And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit

^y Da. 12: 3.

unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

no *four months* to its approach. No proverb like that applied to the distant but sure approach of the natural harvest, could be used respecting it. The fields were always white for the harvest. The great work of gathering in souls for the service of God, and the enjoyment of His favor, was a present one, and would always be so to the end of time. The illustration from the natural to the spiritual harvest, is here one of contrast and not of resemblance. In the former, there must be a waiting for the harvest to mature; in the latter, the grain was always ripe for the sickle. The pronoun *ye*, is put generically for the people, among whom this proverb was a familiar expression. 'Is it not a proverbial saying of *ye Jews?*' *Lift up your eyes*, &c. The Samaritans may at this time have been seen in the distance, approaching him from their city. To these our Saviour may have directed the attention of his disciples, as he uttered these words. They were in a state of readiness to hear and obey the truth. The field so far as they were concerned, was already white for the harvest. The word *white*, refers to the color of the stalk when the grain is fully ripened. *Already* is opposed to the *four months*, which marked the interval between seed time, or the springing forth of the tender blade, and the harvest. There is no such intervening time, between the sowing of the seed and the gathering of the harvest in the spiritual husbandry. The one follows the other in quick succession. Indeed the sowing of the spiritual seed is at times simultaneous with the harvest, such a ready reception is given to God's truth, and so sudden and rapid is its transforming influence upon the heart.

36-38. These verses are closely connected in sense, and it will be seen that a strictly logical order would require their inversion. Verse 38 discloses the fact, that the apostles had entered a

field of labor, on which a great preparatory work had been performed by other and previous laborers. This rendered true the saying referred to in v. 37, and the result of this division of labor was, that both he who performed the preparatory work of sowing, and he who followed with the sickle, were alike to rejoice in the fruit gathered unto life eternal. This is the sentiment of v. 36. But the inverted order of the argument renders the whole statement more emphatic and impressive, by carrying the mind from the impartial distribution of the reward of this service, back to the great principle which underlies the whole subject. The close and logical connection which subsists between these verses, will be seen more fully in the explication which follows.

36. *He that reapeth*, &c. The figure of a spiritual harvest is here continued. The reapers are the apostles, the sower in the present instance is Jesus himself. The sentiment is finely illustrated, by the comparison of this visit to the Samaritan city, with the subsequent missionary visit recorded in Acts 8: 5-25. *Wages*. This includes of course the joy and happiness which accompany a service so delightful, as that of laboring to promote the salvation of men. Hence, as Alford remarks, these *wages* correspond to the *meat*, which our Lord, the great Sower of truth, declared to be furnished him in doing the will of Him that sent him. But the great reward is undoubtedly that which is brought to view in the next clause, and is therefore not so much co-ordinate with the first clause, as illustrative and explanatory of it. We might translate and explain it, *receiveth wages, even the gathering of fruit unto life eternal*. The words *gathereth fruit*, refer to the souls saved from sin and death, and rendered meet for eternal life. This shows that the first clause, *he that reapeth receiveth wages*, refers to a spiritual harvest. *That*

37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

38 I sent you to reap that

both he that soweth, &c. denotes the result of these spiritual labors and this harvest of souls. The laborers in God's husbandry both sowers and reapers, shall all rejoice together in the world of happiness above. Although Christ is especially referred to here as the Great Sower, yet in a subordinate sense, all his ministers who preach the gospel, and all private Christians who sow the seed of eternal truth, are included in the expression *he that soweth*. To the labors of such dispensers of the word, others succeed as reapers, but all are engaged in one common work of love, and shall alike rejoice at the precious results of their labors.

37. The sentiment of the preceding verse is appropriately illustrated and enforced by the proverbial saying here referred to, which, although primarily used of what takes place in the vicissitude of human affairs, where one man harvests that which was sown by another, is equally applicable to spiritual sowing and reaping. There is this difference, however, between the temporal and spiritual application of this truth. In the natural world, this mutation of things takes place usually to the prejudice of the one who sows; whereas in the spiritual world, it subtracts not in the least from the joy of the sower, that another enters upon his labors and becomes the reaper.

38. This verse in the textual exposition (not however in the logical order, see N. on vs. 36-38), is the application of the preceding proverb. *I the lord of the harvest*. See Matt. 9 : 38 ; Luke 10 : 2. *Sent you to reap*. In the use of the past tense, our Lord speaks by way of anticipation, as though his work were already accomplished, and his disciples sent forth on their mission. As a fact, however, they had been called to the work, and had already entered upon their preparatory discipleship, although not yet formally set apart to

whereon ye bestowed no labour : other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

their apostleship. In a certain sense, although to an eminent degree themselves the sowers of truth, they were reapers of a harvest from seed sown by the prophets and religious teachers, who had preceded them, and prepared the way for the proclamation of the gospel. This was emphatically true of their relation to Jesus himself, who prepared the soil and sowed the seed of truth, from which in the early ages of the church such an abundant harvest was gathered. *Other men*, i. e. the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and especially our Lord himself. Alford finds the reference to our Lord only, the plural being used to correspond with *ye* in the second member. Such also is the exposition of Tholuck and other evangelical German commentators. Olshausen, on the other hand, excludes all reference to Jesus, inasmuch as he is the Lord of the harvest. But the figure drawn from the harvest, is employed in a variety of ways, sometimes referring to the end of the world (Matt. 13 : 37, 39); sometimes to those whose iniquity is ripe for punishment (Rev. 14 : 15); sometimes to the converts to be gathered into Christ's kingdom (Matt. 9 : 37, 38 ; Luke 10 : 2), and sometimes to the reward according to his works, which each one shall receive (2 Cor. 9 : 6 ; Gal. 6 : 7). In accordance with this variety of applications and uses of the figure, our Lord is sometimes called the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9 : 38 ; Luke 10 : 2); at other times, the Sower of good seed (Matt. 13 : 37). In the passage before us, the whole train of thought refers to Christ, as the great Sower of the seed of truth. He had, despite his weariness and fatigue, planted the germs of truth in the heart of the Samaritan woman, and now the men of the city were approaching in numbers to see and hear for themselves. A harvest of souls, as we find in v. 41, was at once gath-

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

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

ered in, and still more abundant fruits were seen in the great ingathering in Acts 8: 5-25. But^a while special reference is had to the Lord Jesus, in a general sense, as has been remarked, the expression *other men*, may be referred to all the religious teachers who had preceded Christ, and prepared the way for his advent and mission. In a word, the special application is to Jesus himself, the Great Sower of truth; the general scope embraces all in every age, who dispense the truth, and prepare the way for a subsequent ingathering of souls into the kingdom of Christ.

39. This verse seems to have been thrown in, to account for the readiness, with which the Samaritans accompanied the woman on her return to Jesus. They were struck with the extraordinary report which she had made of the Jewish stranger, and confiding fully in the truth of what she had affirmed, became at once believers in him. Their faith was doubtless vague and indefinite, but it was sufficient to bring them to him to be confirmed and enlightened by the gracious instruction, which he vouchsafed to give them during his visit to their city. *Believed on him* as the promised Messiah. Here was an exemplification of the ripeness of the spiritual harvest. *For the saying of the woman*. Contrasted with this is *his own word* in v. 41. What the saying of the woman was, is denoted in the clause which follows, *he told me all*, &c. in reference to which see N. on v. 29.

40. The word rendered *so*, is more literally *therefore*, and resumes the narration from v. 30. *Were come unto him*, and were confirmed in the extraordinary

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for ^a we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

^a Ver. 29.

α Ch. 17: 8; 1 Jo. 4: 14.

character which the woman gave to him, by what fell from his own lips. We do not read of a single miracle performed by Jesus on this occasion. The reception given him by these Samaritans was the sole effect of the preached word, the sowing of divine truth. *To tarry*. This word refers to a long, if not a permanent continuance with them, *to remain*, *to abide* being its literal signification. *Two days*. He spent the night with them, and thus portions of two days, which in accordance with Hebrew usage are denominated *two days*. See N. on Matt. 12: 40.

41. *Many more*. The comparison is with the *many*, who believed in Jesus on account of what he said to the woman (v. 39). Webster and Wilkinson are right, however, in saying that the *many more* who believed, may well be understood to include the former *many* (v. 39), the word rendered *not* in v. 42 being literally *no longer*, "reference being had not to the former belief of some of those who spoke, as to a former belief on different grounds from those of the present." *Because of his own word*, as they themselves heard it. *His own word* is here put in contrast with the report of him, which the woman brought to her townsmen. See N. on v. 39.

42. *Not* (literally, *no longer*) *because of thy saying*, i. e. not so much on account of what the woman had said, as from his own words. See N. on v. 41. *Thy saying*; literally, *thy talk*, as opposed to the discourse of Jesus. Special reference is had, however, to her testimony referred to in vs. 29, 39. *For we have heard*, &c. This belongs to the clause *now we believe*, denoting

43 ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.

the ground or reason of their belief. Augustine draws a beautiful and striking analogy between the faith of these Samaritans, first excited through the report of the woman concerning Christ, and afterwards confirmed by his presence, and that of those, who in subsequent times believe on him, being first invited to seek him by Christian friends, but only reaching the full measure of faith, when they come to him and experience by direct communication with him, his life-giving and saving power. *The Saviour of the world*, and not simply of the Jews and Samaritans. This shows how far in advance of the Jews were these Samaritans, in their conception of the true office work of the Messiah. From their cordial reception of Jesus, and their noble confession of faith, we cannot wonder at the flourishing church, which was there built up in the earliest age of the church. Tholuck remarks that "it cannot be maintained positively, that the people actually employed the expression *Saviour of the world*." But we might doubt with as good reason, that they actually uttered the preceding words, *this is the Christ*. Their view of the Messiah as a Prophet and Revealer of truth to men, as far as it went, was much more correct, than the opinions entertained in general by the Jews; and if we may augur from the explicit declaration of his Messiahship, which our Lord made to the woman, it seems not unlikely, that he followed it up with a full disclosure to the Sycharites of his office, as a suffering, dying Redeemer of men. If it be objected to this, that his disciples must have heard it, it may be replied, that if so, their Jewish prejudices in favor of a temporal Messiah precluded their full understanding and reception of this truth; and this we know was true of them, when in a subsequent stage of his ministry, he disclosed to them the un-

44 For ^b Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

^b Mat. 13:57; Ma. 6:4; Lu. 4:24.

come truth, that he was to suffer and die at the hand of his enemies.

43. *After two days*; literally, *after the two days*, mentioned in v. 40. He did not tarry long with the Samaritans, as his official life was to be passed among the Jews, to whom the gospel was first to be preached. His brief visit and its gracious results were intended only as a foreshadowing of the free and universal proclamation of the gospel, confined to no people or country, which was to be made after his ascension. *Into Galilee*, as distinguished from Nazareth his native city. The reason why he did not go there is given in the next verse.

44. The connection and precise meaning of this verse has been variously explained. Some render the particle translated *for*, by the word *although* giving as the sense that Jesus returned into Galilee, notwithstanding the disinclination of the people to acknowledge his claims as a religious teacher, from the fact that it was his native country. But this is a sense which the Greek particle never has, and it would be presumptuous to force it upon this passage. Meyer, Neander, and others, regard it as the reason why our Lord had tarried so long in Judea, and did not go to Galilee before. They had at first shown no disposition to receive him as a religious teacher, but had become now more inclined to faith, through the miracles which had been witnessed in Jerusalem, and hence he leaves Judea and returns to Galilee. But this is forced, unnatural, and has no support from the connection with the passage with what precedes or follows. Tholuck, De Wette, and Alford, consider it as a preliminary explanation of the whole narrative which follows, indicating the difference between the Galileans and Samaritans; the former believing only when they saw signs and wonders (v. 48); the latter yielding full belief to his simple declarations re-

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, ^c having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the

^c Ch. 2: 23; & 3: 2.

specting himself. Tholuck expresses the idea thus: "By translating the Greek particle [rendered *for* in our common version] *namely, to wit*, this verse then serves to indicate why the Evangelist attributes the faith of the Galileans to their having seen the miracles performed in Jerusalem, namely, to show that this readiness was not in contradiction to the earlier words of Christ." But with all deference to these eminent expositors, this explanation is in itself dark and obscure, proceeding on a very involved construction, and forcing us to take the verb of the Greek aorist in a pluperfect sense, a thing which is admissible for the most part only in narration, when the speaker or writer wishes particularly to express the exact relation of time. The context also must demand this change of tense; whereas, in the present instance, the change is made in order to clear up a doubtful connection. The exposition which makes the passage teach that Jesus returned into Galilee, for the very reason that he would be received with distrust and disrespect by his wicked countrymen, is too absurd to demand a serious refutation. It is opposed to the wise prudence which dictated all his movements, and to the spirit and letter of the direction given to his disciples. Matt. 10: 14; Mark 6: 11; Luke 9: 5.

The most natural solution, and one which comports with the grammatical demands of the passage, is to refer it to what immediately precedes, as a reason why he did not return to Nazareth his native place, but went into some other part of Galilee. It would have been so natural for him to go to his own city or town, that the Evangelist represents Jesus himself, as giving a reason for not doing so, that a *prophet hath no honor in his own country*. This relieves us from the necessity of employing the

feast: ^d for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, ^e where he made

^d De. 16: 16. ^e Ch. 2: 1, 11.

verb in a pluperfect sense *had testified*, the saying in Luke 4: 26; Mark 6: 4, being only the varied and subsequent repetition of the same proverb, and not uttered previously, as Webster and Wilkinson seem to infer. The particle rendered *for*, is employed in its true and more usual sense, as introducing a cause or reason for what logically precedes it. The expression *his own country*, is used of Nazareth in Matt. 13: 54; Mark 6: 1; Luke 4: 23, and hence we are justified in giving it this reference here. Winer referring to v. 43, says that *country* can only mean Galilee. But for the reasons above given, I cannot concur with him in this view. *Jesus himself testified*, i. e. he gave open and emphatic utterance to this proverb. *Hath no honor*, &c. His claims to be regarded as a prophet would be rejected by his townsmen. See Ns. on Matt. 13: 57; Luke 4: 26.

45. *Received him* or welcomed him, not because they believed in him as the Messiah, but on account of the miracles, which they had seen performed by him at Jerusalem. This appears from the next clause, *having seen* (i. e. because they had seen) *all the things*, &c. See 2: 23. 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. It was also a matter of pride to them, that a Deliverer should rise up from their country, which was always held in low repute by those who dwelt in Judea. *For they also*, &c. is added by the Evangelist for the benefit of his Gentile readers, to show that the Galileans were in the practice of attending the prescribed feasts at Jerusalem.

46. *So*; literally, *therefore* in consequence of his visit to Galilee, and the favorable reception given him, by the Galileans. It is a general inference

the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come

ſ1 Co. 1:22.

from what has just been related. *Into Cana of Galilee.* As the cause of this favorable reception of Jesus by the Galileans was the fame of his miracles, he wisely sought to take advantage of the public estimation in which he was held, to disseminate more correct views of the spiritual nature of his mission, and hence proceeded to Cana, which had been the scene of his first miracle, and where he supposed that the people would be inclined to listen to his instructions. *A certain nobleman; literally, a courtier, a royal attendant.* He was probably an officer of Herod Antipas, and is conjectured by some to have been Chuza, Herod's steward. See Luke 8:3. Alford thinks that he was a Jew, but this is quite doubtful. *Whose son.* The article in the original, seems to point him out as an only son. *At Capernaum.* This refers to the dwelling place of the nobleman, as well as to the place where his son was sick.

47. *When he heard, &c.* The incident here recorded took place, probably, almost immediately upon the arrival of our Lord in Galilee. *Would come down,* in reference to the situation of Capernaum upon the lake shore. See N. on Luke 4:31. *For he was at the point of death;* literally, *about to die.* These are the words of the nobleman, and given as a reason for immediate assistance.

48. *Except ye see, &c.* These words, which place in strong contrast the unbelief of the Galileans, compared with the ready faith in Jesus manifested by the Samaritans (vs. 39, 41), were spoken as a reproof to the bystanders, and through them to all the Galileans, who like the Nazarenes rejected him, because they saw no such miracles, as he

down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

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.

was reported to have wrought at Capernaum (see Luke 4:23). No particular stress is to be laid upon the verb *see*, as opposed to testimony from hearsay; but the contrast lies between that unbelief which yields only to the evidence of the senses, compared with the simple and ready faith, which the woman of Samaria and her townsmen put in his words. Reference is had to the reason alleged in v. 45, why the Galileans received him. The nobleman may have been slightly referred to, whose faith was so weak, that he supposed our Lord must of necessity be present to effect the cure of his son. *Signs and wonders.* These words are joined only here and in Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22, where they are used in reference to deceivers and unbelievers. It is usual to regard them as employed with little or no distinction, but this is erroneous. The sense is *except ye behold signs* (compare Matt. 12:38, 39; 16:1; Mark 8:11; Luke 11:16; John 2:18; 1 Cor. 1:22), even such as may be regarded as *wonders*, prodigies, something of a very superhuman and extraordinary character, *ye will not believe.* *Signs* then, as Stier from Origen remarks, point to the internal significance of the *wonder* or extraordinary manifestation. So Webster and Wilkinson: *wonders* which occur as proofs, significant, testificatory wonders.

49. The nobleman seeing that Jesus made no direct reply to his urgent request, but was turning to the multitude with words of reproof for their unbelief, again ventures to importune him for speedy relief. His faith, which may have been at first, quite weak, was thus tested and strengthened. *Come down ere my child die.* This repetition shows that the nobleman placed great stress

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.

upon the personal presence of Jesus to heal his child. In like manner, Martha and Mary did not fully recognize our Lord's power to raise even the dead, but expressed their confidence, that had he been present their brother would not have died (see 11: 21, 32). Lange remarks upon this verse, that our Lord opposes to the precipitate excitement and haste of the nobleman, his own supreme self-possession and tranquillity. This is true of other and similar instances, where he was urgently called upon for assistance. See Matt. 8: 26; 14: 26-32.

50. *Go thy way*, &c. This direction put the faith of the nobleman to the severest test. 'Can this man heal at a word my son, who lies sick at a town some 25 miles distant? Such amazing power seems beyond belief.' But the command has in itself the calm dignity of conscious power, and the nobleman returns with a believing spirit to his sick child. Commentators have not failed to notice the difference between our Lord's treatment of this case, and that of the centurion (Matt. 8: 8). When his faith in the outset was so strong, that he requested our Lord to speak the word only and his servant should live, the reply was, "I will come and heal him." Here the nobleman asks Jesus to come down to his house, and is answered, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." As Trench after Chrysostom remarks, the weak faith of the nobleman is strengthened, while the humility of the centurion is honored. *Thy son liveth*, is something more than *is convalescent*. His malady had made such progress and was so incurable, that he might be already regarded as dead, and hence the removal of the disease was the same as life from the dead. The expression is put in strong antithesis with the death spoken of in v. 49, as certain to take place unless

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.

help were obtained from Jesus. Lange, who is quick at seeing verbal shades of thought and emphasis, supposes a pause between *go thy way* (which in the original is a single word, *proceed, depart*), and the words of hope and comfort, *thy son liveth*, which follow. The one subjects his faith to a still severer test; the other raises him from the abyss of despair, into which he was about to be plunged. *The man believed the word*, &c. He no longer waited to see signs and wonders, but with implicit trust and confidence in the simple word of Jesus, set out at once on his return to Capernaum. His faith was now so strong, that he no longer importuned Jesus to accompany him, but departs with cheerful confidence that it shall be as he had said. Alford remarks that "the bringing out and strengthening of the man's faith by these words, was almost as great a spiritual miracle, as the material one which they indicated."

51. *As he was now going down*, &c. He was probably at this time near his home. It appears from the narrative, that as he did not reach Capernaum the preceding night, which he might have done, the distance being only 25 or 30 miles, and leaving Jesus as he did at 1 o'clock, P. M. (see vs. 52, 53), his servants fearing that he was detained by some accident or untoward circumstance, and willing to relieve his mind from all anxiety respecting his child, went forth the next morning to meet him. *Thy son liveth*. The very words which our Lord used, when he dismissed the nobleman from his presence (v. 50), except that the word more literally rendered *boy*, is substituted for *son*. The expression is here a brief annunciation that the child was out of all danger.

52. *Then inquired he*, &c. "This question proves that the nobleman was concerned not merely about the result

And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

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.

of the curing, but also about the confirmation of his faith in Jesus." Tholuck. He at once refers the restoration of his son to the sovereign power and grace of Jesus, and hence seeks for the evidence of the coincidence, which his faith assures him subsisted between the hour of his recovery, and the time when Jesus sent him away with the assurance that his son lived. *To amend*; literally, *to be better*. These words show that the father was looking for a gradual cure, and this may in part account for the leisurely manner, in which he evidently pursued his journey homeward, although this fact is mainly to be attributed to the new emotions of love and gratitude to Jesus, which had sprung up in his soul, making his journey, one of devotional praise instead of feverish anxiety in regard to his sick child. *Yesterday*. This shows that it was the day following his interview with Jesus, when he reached home. *Seventh hour*. The time when Jesus dismissed the nobleman was therefore about one o'clock. *The fever left him*. This shows the sudden and radical cure which took place, and contrasts strongly with the words of the father *began to amend*, his faith not having anticipated so sudden and complete a restoration to health. On the gradual recovery from febrile diseases, see N. on Matt. 8 : 15.

53. *Himself believed*, &c. He now believes not only in the word and promise of Jesus (v. 50), but in him as the Messiah. *His whole house* (or *household*), comprising his servants also, who had learned from him the circumstances attending the healing of his son, and may even have anticipated such an announcement, when they compared the time of

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

CHAPTER V.

AFTER "this there was a feast of the Jews ; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

a Le. 23 : 2 ; De. 16 : 2 ; ch. 2 : 13.

this sudden and unlooked for departure of the fever, with the time when they might expect their master to have the interview with Jesus, whom they knew he had gone to visit.

54. *Again* should be translated with the latter clause of the verse, so as to read, *when he was come out of Judea again into Galilee*. *Second miracle* in reference to the one previously performed in Cana (2 : 1-12). Dr. Robinson takes the word *again* with *second*, as a sort of pleonasm. So Webster and Wilkinson refer to the English expression, *a second time repeated*, which although incorrect is frequently employed. Both these miracles occupied an important position, the one being designed to strengthen the faith of his disciples ; the other, that of the people, whose faith was probably after the type of that of the nobleman, and needed to be confirmed by some remarkable manifestation of his power. It is too evident to require proof, that the miracles which our Lord wrought in Judea are passed over, and as no previous miracle in Galilee has been spoken of, the one in Cana must be that to which this miracle sustains the relation of the *second* one.

CHAPTER V.

THIS chapter introduces us to those great discussions and conflicts which Jesus had with the Jews, and which ended with a most settled and malignant determination on their part to effect his death. In the light of John's gospel, we see much more clearly than in the synoptical gospels, the reason for that violent and inveterate rage, which reached its culminating point after the

2 Now there is at Jerusalem
^b by the sheep market a pool,
^c Ne. 3:1; & 12; 39.

resurrection of Lazarus, and was satiated only by his being nailed to the cross. The miracles related serve as the themes or exciting causes of these great discourses with the Jews; and it will be seen by the careful reader, that John records such miracles only as stand connected with the vindication of his divine mission and character, which Jesus so fully and conclusively made to these unbelieving Jews. Thus the charge of his having violated the sabbath, to which his miraculous cure of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda (5: 1-10) subjected him, furnishes the ground of his claim to equality with the Father, which he proves on the testimony of his Father, of John, of his own works, and of the Scriptures. The miraculous supply of bread for the five thousand (6: 5-13), introduces the discourse in which he declares himself to be the bread of life to all believers. The restoration of the blind man to sight (9: 1-7), and the opposition from the Pharisees excited thereby, gives occasion for him to declare that he came into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. Thus it will appear that John records those miracles only, which stand related to the subsequent discussion of some great truth, occasioned by the increasingly virulent and active opposition of the Jews to which the miracle gave rise. This furnishes the reason why John narrates so few miracles seven only being recorded previous to the close of our Lord's active ministry. It was not the design of his gospel to speak so much of the works of Jesus, as his doctrines, and hence those miracles only are related, which were the occasion of his doctrinal discourses, or those which refer to the higher life to which the believer has been quickened and introduced.

1-47. THE HEALING OF THE INFIRM MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA, AND OUR LORD'S SUBSEQUENT DISCOURSE. *Jerusalem.*

which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

1. *After this*; literally, *after these things*, referring, as Lücke remarks, not to immediate succession, but to what takes place after an interval. Immediate succession in John's gospel, is generally denoted by the singular *after this*. *There was a feast*. This, as Dr. Robinson most ably and conclusively shows, was the feast of the passover, and the *second* one in our Lord's ministry. The *third* is noticed in 6: 4; the *fourth*, in 11: 55. It is from these passovers, that we are enabled to fix the duration of our Lord's public ministry, at three and a half years.

2. *There is at Jerusalem*. The present tense which John here employs, makes Bengel think that he wrote his gospel prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. But this furnishes very slender ground for such a conclusion, as the tense is doubtless the present historic, employed to give animation to the recital of past events by bringing them before the mind of the reader, as going on or existing at the present time. This is a common practice with writers of such graphic energy and vivacity as John. *By the sheep market*. The word *gate*, would have been correctly supplied in our version, reference being had doubtless to that spoken of in Neh. 3: 1, 32; 12: 39, and called sometimes the *gate of the valley*, through which sheep to be offered in sacrifice were driven. It has been thought to be the same as that now called the gate of St. Stephen, but Dr. Robinson has shown that no wall existed in that quarter until the time of Agrippa. *A pool*; literally, *a bathing place*, or one to swim in. *Bethesda*, i. e. house of mercy. It is quite a useless task to inquire into the site of this pool. "The spot now traditionally known as Bethesda, is a part of the fosse round the fort or town of Antonia, an immense reservoir or trench, seventy-five feet deep. But, as Robinson observes, there is not the slightest evidence that can identify it with the Bethesda of the New Testament." Alford. Josephus

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

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and

does not mention this pool, but this is no evidence against the fact of its existence, as here related. There were very many things connected with the topography of Jerusalem, which it did not fall within his province to relate. *Five porches*. These were doubtless covered porticos fronting the pool, for the accommodation of those sick persons who wished to avail themselves of the healing quality of the waters.

3. *In these lay*, &c. Some of these sick persons probably remained there both night and day. Others resorted to the pool on the morning of each day, and returned at night-fall to their own homes or those of their friends. *Impotent folk*; literally, *the feeble, the sick*, the article in the original referring in a generic sense to the sick as a class. The special reference here is to such as were enfeebled by long-standing complaints. Persons who were prostrated by fevers and other violent diseases of like character, from the nature of the case, are to be excluded from the number of those who lay here waiting for the movement of the water. *Halt*, i. e. those who were crippled in the feet. *Withered*. See N. on Matt. 12: 10. *Waiting for*. The word has the sense of waiting with the hope or expectation of receiving some benefit. *Moving of the water* in the manner spoken of in the next verse.

4. The question in regard to the authenticity of this passage, has been agitated by critics and expositors, in almost every age of the church. In many ancient MSS. it is wanting; in others, it is marked as suspicious or spurious. Of the moderns, Tholuck, Alford, Olshausen, and Lücke, regard it as spurious, although Olshausen, while he denies that the passage emanated from John, says that it contains nothing incompatible with his range of

troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

ideas. On the other hand, the Syriac, Latin, Æthiopic, and Arabic versions have the passage. All the Christian Fathers, such as Tertullian, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyril, Augustine, hold the reading as genuine. Verse 7, as Stier well remarks, absolutely requires the whole addition, for taken alone without the explanation furnished by v. 4, it is wholly unintelligible. If it be said that v. 4 has been interpolated by some reader or copyist, in order to explain v. 7, this is a mere begging of the question, without one particle of proof to sustain it.

It is adduced by some, as a collateral argument against the genuineness of this passage, that no allusion whatever is made to this angelic agency by the other Evangelists. But this objection, if admitted, would lie with equal force against the genuineness of the raising of Lazarus, the turning of the water into wine at Cana, and other incidents recorded by John, and not by the other Evangelists. Pushed to its ultimate consequences, it would throw discredit on any fact, which happens to be found recorded in only one of the gospels. It would demand absolute uniformity of plan and detail; and throw doubt upon every statement which was not a repetition of what was related by the previous writer. The Evangelists all had their own design, under the guidance of the Spirit, in the composition of their gospels, and recorded such incidents and discourses as would best subserve the purpose for which they wrote. Especially was this true of John, the very beginning of whose gospel, shows that he had an express object in view, which could not be attained by making the gospels previously written his models. Hence we might expect in his gospel, the introduction of incidents and discourses different from those re-

corded by Matthew, Mark, or Luke. The thing here related must have been notorious, for John lived at Jerusalem some twenty years, until the disturbances commenced which led to the destruction of the city. He then went to Ephesus, and there in the face of the world published his gospel, in which was recorded this fact. There were many Jews at Ephesus, and in every other city of Asia Minor, bitterly opposed to Christianity, and well acquainted with the topography of Jerusalem, who, if John's account had been false, would most assuredly have exposed the falsehood.

As it regards the fact here related, that an angel at certain seasons disturbed the water, and imparted to it thereby a sanitory influence, who can disprove it? It is to us as much a matter of revelation, as the existence of good angels, demons, and other things pertaining to the spiritual world. See N. on Matt. 4: 24. Every effort made to explain this angelic ministration, by electricity or some other agency of nature, imparting to the water a healing property, is wholly absurd and futile. Was it ever a recorded fact, or even a thing heard of from the creation of man to the present time, that electricity or any process of mineralization, took upon itself an active agency at regular and definite seasons, having power to heal every form of disease, even those demanding the most opposite treatment, and incurable by the same natural means—and still more strange, this healing power being exhausted for the time upon the one diseased person who should first step into the water? Tholuck thinks that this spring was gaseous and bubbled at intervals, and refers to a gaseous spring at Kissingen, which, after a rushing sound about the same time every day, commences to bubble, and is most efficacious at the very time the gas is making its escape, and that this gas spring was especially used in diseases of the eye. But did this gaseous spring expend all its curative power upon the *first* person who dipped himself in its waters, or applied them to himself; were they cured *instantane-*

ously; and was it alike effective in curing *any* and *every* disease with which the patient might be afflicted? These and other questions are to be met and answered, before we can presume to explain away the miraculous character of this narrative, by comparing the pool of Bethesda with any of the mineral or gaseous springs, which are found to exert a remedial influence on certain diseases, but none of which has the wonderful power of effecting an instantaneous cure of any disease whatever, nor the equally remarkable property of losing temporarily its sanitory power on its application to a single person.

We hardly need mention, except for the sake of illustrating the pitiful shifts, to which men resort, who undertake to explain away God's word, or to improve upon its simple teachings by their own inventions, the notions of some who would refer the healing virtue of this pool, to the blood of the sacrifices, which flowed into it from the thousands of victims slain at the passover and other great feasts. It would be a sufficient reply to this absurd theory, that no Jew could have been tempted to bathe in waters so unclean, even to obtain so great a blessing as restoration to health. This theory is also open to the same objection, which lies against the reference of this healing power to electricity, impregnation with mineral properties, gaseous excitement and the like, that its sanative virtue should be such, as to cure any and every form of disease, and should be experienced only at stated seasons and by only one person at a time. No one, unless disposed to discard all miraculous agencies and manifestations, would ever resort to such absurd theories, in regard to the plain declaration of the text respecting the angelic agency exerted at times upon this water. We are bound to receive this as a plain matter of revelation, and as furnishing 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.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

It is unnecessary to suppose that the Jewish people, at this time, were acquainted with the cause of the healing properties of this pool, or of the wondrous phenomena attending it. This has been made known to us by the revealed word of God. They knew only this—a fact which in the outset may have been stumbled upon by the merest accident—that at a certain apparent commotion of the waters, whoever first succeeded in bathing himself in the pool, was immediately cured of his disease. They learned to avail themselves of this wondrous virtue of the water, ignorant, however, of what has been revealed to us by John, that it was caused by an angelic agency.

Went down. The tense in the original denotes the habit of descending for this benevolent purpose. *Certain season.* This does not necessarily refer to stated seasons, or those recurring at regular intervals, for as Alford well observes, in that case, the sick need not have waited for such seasons. The idea seems to lie in the fit or opportune seasons, as seen by the eye of Him in whose benevolent service the angel was engaged. This accords with the meaning of the original, the word rendered *season*, being literally, *the right, fit, proper time, the season of action.* *Into the pool.* The preposition in the original is *in*, which has led Lücke to refer it to the descent of the angel into the depths of the pool, in order to produce the agitation here spoken of. It is better however to take the preposition by a pregnant construction (see N. on Matt. 3:6), as indicating the state of rest which follows the action of the verb. The angel descended to the pool, and there remained until he had disturbed the water in the manner here specified, when, so far as the narrative is concerned, he went away. *Troubled*, i. e. disturbed, agitated. Bengel prefers the reading *was troubled*, the angelic agency in the phenomenon being

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith

thus regarded as unknown to the people. *He had*; literally, *he was held bound*. Reference is had to long standing and inveterate chronic diseases, such as are most difficult to be cured.

5. *Which had an infirmity*; literally, *having been in his infirmity*, or *in a state of infirmity*; or as Bloomfield renders it, *who had been thirty-eight years laboring under sickness*. It is not asserted or implied that he had been at Bethesda all this time, although from v. 7, it appears that he had lain there long enough to destroy nearly all hope of being able to avail himself of the remedy afforded by the troubled waters.

6. *Saw him lie.* The word rendered *lie*, is employed of one too weak or sick to be in other than a recumbent position. See N. on Matt. 8:14. *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." Stier. The words rendered *saw* and *knew*, are participles in the original, and seem to be used in this sense, *although Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been a long time in that case*—which of itself showed his great desire to be healed of his infirmity—*yet he saith unto him* (in order to draw from his own lips his sad condition, and desire to be cured), *wilt thou be made whole?* The question—which was one of compassion and not of blame on account of too great despondency, much less implying that he was pretending to a more violent complaint than he really had—served to call forth from the man some expression, by which might be tested his worthiness to receive the great blessing which Jesus was about to confer upon him, and established, as Alford well remarks, a point of connection between the spirit of the person addressed and his own gracious pur-

unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

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.

c Mat. 9: 6; Ma. 2: 11; Lu. 5: 24.

poses. *Wilt thou.* Not mere willingness is here denoted. The verb is one which expresses an active desire.

7. *Sir, I have no man, &c.* This does not seem to be a direct answer to the question of Jesus, *wilt thou be made whole?* We may therefore, as Winer suggests, supply a simple *yes, certainly*, which the sick man by a nod or ejaculation may have expressed, before he proceeded to state the obstacle which had thus far prevented him from availing himself of the healing properties of the pool. His reply, while it is almost one of despair, shows that he had no hope or expectation of any other mode of restoration to health, than the one here afforded. *Sir.* The original is *Lord*, an expression of high respect, which the grave and dignified demeanor of Jesus challenged from the sick man. *I have no man, &c.* Skeptical critics cavil at this, by inquiring why the persons who brought him each day to the pool, did not remain and assist him to attain the object of his desire. But not to say that the exact time when the pool was to be troubled was unknown, we have no evidence that the man was of a position in life to have attendants, who could afford time to sit by him from day to day, to watch for the favored moment of the troubling of the waters. Although the word *lie* in v. 6, as has been remarked, is used of one who is too weak or crippled to stand erect, yet the words *while I am coming*, denote that this man was capable at least of a slow motion. *Steppeth down*; literally, *descends, goes down*. As contrasted with the preceding verb, it here denotes a comparatively rapid movement. *Before me*, in point of time.

8 Jesus saith unto him, ' Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

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

10 ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is

d Ch. 9: 14.

8. *Rise.* How this word of divine mercy and power contrasts with the helpless feebleness expressed in the reply of the sick man. *Take up thy bed, &c.* This direction resulted from a twofold reason, one, that his thorough cure might be the more manifest; the other, to give occasion for the discourse with the Jews, to which the man's apparent violation of the sabbath gave rise.

9. The cure was instantaneous and complete. The man arose, took up his couch on which a moment previous he was reclining in helpless weakness, and walked in freedom and happy consciousness that he was restored to full strength. He had no qualms of conscience, that in thus obeying the command of the stranger he was violating the sabbath. The potent words just uttered in his hearing, were as though they came from heaven itself, and furnished him with ample justification for what he was doing (see v. 11).

10. *The Jews*, who saw him in the act of carrying his couch through the city to his home. They were not the persons who stood by and saw the miracle performed, as is evident from the inquiry in v. 12, but were doubtless the chief priests and rulers, the principal persons in the city, members of the Sanhedrim (see N. on 2: 18), who seized upon every occasion to bring Jesus into contempt with the people. *It is not lawful.* See Jer. 17: 21, 22; Neh. 13: 15-22; Ezek. 31: 14, 15. A more sharp reproof would have been administered, doubtless, had they not been impressed with awe at the stupendous miracle which had evidently been wrought. *To carry*; literally, *to take up* with intent to carry. The word has

the sabbath day : ' it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said

e Ex. 20:10; Ne. 13:19; Je. 17:21, &c.; Mat. 12:2; Ma. 2:24; & 3:4; Lu. 6:2; & 13:14.

the pregnant signification of taking up and carrying, as was done in the present instance.

11. *He—the same*, equivalent to *the very person*. Emphasis is given to the incontrovertible position, that one who could perform so amazing a miracle was to be obeyed. The man did not deny that, according to the letter of the Jewish law, he had transgressed the sabbath. He justified himself solely from the fact, that he had acted in obedience to the command of that wondrous personage, who had healed him at a single word. It will be seen also from v. 17, that Jesus did not justify his own act on any such grounds as he adduced in Matt. 12:1-7, but from his superior dignity which gave him power even over the law of the sabbath. See N. on Matt. 12:8.

12. *What man is that*, or more literally, *who is the man?* This question is not to be imputed to real ignorance as to the person who had wrought this miracle. The fame of Jesus was already such, that they doubtless surmised at once, that it was he who had healed the man. They interpose therefore no further obstacles to the return of the man to his own home, as he had been commanded, but bend their efforts to convict Jesus of having violated the sabbath. They are careful to refer to the unknown person, whose name they pretend to seek, in a very contemptuous manner, the word employed for *man*, being that which designates one as simply belonging to the human species, and not the one which designates a man of mark and distinction. *Who said unto thee*, &c. By thus shaping their question, they ignore the miracle and give prominence to the act consequent thereon, which they characterized (v. 10), as a violation of the sabbath. All these circumstances are to

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

be noted, in order to fully apprehend the hypocrisy and opposition to Jesus which characterized these men.

13. *Wist not*. An old form of speech for *knew not*. It is not strange that the man was ignorant of the name of his benefactor. The fame of Jesus, although wide-spread enough to fill with dread and apprehension these unbelieving rulers, had not yet fully reached the lower classes of the community, especially persons of the abject condition of this sick man. The next clause, *for Jesus had conveyed himself away*, &c. is also added as a reason, why the man did not know the name of Jesus. As soon as our Lord had bid him rise and walk, and before the man, who to his amazement was possessed of power to put into execution the command which thus suddenly and unexpectedly fell upon his ear, could find time to look after his benefactor, he had passed out of sight among the crowd. One who was thus suddenly restored to sound and vigorous health, after having been afflicted with disease for thirty-eight years, could hardly be expected to stop to make inquiries as to the name of the person, who had bid him rise up from his couch of suffering. In the exuberance of his joy, he would proceed at once to his home. These considerations make it nowise strange that it should be as here related. *Had conveyed himself away*; more literally, *had turned away*. He passed immediately into the crowd, and thus escaped the notice of the man, who, as has been stated, was occupied with arranging his couch, so as to take it up and bear it away as he had been commanded. *A multitude being in that place*, and rendering it easy for Jesus to be lost among the crowd. "A comparison of this passage with 12:15-21; Luke 5:14, John 6:15, will supply evidence of the

not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him,

truth of the Gospel narratives arising from the identity of Christ's character." Webster and Wilkinson.

14. The man had probably gone up to the temple, as a suitable place for rendering thanks to God for his recovery. *Afterward*; literally, *after these things*, implying that some time elapsed from the cure of the man to his meeting with Jesus in the temple. Immediate succession of time would have been denoted by the singular (see N. on v. 1); and it is not likely that the man would have gone up to the temple at least before the next day, especially as he had received so sharp a rebuke from the Jews, for carrying his bed on the sabbath day. *Jesus findeth him*. Our Lord would not leave him until he had confirmed his faith and admonished him against a lapse into sin, to which, as we may gather from this narrative, he was in special danger from former sinful habits, or some natural inclination of his physical or moral temperament. *Behold thou art made* (literally, *hast become*) *whole*. This confirms his recovery, and forms the basis of the admonition which follows. *Sin no more*. Webster and Wilkinson say, that there is no necessity for inferring from the words, that the man's disease had been the effect or punishment of vice, averring that *no more*, is to be interpreted of a state of progression, rather than of comparison with what has gone before (like *no longer* in 4: 42). I cannot but agree, however, with Stier, Tholuck, Alford, and other commentators, that it is here implied that his infirmity arose from some particular moral delinquency; and that our Lord, in referring to a sin committed thirty-eight years previous, gave to the man, as to the woman of Samaria, the highest evidence that he was fully conversant with all the circumstances of his past sinful life. *Lest a worse*

Behold, thou art made whole: ⁷ sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told

J Mat. 12: 45; Ch. 8: 11.

thing, (literally, *something worse*) *come unto thee*. Trench observes, that "this expression gives us an awful glimpse of the severity of God's judgments. The infirmity had found him a youth and left him an old man; it had withered up all his manhood, and yet a *worse thing* even than this threatened him, should he sin again." Of course we are left in ignorance as to the precise sin, which had entailed upon the man such direful consequences. The lesson of instruction which all should draw from the incident, is not however impaired thereby, but rendered even more impressive, since it may be referred to any sin into which one may have fallen, and from the sad effect of which, by the grace of God, he is recovering and beginning to hope in a complete restoration to the path of virtue and rectitude. Prof. Crosby remarks, that "if our Saviour does not refer to some previous vice, by which the man was brought into this crippled condition, that his words mean: 'Turn now from your sins, for if you persist in sin, you will come to a far worse condition than such bodily ailment as this from which I have released you.'"

15. *The man departed*, &c. Some have attributed this to a desire on his part to curry favor with the Jews, by reporting to them the name of the man who had made him whole. But this is hardly reconcilable with v. 11, where he openly acknowledges his obligations to his unknown benefactor. It is rather to be attributed to the question proposed to him in v. 12, to which he felt bound to reply, coming as it did from those in high authority. In confirmation of the good intentions of the man, it is to be noted, that he did not reply in the direct language which the question in v. 12 would seem to demand, that it was Jesus who had bid him take up his bed and walk, but that

the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to

it was Jesus who had made him whole, thus bearing witness the second time to the great cure which had been wrought in him. We would not therefore attribute to this man such monstrous ingratitude, as reporting the name of Jesus with hostile intention, but rather refer his act to a want of quick perception to discern in the inquiries of the Jews (v. 12) their hostility to his benefactor, which, had he suspected, he would never in his honest simplicity have reported to them the name of the object of their intense hatred.

16. *Therefore*; literally, *on account of this*. The last clause explains the ground of their persecution. *Did persecute*. The imperfect tense in the original, denotes that this was a continuous persecution. It ceased not from this time onward, but waxed more and more virulent, until they succeeded in accomplishing his death. That the word *persecute*, has here its bad sense, and not that of legal cognizance of crime, is evident from the next clause, *and sought to slay him*, which shows that their murderous hostility to Jesus would not have waited for legal forms, had it found opportunity to compass its ends in any more certain and expeditious manner. *Because he had done*, &c. is not the real but pretended reason of their evil designs.

17. Our Lord now condescends to address them at some length, and vindicate himself from the charge of having violated the sabbath. He *answered* the allegations implied in their hostility to him, or perhaps their openly expressed charges, in regard to his recent miracle on the sabbath. "The word *answered*, does not always imply a previous question addressed to the speaker, but sometimes only an occasion demanding explanations or remarks." Webster and Wilkinson. *My Father*. Not *our* Father, as would alone be suitable for us. That he claimed in

slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

17 But Jesus answered them,

this language a peculiar Sonship to the Father, and such as could be shared by no created being, is evident from v. 18, where the Jews understood him as claiming for himself equality with God. They were led the more to this from his avowal, that as God's providence operates with unceasing activity on the sabbath, as well as on any other day, so he possessed an equal right with the Father to work on that day. They correctly inferred that one, who claimed the same right to work on the sabbath, as He who had ordained its observance, did thereby make himself equal with God. The sentiment is the same, although couched in different language, with that of the words he uttered on the occasion of his passing through the cornfields, shortly after this, *the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day*. See Ns. on Matt. 12: 8; Mark 2: 28; Luke 6: 5. The prerogative of divinity could not be claimed in stronger or clearer terms. *Hitherto*, i. e. until the present time, ever since the creation. The rest spoken of in Gen. 2: 2, was rest from the work of creation, and not from the exercise of his Almighty Providence, which is continually exerted in upholding all things. See Heb. 1: 3. There is not a moment of time, in which the Divine energy does not operate in sustaining and keeping the universe of mind and matter in orderly and harmonious action. *And I work*. Not separate from, but with God, in this providential upholding and governing of the universe. The Father does not work independent of the Son, nor the Son independent of the Father, but they work together in harmonious and ineffable union and love. Such is the plain declaration of our Lord, and so the Jews rightly understood him to aver. There is not the shadow of a doubt, that Jesus did here claim, and intended to claim, absolute equality with the Father. What is here most logically inferred, is dis-

^g My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

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, ⁱ making himself equal with God.

^g Ch. 9 : 4 ; & 14 : 10.

tinently stated in Col. 1 : 15-17 ; Heb. 1 : 2, 3. Thus the great truth stated in 1 : 1, is here confirmed by our Lord's own testimony respecting himself.

18. At this assumption of equality with the Father, which they deem blasphemous to the highest degree, the Jews are so exasperated, that they seek to put him to death. We have no means of knowing whether this refers to their fixed murderous purpose, or to some sudden outbreak of fury seeking his immediate death. Probably the former is the more correct supposition, as in accordance with the usage of the Evangelist, had the latter been true, he would have mentioned it, as in 8 : 59 ; 10 : 31. We see here as in subsequent instances, that instead of testing our Lord's claims by his miracles and doctrines, and examining the Messianic predictions such as those in Isa. 9 : 6 ; Dan. 7 : 13, 14 ; Zech. 13 : 7, they close their eyes to the truth, and seek to silence his claims by effecting his death. In addition to the charge of breaking the sabbath, they now add that of blasphemy, in that he asserted an equality with God, by calling him his Father (literally, *his own Father*). This was the more serious charge, and one which they never lost sight of, until on the morning of his crucifixion, pretending that he had given utterance to blasphemous language in declaring himself to be the Son of God, they pronounced him worthy of death. See Matt. 26 : 64-66 ; Mark 14 : 61-64 ; Luke 22 : 70, 71. *Making himself* (by calling God his own Father) *equal with God*. In this inference of the force and intent of his assertion, they were by no means mistaken.

Vol. III.—5

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^k 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.

^h Ch. 7 : 19.

ⁱ Ch. 10 : 30, 38 ; Phi. 2 : 6.

^k Ver. 30 ; ch. 8 : 28 ; & 9 : 4 ; & 12 : 49 ; & 14 : 10.

19. Our Lord now reiterates and expands his preceding declaration. He had in the briefest and most emphatic manner declared his essential unity with the Father, by claiming the performance of the same works of providence. Now he proceeds to assert that so close and indissoluble is this unity of purpose and action, that *the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do*, and that the Father doeth nothing which the Son doeth not likewise. In averring that the Son can do nothing of himself, our Lord means nothing more than that his essential unity with the Father is such, that he can do nothing contrary to his will and counsel. He does not avow any dependence or subordination of rank or power, but the most entire harmony of will and action with his Father. This is evident from the context. The Jews had charged him with having violated the sabbath. Christ denies this on the ground, that his union with the Father was such, that he could do nothing but what was in perfect harmony with the will of God the Father. This being so, no sin could be chargeable upon him for healing the man on the sabbath day. The argument then is clear and convincing, that Jesus here claims essential unity with the Father. *But what he seeth the Father do*, is equivalent to *but what the Father does*, and implies that the Son can do whatever the Father doeth. This is clearly and explicitly stated in the next clause, *for what things soever he* (i. e. the Father) *doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise*. Not only equal power, but the equal exercise of power is predicated of the Father and Son. What accumulative proof is here furnished of

20 For ' the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things

1 Mt. 3: 17; ch. 3: 35; 2 Pe. 1: 17.

the declaration made in the very first verse of John's gospel, **THE WORD WAS GOD**. This additional proof is the more valuable from the fact, that it was our Lord's own declaration, in view of the charge made against him by the Jews, that he had on this very occasion made himself equal with God. This was the time, if ever, for him to have disabused their minds of such a misconception of his language, had it been so. But instead of this, he goes on to assert in the very plainest terms, that such unity of essence subsists between the Father and Son, that there is not an act or work, in which they do not equally participate, so that it may be truly said, that what things soever the Father doeth, the Son doeth likewise.

20. The argument of the divine nature of the Son is still accumulative. This verse serves to explain and confirm the preceding declaration. In v. 19 it was asserted that the Son could do nothing of himself (i. e. dissevered of all connection with the Father, which from the very unity of their being was an impossibility), but what he saw the Father do. Here the love of the Father towards the Son is affirmed to be such, that *he shows him all things that himself doeth*. Hence as the Son can do those things which he seeth the Father do (v. 19), and as the Father of his boundless love shows him every thing which he himself doeth, it follows as a plain and irresistible inference, that the Son can and does do every thing which the Father does. Thus this verse reaffirms the declaration with which v. 19 closes, with the additional truth, that all this co-ordinate and co-working power is founded, not only upon an essential, but a love union of the Father and the Son. *He will show him greater works than these*, i. e. there will be wrought by the Son, in conformity with this spiritual intercommunication between the Father and the Son, greater works than those which the Jews

that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

had yet seen performed by Jesus. Reference is had in *these*, to the miracles which he had wrought in attestation of his divine mission. One of these miracles was the healing of the infirm man, and was the occasion of the sublime discourse which he was now holding with the Jews. These miracles were to be more and more glorious and significant of his divinity, until they were crowned by the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and his own resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven. But these works were not to cease with his disappearance from earth. The raising and quickening of the dead were committed unto the Son, to whom all judgment likewise was committed, so that eventually all should be brought to honor the Son, even as they honored the Father. Such is the train of thought, as the argument of the divine nature of the Son from the works given him to perform, progresses in vs. 21-24. Alford makes a distinction between the working of the Son in vs. 20 and 21, referring the former to his working in the state of his humiliation, in which the Father should by degrees advance him to exaltation and put all his enemies under his feet; the latter, to the working of the Eternal Son with God in heaven. But I see no reason for this distinction. The subject has reference to the Son in his state of incarnation. The discourse is a vindication of himself, as he stood before his enemies, from the charge of having violated the sabbath. There is nothing predicated of him in these verses, not even his office of final Judge, which refers not to him in his character of Messiah, God-man, Mediator. See Matt. 25: 31. *That ye may marvel*. Some interpret this as the purpose or design of the greater works which our Lord was to perform. This may be in a sense true, and yet it comports better with the general scope, to regard the word rendered *that*, as marking the result (see N.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them* ;

on Matt. 1 : 22). The idea is that although they were insensible to the power and grace displayed in the miracles he had hitherto wrought, yet the time was coming, when their admiration could no longer be withheld at the display of his mighty power. Even if the raising of Lazarus and his own resurrection and ascension failed to elicit their admiration, yet the scenes of the final judgment would command their wondering astonishment, and challenge their acknowledgment of his supreme power and dignity as God's Son. See Philip. 2 : 10, 11.

21. The argument, as it proceeds on from verse to verse, is climacteric. Our Lord shows his right to work on the sabbath in the way here referred to, by his miracles, and by averring that greater works were yet to be done by him. In this verse, he includes in these greater works, the raising of the dead and the quickening agency to be exerted upon them. This is referred to again in more ample terms, in vs. 25, 28, 29. *For as the Father, &c.* This is confirmatory and explanatory of v. 20, showing in what the *greater works* there spoken of consists. Prof. Crosby makes the connection to be : "The Father loveth the Son (v. 20), *for* he shows him all his power even to the raising of the dead physically and spiritually (v. 21), and he has committed all judgment unto him (v. 22)." This is true, but the explication is more simple and logical, which makes the Father's love to the Son to be evinced by the display to him of the great works which he does (v. 20), and which are referred to in the verses immediately following as wrought by the Son. The train of thought is simply this : 'the love of the Father to the Son is manifested in his showing him (i. e. commissioning him to execute) the stupendous works which he himself doeth, among which are the raising and vivifying the dead and judging them at the last day.' *As the Father, &c.* Our Lord continues the form

m even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

m Lu. 7 : 14 ; & 8 : 54 ; ch. 11 : 25, 43.

of comparison by which equality and essential unity are established between him and the Father. *Raiseth up the dead.* This undoubtedly refers to the resurrection of the body at the last day. No other resurrection would produce the result referred to at the close of v. 20. It would be a harsh and unintelligible transition from the physical to the spiritual, to make the *greater works*, spoken of in v. 20, to which the raising and quickening here referred to belong, relate to a moral resurrection and quickening to spiritual life. The majority of expositors interpret the passage of the resurrection of the body only. There are some, however, who refer it to a spiritual, moral resurrection. Tholuck, Neander, Olshausen, and Alford, make it include both those who are outwardly and spiritually dead. There is no objection to this view, although the argument is more direct and simple, to refer it to the bodily resurrection alone. The resurrection is here attributed to the Father, in accordance with the belief of those with whom our Lord was conversing. But the Son is declared to be possessed of the same quickening power, and in the light of the New Testament revelation, we know that the summoning of the dead from their graves at the last day, will be the act of God's Son, yet in the exercise of his Mediatorial office, as vicegerent of the Father. This truth is brought out distinctly in Acts 17 : 31. *Whom he will.* The power to vivify is here declared to accompany the will. We should guard against inferring from this, that a portion only of mankind are to be selected as the objects of Christ's vivifying power, the simple averment being, that his power to raise the dead is as unlimited as his will. This is however pre-eminently true of the spiritual resurrection, or quickening to spiritual life, of which our Lord is the original source. The bimembral form of the verb demands that we should read : *even so the Son [raiseth and] quickeneth*

22 For the Father judgeth no man, but ⁿ hath committed all judgment unto the Son :

23 That all *men* should honour

ⁿ Mt. 11:27; & 28:18; ver. 27; ch. 3:35; & 17:2; Ac. 17:31; 1 Pe. 4:5.

whom he will. The raising of the dead, although apparently simultaneous with the quickening power, yet in the order of nature precedes it, and is a distinct act.

22. In this verse we find the Son possessed of the high function of final Judge, all judgment having been committed to him by the Father. But this implies not only the power to raise and give life to the dead, but also that such power is actually committed to the Son. Hence the first clause *for the Father judgeth no man*, imparts to the preceding verse the additional idea, that the Son not only raises and quickens whom he will, but has this office delegated to him in his capacity of final Judge. It is a closely connected series of acts, and as the Father is declared to judge no man, so no one will be raised and brought to judgment, but through the divine power and agency of the Son. This verse then by its *for*, not only explains and confirms, but by implication enlarges the functions of the Son referred to in v. 21, and thus, as has been remarked in Note on v. 20, introduces an example of the great works committed to the Son, in proof of the Father's love to him. *Judgeth no man* except through the agency of the Son. In view of the essential unity of the Father and the Son, what is done by the one is done by the other. But reference is had here to the office possessed by the Son in his Mediatorial capacity. As God-man, he is to judge the world at the last day. See Acts 17:31. The office of judge anciently comprised in itself that of a ruler or king. Hence our Lord's kingly dignity incidentally is brought to view in this passage. See Matt. 25:34, 40. *Hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* As Redeemer and Mediator, our Lord is officially subordinate to the Father, and hence re-

the Son, even as they honour the Father. ^o He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

^o 1 Jo. 2:23.

ceives from Him the delegated office of final Judge. This however does not imply essential inferiority in the Son. *All judgment*, i. e. the entire work of judgment, all the prerogatives of the office of final Judge. The word *all*, implies that Christ is to be the sole Judge.

23. In this verse, the end or purpose of thus committing all judgment to the Son is declared. *That* (here indicating both purpose and result) *all men should honor*, &c. The good will do this of their own choice, having escaped the condemnation of death through faith in God's Son; the homage of the wicked will be compelled by the supreme power and dignity of the Judge. Thus "every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philip. 2:10, 11. The verb *should honor*, is here to be taken in the sense of *should render homage and obedience*. This equality of honor, resulting from the conferral of the office of final Judge upon the Son, is expressed negatively in the following sentence, *he that honoreth not the Son*, &c. Not only is the honor of the Son to be equal to that of the Father, but no honor can be awarded to the Father, except it be likewise bestowed upon the Son. Every profession of honor and reverence for the Father is empty and valueless, unless accompanied by a feeling of equal respect and reverence for the Son. Thus the honor of the Father and the Son, is declared in the most emphatic terms to be one and indivisible. Who in face of such testimony as is here given, can look upon Jesus Christ as a mere created being?

The negative in the first clause is dif-

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you,^p He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall

p Ch. 3:16, 18; & 6:40, 47; & 8:51; & 20:31.

ferent from that in the second, and imparts a conditional sense, *he that honoreth not the Son*, in case that any one does not honor him. The negative in the second clause, *honoreth not the Father*, is positive and unconditional.

24. This verse commences a new illustration of the life-giving power of the Son, and the ground on which it is exercised. It is evident that the discourse is here of spiritual life bestowed upon the believer in Jesus Christ. This verse is therefore a sort of parenthetical illustration of the glory and dignity of Christ, as the author and source of all life, spiritual as well as physical. This is such an advance in the claim of God's Son to equal honor with the Father, that it is introduced by the usual formula of solemn confirmation, *verily, verily*. See N. on 3:3. The climacteric character of the argument for the dignity of God's Son, as evinced in this advance from a physical to a spiritual resurrection, would be all lost by the interpretation, which finds both the bodily and spiritual quickening taught in v. 21. Indeed the train of thought would be hopelessly confused by such an interpretation, for if spiritual quickening is taught in v. 21, the reference to it in this verse would be little more than a naked repetition. *He that heareth*. The mere external act of hearing is not here referred to, but that which is accompanied by inward belief. A twofold object of faith is here referred to, which is however essentially one and indivisible. In this clause, faith in Jesus Christ, and in the next, faith in the Father who sent him, is demanded as a condition of eternal life. Thus the close and inseparable union between the Father and Son, is still the great and prominent object held up before the mind. We are taught here, that an essential prerequisite to belief in God, is belief in his Son Jesus Christ.

not come into condemnation; ^q but is passed from death unto life.

q 1 Jo. 3:14.

Indeed belief in the Father on the testimony of the Son, who is the great Revealer of the divine being and perfections of God, presupposes a belief in the divine mission of the Son. *Hath everlasting life*, i. e. is an heir of the eternal glory and blessedness which God's people shall enjoy in heaven. The same truth is also expressed, according to John's custom, negatively, *and shall not come into condemnation*, i. e. shall not continue in the way of sin, until the judgment which awaits the transgressor overtakes him. It does not imply that previously to his belief in Christ, he was not in a state of condemnation and death, for this is distinctly asserted in the last clause, *is passed from death unto life*. The simple idea is that the believer shall not come into that state of final condemnation, in which those who are impenitent and unbelieving will be found at the last day. The word rendered *condemnation*, is the same which is translated *judgment* in v. 22, where it is evidently put for the office or function of judgment. The context clearly determines the correctness of the translation *condemnation*, a sense which the word often has in the New Testament. See Matt. 23:33; Mark 3:29; Heb. 10:27; James 2:13; 2 Pet. 2:4. *Is passed from death unto life*. All men are by nature in a state of condemnation and death; or as it is expressed in Eph. 2:1, are "dead in trespasses and sins." But the death of Christ has so removed the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), that they who believe in him are no longer subject to its pains and penalties, being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (1 Pet 1:5). Life and death are here strongly antithetic; and the everlasting subjection of the soul to the one of these conditions for which in the present life it was fitted, can be no more plainly taught than in

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.

r Ver. 28; Ep. 2:1, 5; & 5:14; Col. 2:13.

this passage. *Is passed.* The principle of life is within him, and although the full measure of blessedness will not be attained this side the grave, yet the believer is in the present possession of the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:14).

25. *Verily, verily.* This formula of asseveration attests the importance of the truth now to be revealed. *And now is, i. e.* the time is so near at hand that it may be said to be already present (see 4:23). The words are added to impart the idea of speedy approach to the preceding words, *the hour cometh*. They are omitted in v. 28, because the event there referred to is more remote. *The dead.* There arises here a very important question, and one in reference to which the most pious and learned commentators are divided, whether our Lord refers to those *naturally* or to those *spiritually* dead. The preceding context, unless v. 24 be regarded as parenthetical, justifies the latter view; the following context, the former view. Of those expositors who refer this to a spiritual awakening, some take the passage solely in this sense: others, as including both a spiritual and physical resurrection. The reference to a spiritual resurrection, as has been remarked, is based on the kind of death referred to in the preceding verse. As the passage from death unto life is there acknowledged by all, to denote a great spiritual vivification, so the resurrection of the dead at the voice of the Son of God, here spoken of, is thought to denote a moral quickening process, which had even then begun under Christ's ministry, and would go on with increasing power, after his ascension and the descent of the Spirit upon the church. The advocates of this view harmonize it with the following context, by averring that vs. 28, 29 are introduced, to remove all marvel that souls should be

quickened to spiritual life by a voice, so potent as to reach, as it will at the final judgment, all who are held in the embrace of the grave, and awaken them to life. But this reasoning is hardly satisfactory, when it is remembered that the salvation of a soul from death, or the quickening to life of one who is spiritually dead, is regarded in God's word as one of the highest acts of omnipotence (Eph. 1:19), and therefore by no means less wonderful than the resurrection of the natural body (vs. 28, 29), which it would be, if the argument proceeds from a spiritual resurrection in v. 25, to a physical one in vs. 28, 29, as those expositors teach, whose interpretation of the passage is above given.

The commentators who refer this passage to the resurrection of the body, claim its fulfilment in the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus. These they maintain are contrasted with the whole race of men, who (vs. 28, 29) are in like manner to come forth from their graves at the voice of the Son of God. The argument is, that it was comparatively no matter of wonder, that a few persons should be raised from the dead by a voice of such divine potency, that the millions held in the corruption of the grave, should at its bidding come forth to life at the last day.

To the one or other of these views, every reader must incline, unless with Stier, Tholuck, and some other recent expositors, the reference is thought to be to both a moral and physical resurrection. This is hardly admissible according to the strict laws of interpretation; and besides renders the whole passage confused and comparatively pointless. The power to produce a moral resurrection is implied in the power to raise the dead from their graves, as the latter is also implied in the former. But to suppose that our Lord has direct reference to both in the language here employed, is an adoption

of what is styled *the double sense* in its first form.

As to which of the above-mentioned expositions is the true one, is a point quite difficult to determine. I am disposed, however, to refer the words here uttered by our Lord primarily to a physical resurrection, but by implication and inference to one also spiritual. The demands of the context seem best to be met by this interpretation. Jesus had been accused of violating the sabbath, by healing on ~~that~~ day the sick man. He justifies himself (v. 17) from the charge, by averring that as the Father worked in the providential upholding of the universe on that day, so he worked, and had a right thus to do. The Jews at this manifest assumption of equality with God, were violently excited, and sought to kill him because he had said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God (v. 18). Our Lord proceeds to show (v. 19), that so essential was the union between the Father and him, that the works of one were necessarily those of the other; and hence he left them to draw the inference, that the healing of this man on the sabbath was in a sense the work of his Father as well as his own, and manifestly therefore not wrong. The subject of discourse so far as the works of our Lord were concerned, was the miracle wrought at the pool of Bethesda. But now (v. 20) Jesus goes on to say, that *greater works than these* (i. e. miracles of this sort) would the Father show him (i. e. give him power to do), so that their highest wonder would be elicited in view of them. Would not the Jews understand him to refer to works which would be cognizable to their natural senses, such as miracles, natural signs, physical phenomena? Most assuredly. They could not have understood him otherwise. The language would have been to them strange and wholly unintelligible, had it been respecting the new birth or a moral resurrection. Nicodemus could hardly understand the latter subject, even when declared to him in the simplest and plainest terms. Could the Jews have been presumed to understand

Jesus, had he so abruptly passed from the miracle of Bethesda, to spiritual subjects which can only be spiritually discerned, and would therefore constitute, in the eyes of those with whom he was speaking, no evidence of his Messiahship or his equality with the Father? The expression *greater works*, must therefore be referred to the miracles, which he subsequently wrought in confirmation of his divine mission, including also the great and crowning miracle of his resurrection from the dead, and even running on in the future, so as to embrace all the sublime manifestations, which he is to make of his power and dignity at the judgment of the great day. Hence the discourse advances naturally and clearly to the *greater works* or manifestations which lie far in the future, when the Son, to whom all judgment is committed, will summon the tenants of the grave to come forth and be judged at his tribunal. This reference to the vivifying power of the Son, is expanded and confirmed by the declaration made in v. 24, which is evidently parenthetical, that, in this judgment which is committed unto the Son, all those who believe in his words and in the Father who sent him, shall escape condemnation, having already passed from a death in trespasses and sin, to life in its highest spiritual sense. This verse, therefore, neither breaks up nor interrupts the train of argument, which was that the Jews should behold with their own eyes such stupendous works wrought by Jesus Christ, that they would no longer be in doubt as to his equality and oneness with God the Father. It is simply interposed parenthetically to show of what infinite importance to the welfare of the immortal soul beyond the grave, is a firm and living faith in Jesus Christ, which alone in the judgment can avail to save men from the condemning sentence of God's law.

This being the train of argument in the preceding context, it admits of scarcely a doubt, that *the dead* spoken of in v. 25, are the persons referred to in v. 21, and not the spiritually dead to whom reference is had in v. 24.

The following context makes this ref-

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

erence of the *dead* to those *physically* so, still more clear and pertinent. No one denies that the resurrection spoken of in v. 28, is that of the body. Equally clear is it, that there is a correspondence, if not a comparison, between this general resurrection at the last day, and the partial one referred to in the present verse. *The dead* in this passage, corresponds to *all who are in their graves*, in v. 28. Both classes of persons were to hear the voice of the Son of God. In v. 25, the result is expressed in the words *they that hear shall live*; in v. 28, it is varied to *shall come forth*. Who can doubt that these correspondences indicate a reference to classes of persons in the same condition? What this condition is we learn from v. 28, where the expression *in the graves*, proves beyond question that the physically dead are referred to. Thus reasoning back from v. 28, to v. 25, we arrive at the conclusion that the physically dead are there the subject of discourse.

But the subsequent context proves this by another train of reasoning. The annunciation of the words in v. 25, that at his voice some were soon to come back from the abodes of death, was received doubtless with an astonishment, manifested in their looks, if not in low and murmuring words. In view of this, our Lord bids them cease marvelling at what he had announced, for that same voice at a coming hour should be heard by *all* the dead, who at the call of the Son of God should come forth from their graves, and receive the award due to their works while on earth. This marks a clear and well-defined train of thought, and avoids the confusion of sense, which results from making the subject at one time a moral, and in the next breath, a physical resurrection. As has been remarked, the *greater works* spoken of in v. 20, are such as would be seen by the natural eye, and produce in all the beholders wonder and admiration. To

27 And ^s hath given him author-

^s Ver. 22; Ac. 10:42; & 17:31.

these *greater works*, the resurrections spoken of in vs. 25, 28, 29, belong, and cannot therefore in either case be referred to a moral resurrection.

Alford contends that the words *they that hear* (not *they hearing*) *shall live*, determines the verse to be spoken of a *spiritual*, and not a *bodily* awakening. But the necessity of such a conclusion is not apparent. We admit that the form of expression *they that hear*, implies only a partial resurrection, or that a portion only of the dead will hear this potent voice of God's Son. But is not this as equally applicable to persons *physically* dead, like Lazarus and others whom our Lord raised, as to those *morally* dead? Lazarus heard the voice of the Son of God and came forth. The ears of others who were sleeping in the grave, were so sealed, that they heard it not and did not therefore come forth. But the time was to come, when *all* would hear that voice, and be raised from the dead to stand at the bar of judgment. Alford's objection becomes thus an argument in favor of the view which it was designed to oppose.

26. Here is a reiteration of the sentiment of 1:4. The life here spoken of is not one of mere existence, for in that sense, the Son has as independent an existence as the Father, but is the life-giving power, by which the dead are to be raised as here asserted. This vivifying power is conferred by the Father upon the Son as God-man, so that he possesses it in himself and can exercise it upon whom he pleases. The word *Son*, has the same sense as in the next clause, *Son of man*. Alford, however, contrasts it with the latter term, as denoting the Son in his higher divine nature, the *Eternal Son of God*. But it removes much of the complexity of this passage, to refer the whole discourse to the Son in his character of Messiah, Mediator, God-man. The divine nature of the Lord Jesus is the

ity to execute judgment also, ' because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the

† Da. 7: 13, 14.

foundation, however, of the possession of this vivifying power, as to no mere man could be imparted this gift, so that he should have life *in himself*, as God has life *in himself*. But it is not the divine alone in Jesus which is referred to, but the divine and human, so intimately and mysteriously blended in the person of Christ Jesus. This gives great force and beauty to this sublime discourse to the Jews. They had accused him of breaking the sabbath. He replies to their accusation, that his right to work on the sabbath was equal to that of the Father (v. 17), and that besides this inherent and essential prerogative of divinity, all power had been committed to him by the Father, so that greater works than any which they had yet seen would be performed by him. Of these works, the great and crowning one, would be the raising of all the dead to judgment at the last day, in accordance with the economical arrangement of redemption, by which "all judgment was committed to the Son." This was not to excite the wonder of his auditors, for it had been given him of the Father to have life in himself, and that too in such unlimited measure, that he could impart life to whomsoever he pleased. To him also had been given authority to execute judgment (v. 27), because it was meet that he the Son of man should judge the world, into which he had come on this errand of love. This is the obvious train of thought, and forbids the supposition, that reference is had here to the Son in his original condition, as one of the persons in the Trinity, independent and apart from the complex nature, which he assumed in the work of human redemption.

27. *Hath given him authority, &c.* This is an emphatic repetition of what is asserted in v. 22. The life-giving power of the Son, and his office of

hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

Judge, are throughout this whole discourse placed in the closest connection. Indeed his power to raise the dead, seems to be spoken of as being essential to his office of final Judge. *Because* (i. e. seeing that) *he is the Son of man*. The article is wanting in the original, and it would therefore have been a closer and better translation, *because he is Son of man*, i. e. has the character and nature of Son of man. Who is so fit to sit upon the throne of judgment, as He to whom has been committed the work of man's recovery from sin and death, and who in the execution of his work, took upon himself man's nature, and represented in his own person both the human and divine? In reference to the expression *Son of man*, see N. on Matt. 8: 20. This designation of God's Son, in the connection in which it here stands, is one of the strongest proofs of his human nature, which was denied by the younger Apollinaris or Apollinarius, in the fourth century. If the Logos, as he taught, was *incarnate* but not *insouled*, or had no human soul, then in what sense could he be the *Son of man*, or why was authority given him to execute judgment, as here declared, *because he is the Son of man*? This denial of Christ's human soul, involves in it, a denial of his supreme divinity, for if he had no inferior nature, or was not *God-man*, how could authority be delegated to him, unless on the ground of the inferiority of the nature which he did really possess? It was not and could not be as the supreme God, that Jesus Christ was subordinate to the Father, but as the incarnate Son of God, having a "true body and a reasonable soul."

28. The connection of this verse with v. 25, has been referred to in the note on that verse. In the plainest and most sublime terms, our Lord now asserts, that a still greater exhibition of his power is to be made in the final

29 " And shall come forth ; " the resurrection of life ; and they that have done good, unto

u Is. 26 : 19 ; 1 Th. 4 : 16 ; 1 Co. 15 : 52.

o Da. 12 ; 2 Mat. 25 : 32, 33, 46.

resurrection. This event would be one of such amazing grandeur and power, that there would be no place for wonder at the previous and lesser displays of his power. It was an astonishing exhibition of his power, when, at his summons, Lazarus came forth from the grave. But how insignificant was this, compared with the calling into life of the whole human race at the last day. See Matt. 25 : 31 ; 1 Thess. 4 : 16 ; Rev. 20 : 12. *Marvel not at this*, i. e. at the annunciation made in v. 25. *For the hour is coming*. The event here spoken of lay far in the future, and hence the qualifying expression *and now is*, found in v. 25 is omitted. *In the graves* proves, beyond all question, that it cannot be a moral resurrection to which our Saviour refers. The key is thus furnished to the elucidation of the whole passage, which otherwise might have been rendered obscure by mistaken views of the resurrection referred to in v. 25. *All that are in the graves*, is a circumlocution for *all the dead*. Some repose in costly sepulchres ; others, deprived of the rites of burial, or covered with scanty earth, have a resting place unknown to any eye save that of Omniscience ; some lie in the depths of the ocean ; the ashes of some have been scattered about by the winds of heaven. But not one will be overlooked in this grand assize of our race. All who have lived and died since the creation of man, will hear the voice of God's Son, and come forth from their graves to stand before His tribunal. *Shall hear his voice*. An audible voice is not necessarily referred to. The will or command of the Judge will be as potent in the unexpressed determination of his divine mind, as though uttered in the loudest thunder. Yet it would be presumption to affirm, on the other hand, that there will be no audible voice, in obedience to which the dead shall come forth from their graves. In Thess. 4 : 16, it is said that " the

the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." See also 1 Cor. 15 : 52. We should hardly be warranted in view of such language, in affirming that there will be no openly expressed indication of the will of the Judge, on this dread occasion. How far angelic agency may be employed in gathering the nations before the throne of judgment, we have no certain knowledge, yet that such a service will be assigned them, appears quite probable from such passages as Matt. 13 : 39, 41, 49 ; 25 : 31 ; 2 Thess. 1 : 7.

29. *And shall come forth* from their graves. It would appear from 1 Thess. 4 : 16, compared with Rev. 20 : 4, 5, that the pious dead will be raised first, who together with those who are alive on that day, shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and that this will constitute the *first* resurrection. With these as a grand and admiring retinue (see Jude 4), He will come to execute judgment on all mankind, the rest of the dead being then raised to receive the just award of their deeds. The time of this great transaction is not to be limited by the terms *hour* and *day*, in which it is here and elsewhere designated. These expressions of time are to be taken in an indefinite sense. For aught we know, the preliminary and opening scenes of the judgment, together with the process of final adjudication, may occupy centuries of years, before the grand transaction is brought to a final close. *They that have done good*. "As our Lord himself teaches us, and so also the rest of Scripture, that there will be some who had never learned to know the name and person of the Lord Jesus (although they experienced in themselves the distinctive energy of the Logos), we are led to a profounder consideration of the reason why the Lord here, as in Rev. 20 : 12, 13, mentions works instead of faith or unbe-

30 " I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because ^z I seek not mine own will, but the

^y Ver. 19.

lief." Stier. But in general it may be said that works here, as in Matt. 25 : 35, 36, are regarded as the index of the soul, and thus form the basis of judgment. The same principle is brought to view in Matt. 12 : 37, on which see Note. *Resurrection of life*, i. e. a resurrection to a life of endless happiness and glory. *Resurrection of damnation* (or condemnation). By the force of the antithesis, this may be termed a *resurrection of death*, or as Bengel expresses it, *a resurrection from death to death*. As the resurrection of life includes all happiness and glory, so this resurrection of death involves all suffering and debasement. Two states are here referred to so opposite and final, that were other proof wanting, it would make the recovery to holiness of the finally impenitent, a most hopeless thing. This coming forth from the slumber of the tomb to the resurrection of life and of damnation, is not to be regarded as the entering upon a state or condition, which in the coming ages will terminate, but one which is fixed and irreversible. See Matt. 25 : 46. It is worthy of remark, that this resurrection of some to damnation furnishes additional proof, that a moral or spiritual resurrection is not here referred to.

30. Our Lord in this verse refers again to the union, subsisting between him and the Father, which renders it impossible for him to do any thing of himself or apart from the Father. Hence his judgment cannot but be just. *Can do nothing* as Judge. This is implied in the next clause, *as I hear* (from the Father. See v. 19). *I judge*, i. e. my judgment shall be in perfect accordance with the will of the Father, and therefore *my judgment is just*. It is to be noticed how our Lord passes from the third (vs. 19-23) to the first person, thus referring to himself all that

will of the Father which hath sent me.

31 ^a If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

^z Mat. 26:39; ch. 4:34; & 6:33.

^a See ch. 8:14; Re. 3:14.

had been previously said of the Son, as the great Vivifier and Judge of mankind. *Because I seek*, &c. This stands as a reason for the justice of his judicial decisions. *Mine own will* apart from that of the Father. *But the will of the Father* which cannot but be just. This closes up his vindication from the charge of having violated the sabbath by what he had done for the infirm man. He sought not to justify himself on the ground that it was an act of mercy or necessity (as in Matt. 12:3, 12), but took the high position, that as his Father worked in his providential agencies on the sabbath, so the Son, united to him in the closest union of essence and love, had equal right to work on that day. This essential unity of the Son with the Father, he proceeded to confirm and illustrate by the high office-work of raising to life and judging men, committed by the Father to the Son. The supreme divinity of the Son is here taught; for if he were less than God, words of greater blasphemy were never uttered, than those spoken by Jesus on this occasion.

31. Our Lord now by a natural and easy transition, proceeds to appeal to the various kinds and sources of testimony by which his claims are substantiated. He had previously appealed to his works (v. 20), but somewhat incidentally, and testimony from that source is again referred to in v. 36. *If I bear witness*, &c. There is some difference of opinion, whether this is a direct and absolute assertion, or whether the idea intended to be conveyed is, that if he bore witness of himself alone, his witness was not valid in the Jewish legal sense (see Deut. 17:6; 19:15). The latter I take to be the true interpretation, although the former would contain a great truth; for such is the intimate and essential union, declared in vs.

32 ^b There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

^b Mt. 3:17; & 17:5; ch. 8:18; 1 Jo. 5, 6, 7, 9.

17-30 to subsist between the Father and Son, that if the thing were possible that he could testify of himself apart from the will and purpose of the Father, it would stamp with falsehood his whole statement. See 8:14, 17. But the words of *myself*, are not the same as in vs. 19, 29, but should be translated *concerning* or *about myself*. Alford's explanation is, that the office-work of the Son was to speak not of himself but of the Father. If he transgressed this law of his mission, and resorted to means of self-glorification, it would be a falsification of the truth of God, as manifested in the Son. But while all this is so, yet the following context points so directly to the substantiation of our Lord's claims, on evidence such as is regarded legal and competent in the Jewish civil law, that we must assign to the passage the sense I have above given. So Hutcheson with his usual discrimination remarks: "Christ by this sentence doth not grant this as true, for the contrary is asserted in 8:14, but only by way of preterition passeth it, to make way for the following testimonies of himself, that he might let them see that he had witnesses beside to convince them, though he were silent."

32. *There is another*, &c. To whom does this other witness refer? Some expositors say John the Baptist. But the testimony of John is referred to in v. 33 by a verb in the past tense; and in v. 34, our Lord explicitly declares that he needs no human testimony in an affair of such high moment. This he would not have done, had he not been in possession of ample testimony from a higher source. There is also a dignity and confidence of appeal to this other witness, which precludes the idea of its reference to John. There can be no doubt then, from these and other reasons which might be given, were it necessary, that the witness here spoken

33 Ye sent unto John, ^c 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.

^c Ch. 1:15, 19, 27, 32.

of is none other than the Father. This is confirmed by v. 36 (see also 8:18), where the expression *greater witness*, referring to his works and also to the personal testimony of the Father, is a repetition of our Lord's words in the present passage, "I know that the witness, which he witnesseth of me is true." The validity of the testimony as seen in its high source, is in both verses affirmed in the strongest terms. *I know that the witness*, &c. "His assertion of his own consciousness and certainty of the truth of his Father's testimony concerning him, implies a confidence that it will be placed beyond all doubt and objection." Webster and Wilkinson. There is, however, a deeper significance in our Lord's assertion of his Father's veracity, and that is, his conscious knowledge of what he asserts, from his essential union with the Father. These great utterances of his are not to be interpreted as isolated and disconnected, but with a due regard to the general scope and drift of the discourse, which is here the vindication of himself from the charge of violating the sabbath, by averring his right to act as he had done, founded upon his equality with God.

33-35. The Jews would naturally refer the witness spoken of in v. 32, to John. In correcting this impression, our Lord alludes to the testimony of John in reply to their message (1:19-27), as being true. But in support of the extraordinary claims which he had put forth, he would not rely upon human testimony, which the nature of the subject might lead his hearers to reject as inconclusive. In thus disclaiming all dependence on human testimony in proof of his divine character and mission, he prepared the way for the great declaration, which he is about to make in vs. 36-38.

35 He was a burning and ^d a shining light: and ^e ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 But ^f I have greater witness

^d 2 Pe. 1: 19.

^e See Mt. 13: 20; & 21: 26; Ma. 6: 20.

But these things I say, i. e. I make this allusion to John's testimony, in order that it may be seen that I am not without the highest human testimony, if required to support my claims. *Testimony*; literally, *the testimony*, i. e. my testimony, such as is necessary to the support of my claims. This he will not receive from John, for as Zelter observes, "where is the ambassador of a king, who instead of seeking his authentication distinctly from his own sovereign himself, would appeal to the testimony of the secretary to his embassy?" *That ye might be saved*, i. e. to remove from your mind every doubt which might impede your salvation.

35. In conformity with the gracious intention expressed in the preceding verse, our Lord goes on to speak of the high mission and moral dignity of John. *He was a burning and shining light*. The words *burning and shining*, are not used of light undervived or independently possessed, but of that which is lit up and shines from another source. John was a light shining brightly indeed, but yet with beams reflected from that Light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (1: 9). The past tense of the verb, shows that John was already cast into prison, if not executed. *Ye were willing*, &c. This refers to the impression made by John upon the minds of the Jewish priests and rulers, but which was too evanescent to produce any real or lasting reformation of character. See Matt. 3: 7. The verb rendered *were willing*, is indicative of something more than a mere willingness. It implies active choice and purpose, and shows that they took delight in attending upon John's ministry, or as Hutcheson quaintly expresses it, "were much taken up with him." *For a season*,

than *that* of John: for the ^g 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.

^f 1 Jo. 5: 9.

^g Ch. 3: 2; & 10: 25; & 15: 24.

i. e. for a brief interval. The word literally signifies *hour*, the use of which in this indefinite sense is common in all languages. *Rejoice in his light*, i. e. listen to his instruction and rejoice that a prophet of such celebrity had been sent to the nation. They also rejoiced at the burden of his proclamation, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and the Messiah about to come, although their views of this event were very erroneous. The metaphor is continued from the preceding clause, a great and brilliant light being a natural incitement to joy.

36. The order in which the various kinds of testimony are here adduced is climactic, or as Stier expresses it, there is "a gradation of energy." From John's testimony there is an ascent, through that of miracles and other wondrous manifestations, to the word of God, which is highest of all. *But I have greater witness*. The presence of the article in the original requires the translation, *but the witness which I have is greater than* [the witness of] *John*. These words are repeated from v. 32, on account of the parenthetical verses 33-35, introduced to show, that although John's witness of him was true, yet he was not dependent upon that to prove his high character and mission. The witness of the Father was twofold, the works which he gave Jesus to do, and his written word. *The works* here spoken of have primary reference to the miracles which our Lord wrought, but Olshausen is wrong in restricting them solely to these miraculous manifestations. Stier and Tholuck more correctly make the expression embrace the entire sphere of the Messiah's activity, his teachings and life, indeed all that is included in *the work* spoken of in 17: 4. The works to which our Lord here ap-

37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, ^a hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, ⁱ nor seen his shape.

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you : for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

^a Mat. 3:17; & 17:5; ch. 6:27; & 8:18.
ⁱ De. 4:12; ch. 1:18; 1 Ti. 1:17; 1 Jo. 4:12.

peals, are undoubtedly the same as those referred to in vs. 20-30, comprising all his acts during his earthly ministry and onward to the resurrection and judgment of all mankind at the last day. In all these works, the Father bears testimony to the divine mission of the Son, because as Mediator they were given him of the Father to do, and indeed in 14:10, they are declared to be done by the Father who dwelleth in the Son. Thus these works of Christ are virtually the testimony of the Father himself, being the result of the mediatorial power which the Son officially received from the Father. It hardly need be said that the term *works*, is here and elsewhere inclusive also of his doctrines and instructions, which no less than his miracles proved his divine mission to man.

37-38. *And the Father himself*, &c. Besides the mediate testimony which the Father gave, by endowing the Son with miraculous powers, and committing to him all judgment (see v. 22), he had given also immediate and personal testimony that Jesus was his divine Son. That new and distinct testimony is here introduced, is rendered apparent by the pronoun *himself*, which opposes the Father's testimony, not only to that of John (vs. 33-35), but also to that furnished by the works which the Father gave Jesus to do (v. 36). This witness of the Father is therefore something more than the works of Jesus. To what then does it refer? Cyril, Theophylact, and Calvin, refer it to the witness of the prophets, comprising all the previous forms of divine revelation. Bengel after Chrysostom finds in it an allusion to the direct testimony of God at the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus. Olshausen refers it to the direct operation of the Spirit of God upon man. To all these views there are weighty objections, except to the first,

which refers the personal testimony of the Father to the prophetic declarations of God in the Scriptures. This is brought out more fully in v. 39. *Ye have neither heard his voice*, &c. As this reads in our common translation, it appears to be directly opposed to the argument, that the Father's testimony to the divine mission of his Son was so direct and palpable that all excuse for the want of faith in him was taken away. Prof. Stuart and some others, therefore, prefer to give it the interrogative form, *have you not heard his voice and seen his shape?* In this way reference is supposed to be had to the voice which was heard, and the shape which descended and rested upon him, at his baptism. But the Greek does not seem to be susceptible of such a translation, nor does the following context justify it, for we should expect the same interrogative form in the next clause, which would give the false sense, *have ye not his word abiding in you?* It may be further objected to this view, that we have no evidence, that the people had any personal knowledge of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus at his baptism, or that they heard the words then uttered from heaven. Indeed in 1:32, as well as in Matt. 3:16, in the words *he saw*, the contrary to this is very strongly implied. The descent of the Spirit also formed a part of the testimony of John (1:32-34), and cannot therefore be taken as new and independent testimony, such as the context proves this to be.

The difficulty which Prof. Stuart felt and sought to avoid, by giving the sentence an interrogative form, must then be solved in some more satisfactory manner. What then is the general scope and argument? Our Lord asserts that he has another witness, not John, for in regard to the divinity of his claims he seeks not human testi-

39 ^k Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal

life: Is. 8:20; & 34:16; Lu. 16:29; v. 46; Ac. 17:11.

mony, but the Father himself who has borne witness of him. He proceeds to say that this was not done by an audible or visible manifestation (see 1:18), as their unbelief and hardness of heart would prompt them to require (Matt. 12:39). Nor did the word of God so abide in their heart, as to produce an inward conviction, or what might be termed a witness of the Spirit, that Jesus was the Messiah. This rejection of the indwelling word was evinced, by their unbelief in him whom God had sent (v. 38, end). Yet although they had seen and heard no direct communication from God, they were in possession of the Scriptures, by searching which they could learn what God had said concerning the Messiah, and see how these predictions were all fulfilled in him. This gives an appropriate and well connected sense, and does no violence to the original Greek. There is another solution which some may prefer, and which seems to be hinted at by Webster and Wilkinson, that there is an allusion to the direct testimony furnished at his baptism, but not directly to them. “Ye have neither heard his voice nor seen his shape,” and yet a voice was heard and a shape seen on the bank of Jordan, which fully attested my divine mission and relation to the Father.’ The expression *his word abiding in you*, seems to refer to that inward light and consciousness of truth, which God by his Spirit gives to those who trust in Him, and earnestly seek by prayer his guidance and favor. In all such, the word of Christ dwells richly in all wisdom (Col. 3:16), being hid away in the heart and giving light to the understanding.

39. *Search the Scriptures.* Some of the best commentators read this as an assertion, instead of a command. *Ye search the Scriptures*, i. e. you profess- edly resort to the Scriptures as the word of God containing eternal life, and yet although they testify so fully

life: and ^l they are they which testify of me.

l De. 18:15, 18; Lu. 24:27; ch. 1:45.

of me, “ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.” This sense is natural and pertinent, and does no violence to the original, which may be read as an indicative as well as an imperative. I prefer however the sense given in our common version. *Search the Scriptures* (i. e. read them carefully); *for in them ye (rightly) think ye have eternal life* (i. e. the revealed way of eternal life): *and (yet) they are they which testify of me.* It is as though our Lord had said, ‘the Father has testified of me, not by an audible voice or visible shape, but by his word, which you rightly receive as containing the doctrine of eternal life. Now search these Scriptures anew. They are full of predictions respecting me. In them you will find the clearest and most explicit testimony of the nature of my mission, and the truth of my claim to the Sonship of God.’ This is a more simple and pertinent train of thought, than can be obtained by reading the verb *search*, as an indicative *ye search*. The words *ye think ye have eternal life*, refer probably to the dependence on the letter and external ordinances of the law, which characterized the Jews of that time, and to which they looked for acceptance with God. Our Lord virtually tells them that the law and ordinances, as well as the prophecies of the Old Testament, have their fulfilment in him, and therefore it will be necessary for them to read anew the sacred oracles, and learn their true import. With this general exposition Stier accords in these impressive words: “If the testimony of the Scriptures is actually the last and greatest, and if on that account the Lord now first refers to them; if, as we have seen, the unbelief of the Jews toward Jesus was fundamentally based on their misunderstanding of those Scriptures, what could have been more proper than the change and progression of the discourse into an imperative? We cannot but expect

40 ^m And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.

41 ⁿ I receive not honour from men.

^m Ch. 1: 11; & 3: 19.

ⁿ Ver. 34; 1 Th. 2: 6.

from Him who now speaks *that they may have life*, that He would not dismiss them with nothing but reproaches, rather that He would send them away with exhortation and hope. It is to us as if He would say—Ye sent in vain to John, who sent you back to me; I myself stand before you, but ye know me not; *I now therefore send you back and refer you to your own Scriptures again.*"

40. The general connection is this: 'Ye profess great veneration for the scriptures; ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and yet although they so abundantly testify of me, ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.' The clause *that ye may have life*, denotes not purpose, but result (see N. on Matt. 1: 22), and is opposed to the vain reliance on empty forms and ceremonies implied in the clause, "in them ye think ye have eternal life." It is here charged upon them, that in the very Scripture, to which they resort professedly to find the way of eternal life, is the most abundant evidence, that the only true and living way, is the very one they are now so obstinately rejecting. *Life* is here to be taken in the sense of *eternal life*, as is evident from the preceding verse.

41, 42. This verse begins what Stier calls the third part of the whole discourse. Verses 19–30 contain continuous promising and threatening assertion; vs. 31–40, the reproving appeal to the Father's testimony concerning his Son in whom they believed not; now in vs. 41–47, follow warnings based upon the principle and results of unbelief. As it respects v. 40, it is evidently an emphatic but somewhat varied repetition of what is asserted in v. 34. As our Lord was not dependent upon human testimony to the validity of his high claims, so he sought not human

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 ye will receive.

applause. What was the praise of men to Him, whose relations to the Father were so intimate, and to whom had been committed the office of raising from the dead and judging mankind at the last day? *I receive not.* 'I accept not; I have need of no human honor or applause.' *But I know you*, &c. 'You, who make your chief good to consist in the honor which you receive one from another, cannot appreciate this. Your rejection of this divine testimony in my favor, shows that *you have not the love of God in you.*' The assertion of our Lord that he receives not honor from men, does not imply that men are not to honor him (see v. 23), or that he is not pleased to receive the homage of the broken hearted and believing soul. But the idea is that he covets not human applause, and will not receive it when offered him (see as an illustration of this, 6: 15). This desire of worldly honor and praise, was the very thing which blinded the minds of the Jews to his claims (see v. 44).

42. *But I know you*, &c. Here gleams forth again a ray of his divinity. He had declared his knowledge of the deep things of God, by his essential union with the Father; he now avers that he penetrates the thoughts of those whom he addressed, and knows that the love of God is not in them. It was no inference from what they had said and done, but direct cognition, *I know you*, &c. Thus to the end of this sublime discourse with the Jews, he retains the high position and prerogatives, which he had assumed in the outset, as the Eternal Son of God. *Love of God* has here the objective sense of *love to God*. They were not actuated in any thing which they did by a desire to promote God's glory. Their ends and aims were all selfish.

43. In this verse is given the result

44 ° How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another,

o Ch. 12:43.

and seek not^p the honour that cometh from God only?

p Ro. 2:29.

of a heart devoid of love to God. It leads to the rejection of every thing good and true. Christ came in his Father's name and was their true Messiah. But him they rejected. Another of like selfishness with themselves, and coming in his own name, they were ready to receive. What is asserted therefore in this verse, is a proof of the truth of the preceding allegation. *I am come as Messiah. In my Father's name*, i. e. with the most full and satisfactory credentials, that I act under his sanction and authority. *Receive me not*, i. e. believe not in my divine mission. *If another shall come*, &c. An obvious reference is here made to the false Christs who afterwards came, all of whom found more or less adherents among the Jews. See Matt. 24:24. These false Christs, of whom Tholuck remarks that in the course of history sixty-four have appeared, all pretended that they were sent of God, but in reality they came in their own name, and looked only to their selfish interests. That such manifest impostors should be hailed as the Messiah, while Jesus, whose works and doctrines have stood the searching test of more than eighteen centuries, was rejected and crucified by the Jewish people, was the most convincing proof, that the love of God was not at all in their heart. Alford thinks that the words, *another shall come in his own name*, are spoken primarily of the false or Idol-Messiah, the Antichrist, who shall appear in the latter days. See 2 Thess. 2:8-13. But it seems quite evident that *another*, is used in a generic or collective sense of all the false Christs, who made their appearance in the time of our Lord and afterwards, and not of any one in particular. *In his own name*; literally, *in the name* (that which is) *his own*. This collocation brings out more emphatically the contrast between Jesus Christ and these false Messiahs; the former coming in his Father's name, the latter, in their own name, and for their own

selfish ends. *Him ye will receive*. One of these false Christs, Bar Cochba, had twenty-four thousand adherents.

44. In the preceding verse the fact was asserted that Jesus was rejected, while Antichrist, or the false Christs which were to come, would be received. The reason is here given in their strong desire for human applause, and disregard of the honor that cometh from God only. The words *how can ye believe*, refer not to any physical disability, but to the inveterate unwillingness spoken of in v. 40. So deeply seated was this aversion to God's Son, as to effectually preclude their approach to him, and constitute an impediment in the way of true saving faith, which would never be removed, unless by the agency of God's Spirit renewing the heart, and bringing it into sympathy with divine truth. *Which receive honor*, &c. A desire for worldly honor is here the prominent idea. So deeply seated and absorbing was this, that the self-denying doctrines of Jesus were offensive to them, and awakened their most strenuous opposition. *One of another*; literally, *from one another*. The preposition employed in the original denotes the twofold relation *from one towards one*, and refers here not only to the reception of honor from, but also to its voluntary conferral upon another. The bestowment of honor upon man, which belongs properly to God, is a sin no less heinous than that of an inordinate love of human praise and distinction. *And seek not the honor*, &c. This is placed in strong antithesis with their selfish aims and ends. The friendship of the world is enmity to God (James 4:4). The one cannot subsist with the other. Those who possess the praise of men, cannot at the same time possess that of God (Rom. 2:29). *From God only*; literally, *from the only God*, which Alford says, "is put in contradistinction to the idolatry of the natural heart, which is ever setting up for itself other sources of

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: 'there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust.

q Ro. 2:12.

honor, worshipping *man* or *self*." But the common rendering is preferable, the adverb being changed from its natural position after the verb for the sake of emphasis. "*God alone*, i. e. God the only Being to seek it from." Webster and Wilkinson. The same preposition with the twofold sense of *from* one *towards* one, is here employed in *from* God, as in the previous clause *one of another*. God is more willing to bestow honor upon those who desire it from Him, than they are to receive it, so that the idea indicated by the preposition is in this respect stronger and more enlarged, than in its previous reference to the honor which men not only seek, but are fond of bestowing upon one another.

45. Assuming that condemnation will follow such a substitution of the love of self for that of God, our Lord proceeds to show by whom the accusation of unbelief and sin will be pressed upon the notice of the Father. *Do not think that I, &c.* 'Do not regard me as uttering any threat, that I will become your accuser before the Father, for your unbelief in him whom He hath sent.' Our Lord came to save and not to condemn (3:17). His office-work is one of intercession with the Father. Even in his office of final Judge, he acts not the part of an accuser, but judges men "out of those things which are written in the books according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). *There is one that accuseth you, even Moses*. The original has an energy of expression, which we cannot well transfer into English. It is as though it had been said, 'there is already an accuser, Moses'; or 'you have your accuser, Moses.' The law is here personified in Moses, in order to correspond to the personal *I*. See Luke 16:29; 2 Cor. 3:15. *In whom*. The preposition in the original, gives the sense *in* or *upon*

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: 'for he wrote of me.

r Ge. 3:15; & 12:3; & 18:18; & 22:18; & 49:10; De. 18:15, 18; ch. 1:45; Ac. 26:22.

whom you place your trust. The very law upon which they placed such external honor, and in which they trusted with such reliant self-righteousness, was to be their accuser in the day of final account. They had overlooked and neglected its spirit, and substituted for its living demands, the most empty forms and ceremonies. The law then, broken and dishonored both in letter and in spirit, would be their accuser at the bar of judgment, and demand the infliction of its fearful penalties.

46. *Had ye believed Moses*. The Jews were loud in their profession of faith in Moses. But their rejection of Christ, in whom the law with its typical rites and ceremonies found its highest and most perfect fulfilment, proved the hypocrisy of their professions. Hence this verse is introduced by *for*, as furnishing the ground or reason why Moses would act the part of an accuser against them. *Ye would have believed me*. The Mosaic code pointed so directly to Christ, and found such an exact fulfilment in him, that a belief in the one, of necessity implied a belief in the other. Hence unbelief in Christ furnished the most indubitable evidence of want of faith in Moses. *For he wrote of me*. The reference is thought by some to be to Deut. 18:15, 18, but it is better with Bengel, to refer it to the spirit and teaching of all the Mosaic writings. The tense in the original gives the sense *he always wrote*, or *in every thing which he wrote*. See N. on Luke 24:27, 44.

47. This is the converse of the preceding verse, with the additional idea of the impossibility of believing in Christ, unless there is a full and cordial belief in the spirituality of the Mosaic writings. Whoever trusted in the external forms and ceremonies of the law for salvation, overlooked its true import and spirit, and would never seek for justification through faith in the Son of

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

a Mat. 14: 15; Ma. 6: 35; Lu. 9: 10, 12.

God. "Moses preaches the necessity and awakens the need of regeneration; and how can he who has rejected that, believe the testimony of the Saviour?" Stier. *How shall ye believe.* See N. on Matt. 12: 34. The argument is *a fortiori* (see N. on Matt. 5: 15). They pretended the highest respect for the writings of Moses, and if with all this, as a matter of fact, they had no real regard for his teachings, how could they be expected to believe in Jesus, for whom they did not even pretend any regard? The expression *his writings*, is here substituted for *Moses* in the preceding verses, and shows that his name is employed for the Scripture written by him. *My words* refer to the declarations made by Jesus as to his character and mission. The blindness and unbelief which characterized their relation to the Mosaic law, would prevent their seeing in Jesus the true Messiah.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER the discourse recorded in the preceding chapter, Jesus returned to Galilee, where he fulfilled the duties of his ministry, until at the approach of the third passover (see v. 4), John again resumes his narrative with the account of the feeding of the five thousand, and the discourse with the Jews to which that miracle gave rise. Indeed this miracle seems to have been related by John, in order to introduce the testimony which Jesus bore at that time to his divine character and mission. Alford remarks that "in the last discourse Jesus was the Son of God, testified to by the Father, received by faith, rejected by unbelief; here he is SON OF MAN, the incarnate life of the world, and we have the unbelief of the Jews and of his own disciples, set in strong contrast with the feeding on and participating in him as the Bread of Life."

1-14. JESUS RETIRES WITH HIS DIS-

CHAPTER VI.

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

CIPLES ACROSS THE LAKE. FIVE THOUSAND ARE FED. *N. E. coast of the Lake of Galilee.* See Ns. on Matt. 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 32-44; Luke 9: 10-17. It may be asked why John, after passing over in silence so many miracles performed by our Lord in Galilee, narrates the two which are found recorded in this chapter. The reply to this has been in a measure anticipated, in the brief remarks with which I have prefaced the chapter. These miracles served to introduce the great discourse which Jesus delivered at Capernaum, in which he sets forth his flesh and blood as the true spiritual food of the believer. The miracle of his walking upon the water constituted so essential a part of the general narrative, that the Evangelist could not well omit its insertion. This will appear by a reference to vs. 22, 24, 25, where it would be difficult to account for the fact that the people found Jesus on the other side of the sea, when the evening previous they had seen his disciples depart in a ship without him, unless the subject had been cleared up by what is related in vs. 15-21. Alford however rejects this reason for the recording of the miracle, and finds it to be this: to give to the Twelve, in the prospect of so apparently a strange discourse respecting his body, a view of the truth respecting that body, that it and the things said of it were not to be understood in a gross, corporeal, but in a supernatural and spiritual sense. But this is a very dangerous view to take when looked upon in its legitimate consequences, for if our Lord's body was not truly and really as gross and material as our own, how can we avoid the dogma of the Docetæ, that it was only a bodily appearance and not a real body, which our Lord took upon himself while on earth?

1. *After these things.* This as has been remarked (see N. on 5: 1) is a general term of transition, giving us no

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

3 And Jesus went up into a

fixed date. An interval of nearly a year had intervened between the events here recorded and those of the preceding chapter. *These things* refer however of course to the healing of the infirm man at Bethesda, and the events and discourse consequent thereon. *Went over* to the north-east side near to Bethsaida. See Luke 9 : 10. *The sea of Galilee*. It is called in Luke 5 : 1 (on which see Note), *the lake of Genesaret*. 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. Tiberias, which is mentioned by John only, was quite a new city in the time of our Saviour, but had waxed to considerable size and importance in the time of Josephus. In the Jewish War which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, Tiberias was spared by Vespasian and Titus; and its adherence to the Romans was rewarded by its being made the capital of the province (see Thomson's Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 72). This will account for the explanatory clause, here thrown in to identify the lake to the Gentile reader. See 21 : 1. Bengel strangely supposes, that the clause is added to show the part traversed by our Lord. The reason why Jesus crossed the lake at this time, is given in N. on Matt. 14 : 13, which is parallel to this.

2. *A great multitude*. The large numbers who followed Jesus, are referred to in Matthew and Mark, but in a somewhat different connection, as may be seen by a reference to the account given by these Evangelists. Thus we are continually meeting with evidence of the independence of the sacred writers and the truthfulness of their statement. *Because they saw*, &c. This reason for their resorting to him in such

mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

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

^b Le. 23 : 5, 7 ; De. 16 : 1 ; ch. 2 : 13 ; & 5 : 1.

great numbers, is peculiar to John. *Followed him* ; literally, *were following* or *proceeded to follow* him ; if the scene of the miracle was at the south-eastern extremity of the Butaiha—a plain on the north-eastern shore of the lake, resembling somewhat Genesaret on the western shore—these people must have forded the Jordan at its entrance into the lake, on their way from Capernaum and other places on the extreme north-western shore. See N. on v. 17. *Which he did on them*, &c. The preposition employed in the original, marks these diseased persons as the cause or occasion of the miracles here referred to, as though it had been said, 'which he took occasion from the sick persons to perform on them.' The idea is that there was resident an inherent power in him to work miracles, which the presence of these sick people furnished opportunity for him to make manifest.

3. *He went up into a mountain* ; literally, *the mountain*, or eminence bordering on the lake. On the south-eastern part of the Butaiha, Thomson says that there is a bold headland, which he regards as the scene of the miracle here related. Its marks of identification are these : It belongs to Bethsaida ; it is a desert place, and near the shore of the lake (see Matt. 14 : 19) ; a mountain is close at hand, and there is the smooth grassy spot upon which the people might be seated as here described. The mountain, as above remarked, on the extreme south-east corner of this Butaiha shuts down upon the lake bleak and barren. Here is a little cove in which the ships or boats were anchored. See Thomson's Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 29. The reference to this mountain or headland is peculiar to John. *Sat with his disciples*. See N. on Matt. 5 : 1.

4. This verse is valuable, inasmuch as it fixes the time when this great

5 ° When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great com-

c Mat. 14: 14; Ma. 6: 35; Lu. 9: 12.

miracle was performed and the subsequent discourse at Capernaum pronounced. It seems pretty clear from this passage, compared with 7: 1 (on which see Note), that our Lord did not go up to Jerusalem on the occasion of this passover, probably on account of the deadly hostility of the Jews; and perhaps, as Webster and Wilkinson suggest, on account of the great excitement, which this miracle of the feeding of the five thousand produced among the people. It seems from this time that he retired to the more unfrequented parts of the country (see Matt. 15: 21; 16: 13; Mark 7: 24; 8: 27; Luke 9: 18); but this may have resulted in part from the jealousy of Herod, who from the time of his putting John the Baptist to death, seems to have looked with an evil eye upon the rising fame of Jesus. See Ns. on Matt. 14: 1; 15: 21. *A feast*; literally, *which* (was a) *feast*. This explanatory adjunct shows that John wrote his gospel for Gentile readers. The verse is parenthetic.

5. *Then or therefore*. If v. 4 is parenthetic, this connection refers back to v. 3, in which Jesus is said to have taken his position as a public teacher, upon an elevation bordering on the lake. This would naturally attract to him great crowds. *Lifted up his eyes*. A form of expression of frequent occurrence in the Bible, and here signifying that his attention was directed to the great numbers which from all quarters were gathering around him. *A great company*. Bengel and Alford refer this to the people, who were gathering on their way to keep the passover at Jerusalem. But see N. on Matt. 14: 14. I am the more confirmed in the objection there made to Alford's view, by a recent conversation with Prof. Howard Crosby, who from a careful personal survey of the whole region around the Lake of Tiberias, assures me that the usual route to Jerusalem from Caper-

pany come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

naum, Bethsaida, and the adjacent towns must have been down the western shore of the lake to a ford of the Jordan some ten miles below its outlet, where the traveller crossed over and proceeded onward, until opposite to Jericho he again recrossed the river, and pursued the usual route from Jericho to Jerusalem. *Come unto him*. The original is in the present tense as it appeared to the eye of Jesus. The literal rendering is, *having seen that a great company is coming to him*, or *keeps coming to him*. The gradual increase of numbers is explained by the parallel passage in Mark, *many knew him and ran afoot thither out of all the cities*. The hour of the day, when they reached the place where Jesus was, would of course vary with the distance of the cities and towns. Some doubtless did not arrive until the day was far on its decline, and this gave occasion to the disciples (see the account as narrated by the other Evangelists) to suggest to Jesus, that he should send the multitude away, to obtain food for themselves from the adjacent villages. *He saith unto Philip*. In the other Evangelists, the conversation is said to have been begun by the disciples, who requested him to send the multitude away to obtain food; whereas in John, our Lord commences the subject by the inquiry made of Philip, as here related. Alford calls this a disagreement, so far as the mere letter is concerned. But it is nothing more than one of the variations of detail and incident, always found to a greater or less extent in truthful and independent writers. Webster and Wilkinson thus harmonize the statements: *Disciples*. 'Send the multitude away,' &c. *Jesus*. 'They need not depart; give ye them to eat.' (Matt. 14: 15, 16; Luke 9: 12.) *Disciples*. 'Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?' (Mark 6: 37.) *Jesus* (to 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.

7 Philip answered him, ^a Two hundred pennyworth 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,

Philip. 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.'

Jesus. 'How many loaves have ye? go and see.' (Mark 6 : 38.) *Andrew.*

'There is a lad here,' &c. This removes every difficulty from the apparent verbal variance in the accounts, although I think that the question put into the mouth of the disciples in Mark 6 : 37, was the one here attributed to Philip, who acted as spokesman. See Ns. on Matt. 14 : 16; Mark 6 : 37. All the Evangelists concur in the statement, that Jesus first proposed to the disciples to provide food. Bengel thinks that our Lord addressed Philip as here related, because to him had been assigned the duty of attending to their provisionary matters. But see v. 6.

Whence, i. e. from what store or market? It being a desert place, the question might well stagger Philip, who looked only to the usual mode of obtaining a supply of provisions.

6. This verse, which is a parenthesis, places beyond a doubt that our Lord's question was proposed to Philip as a trial of his faith. See N. on Matt. 14 : 16. *To prove*; literally, *proving*, or *in the way of testing*. The words *he himself knew what he would do*, undoubtedly refer to the divine omniscience of Jesus, by which the future was as the present, and no contingency could arise, in which he should be doubtful as to the proper course to pursue. See 2 : 25; 6 : 64; 13 : 3, 11; 18 : 4; 19 : 28, where omniscience is attributed to him in language which cannot be mistaken.

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes : ^e 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.

d See Nu. 11 : 21, 22.
e 2 Ki. 4 : 43.

7-9. *Two hundred pennyworth.* A sum variously estimated from \$28 to \$30. *A little.* The original is indefinite, *some little* (portion). Philip's answer shows his want of faith in the source of supply guaranteed by the presence of Jesus. The same is true of Andrew, who appears on this, as on other occasions, in close connection with Philip. Willing to impart all the information he possessed in order to meet the exigency, he informs his Master, that there was a lad present, who had five barley loaves and two small fishes, but showed his sense of the insufficiency of this small quantity of food, by immediately adding, *what are they among so many* (literally, *for so many*)? We see from all this, that the miraculous supply of food was anticipated by no one of the company, and hence was the more astounding when it took place. *A lad*; literally, *one little boy*. Webster and Wilkinson think that to him the disciples had intrusted the care of their stock of provisions. But see N. on Matt. 14 : 17. John is the only writer who mentions the circumstance that these were barley-loaves. This shows how plain was the fare thus miraculously supplied. See N. on Matt. 14 : 18. *Small 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. Some here translate *two fishes*, but the best Greek Lexicons put down the word as

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^f that Prophet that should come into the world.

^f Ge. 49: 10; De. 18: 15, 18; Mat. 11: 3; ch. 1: 21; & 4: 19, 25; & 7: 40.

a diminutive. *But what are they*, &c. The order of the words in the original is much more emphatic: *But these—what are they for so many?*

10. *Make the men*, &c. The word rendered *men*, is the one which is used generically for *people*, *folks*, and here includes also the women and children. In the clause *so the men sat down*, the Greek word is used signifying *men*, in opposition to women and children; men of adult years. This harmonizes John's statement with that of Matt. 14: 21, on which see Note. As the men seem only to have been numbered, it is thought that they alone sat in ranks, the rest of the company taking a position less prominent and orderly. *Now* (literally *but*) *there was much grass*. This serves to explain why Jesus directed the people to sit down. It also anticipates an objection, which might arise from the apparent inconvenience of obeying the command to sit upon the ground. The clause is peculiar to John (see N. on Matt. 14: 19), although Mark (v. 39) speaks of *the green grass*, on which the people were caused to sit. Thomson speaks of the beautiful sward at the base of the rocky hill, as one of the signs of identification, that the south-eastern portion of the Butaiha was the place where this miracle was wrought (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 29). *Took the loaves*. In all the other Evangelists, *the five loaves*. John refers however to the number in v. 13. *Had given thanks* (see N. on v. 23). In the other Evangelists, the word signifying *to bless*, *to ask God's blessing* (on food),

is employed. Both ideas were doubtless made prominent in this act of devotion. *He distributed*, &c. At this point the creative power was no doubt exerted. See N. on Matt. 14: 19. *Likewise of the fishes*, i. e. these were distributed in like manner as the loaves. The original is not the usual construction for *of the fishes*, but a prepositional clause denoting, *out of or from the fishes* as the source of the supply. *As much as they would*, i. e. until their wants were fully supplied. This refers grammatically to the fishes, but in sense also to the loaves. When it is remembered that this great multitude were in a state of extreme hunger, it will be seen that no ordinary supply would have sufficed for their wants. This idea of satiety is expressed in the other Evangelists by the words, "they did all eat and were filled."

12, 13. *When they were filled* interprets the full sense of *as much as they would*, in the preceding verse. *Gather up the fragments*, &c. This command and the reason for it is recorded only by John. A beautiful and impressive truth of economy is taught, which persons of prodigal and wasteful habits will do well to ponder upon. Even food miraculously supplied at a word, was not to be wasted, but all gathered up and reserved for future use. See N. on Matt. 14: 20, 21, for general remarks on this evidence of the completeness of the miracle, and the kind of baskets here referred to. *Of five barley loaves*. The same prepositional construction is here employed as in v. 11 (on which

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.

16 ^g And when even was *now*

g Mat. 14: 23; Ma. 6: 47.

sec Note), denoting *out of* or *from*. These fragments far exceeded in bulk and quantity the original loaves, and hence the simple construction of, would not have so accurately expressed this as *out of* or *from*. The relative in which remained, refers to the word *fragments*.

14. This miracle was so palpable and stupendous, that the people (*those men*, the generic word being employed. See N. on v. 10) at once professed their faith in him as the Prophet (see Deut. 18: 18-20), or Messiah who was to come into the world. That their faith however was superficial and evanescent appears, not only from their mistaken notions of the object of his mission implied in their attempt to make him their king (v. 15), but in their rejection of him at Capernaum, where on the following day, he discoursed upon the spiritual food, which he was to furnish in his own flesh and blood. *That should come*. The Coming One. See N. on Matt. 11: 3.

15. The people were raised to such a pitch of excitement by this stupendous miracle, that they demand him to be their king. Who would be so able to lead them against their Roman oppressors, as one who at a word could supply thousands with food? Under such a leader they could not fail of success. The passover was at hand. Thousands of bold hearts, panting for the deliverance of their country, would soon throng the streets of Jerusalem. Now was the time to strike a blow for liberty. Under this strong feeling that the long expected time of their deliverance had come, so importunate were they, that they would even force Jesus to become their king and leader. This indicates the previous employment of urgent request and entreaty to induce

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.

him to be their king, all of which had been fruitless. His kingdom was not of this world, and hence he did not yield to their request; and when they *would take him by force* and compel his assent to be their king, *he withdrew again into the mountain*, whence he had previously addressed them (v. 3). This time he retired alone to the mountain, as Matthew and Mark say, to pray. The reason for this is given in N. on Matt. 14: 23. The verb *take him by force*, literally signifies *carry him off by force*, and shows that it was doubtless the intention of these Jews to take Jesus with them to Jerusalem, and there publicly proclaim him king, a fact which, Tholuck says, makes it clear why Jesus frequently prohibited persons from noising abroad his miracles.

16-21. JESUS WALKS UPON THE WATER. *Lake of Galilee*. See Ns. on Matt. 14: 22-33; Mark 6: 45-51.

16, 17. *When the even*, &c. This was the second or real evening which began at sunset. The first evening, as it was called, commenced as some say, at three o'clock; as others say, just before sunset. See Ns. on Matt. 14: 15, 23. *Went down*, as one would go to the shore or beach of a lake. *Entered into a* (literally *the*) *ship*. Matthew and Mark say that Jesus constrained his disciples to do this, that is, he used a sort of friendly compulsion. *Went over the sea toward Capernaum*. Since I published my commentary on Matthew and Mark, in which I fell in with the common, and as I supposed universally entertained theory of *two* Bethsaidas, Dr. Thomson has given the world his "*Land and Book*," in which he shows most clearly, that there was but *one* Bethsaida, situated at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake. But how is this reconcilable with what

is said in Mark (6 : 45), about going "to the other side before unto Bethsaida?" The question is so pertinent, and the answer of such importance to the right understanding of the location of these places, that I shall take the liberty to quote Dr. Thomson in full, whose familiarity with these and other sacred places, by a residence of twenty-five years in the country, entitle his opinion to the highest credit. "According to John, the disciples went over the sea toward Capernaum, while Mark says that Jesus constrained them to get into the ship, and go to the other side before unto Bethsaida. Looking back from the point at the south-eastern extremity of the Butaiha, I see no difficulty in these statements. The case was this I suppose: As the evening was coming on, Jesus commanded the disciples to return home to Capernaum, while he sent the people away. They were reluctant to go and leave him alone in that desert place; probably remonstrated against his exposing himself to the coming storm and the cold night air, and reminded him that he would have many miles to walk round the head of the lake, and must cross the Jordan at Bethsaida before he could reach home. To quiet their minds, he may have then told them to go on before toward Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd, promising to join them in the night, which he intended to do, and actually did, though in a manner very different from what they actually expected. Still they were reluctant to leave him, and had to be *constrained* to set sail. In this state of anxiety, they endeavored to keep near the shore between this and Bethsaida, hoping, no doubt, to take in their beloved Master at some point along the coast. But a violent wind beat off the boat, so that they were not able to make Bethsaida, nor even Capernaum, but were driven past both; and when near the plain of Gennesaret, at the north-west corner of the lake, Jesus came to them walking upon the sea. All this is topographically natural, and easily to be understood, on the supposition that the miracle took place on

this spot [i. e. the south-east corner of the Butaiha]; that Bethsaida was at the mouth of the Jordan, and Capernaum at Tell Hûm [i. e. on the northern shore of the lake a few miles south-west of the entrance of the Jordan]. Nor is there need even of the marginal rendering in our Bible: 'Over against Bethsaida.' The disciples would naturally sail *toward* Bethsaida in order to reach Tell Hûm [i. e. Capernaum]. Neither is there anything inconsistent with the statement of John, that the people took ship the next day and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. They came from the south-east, where the miracle had been wrought, and would naturally seek him in Capernaum, for that was his home, but it seems that they did not find him there, for John immediately adds, that when they had found him *on the other side of the sea*—a very singular mode of expression if they found him in Capernaum itself, but perfectly natural on the supposition that they had *to go on* to the plain of Gennesaret, where he had landed. They would probably find him somewhere about 'Ain et Tiny, near which, I presume, the party reached the shore from their wonderful sail. But if it should appear to any one more probable, that the people actually found Jesus in Capernaum, this might easily be, for Capernaum was not more than an hour's walk from the corner of Gennesaret [i. e. 'Ain et Tiny], and he could easily have returned home, for they reached the shore very early in the morning." Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 30.

The importance of the subject here discussed, and the desirableness of reaching the exact truth, if possible, in regard to the question whether there were two Bethsaidas or only one, and if so where it was situated, is my apology for so long an extract from Dr. Thomson's excellent book. *It was now dark*; literally, *it had now become dark*. So *was not come*, is literally *had not come*. The pluperfect is employed here to denote the fact, that night had actually overtaken them, and Jesus had not yet joined them as they had expected.

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

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.

20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immedi-

ately the ship was at the land whither they went.

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 whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone;

The implication is also, that they had now given up all expectation of his coming on board that night. This sense of disappointment was followed almost immediately by the adverse tempest spoken of in the following verse.

18, 19. *The sea arose*, i. e. was beginning to run high. *By reason of a great wind*, &c. See Ns. on Matt. 8 : 24; 14 : 24; Luke 8 : 23. *Five and twenty or thirty furlongs*. As they had been rowing until the fourth watch, or about 3 o'clock in the morning, and yet had made only three or four miles, it shows how strong and contrary was the wind, and also how far Jesus walked upon the water, before he reached the ship in which were his disciples. *Walking on the sea*. The preposition employed here in the original, denotes the steady resting upon or continuance of our Lord upon the water, and is opposed to the idea that he appeared to walk on the wave, while in fact he did not actually rest upon it or touch it. *Drawing nigh unto the ship*. We learn from Mark, that while his direction was toward them, it yet seemed to be his intention to pass them. *They were afraid*. See Ns. on Matt. 14 : 26; Mark 6 : 49.

20. See Ns. on Matt. 14 : 27; Mark 6 : 50.

21. *Then they willingly*, &c. See N. on Matt. 14 : 32, where these words are explained. *Immediately* is taken by some expositors in a comparative sense, *soon*, *almost immediately*. Others, as

Bengel, regard it as a literal verity, and find here in the instantaneous reaching of the desired port, a new miracle. The former I take to be the true and most natural sense. The disciples had passed almost the whole night, in a fruitless attempt to reach the place to which they were bound. The winds and waves were against them. But as soon as Jesus was received on board, the elements were no longer adverse; and their boat glided so rapidly over the peaceful surface of the lake, that they found themselves almost immediately at the place whither they were wishing to go. Thus when Jesus accompanies us in any duty we have to perform, it becomes easy, delightful, and successful; but when he is absent, all is dark, cheerless, and adverse. *At the land*; literally *upon the land*, reference being had to the ascending beach upon which the ship was drawn up. *Whither they went* or were bound.

22-71. OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE AT CAPERNAUM IN WHICH HE DECLARES HIMSELF TO BE THE BREAD OF LIFE. *Capernaum*.

22. *The day following* the one on which the five thousand were fed. *The people which stood*, &c. Some of the people had doubtless returned to their homes according to the direction of Jesus (see Matt. 14 : 23; Mark 6 : 46); otherwise all the boats on the lake would have scarcely sufficed to have conveyed them at one time to Capernaum (v. 24). Some, however, seeing that he had not departed in the boat with his disciples, and supposing that he would spend the

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 ?

night somewhere in the immediate vicinity, remained at or near the place where the miracle had been performed, with the expectation of seeing him again on the following morning. They were the more confirmed in this, because no other boat was there, by which Jesus could have been conveyed across the lake. *When they saw*; literally, *having seen*, which is repeated on account of the intervening parenthesis, by the verb *saw* in v. 24. The principal verb in the original is, *took shipping* or *went on board the ships* (v. 24).

23. This verse is parenthetical, being designed to show how it was that when the disciples embarked in the only boat which lay in the cove the preceding evening, there were other boats there in the morning, on board of which the people embarked to return to Capernaum. These boats had come from Tiberias, after the departure of the disciples. They were employed for ferriage; or perhaps, as Alford suggests, this might have been a landing place for merchandise. *Nigh unto the place* in some convenient cove or harbor. *After the Lord had given thanks*. The particularity with which it is here noticed, shows the important connection of this act of devotion with the great miracle which followed. In like manner, our Lord at the grave of Lazarus gave thanks, before he uttered the authoritative summons which called the dead to life. In neither instance, did he pray for power to work the great miracle which followed, but in sublime and simple utterance proffered his thanks, as though such power in answer to prayer had been already bestowed upon him. See N. on 11 : 41, 42.

24. *When the people therefore, &c.*

The thread of narration which was interrupted by the explanatory parenthesis in v. 23, is here resumed. In the morning the people looked in vain for the appearance of Jesus, whom they had supposed was yet on that side of the lake, but now thinking that very early in the morning, if not during the night, he had gone by land round the head of the lake to join his disciples, they *also* (as well as Jesus' disciples) *took shipping* (see N. on v. 22), as a more convenient and speedy way of reaching Capernaum. *Shipping*, i. e. the boats referred to in v. 23. *Seeking for Jesus* denotes the object or purpose of their hasty return to Capernaum. *Neither his disciples*. Why should they have expected to see his disciples, whom they knew to have embarked the preceding evening in a ship for Capernaum? Perhaps they thought that the violent and adverse gale might have compelled them to put back to the place whence they had started; or the clause may have been inserted to give emphasis to the fact, that Jesus and his followers had all left the place.

25. *On the other side of the sea* in reference, as expositors have hitherto thought, to the north-eastern side where they had spent the preceding day, and witnessed the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. But if Dr. Thomson's conjecture is the right one (see N. on v. 17), their surprise was the result of not finding him at Capernaum, but still farther south at 'Ain et Tiny, the northern extremity of the plain of Gennesaret, whither the boat had been driven by the adverse wind. The only difficulty which I find in the way of this solution, is the improbability that when these men found neither Jesus nor his disci-

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.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but ^h for that

^h Ver. 54; ch. 4: 14.

ples at Capernaum, they should so immediately have proceeded southward along the lake coast to search for him. It seems therefore to me the more probable supposition—and one which Dr. Thomson has admitted as an alternative to his conjecture that the people proceeded to 'Ain et Tiny—that Jesus and his disciples, if they had been driven past Capernaum in the gale and landed somewhere below, returned forthwith to Capernaum. If the people, who had just come over from the north-eastern shore and probably reached Capernaum before Jesus and his disciples, at first wondered at their absence and afterward saw them enter the place from a southern direction, they would have virtually *found him on the other side of the sea*, i. e. at a place further south, and more directly opposite the scene of the recent miracle than Capernaum was, which, as Dr. Thomson has abundantly shown, was at the upper end of the lake, and only an hour's walk or so from the entrance of the Jordan. *When* has also the pregnant signification of *how*. They supposed that Jesus came round the head of the lake on foot, and they did not see how he had already joined his disciples, in case he left the north-eastern shore that morning. Their surprise would be still further increased, if, as Dr. Thomson thinks, the disciples with Jesus were found further south at 'Ain et Tiny, and were seen coming to Capernaum from that quarter.

26. Here commences the spiritual application of the great miracle, which had been wrought the day previous on the north-eastern shore of the lake. *Jesus answered*, &c. Our Lord did not reply to their question of vain curiosity, as to how and when he had reached Capernaum or its vicinity, but referred directly to the low and unworthy mo-

tives which actuated them in seeking him. *Ye seek me*, i. e. desire to be with me. *Not because ye saw*, &c. i. e. not from a high and holy purpose of gaining new faith in my divine mission by witnessing my miracles. The verb *saw*, is not to be taken here in the superficial sense of mere external vision, but of an appreciation and right understanding of the significance of these miracles. This declaration evinced such a deep and searching knowledge of their inmost heart, that it was introduced by the emphatic *verily, verily*. The plural *miracles*, is employed in reference to all the miracles which he had wrought in confirmation of his divine mission. The article in the original is wanting, and should not have been inserted in our English version, the word being intentionally left indefinite, *not because ye saw signs*, i. e. miraculous proofs of my divine mission. *But because ye did eat*, &c. i. e. because you hoped to reap temporal advantages from my miraculous power. The eating of the loaves is not here to be taken in the narrow and restricted sense of a mere supply of their bodily wants, but is put generically for all the temporal blessings which they hoped to enjoy as the followers of a personage possessed of such miraculous powers. It constitutes also the point of contrast drawn by our Lord, between the meat that perisheth and that which endureth to everlasting life. *Of the loaves*; literally, *from the loaves*. See N. on v. 11.

27. *Labor not*, &c. No prohibition is here laid upon such labor and forethought, as are essential to the supply of our bodily wants; but upon that excessive and absorbing desire for worldly good, which causes that which is spiritual, heavenly, and abiding, to be wholly lost sight of. Hence we need not with Kühnöl translate and explain: *labor not so much for ordinary*

meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man

† Mat. 3:17; & 17:5; Ma. 1:11; & 9:7; Lu. 3:22; & 9:35; ch. 1:33; & 5:37; & 8:18; Ac. 2:22; 2 Pe. 1:17.

food, as for heavenly. This would weaken the antithesis, and contrary to the usage of Jesus (see Matt. 6:19, 31, 34), place earthly good in a scale of comparison with that which is heavenly; as though any comparison whatever could be instituted between that which is fleeting and transitory, and that which is eternal. The word rendered *labor*, literally signifies, *to spend labor upon, to busy one's self about*, here with the additional idea drawn from the context, of laboring with anxious solicitude and concern. These men who were hurrying after Jesus, were not at this time engaged in manual labor, but were in a state of anxious excitement, how to turn these wonderful works of Jesus to their personal advantage. *Meat*. Food. See N. on Matt. 10:10. *Which perisheth*, i. e. whose nourishing quality is transient, and has no power to confer immortality. Alford likes the idea of the English translation, *which perisheth*, i. e. the *useless* part of it in being cast out—the *useful* in becoming part of the body which perisheth. So Stier: “the food of the body perisheth or passeth away—in the use of it in man himself, since the greatest part of it must again, as dead excrement, be rejected. *But for that meat*. The hortatory imperative *labor*, must be here repeated in the sense, *seek to obtain*, by believing in Jesus and obeying his commands. *Meat* in the second clause, is to be taken metaphorically in the sense of spiritual food, the enjoyment of the divine favor, and all the blessings comprised in it. The expression *endureth to everlasting life*, is antithetic to *perisheth* in the preceding clause, and signifies that which preserves its nutritious power throughout man's endless being. The contrast is between the perishable nature of temporal good,

shall give unto you: † for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

and the imperishable spiritual blessings, of which, if the soul of man once partakes, it will never hunger or thirst any more (see v. 36; Rev. 7:16). *Which the Son of man, &c.* This relative clause refers not, as some think, to the immediate antecedent *life*, but to *meat*, as is evident from the scope of the passage, as well as from the subordinate grammatical relation of *everlasting life* to the true *meat* for which they were to labor. *Shall give*. That this refers to the giving of himself up to death, is evident from v. 51. The wondrous food here spoken of, was as much a gratuity on the part of Jesus, as the miraculous repast of the preceding day, in view of which they were now following him. It was not to be purchased by good works, or an outward and empty profession of fealty to him as a temporal king (see v. 15), but by a sincere and candid reception of him as a spiritual Deliverer, and faith in him as the true Messiah. *For him hath God, &c.* This clause is designed to furnish proof that Jesus had the power of bestowing the bread of everlasting life, which he claimed to possess. The verb *hath sealed*, has here the sense of *has confirmed, established* as the Messiah. The use of the figure is explained in N. on 3:33. The miracles, doctrines, and life of Jesus, were furnishing the most ample proof that he had been appointed and consecrated of God to the Messianic office. Hence the people were wholly inexcusable for the eagerness with which they sought the meat that perished, to the total neglect of that which endured to everlasting life. *The Father* is correlative with the preceding *Son of man*, which is thus shown to have the high sense of the *Son of God*. Jesus does not ignore his divine nature in the appellation *Son of man*, which his humility and condescension

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, ^k This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Æ 1 Jo. 3:23.

to our fallen race leads him so often to use.

28. *Then said they.* It is evident on the face of what follows, that the auditors of Jesus were not those only who had crossed the lake (v. 24), but that the Jews of Capernaum, in greater or less numbers engaged in the discussion, which, as we see from v. 59, took place in the synagogue. Some of the disciples of our Lord were also present (vs. 60-66), and also the Twelve (v. 67). *What shall we do, &c.* The people could not but see that Jesus had reference to spiritual benefits, but having as yet no knowledge of the way of salvation through grace, proceed at once to inquire, what they shall do to secure this meat so enduring and imperishable. Some find in the question here proposed, a vein of mockery. 'How are we to do this? This we leave to God.' But this would imply a knowledge of the impossibility of justification by works, to which we cannot suppose the Jews to have attained, and even if admitted by them as a theory, certainly not reduced to practice (Rom. 10:3). It is evident, therefore, that the question was seriously proposed, in order to draw from him some explanation of what he meant by the words, *labor for the meat which endureth, &c.* They evidently referred the direction to external works, the reward of which was to be the attainment of everlasting life. Now they wish to learn what these works are, by the performance of which they may secure the divine favor. This sense meets the full wants of the passage, and does not compel us to put into the mouth of the people, at this early stage of the discussion, the language of opposition and mockery. The verb *might work*, is the very same employed by our Lord in v. 27, translated *labor*, and shows that the people

30 They said therefore unto him, ^l What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

l Mat. 12:33; & 16:1; Ma. 8:11; 1 Co. 1:22.

had their eye on that direction of our Lord, when they proposed this question. By *the works of God* is not here meant, the works which God performs, but those enjoined by him upon men, such as the sacrifices, rites, ceremonies, and other requirements of the law. "Those which are right in God's sight." Prof. Crosby.

29. Jesus now declares that the work of God enjoined upon them as the condition of salvation, is to believe on him whom the Father hath sent, that is, Jesus Christ, the very person who was then addressing them. *This is the work of God* (which you are to do); not as some strangely interpret, *this is the work of God* (and not yours), as though faith in Christ were the act of God and not man. Stier quotes Schleiermacher as saying: "I do not know that there can be found even in the writings of the apostles, a passage which more plainly and expressly teaches us, that the whole imperishable life of man's soul proceeds from *faith in Christ*, and that nothing but this faith lies at its foundation; a faith from which proceeds every other good thing acceptable to God." This great doctrine of justification by faith, here so explicitly taught by the Lord Jesus himself, is more fully expanded and explained by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. Faith is here called a *work*, because it is the *act* of receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the Gospel (see Assembly's Shorter Catechism).

30. Their deep seated and obstinate unbelief now develops itself. They require a sign that Jesus is what he professes himself to be. Probably they asked for a sign from heaven, some remarkable manifestation from the skies, like the sign-seekers in Matt. 12:38; 16:1. There were doubtless those

31^m Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written,
m Ex. 16:15; Nu. 11:7; Ne. 9:15; 1 Co. 10:3.

present, who had never witnessed a miraculous display of his power. But there were many in the synagogue, who had seen and could testify to the great miracle which had been wrought the preceding day. Even these, in the hardness and blindness of their hearts, may have united in a clamorous demand for some new and more imposing miracle, which should put an end to all doubt respecting his claims to the Messiahship. There is no necessity of supposing that these were the sentiments of all who were present on this occasion. Some were already true believers in him. But the connection justifies us in attributing these words to the leading persons, if not the majority of those present. The pronoun *thou*, is in the original emphatic, and looks forward to the disparaging contrast, which they draw between the miracle he had wrought, and the more wonderful supply of bread furnished miraculously by Moses to their fathers in the wilderness. *That we may see* (the sign) *and believe*, i. e. that we by seeing this sign may believe. It is implied here that his previous works had been insufficient to produce conviction of the justice of his claims. These sign-seekers intimate that they are not prepared to decide against him; but before they can admit his pretensions they must have higher evidence that he is what he professes himself to be. In their blindness and hardness of heart, they speak as though no miracle had yet been performed by him worthy of mention. '*What sign showest thou? What dost thou work?*' One who claims to be our Messiah, must advance satisfactory evidence that he is what he professes to be, and no such evidence has yet been offered by thee.' Thus they wholly ignore, not only the miracle of the loaves and fishes, but his other wonderful works of which they must all have heard, and many of them seen. Their implied pledge of discipleship, in case he gave them a sign of his divine mission, was worthless and hypocritical.

ⁿ He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

n Ps. 78:24, 25.

Their whole conduct on this occasion evinced, that no sign terrestrial or celestial would have sufficed to remove their hardness of heart and unbelief in the Son of God. *What dost thou work?* They intimate that as yet he had done nothing remarkable, which would warrant the assumption of such high claims as he had put forth. There is in the brevity of the original (*what workest?*), that which is strongly indicative of the sneering tone of this question. Bengel finds here a retort, that whereas he had enjoined upon them *a work of God* (v. 20), they now in turn demand of him *a work*, which shall be the sign of his warrant for thus addressing them. It is clearly evident that they had taken offence at his demand upon their faith in him, as the only acceptable work of God which they could perform.

31. The design of this reference to the manna with which the people were supplied in the wilderness, was to show that it was a miracle far more transcendent than any which he had yet wrought. The marvellous supply of manna was indeed a sign from heaven (see N. on v. 29), and unless he supported his claim by an equal if not greater miracle, he could not challenge their belief in his Messiahship. Reference is probably had to the miracle which he had wrought the day previous, and which in the implied contrast here carried on, they aver to have been far inferior to that wrought in the wilderness by Moses, since that was indeed *bread from heaven*. In immediate view of this miraculous supply of their wants, they were willing to make him their king, but when required to believe in him as their spiritual Deliverer, they depreciate his miracle and renounce his claim upon their confidence as one sent of God. *Our fathers did eat manna* (literally, *the manna*) *in the wilderness* (for the space of forty years); 'you only supplied by a single meal the wants of a few thousand. The bread also upon which they fed was from

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.

heaven (Ps. 78: 24. See also Exod. 16: 15); but this bread furnished by you was only of a common kind, and distributed as upon ordinary occasions. Your miracle therefore falls far below that of Moses, and we are justified in demanding of you a greater and more satisfactory sign.' Such is the evident scope and intent of this verse, which at first sight seems to be wholly disconnected from the preceding context, but which furnishes the reason for the captious demand made in the preceding verse for some more notable miracle. The subject of the verb *gave*, is wanting in the original, but a reference to Ps. 78: 24, will show that *God*, and not *Moses*, is to be supplied. As the latter was the agent through whom the miracle of the wilderness was wrought, Jesus however in the next verse refers to Moses, in order to make the contrast more palpable between himself and that great lawgiver and prophet.

32. Our Lord replies by correcting two errors in their statement. It was not Moses (as their words implied it to be), who gave them bread in the wilderness; nor was the manna thus given, the true and essential bread from heaven. It was God himself who was the giver (Exod. 16: 4, 15), and the bread was of a perishable nature, and therefore not the true bread "enduring unto everlasting life." Some expositors do not include *Moses* in the negative, and give the sentence this turn: "that which Moses gave was not the true, real bread from heaven." The antithesis is so strong between *Moses* and *my Father*, that at first sight this would seem to be true. But our Lord's reply clearly shows that he understood the Jews to refer the pronoun in *he gave*, to Moses, contrary to its evident reference to God, in Ps. 78: 24, from which the words were quoted. Hence in thus naming Moses, he most em-

phatically denied what their words implied, that it was Moses who had given them bread from heaven to eat. The words *that bread* (better *the bread from heaven*, refer to the *true bread*, spoken of in the latter member of the sentence. *But my Father giveth*, &c. The Father gave the Son to be the Saviour of the world (3: 16, 17), and he was the bread of life (see v. 35). Our Lord does not deny the miraculous nature of the manna given in the wilderness, but that it constituted, in any sense, the true spiritual bread of which it was the mere type. The tense of the verb *gave*, is literally *has given*, and the word *you*, is substituted for *your fathers*, in order to make the correspondence more complete with *giveth you*, in the next clause. The manna, placed here in such strong and open contrast with the true bread from heaven, might be said also to comprise the whole Mosaic law and ordinances, which had no power to give life to the soul.

33. This verse illustrates and confirms the preceding sentiment. Olshausen would read and construct thus: "He who comes from heaven, the dispenser of life to the world, is himself the bread of God." Alford, on the other hand, maintains that what Olshausen takes as the subject is the predicate, and translates: "the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven." Such also is the translation adopted by Stier, and Webster and Wilkinson. Tholuck thus translates and explains: "That only deserves the name of the bread of God, which descends from heaven, and has the power of imparting life to the whole world." But this seems to be repetitious of the preceding sentiment, and besides does not strictly accord with the train of thought, which is evidently progressive to the great declaration openly made in v. 35, that Jesus himself is the bread

34 ° Then said they unto him,

o See ch. 4:15.

Lord, evermore give us this bread.

of life. The words *he which cometh down from heaven*, look back to the words, *him whom he hath sent*, in v. 29, and would therefore be readily apprehended by the Jews, as referring to a living personality, and not to the bread itself. *He which cometh, or he coming.* The present tense of the participle refers not so much to the fact that the Son came from heaven, as to the continual manifestation made by him as the Eternal Logos, whom the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain (1 Kings 8:27), much less this earth on which the incarnation took place. In this sense, there was a continuous descent of him who dwelt in the bosom of the Father. This great idea, which implies our Lord's supreme divinity—a truth which is out-cropping in this whole discourse—is made by Stier and others who refer both the subject and predicate to this celestial bread here spoken of, to hang on the typical element in the manna, which ever continued to descend to supply the wants of the people in the wilderness. In this respect the true bread from heaven was the fulfilment of the type, in its ever-present and continued descent from heaven to supply the wants of the hungry soul. Prof. Crosby also prefers the translation *that which cometh down*, on the ground that our Lord had not yet revealed the great truth that *he* was the bread. See v. 35. So Dr. Turner would translate it, *the bread which cometh down*. But is not personality here required to distinguish the true bread of heaven from the manna, which David, although in a subordinate sense, calls "*the corn of heaven?*" Would there be here any advance in the argument from the last clause in v. 32, if we exchange the personal *he* (referring to a personage not fully declared until v. 35), for the pronoun *that*, referring to bread? The train of thought has reached that point, where the type must give place to the person typified; in a word, where the reference must be to the Eternal Son

himself, the true bread of life. So Olshausen well observes, "the coming of Christ from heaven was not concluded once for all with the birth, but is a continuous act, on which account Christ was spoken of during his life on earth as being in heaven." *Unto the world.* In this respect also the true bread from heaven differed from the manna in the wilderness, for that was provided for the Israelites only, but this, for the whole world of mankind. Another argument is here furnished for referring the words *that which cometh*, directly to the Son of God, it being so accordant with the language employed in regard to the purpose of his advent. See 1:9, 29; 3:17; 9:5; 12:46. The words *giveth life to the world*, are not to be taken irrespective of faith and repentance on the part of the recipients of this gift of life.

34. The Jews now in a state of vacillation between belief and unbelief,—which latter principle we see in the sequel gains the final victory—like the woman of Samaria (4:15), eagerly desire this bread which has such wonderful life-giving properties. It is evident that they had little or no conception of its true nature, for when made acquainted with its spiritual character, they took offence and went away from him. In this respect their conduct was widely different from that of the Samaritan woman and her townsmen, who received him gladly and believed in his word. It is noticeable that both now, and when they first addressed him (v. 25), they use a term of respect, *Rabbi, Lord*; but soon (v. 42) they refer contemptuously to his low birth, and stumble at his want of that high social position, which they thought the Messiah was to assume. Their use of *Lord*, shows that this was a sincere utterance, and not evil-minded mockery, as Calvin and others after him have supposed. *Evermore* (i. e. at all times, whenever we need it) *give us this bread*. Perhaps they had some lingering, undefined hope, that their temporal food

35 And Jesus said unto them,
^p I am the bread of life: ^q he that
 cometh to me shall never hun-
 ger; and he that believeth on me
 shall never thirst.

^p Ver. 43, 58.

would be miraculously supplied by Jesus, somewhat after the manner in which manna had been divinely provided for the Israelites in the wilderness. That spiritual food was not apprehended by them, is quite evident from the fact, that when apprised that this was that to which Jesus referred, they rejected it in the most decided terms.

35. Our Lord now plainly disabuses them of the mistake into which they had fallen, by asserting that he himself was the bread of life of which he had been speaking. He was the one who had come down from heaven, and given life unto the world. It was the sole object of his mission, to restore men to the favor of God and supply their spiritual wants, but not to administer to their temporal necessities. The train of thought in view of the preceding context is this: 'The true bread from heaven is that which my Father giveth (v. 32); and this bread is not material and earthly, but is he who cometh down from heaven to give life to the world (v. 33); I am that person, and proclaim myself to you as the bread of life.' *He that cometh to me* in faith and penitence (see v. 29). Our Lord began this discourse in the third person, but he now carries it on with such direct personal reference to himself, that the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *my*, in vs. 35-65, occur some forty times. *Shall never hunger*. This refers to spiritual hunger. The negative in the original is of the strongest kind. The same is true also of the next clause. See Matt. 5: 6. *And he that believeth*, &c. This is parallel with the preceding sentiment, the clauses mutually corresponding somewhat after the manner of Hebrew poetry. This believing on Christ shows what is meant in the preceding clause by coming to Christ.

36 * But I said unto you, That
 ye also have seen me, and believe
 not.

^q Ch. 4: 14; & 7: 37.
^r Ver. 26, 64.

36. Webster and Wilkinson refer to the natural division of this discourse by the interpellatory remarks of the Jews. "From v. 35 to v. 40, in answer to the request in v. 34, he teaches that He came from heaven to give men everlasting life; from v. 43 to v. 51, in answer to the murmurings of the Jews (vs. 41, 42), he shows that He is himself the source of everlasting life; from v. 53 to v. 58, in answer to the objection in v. 52, he teaches that through his incarnation and death, and our individual interest in both, we possess everlasting life in Him." *But I said unto you*. There is some difference of opinion among commentators, as to the time when the words were spoken to which reference is here made. Bengel, Doddridge, and Stier, refer it to v. 26, the sense instead of the exact words being given. Lücke and De Wette refer it to 5: 37-44. Alford suggests that it may relate to some unrecorded saying of Jesus. I see no objection to this latter view, although it seems more natural to refer it to the general sentiment of what he had said, rather than to any precise form of words. Many times even in the early stage of his ministry, he had occasion to reprove the people for their unbelief. *Ye also have seen me* refers to his presence with them, and the miracles he had performed in their sight. He had given them the most open and emphatic proof of his presence and power as their true and long expected Messiah, and yet they had not believed on him. How could he expect a different reception on the present occasion? They had virtually declared (v. 30), that if he would show them some sign on a grand scale, they would acknowledge his claims. He avers in reply, that they had seen Him—in itself a far more glorious sight than the most stupendous miracle—and yet

37 * All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and [†] him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

^s Ver. 45.

[†] Mat. 24: 24; ch. 10: 28, 29; 2 Ti. 2: 19; 1 Jo. 2: 19.

they remained in unbelief. This last and strongest demand made upon their faith in him from his personal presence, is more clearly seen in the original than in our common version, the word rendered *also*, not being *in addition to*, but *even*, as though this was the most convincing proof which could be presented to them of the truth of his word. If they rejected this, nothing like a cordial and confiding trust in Him was to be expected of them.

37. The sentiment is as though he had said: 'Nevertheless it will not be so with all to whom my gospel shall be preached, for *all that the Father giveth me shall come unto me*,' &c. Reference is had in these words to the compact—if so sublime and ineffable a transaction may be thus expressed—between the Father and Son, by virtue of which a definite number of the human family, in other Scriptures styled the *elect*, was given to the Son, as the purchased inheritance of his blood. Although others should reject him, these would all come to him (see vs. 29, 35), and be partakers of his glory and blessedness. So Doddridge well paraphrases it: "all that the Father has graciously chosen to himself and whom he giveth me in consequence of a peculiar covenant, to be sanctified and saved by me, will certainly at length come to me." See 17: 2, 21. In the original the word *all*, is the neuter singular, which is to be taken abstractly in a collective sense of one integral whole; but in the next clause, *him that cometh unto me*, the masculine singular is employed, reference being had to the individuals of whom the mass of believers is composed. The word *cometh*, in this clause, represents the act or process of coming; the verb *shall come*, in the preceding member, the act considered as completed. *I will in no wise cast*

38 For I came down from heaven, ^u not to do mine own will, ^z but the will of him that sent me.

^u Mat. 26: 39; ch. 5: 30.

^z Ch. 4: 34.

out, i. e. will not refuse them my grace and favor. The promise of receiving, preserving, and crowning with glory and happiness, contained in these blessed words, has given hope and comfort to thousands who have looked from the depths of despair in faith and penitence to Jesus. The imagery is founded upon the banishment of a person from a kingdom, or his ejection from the presence and company of those with whom he formerly associated. Excommunication from the synagogue may perhaps be remotely referred to (see 9: 34). The negative form *I will in no wise cast out*, is emphatically put by the figure of speech called *litotes*, for the positive *I will assuredly receive*.

38. This verse confirms the promise just made. The argument is this: 'If our Lord came down from heaven to do his Father's will, and if the Father out of his boundless grace has given to him a portion of the human race to be his peculiar people, the Son, to whom the will of his Father is the supreme law of action, will never reject those who are thus divinely drawn unto him. His own love for his people and his desire to do his Father's will, forbid his rejection of any one of those embraced in a covenant of such high and merciful import.' No one however should so abuse this glorious truth, as to seek to excuse his unbelief and impenitence on the ground, that he may not be one of those included in this covenant of redemption, for the promise with which this passage concludes (see v. 40), is ample enough to embrace all, who will come to Jesus with broken and contrite hearts, and sue for mercy and forgiveness. *For* would be better translated *inasmuch as*. The tense of the verb *came down*, is the perfect, *have come down* (and am now here). A literal rendering would have given more em-

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me,^y 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,^z that every one

^y Ch. 10: 28; & 17: 12; & 18: 9.
^z Ver. 27: 47, 54; ch. 3: 15, 16; & 4: 14.

phasis and vivacity to the thought, by representing the act spoken of as having reference to the present time. Webster and Wilkinson render it, *I am descended, not to do mine own will*, apart and separate from that of the Father. See 5: 30.

39. This verse expresses more distinctly what was the will of the Father. It refers back to the covenant brought to view in v. 37, and confirms its merciful provision in regard to the recovery from sin and death of those who are embraced in it. *Will* is here taken in the sense of *purpose, counsel*. In v. 38, it has the sense of the *thing willed or wished to be done*. With the words of *all which he hath given me*, supply from v. 37, *and come unto me*. The Father's will in regard to such is, that Jesus shall lose nothing (literally, *shall not lose any thing from it*), that is, that he shall reject no one thus drawn unto him by the Father's elective grace, and coming to him in faith and penitence. The word rendered *all*, in this passage, is a collective neuter as in v. 37. The common translation, *that of all which he hath given me*, is a slight departure from strict accuracy, the construction being *that in regard to all*, &c. *Should raise it up*, &c. This final resurrection is the consummation of his covenant faithfulness and enduring love for his people. The neuter *it*, conforms to the gender of *all*, and is in like manner to be taken in a collective sense of all his people. *Last day*, i. e. the day of final judgment, a use of the words peculiar to John. See 11: 24; 12: 48.

40. The argument is here progressive. The promise which in v. 39, was expressed negatively is here positively

which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

affirmed. It was there declared that no one would be lost who had been given to him by the Father; this verse promises to all such everlasting life, and reiterates and confirms the promise of a glorious resurrection at the last day. Increased emphasis is also imparted to the promise here made, by the employment of the masculine pronoun *him*, instead of the neuter collective *it*, in v. 39. This verse is not therefore an empty repetition of the preceding one, but amplifies and renders sure the promise and pledge to every believer. *Seeth the Son*, i. e. discerns in him the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. Mere natural vision as in v. 36, is not here referred to, but that spiritual sight which every believing soul obtains of Jesus, when from the depths of sin, it turns and looks unto Him for salvation. *Believeth on him*. Saving faith necessarily follows the spiritual vision just referred to. First in order is the hearing of a Saviour through the preaching of his word (Rom. 10: 14); then follow a spiritual perception and acknowledgment of his claims, and saving faith in his blood. *And I will raise, &c.* Our Lord here pledges himself to the performance of what in v. 39, was declared to be the will of the Father. The pronoun *I*, has emphatic prominence in the original, indicating the full personal concurrence of the Son in the merciful designs of the Father.

41, 42. The multitude present, as has been remarked (see N. on v. 28), was composed of various classes of persons. Some had witnessed his miracle on the other side of the lake, and were now present to hear him still further. Others had been drawn to the

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?"

43 Jesus therefore answered

α Mat. 13; 55; Ma. 6:3; Lu. 4:22.

synagogue by the fame of his doctrine and works; and others undoubtedly came to find some cause of accusation against him. Very different impressions would be made upon such a mixed assembly by this discourse, and we should guard against inferring that all his hearers murmured at his doctrine. It is very evident, however, that the leading persons were offended at his claims, for the term *Jews*, is generally used by John to denote persons of station and high official authority (see N. on 2:18). *At him*; literally, *concerning or about him*. These murmurings of disapprobation were confined to their own circle, but either reached the ear of Jesus, or what is more probable (see N. on v. 43), were known to him by his omniscience. *Because he said*, &c. While they failed to comprehend the great truth contained in the words of Jesus, they were fully assured that there was an assumption by him of superhuman power and authority. Hence they scoffingly refer to his parentage and family position. *Is not this Jesus*, &c. The form of the interrogation is the one which implies an affirmative answer, which in their estimation was sufficient to overthrow all his claims to the Messiahship. They regarded his declaration that he was the bread which cometh down from heaven, as equivalent to a denial of his earthly parentage. To this extraordinary assumption they oppose the well-known facts of his birth and social relations. It is remarked by Stier, that their objection is not so much against his calling himself the bread of life in and of itself, as against his coming down from heaven asserted in connection with it. *How is it then*, &c. Well might they wonder at a fact so inexplicable to natural reason. But had

and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44⁶ 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.

δ Cant. 1:4; ver. 65.

they attended to his instructions, and given due weight to the testimony which he bore of himself, and which was confirmed by the most extraordinary miracles, they would have solved the difficulty by crying out with Peter, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Joseph was probably now dead, but they speak of him as one whom while living they knew. This reference to his parents, in the way of objection to his Messiahship, was made on one, and perhaps two other occasions. See Matt. 13:55; Luke 4:22.

43. If, as was probable, their murmurings were expressed in tones so low as to be inaudible to all but themselves, Jesus gave them, at this very time, a proof of his superhuman knowledge by showing that he knew the subject of their conversation. *Murmur not among yourselves*. This was intended as a mild reproof against warding off the force of truth by captious objections. It is implied also that greater and more mysterious truths were yet in store for them, and they would do well to preserve that calmness of mind, which would enable them to judge rightly of his claims and of the duties which his advent imposed upon them. It is to be noticed that here, as well as in v. 26, instead of replying directly to the point on which their mind was laboring, how to reconcile his claim of heavenly origin with his well-known earthly parentage, he reasserts in a more full and emphatic manner the great truth to which he had just given utterance (vs. 37-40), that he was the bread of life, to be spiritually received by all who would avail themselves of the benefits of his mission.

44. *No man can come to me*, &c. This is a varied repetition of v. 37, according to the custom of John, to ex-

45 ° It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught

c Is. 54: 13; Je. 31: 34; Mi. 4: 2; He. 8: 10; & 10: 16.

press an emphatic truth both positively and negatively. In v. 37, an effect was declared to follow in every case from a certain cause; here it is denied that this effect will follow from any other cause. See Webster and Wilkinson. An implied reference is also made to the obstacles in the way of the reception and right understanding of truth, which exist in the unrenewed heart. No one will come to Christ and feed upon him in faith, but such as are drawn thereto by the Father. Hence instead of indulging in idle murmurs and frivolous objections, they should most earnestly seek for this heavenly influence to draw them to Christ. This makes clear the connection with the preceding clause, and meets the wants of the passage itself. Prof. Crosby finds this connection: "Do not think it strange that you cannot appreciate my words, and thus murmur at my declarations; for you never have allowed God to draw you to the truth, and no man can come to me unless he be thus drawn." The word rendered *draw*, is always used with the collateral idea of force and exertion, as when a ship is drawn down into the sea, or the body of an animal is dragged along. It is also used of wrestling, bending the bow, stretching sails—indeed of almost every physical act requiring strength and exertion. When employed therefore as here, of the drawing of men to Christ, the word carries with it the idea of a mighty exertion of moral power, such as would be required to overcome the opposing tendencies of sin and unbelief. It should always be borne in mind that the inability to come to Christ, spoken of in this verse, is a moral and not a natural one. It results from the deep aversion of the natural man to holiness. It requires no new faculties, no change of the mental organization. It is simply the renewal of the heart, the transferral of the affections from things earthly to

of God. ° Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

d Ver. 37.

those which are heavenly and divine. The change, however, is so radical that it will never take place unless it is wrought of God. No pretentious array of good works can effect this result. With a penitent heart and a reliance upon Christ for salvation, the sinner must yield himself up to what Luther calls "this gracious allurements," this drawing of eternal love working in him faith in Jesus and obedience to his will. *I will raise him up.* A solemn and emphatic reiteration of the glorious resurrection, to which they will attain who are thus drawn by the Father to Christ.

45. Our Lord now shows that this drawing by the Father of which he had just spoken, was in accordance with Scripture, which declares that divine illumination and instruction are imparted to all such as are drawn to Him in faith and love. The quotation here made is from Isa. 54: 13. *The prophets* is here put for the prophetic portion of the Old Testament. *Taught of God*, i. e. divinely instructed. In the original prophecy, reference is had to the times of the church's prosperity, when all shall be under the divine guidance and instruction. See Jer. 31: 34. But in the application of the prophecy, our Lord shows that no one can attain to salvation through Christ, who has not been divinely taught the way of life. This spiritual illumination does not cease with the first act of faith in the Redeemer, but becomes more and more resplendant, until the soul is filled with inward light, producing peace, joy, and love. See Prov. 4: 18. *Every man.* In the quotation of the prophecy the plural *all*, was used, because of its reference to the great body of believers. But here it is made to include such only, as are selected by the sovereign grace of God to be the recipients of this inward illumination. The application of this prophecy to Jesus, was plain and pertinent. They were in a state of wonder and doubt, as to the

46 * Not that any man hath seen the Father, ^f save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto

^e Ch. 1:18; & 5:37.
^f Matt. 11:27; Lu. 10:22; ch. 1:18; & 7:29;
& 8:19.

meaning of this coming to Christ, this feeding upon him as the true bread of life. He shows from the Scriptures, that they will never discern this truth so as to profit by it, unless they are divinely instructed in reference thereto. For if divine illumination was necessary to the church in the days of her highest enlightenment and prosperity, it was very clear, that no one, while yet in spiritual darkness, would discern the way of salvation, unless his eyes were opened by the same divine illuminating influence, which was to be so copiously and continuously shed upon those who had already entered upon the way of life. The argument from the prophecy here cited, is therefore *a fortiori* (Matt. 5:15). If those who are already the subjects of God's renewing grace continually stand in need of enlightening influences from above, *much more* is this divine illumination required in leading the dark and benighted soul to Christ. *Hath heard and hath learned* is a varied form of expression, for *taught of the Lord* in the original prediction. The natural order of instruction is followed in the words, *hath heard and hath learned*.

46. Our Lord guards his hearers against the false notion, that any immediate or personal manifestation of the Father is to be made to them. The only medium of communication was the Son, the great Revealer of the ways of God to men, who alone had seen the Father. *Which is of God*. The prepositional construction both here and in 7:29 (on which see Note), requires the translation *who is come from God*, i. e. from a state or condition of rest and repose by the side of God in closest proximity. It represents the same close and indissoluble union, together with distinct and independent personality,

you, ^g He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 ^h I am the bread of life.

49 ⁱ Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

^g Ch. 3:16, 18, 36; ver. 40.
^h Ver. 33, 35. ⁱ Ver. 31.

which is declared in 1:1, to exist between the Father and Son.

47. Having thus claimed to be the only one who has personal knowledge of the Father, our Lord solemnly (*verily, verily*) announces a truth of the most vital importance, which followed as the necessary consequence of the preceding declaration. Faith in him as the Son of God and Saviour of men, who alone had seen God and was able to reveal Him to men, is in the most explicit terms declared to be the only way of obtaining everlasting life. This was indirectly referred to in v. 40, but is here repeated in the most emphatic manner. *Hath*. The present tense shows that the believer in Christ has already partaken of that spiritual bread, which has the principle of eternal life. Alford well remarks, that our Lord now recurs to the subject of their murmurs, and gives the answer for which he has been preparing the way.

48. *I am that (literally the) bread of life*. An emphatic repetition of v. 35, for which declaration the way has been so prepared, that its true import cannot now be mistaken. The argument is that the believer in Jesus cannot fail of everlasting life, for in Him resides the principle and element of life. Thus as bread sustains and prolongs human existence, so they who believe in Christ draw from him such spiritual nourishment, that he is to them *the bread of life*.

49. The comparison between our Lord and Moses, which had been covertly instituted by the Jews (v. 31), is here reverted to. The manna with which they had been fed while under the conduct of Moses in the wilderness, had in itself no life-giving power, inasmuch as all who had eaten of it were then dead. Not having therefore the power to avert death, it was not the

50 ^k This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread ^l which came down from heaven: if any

^k Ver. 51, 53.

true bread which came down from heaven. *Your fathers.* Jesus does not say *our fathers*, as did the Jews (v. 31), for prominence in this whole discourse is given to the great truth that He was God's Son, and as such had no community of parentage with the Jews. Yet as "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1 : 3), he might have said *our fathers*, equally with his adversaries on the present occasion. Stier finds here also a reproving allusion, "your unbelieving fathers, whose genuine children, alas, ye approve yourselves to be (see Matt. 23 : 31, 32)." *In the wilderness.* There is an implied contrast between the arid and sandy desert, where the Israelites were sustained by this manna, and the green pastures and still waters (Ps. 23 : 2), where they repose who are partakers of the true bread of life.

50. Contrasted with this temporal and perishable food, to which the Jews had so boastingly referred, our Lord adduces the life-preserving properties of the true bread which cometh down from heaven, and which in vs. 35, 48, he had emphatically declared himself to be. Whosoever should eat of that bread would never die. Spiritual life is here referred to, as contrasted with natural life, which was prolonged only for a season by the manna of the desert. The clause *that a man may eat thereof, and not die* (i. e. that a man by eating thereof may not die), contains the reason why this bread from heaven was given to man. It also denotes the criterion by which the true bread of life was to be distinguished from that which was earthly and temporal. It contained the element of eternal life, so that whoever partook of it would never die. Although spiritual life is here primarily referred to, the resurrec-

tion of the body to a condition of glory and blessedness is also comprised in the gift. *Of it*; literally, *out of or from it*. The form of construction in the original, indicates the mass or store *out of* which the thing was taken (see N. on vs. 11, 13). This heavenly bread which had in it such life-giving qualities, was furnished in inexhaustible quantity. However great the number of those who partake of it, they only eat *of* it, but can never consume it. See 1 John 4 : 13, where the words "He hath given us of His Spirit," contain the same idea of inexhaustible fulness.

^l Ch. 3 : 13.

^m He. 10 : 5, 10.

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51. The discourse now becomes more pointed and plain, while at the same time, its deep spiritual significance renders it very difficult of interpretation. *I am the living bread*, &c. The original is quite peculiar: *I am the bread* (viz.) *that which is living*, (even I) *who came down from heaven*. His auditors can no longer be in doubt as to the meaning of his previous declarations respecting himself. He stood before them poor and humble in this world's estimation, yet he declares himself to have come down from heaven, the Source and Dispenser of eternal life to all such as believe on him. The word *living*, has the force of *life-giving*, as is evident from the next clause, where it is said that whoever partakes of this bread *shall live forever*. The construction of the original is such as to impart this shade of sense, 'whoever partakes of this bread in the least degree.' Another point of contrast between the true bread from heaven and the manna of the wilderness. Dr. Turner notices the grammatical ambiguity of the original, by which the words "which came down from heaven," may refer either to *I* or to *bread*, and would therefore take the clause in its most comprehen-

52 The Jews therefore ⁿ stroveⁿ Ch. 7: 43; & 9: 16; & 10: 19.among themselves, saying, ^o How^o Ch. 8: 9.

sive reference to both these antecedents. The meaning, as he remarks, would remain the same; but for reasons given in the N. on v. 33, the sole reference to the pronoun *I*, is to be preferred. In the light of v. 35, compared with v. 38, there is no ambiguity of sense, however it may be regarded in a grammatical point of view. *He shall live for ever.* Mere existence, which belongs equally to the good and bad, is not that which is here designated, but life in the higher and more spiritual sense—a *living life*, as opposed to a *living death*, conferred upon all who partake of this bread from heaven. *And* (i. e. moreover) *the bread which I shall give*, &c. Our Lord had thrice declared (vs. 35, 48, 51) that he himself was this living bread, but now he changes the form of expression, and speaks of it as something which he *will give for the life of the world*. In what sense can this be taken, except as having reference to the atonement which he made by giving his life a ransom for sin? His body was broken and his blood was shed to procure life eternal for man. Hence by a natural figure of speech, his body or flesh is here declared to be spiritual bread, containing in it such spiritual sustenance, that whoever feeds upon it shall receive therefrom eternal life. His death was our life, and therefore his body, as that which alone could die, is declared to be the source and principle of life, and so essential to human salvation, that it must even be eaten (i. e. spiritually partaken of through faith), in order that the benefits of his death in bestowing life to the lost race of man, may be realized. Our Lord then in this passage virtually declared the necessity and future fact of his death, since in no other way than by an atonement for sin through his death, could the blessing of eternal life be given to men. The remark of Alford, that his death is here meant, because the flesh of no live animal is eaten, places the argument on too low a basis.

We have also the declaration of our Lord himself in the next clause, that he will give his *flesh* (i. e. his body) *for the life of the world*. This is plainly declarative both of his death and its object or purpose. It was to give life to the world. How was this life to be appropriated and rendered available to men? By faith in Him as an all-sufficient Saviour. It is thus that the believer feeds upon the flesh of Christ, the life-giving properties of which are communicated to him, because Jesus suffered and died in his stead. Doddridge finds a beautiful gradation in this verse compared with v. 31: "They had insinuated that feeding a few thousands with the five loaves was an inconsiderable thing, when compared with what Moses did, when he fed the whole camp of Israel; but our Lord declares the purposes of his grace and bounty to be far more extensive, as reaching the whole world, and giving life, immortal life, to all that should believe on him." *For* (i. e. in behalf of) *the life of the world*. Although the benefits of Christ's death in the higher sense of eternal salvation, will be theirs only who believe on him, yet in a lower and more general sense, the whole human family are benefited thereby. All enjoy a day of probation. The common blessings of life, such as health, food, raiment, social and intellectual enjoyment, the tender ties of family relationship, are all departures from the award of strict justice, which could not have been granted to sinful man had not Christ died. Above all the proffer of salvation through his atoning death, made to every being to whom the message of salvation is proclaimed, and the salvable condition of those who have never heard of the name of Jesus, but who act up to the teachings of natural conscience, in view of those invisible things of God clearly seen from the creation of the world, and understood by the things that are made (Rom. 1: 20)—attest as by a voice from the skies, that Jesus Christ did in verity

can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

give his body for the life of the world in its most enlarged sense. Stier well sums up the teachings of this wondrous passage. "Life is given to us through his appropriated death, and the vehicle of that gift is truly *his flesh* and *blood*, become for us *spirit* and *life*."

52. The Jews received this strange announcement of our Lord in its most literal sense. It is evident, however, that some of those who listened to the discourse, had more correct views of the spiritual nature of this food, or else there would have been no difference of opinion, out of which arose the strife to which reference is here made. The word *strove*, is the Greek middle voice, and must be taken in a reciprocal sense, the translation being *strove among themselves*. *Among themselves*, in our common version, is a mistranslation for *against one another*, the translators not perceiving that this idea lay in the verb, and not in the words here joined with it. A literal translation would be, *strove among themselves one against another*, indicating that the people were all wrangling and disputing with one another, in regard to these strange words which fell upon their ear. They would doubtless have dismissed the words as having fallen from the lips of an enthusiast or insane person, but the great miracle of the preceding day, and other wondrous works of his which they had seen or heard of, together with his calm and dignified demeanor, convinced some of them at least, that he was no ordinary man, much less a fanatic or mad enthusiast. What were murmurs in v. 41, are now the loud voices of earnest, if not angry debate. Bloomfield divides the disputants into the higher class, the inveterate enemies of Jesus, and the lower class, from which were gathered mostly his disciples. But so profound was the reverence of the lower for the upper class, especially those of civil

Except^r ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

p Mat. 26 : 26, 28.

or priestly authority, that such a division of the assembly, on the present occasion, is not very probable. It was nevertheless true then, as it afterwards more fully appeared, that he had comparatively very few adherents in the upper and more powerful classes of society. Such to the present day has been one of the most prominent and unchanging features of Christianity. See 1 Cor. 1 : 26-28. *How can this man*. The word *man*, is wanting in the original, and the pronoun is therefore used in its contemptuous sense, *this fellow*, *this crack-brained person*. Such perhaps is its use in v. 42. The question is proposed by his enemies; the reply of his friends is not given. Webster and Wilkinson refer this question to both his friends and enemies, but this implies too much unanimity to suit the fierce dissension implied in the words, *strove among themselves against one another*. Our translators need not have italicized the word *his*, in *his flesh*, since it is expressed in the original by the accompanying article.

53. We may suppose that a pause took place in our Lord's discourse, either intentional on his part, or in consequence of interruption through the tumultuous excitement occasioned by his declaration in v. 51. In resuming his address, he takes no notice of the possibility of eating his flesh, which had been the point of dispute among his auditors, but speaks of its indispensable necessity as the only ground of eternal life. *Verily, verily*. These confirmatory adverbs indicate the importance of the truth about to be announced, as in vs. 26, 47. They were not only to eat his flesh, but were even to drink his blood, else they had no life in them. Instead of clearing up the difficulty which perplexed his auditors, he now propounds another condition on which eternal life is to be bestowed, involving an equal if not greater apparent ab-

54 ² Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eter-

q Ver. 27, 40, 63; ch. 4: 14.

surdity to their carnal understandings. The drinking the blood of an animal had been forbidden from the days of Noah (see Gen. 9: 4), and great therefore must have been their astonishment, when solemnly informed that they must drink the blood of Jesus, or else forfeit all hope of salvation.

In regard to this drinking of our Lord's blood, the same principle is to be applied, by which we attain to a right understanding of the eating of his flesh. His blood was to be shed for sin, for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9: 22). This was therefore an essential element in the offering, which Jesus made of himself for the sin of the world. Not only was his body to be broken, but his blood was to be shed, in order that believers may have boldness to enter (i. e. have free access to) the heavenly sanctuary, through the new and living way which he has consecrated by his death (see Heb. 10: 19, 20). That the blood of our Lord was actually shed in his crucifixion, see 19: 34. But long before the soldier's spear was thrust into his side, in his great and mysterious travail of agony under his Father's frown, he was virtually shedding his very heart's blood for the sins of men. There is, however, nothing literal or physical in this drinking of the blood of Jesus. But a living faith so unites the soul to Christ, that the bond would not be more indissoluble, if there was a real corporeal union. This living, enduring faith in Jesus as a divine Saviour, by which the benefits of his death are appropriated to the believer, is here expressed under the significant figure of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, the language being suggested by the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, out of which the discourse arose. This same vital union of the soul with Christ is expressed in 15: 1-6, under the figure of the vine and its branches, the same great truth being taught under both forms of imagery, that Christ is the life of the soul.

The question upon which so much has been written and said, whether the Eucharist is here directly referred to, the limits of this commentary will not permit me to fully discuss. In my judgment, the Lord's Supper is not referred to other than very indirectly. The argument here is upon the necessity of feeding by faith upon the flesh and blood of Christ; while the Eucharist is declared in the most express terms, to have been instituted to keep the death of Christ in remembrance (Luke 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 24), and thus to assist in strengthening and giving vitality to the faith, by which alone spiritual nourishment is drawn from the Redeemer. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not a saving ordinance, and cannot therefore be synonymous with this reception of the body and blood of Christ, which is declared in the most express terms to be the eternal life of the soul. The one is an external rite or symbol; the other is a spiritual act, introducing the soul to Christ, and uniting it to him in a living and indissoluble union. That the elements of bread and wine in the Eucharist, were chosen to symbolically represent Christ's body and blood, there can be no question. But the reception of his body and blood as the food of the soul, is not attained through these external emblems, but by faith in the Son of God as the Saviour of men. By overlooking the true design and intent of the Lord's Supper, it has been perverted by some to be the medium of the actual transmission of Christ into the soul of the believer; whereas this is the province and function of faith, assisted indeed but not superseded by the partaking of the external emblems of his body and blood in the Eucharist. Dr. Turner well remarks, "that on the theory by which this passage is expounded of the Eucharist, it is not easy to explain the fact that John in his Gospel gives no account of the institution." This argument is pressed with great force and pertinency by that learned and judicious expositor.

nal 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

r 1 Jo. 3:24; & 4:15, 16.

54. The preceding verse declares the necessity of this spiritual food, to the acquisition of eternal life. This verse reaffirms the promise, made in v. 40, of eternal life and a glorious resurrection, to all who appropriate to themselves the benefits of his death by thus feeding in faith upon his flesh and drinking his blood. *Whoso eateth*; literally, *he that eateth. Hath eternal life*. As eternal life is promised in v. 47 (on which see Note) to those who believe on Christ, and in this verse the same possession of life everlasting, is declared to result from partaking of Christ's flesh and blood, it clearly shows that this latter act is but the varied and emphatic expression of that living faith in him as a divine Redeemer, which is declared in v. 47, and elsewhere, to be the only way by which the benefits of his death may be secured to a soul lost and ruined by sin. Nothing can be plainer than this, if an intelligent comparison is instituted between this verse and v. 47, where faith is made the grand condition on which is suspended the eternal life of the soul. *I will raise him up*, &c. See vs. 39, 40, 44. The repetition of this promise shows, that it is the crowning act of our Lord's love for his people, and should inspire them with the most joyous anticipations of the time, when corruption shall put on incorruption, and mortal shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. See 1 Cor. 15: 51-57. It is the resurrection of the righteous which is so inestimable a blessing; that of the wicked serves only to render their misery more complete and unendurable.

55. This verse is illustrative of the preceding. It furnishes the reason why those who eat our Lord's flesh and drink his blood shall have eternal life. The principal word in this verse is *indeed*, i. e. truly, really in the very high-

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.

est sense. No spiritual life can be enjoyed from any other source. This is the true and essential food of the soul, without which spiritual starvation and eternal death must ensue. It is necessary, therefore, to the life of the soul, that it shall feed upon this true and essential food, which alone has in itself the element of eternal life.

56. The inseparable union between Christ and the believer is now brought to view, as the consequence of this feeding upon his body and blood. *Dwelleth in me*, &c. Olshausen compares with this the Pauline expression, *putting on Christ*. Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27. How eminently spiritual was this discourse of Jesus, is seen in the mutual interpenetration of spirit predicated here of Christ and the believer; for no one can for a moment suppose, that this *indwelling* is a corporeal one. The sentiment is that they who take Christ into their soul by this spiritual feeding upon him, shall be in like manner taken into his soul; so that as Christ dwells in the bosom of the Father (1:18), their life shall be hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). This indwelling of the soul in Christ is a sure guaranty against all evil, and a pledge of eternal life through his blood.

57. The thought of the preceding verse is still further expanded in this. The believer is not only united to Christ by the mutual indwelling which results from eating and drinking his body and blood, but as Christ lives by the Father, and the believer lives by and in him, he is united through Christ to the Father himself. The argument thus reaches the very climax of divine love and goodness. *The living Father*, i. e. He who is the source of all life and being. *Hath sent me*. See 5:37. *I live by the Father*. This does not conflict with the doctrine of the independent

58 * This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as

s Ver. 49, 50, 51.

your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

and underived existence of the second Person of the Trinity. It is as Mediator, God-man, that he lives through and by the Father, and as Doddridge remarks, "has the same dependence on the providence and influence of God, which other creatures have." But the life here spoken of, is something more than natural life, being of the same kind as that which the believer shall live by him. The reference is therefore especially made to that high spiritual life, which Christ as Redeemer and Mediator draws from the Father, and in turn communicates to those who are participators of his flesh and blood. Bloomfield finds an enallage in this verse, and would translate, *as the Father liveth which hath sent me*, the antithesis being in *liveth*, and not in *hath sent*. In like manner, Dr. Burton paraphrases the passage: "I have life in myself, and have power to give life, because the Father (who dwelleth in me, and I in him) hath life in himself, and hath power to give life." The preposition in *by the Father*, denotes the efficient cause, for otherwise it would bereave the following words *shall live by me*, of all force. The dependence is not merely external and incidental, but enters into the very foundation and essence of spiritual life. Webster and Wilkinson interpret the passage, *because of the Father* who has life in himself (5: 26); and *because of me*, "because I live ye shall live also" (14: 19). So Winer: *I live owing to the Father*, i. e. I live because the Father lives. This does not vary the sense. The expression *eateth me*, comprehends both the eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and gives no occasion for De Wette's remark, that our Lord drops the idea of drinking his blood, as only having been occasioned by the accidental circumstance of v. 52. "It was with deep earnestness and rigid meaning, without any inducement thereto from without, that he spake of *flesh and blood* as the

interpretation of *bread*, and it is only because He is returning back to this original expression, that He now speaks only of *eating*, the drinking being obviously included." Stier.

58. Having thus conducted his hearers to the sublime doctrine, that life in its highest and most spiritual sense, can be secured only by feeding spiritually upon his body and blood, our Lord returns to the article of bread whence the discourse arose. He reiterates what he had said in vs. 35, 48-51, and having again contrasted this living bread with the perishable manna of the wilderness, concludes by reaffirming that whosoever partook of this true bread which came down from heaven, should live for ever. A more sublime and highly spiritual discourse was never spoken. No one in the present life can fully sound its depths, or reach its lofty heights. Eternity alone will suffice to unfold its full and ineffable meaning. *This is that* (literally *the*) *bread*, i. e. such is the true bread. A comprehensive summary of the argument evolved in the preceding discourse. *Which came down*. The past tense is here employed instead of the present (v. 50), because, as Alford well suggests, Jesus has clearly identified this bread with himself. *Not as your fathers did eat manna* (literally *the manna*), &c. i. e. not such bread as was the manna which your fathers eat, and which did not preserve them from death. Stier gives it this turn: "not a *bread from heaven*, in the manner in which ye spoke of it, when I was constrained to add, *and died*" (v. 49). This commentator regards *manna*, as the result of some gloss, "which aimed to accurately sum up the whole, but which weakened the emphasis of what was designedly spoken without it." But it appears to me that the sentiment would have been quite obscure, had this word been wanting in the original. There is a twofold antithesis in the word as here

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 ¶ Many therefore of his

found; it was not the true bread from heaven, nor did it confer upon those who partook of it eternal life. This double antithesis would hardly be discernible, were the word *manna*, to be expunged from the text. *He that eateth of this bread* (i. e. the bread which came down from heaven) *shall live for ever*. This is the sum of the whole argument: Jesus Christ who came down from heaven, is declared to be the true bread which giveth life to the soul.

59. *As he taught*; literally, *while teaching*. This discourse was therefore a part of the synagogue worship, following immediately upon the reading of the law and prayer (see N. on Luke 4: 16-21). It is evident on the face of the passage, that the separation between the true and false disciples, took place on the very day in which this sublime discourse was spoken.

60-65. These verses furnish a remarkable example of the sifting power of truth. There had been no violence of manner or language on the part of Jesus; no stern denunciations like those pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees. The language was remarkably mild and affectionate, and yet the effect of his discourse was not only to array against him the opposition of the mass of his hearers, but to drive away those even, who, up to this time, had professed to be his disciples. So universal was the defection of his followers, in view of this wondrous discourse, that our Lord turned to his disciples, as though in momentary expectation that they also would leave him, and addressed to them the touching words, "Will ye also go away?" There was on this occasion a remarkable fulfilment of his prophetic office, as one who was to purge his people from all dross (Mal. 3: 2, 3), and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works (Tit. 2: 14). Such has

disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

† Ver. 66; Mat. 11: 6.

been from that time to this, and ever will be as long as the gospel is preached on earth, the effect of spiritual discourses such as that uttered by our Lord on this occasion.

60. *Many therefore of his disciples*. The mass of his hearers had gone away in unbelief. Even those who were professedly attached to him, and were in constant attendance upon his ministry, reckoning themselves among his disciples, were so scandalized at his discourse, that many openly murmured at the absurdity, if not the impiety, of what he had said. *A hard saying*; more literally, *a harsh discourse*, that is, one too absurd and offensive to be spoken or listened to. *Who can hear it?* i. e. who can stay and listen with approval, to such a harangue? Some refer the pronoun to Jesus, *who can hear him?* See 10: 20. The sense would remain unaltered. The explanation adopted by some, *who can understand it*, as though its principal fault was its abstruseness, does not furnish a sufficient reason for the manifest disgust with which they turned away from his teaching. The cause must be looked for in the emotional, rather than in the intellectual domain. It was not that they utterly failed to discern the meaning of his words, but because the truth which he disclosed was offensive to their carnal nature, that they so abruptly turned their backs upon him and went away. What the actual ground of their offence at his doctrine was, has been a matter of much discussion. The majority of expositors, especially of the older ones, refer it to the absurdity of offering one's own flesh and blood as food and drink, and especially the impiety of the declaration, that whoever partook of this unnatural food should have eternal life. But that his auditors should take his words in a literal sense we cannot well suppose, especially in view of the ground of the disputation

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured

at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

referred to in v. 52. Their want of spiritual discernment does not necessarily imply so low and sensuous a view as this. We must also bear in mind, that these persons did not belong to the multitude who were comparatively unenlightened as to the nature of our Lord's mission; but they were *disciples*, who had been in regular attendance upon his ministry, and therefore knew with what frequency and earnestness he had disclaimed all secular views and aims in the establishment of his kingdom on earth. For such persons to suppose that his discourse on the present occasion, had reference to a literal feeding upon his flesh and blood, is preposterous and incredible. Some of the more recent German commentators attribute the offence of these disciples to the declaration that the Messiah was to die (v. 51). But as Tholuck well remarks, this thought was not directly but mediately expressed, and does not furnish an adequate explanation to the expression, "who can listen to him?"

It seems to me that the reply of Jesus (v. 62) throws much light upon the nature of the difficulty, which met these disciples and turned them away from following him. There was an assumption on his part of such power and dignity, in the declaration that his body and blood were the life of the world, that it seemed to them an arrogation of the prerogatives and attributes of Deity, and they left him, as one too impious in his claims to be listened to any longer. Jesus virtually replies that they ought not to be offended at this, for soon they would see the Son of man ascend up to the station of glory and blessedness which he had before occupied. They were not therefore to stumble at his present humble condition, but receive him as the true and only Saviour of the world. The ground of their offence was therefore the same as that which caused his rejection by the whole nation; on the one hand, the assumption by him of a

dignity so much more exalted than in their highest enthusiasm they had ever awarded to the Messiah; and on the other, his low and obscure origin, which seemed so totally incompatible with his claims put forth in this discourse, as being the life of the world. The overthrow of all their hopes of temporal aggrandizement from the mission of Jesus (see v. 15), which this discourse effected, doubtless exerted no small influence in inducing them to forsake him at this time. But the main reason lay in their blindness as to his true character and dignity, resulting from his low estate as *Jesus of Nazareth*.

61. *When Jesus knew*; literally, *Jesus knowing*. The participial form denotes a knowledge, deep seated and permanent. *In himself*, i. e. by his divine omniscience. The words are opposed to information derived from an external source. *Murmured*. These disciples were restrained by the awe which his presence still inspired, from giving open utterance to their dislike of his discourse. They carried on their conversation in low and inaudible tones, but yet their words could not be concealed from him, and his reply ought to have convinced them, that they were in the presence of One, who could read and understand the secret thoughts of the heart, as well as though audible expression had been given thereof in words. *Doth this offend you?* i. e. prove a stumbling-block to you. The pronoun refers to what he had declared, that in order to have life, they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. Stier remarks that "He well knew that it would be so with them, and nevertheless spoke precisely as he did." He tested their motives and strength of faith by this discourse, and thus sifted from the number of his professed followers, those who from self-interest or mistaken views of the nature of his mission, had for a season attached themselves to him as his disciples.

62 " *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ?

63 " It is the spirit that quick-

u Ch. 3:13; Ma. 16:19; Ac. 1:9; Ep. 4:8.

62. *What and if*; literally, *if therefore, or when ye shall see*. The ellipsis here has been variously supplied. Stier and others, who find in these words of our Lord, a promise of the future removal of the offence, a subsequent better knowledge when his present earthly manifestation should be finally withdrawn, supply as a conclusion, "then will ye find my words concerning the eating my flesh not so hard as ye do now." This supposes the Greek to be susceptible of the translation, *when ye shall see*. Such also is substantially the exposition of Webster and Wilkinson, who give this as the sense; *when ye shall see*, leaving it for his hearers mentally to supply, "then we shall believe." This explanation supposes that reference is had to the solution or removal of the objection advanced by the Jews in v. 42. But instead of supposing that their unbelief will be removed by the effulgence of his character, which shall beam forth at the time of his exaltation, is there not here by an argument *a fortiori*, a predicted increase of their unbelief and hardness of heart, under the higher manifestation which the Son will then make of his Messianic power? The Greek is *if then*, and not *when*. A solemn warning, and not a ground of encouragement is contained in this passage: '*Doth this offend you?* Think not *then* that you will be more inclined to believe in me, *if* you shall see (as you will) the Son of man ascend to the condition of exaltation, which he had before his advent on earth.' Or to express it still more simply: '*Doth this offend you?* (how much more) *then* (will you be offended), *if you shall see* (as you surely will) *the Son of man ascend*, &c. Thus it truly was. The passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, expressed under the general terms, *Christ crucified*, or *the cross of Christ*,

eneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

æ 2 Co. 3:6.

was the great stumbling-block of the Jews in the early days of the church (see 1 Cor. 1:23), and has continued to be so to the present day. An objection has been made that the Jews did not witness his ascension. But what if they did not? The testimony on which it rested was so abundant and incontrovertible, that to reject it was as absurd and wicked, as to have doubted the evidence of their own eyes. There is then no necessity of seeking to avoid this objection, as does Alford, by averring the probability or at least possibility, that our Lord may have spoken this to some of the Twelve also, whose faith began to waver. *Where he was before*. This is a proof-text of the pre-existent nature of Christ. It is worthy of remark that this is the only place, where Jesus refers in so many words to his own ascension. Dr. Turner regards this question as a corrective of their attaching to our Lord's words a literal meaning, "by appealing to the manifest unreasonableness and self contradiction of literally eating his flesh and drinking his blood, after his body shall have been removed from thence to heaven." But while he evidently prefers regarding it as the solution of the difficulty which elicited the murmurs of the people, he admits that it may also have this sense: "If the doctrine is now so distasteful to you, how abhorrent to your feelings and partial reasonings will it appear, after I shall have resumed my former condition in heaven?"

63. Our Lord now condescends to show, in what sense believers were to feed upon his flesh and blood. Here then begins the solution of the difficulty or misunderstanding of his words, resulting from taking them in a literal sense. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth*. It has been a subject of much doubt and discussion, as to what is here meant

64 But ^y there are some of you that believe not. For ^z Jesus

^y Ver. 36.

^z Ch. 2: 24, 25; & 13: 11.

by the *Spirit*. Some take it in the sense of the Holy Spirit, as our translators seem to have done in writing it with the capital; others, of a high spirituality of view, as opposed to the carnal sense, in which many of them seem to have taken the preceding discourse; and others maintain, that it teaches the spiritual sense of the discourse in opposition to the literal sense. Between the last two views, there does not appear to be much difference. It seems to me, however, that the passage contains a comparison between the relation which the spirit or vital principle bears to the body of a man, and the spiritual or quickening power which the words of Christ exert upon the soul of the believer. The spirit of man is what quickens into life and activity the body. The flesh or body, without this pervading principle of life and intelligence, would be inoperative and useless; so the soul, otherwise dead to all spiritual action and influence, when interpenetrated by the life-giving truth of the gospel of Christ, is vivified and inspired with new and clear views of all that pertains to spiritual things. The application of this well-known and acknowledged principle, that the body is dead without the indwelling spirit, but rendered active and operative by its presence, would be natural and obvious. If his words abode in his followers, being received by them in faith and love, they would be vivified thereby, and receive such new spiritual life and energy, that they would be freed from the carnal views which they took of his doctrine, and discern in his flesh and blood the true and only sustenance of the soul. This gives a sense which accords well with the context, both that which precedes and follows, and offers no violence to the language of the original. Alford, after Stier, refers *my words* to the expressions *my flesh* and *my blood*. These were spirit and life, not flesh only; living food, not carnal and perishable.

knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

There is no objection to such a reference, considered as a part of the discourse of Jesus; but *my words*, in their fullest sense, refers to the whole discourse, and even to similar discourses pronounced on other occasions. *They are spirit and they are life*. The literal translation would have been better, *the words which I speak unto you are spirit and are life*, i. e. they are the same in their quickening, energizing influence upon the soul, as the vital principle of life is to the body of man. The comparison is exceedingly apt, concise, and forcible. These disciples who were about to go away from Jesus, were thus informed, that although his discourse seemed harsh and offensive to them, yet it was the only source of spiritual life; and unless received by them in faith and love, they would forever remain as spiritually dead, as the body from which the vital spirit had fled.

64. *But there are some of you, &c.* The general sense is that although there were such life and spirit in his words, yet there were some of his disciples who believed not, and this unbelief was the cause of their murmuring at his doctrine. *For Jesus knew, &c.* This is a parenthetical observation of the Evangelist, serving to show the ground of the judgment passed by Jesus in the preceding clause. It also prepares the way for the statement of the defection of some of his disciples, made in v. 66. *From the beginning* of his ministry; or perhaps better, from the time when they severally attached themselves to his ministry. His unbelieving disciples are referred to in the words, *who they were that believed not*, and Judas Iscariot, in the following clause. The Greek negative employed in the expression *believed not*, is the one used to denote a general truth, applying to any one of the number who believed not. Had the other Greek negative been here employed, as in the clause *there are some of you that believe not*, there would have been

65 And he said, Therefore ^a said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 ^b From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

a Ver. 44, 45.

b Ver. 60.

an absolute reference to the unbelief of particular individuals. The sense will appear from the paraphrase, *who those were not believing* (whoever they might be), the fact of their not believing being assumed also in the preceding clause.

65. *And he said, &c.* The Evangelist resumes the words of Jesus, which had been interrupted by the preceding parenthesis. *Therefore*, i. e. in consequence of your unbelief. These disciples supposed that they had come to Jesus by the true and only mode of approach; but he now shows them that it was in view of their want of genuine faith, that he had referred to the drawing of the Father as essential to the true and actual coming of any to him. *Said I unto you, &c.* See v. 44. *Except it were given, &c.* The language is varied from the declaration made in v. 44, but the sense remains the same. *It were given unto him* refers to the act of coming to Christ, which is not a mere external attachment to his person or cause, but a living belief in him as the Son of God and Saviour of men. Alford notices a parallelism between "the Father giveth me," in v. 35, and "were given unto him of my Father," both gifts being in the Father's power. The Father gives to the Son those whom his infinite grace selects as the objects of his saving love, and also imparts to them those influences by which they are drawn to Christ.

66-71. The result of this remarkable discourse is here given. Those disciples, who had been actuated in following him by low and worldly motives, and who had no experimental acquaintance with the living faith here set forth under the strong and expressive language of feeding upon the body of Christ, left him, and so far as we know, never resumed their discipleship on the true basis here laid down by Christ. Stier thinks it possible, that some of

them fell away from the beginning of faith. But in view of v. 64, and the next clause, *and walked no more with him*, as well as from such passages as 1 John 2:19; Philip. 1:6, we cannot admit that these disciples had the least beginning of true evangelical faith in their heart.

66. *From that time.* The ellipsis is not well supplied in our common version. The general sense would be better preserved by translating, *on account of this*. The same criticism may be made upon the translation *from thenceforth*, in 19:12. *Went back*, i. e. returned to their homes and occupations, which they had temporarily left to attend upon the teachings of Jesus. The literal rendering is, *went away in a backward direction*, i. e. in the very opposite direction from that which they took in approaching Jesus. The idea intended to be conveyed is, that they did not turn aside, or swerve temporarily from their discipleship, but turned back and absolutely forsook him. They had assumed the name and attitude of disciples, hoping thereby to obtain some high position in the temporal kingdom which they supposed he was about to establish. But now their hopes of temporal aggrandizement being destroyed by the demand of Jesus upon their faith in him as a spiritual Redeemer, they separate themselves from the band of disciples, thus evincing their want of sincerity in all their previous professions of love. *Walked no more, &c.* They accompanied him no longer as his professed disciples. The verb literally signifies *to walk about* from place to place, and hence *to be in attendance upon*, or *to accompany*, as a disciple, his master. This clause is added to the preceding, to show that the defection was final and lasting. *With him* has that form in the original, which refers not to

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

mere companionship, but to a communion of feeling and interest, as in Matt. 12 : 30.

67. *Then said Jesus*; more literally, *therefore said Jesus*. The question was proposed in view of this defection of his professed followers. *Unto the twelve*. This is the first mention made by John of the twelve apostles. They had been called to the apostolic office, during the time which intervened between this and the preceding chapter (see N. on v. 1). The reference in John presupposes, that the call and ordination of the Twelve had been known from the other Evangelists. *Will ye also go away?* A most tender and affecting question, when the time and circumstances of its utterance are taken into consideration. Many of his professed disciples were leaving him, probably with expressions of scorn and contempt at the apparent absurdity and impiety of his doctrine. As one and another turned away from him, and he looked around upon the diminished numbers who remained, his soul seems to have been filled with distress, and he turns to his chosen disciples, as though he feared that even their fidelity and love would be shaken, by his searching discourse, and that they too would turn their back upon him. The form of interrogation in the original is one, which denotes fear and anxiety as to the answer. It is as though he had said, '*You also will not go away*. It cannot be possible that you my chosen apostles will leave me.' The pronoun *ye*, in the original is emphatic, and puts his apostles in strong and open contrast with the disciples who were then leaving him. A question here arises, whether our Lord proposed this question as one of trust or distrust, for both views are compatible with what has been said of its tender and touching character. Tholuck regards it as a question of trust, the negative in Greek presupposing a negative reply. Webster and Wilkinson interpret the question as implying a hope that the twelve did not mean to

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we

leave him. Stier rejects the idea that the question was an appeal of sorrow demanding consolation—'ye, my own twelve, will not forsake me too, if it be your will, then leave me, ye are free to do so. I restrain you not,'—just as God spoke in former times to Israel by Joshua (Josh. 24 : 15). My own view of the question is that it is one of sorrowful anxiety, as to their fidelity; in which the humanity of Jesus appears in strong and striking contrast with his divinity, which saw the end from the beginning, and knew the faithfulness and zeal, with which these beloved apostles, with the exception of Judas, would labor and suffer in his service. But as he was troubled in spirit at the prospect of Judas' treachery (13 : 21), so here his soul was affected at the desertion of his professed friends, and he turns to his disciples, not in a tone of boastful confidence in regard to their fidelity, but of affectionate solicitude, lest they also should be swept away in the tide of unbelief. His tender and searching question may have been the very means which his love employed, to keep them from falling into the temptation, which at this time must have sorely beset them, when they in common with others, saw all their hopes of an earthly Messianic dominion destroyed, by the positive declarations, which he had made in regard to the spirituality of his kingdom and mission. The predominant idea of the question is then one of earnest solicitude; as at a later period, when the power of temptation was remarkably strong, he bid them watch and pray that they entered not into temptation, adding that the spirit indeed was willing (Mark, *ready*), but the flesh was weak (Matt. 26 : 41). At the same time, it must not be understood, in any of these instances where our Lord cautioned his disciples against falling away, that his omniscient eye lost sight of their future steadfast perseverance; or that his everlasting purpose in calling them to be his

go? thou hast ' the words of eternal life.

69 ^d And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

^c Ac. 5: 20.

chosen instruments in propagating his gospel, was in danger of being frustrated by their defection. The purpose of God's sovereign grace neither interferes with nor overlooks the means, necessary to keep those who are embraced in its provisions from falling away into open apostasy. The warnings, threatenings, promises, hopes, encouragements, by which the believer is kept in the path of life, are as much the result of God's purpose, as his final perseverance and salvation which they were designed, as means, to secure.

68. Peter answers to this question, with his usual promptness and frankness. *To whom shall we go?* 'To what other teacher or guide shall we resort, for instruction in those things which pertain to salvation?' *Thou hast the words* (see v. 63) *of eternal life*, i. e. thou teachest the way of eternal life. The language of Peter shows that the discourse of Jesus had deeply penetrated his soul. He may not have fully understood it, but he knew enough of its general drift to convince him, that it was a revelation of the true and only way of salvation from sin and death.

69. *And we* (whatever others may think) *believe and are sure*. Both these verbs are in the perfect tense, representing full and completed action: *we have believed* (i. e. are fully possessed of the belief), *and have known*, i. e. have reached the full knowledge and are possessed of it. The form of speech made use of is therefore expressive of the highest confidence in the declaration here made. Tholuck remarks that faith here stands before knowing, as in 17: 8; the reverse is the case in 10: 38; 1 John 4: 16, but chronologically the two points are not to be sundered from one another. *That Christ, or the Christ*, i. e. the true Mes-

70 Jesus answered them, 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and of you is a devil?

^d Mat. 16: 16; Ma. 8: 29; Lu. 9: 20; ch. 1: 49;

^e Lu. 6: 13.

^f Ch. 13: 27.

siah. *The Son of the living God* (see v. 57). See N. on Matt. 16: 16, where Peter made open confession of the same truth, at a time when the faith of the apostles was put to the severest test. Alford and Tholuck adopt the reading, *the holy One of God*; but Bengel shows clearly that the word *Son*, is requisite to correspond to *my Father* in v. 65. Stier and Olshausen would go still further, and reject as spurious *the Christ, the Son*, making the passage read simply *thou art the holy One*, &c. There seems to be no valid reason from the passage itself or the MS. authority, against the reading adopted in our common version.

70. The reply of our Lord to Peter's confession, is unlike that which he made on the subsequent occasion (Matt. 16: 17-19), being indicative of apprehended treachery and desertion, and referring not so much to Peter's steadfast adherence to his cause, as by way of contrast to Judas who was to betray him. The sentiment expanded is this: 'thou hast indeed made a true confession, in which I know that you all agree, and yet, not *all*, for although I have chosen you Twelve to be my apostles, yet I know that one of you is a devil and not my true follower.' *Chosen* refers here to the external call, which had been made to them by Jesus. See Mark 3: 13, 14; Luke 6: 13. Alford says that "the selection of the Twelve by Jesus, was in consequence of the giving of them to him by the Father, so that his selecting and the Father's giving and drawing do not exclude final falling away." So Stier remarks that "there is in the divine love, without prejudice to its prescience, an *election of the lost*." He acknowledges that it is "a mystery, not belonging to strict exegesis, and lying further back, even in Satan, who in his very creation

was *chosen*." But see v. 39, where it is expressly said, that not one of those given to the Son by the Father shall be lost, which of course excludes Judas and all other apostates from the number of the elect. See also 10: 17-29, where the same sentiment is enforced under the imagery of sheep safe in the protecting love of the good Shepherd. In 13: 18 (on which see Note), Judas is expressly excluded from the number of the chosen; for when our Lord said "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen," no one can suppose the choice to the apostleship to be the one intended, but that eternal choice to everlasting life, made in the covenant of redemption between the Father and Son. Stier, Tholuck, and Alford, refer in proof of their exposition to 17: 6. But there is no evidence that Judas is included in the number of those who are there referred to as having been given to Christ. Indeed the passage in its connection, furnishes abundant proof to the very contrary. When our Lord's intercessory prayer was offered, he had gone out from them, on his dark and traitorous errand; and it would be surpassingly strange, if that "son of perdition" who was then on his way to betray his Lord, should be referred to, and as Stier says, "enumerated among those who were given by the Father." If he was one of those who had been drawn to Christ by the Father, and notwithstanding this, was given up to the devil, as a son of perdition, to betray his Lord and Master, to die by his own hand and go to his own place, what foundation has the believer to rest upon, in the unchanging love and purpose of God, and what confidence or hope can he draw from such texts as v. 39; 10: 27-29; 17: 6, and others of like import? If Judas was embraced in "the Father's giving and drawing," and yet irrecoverably fell away, what hope has the believer that such may not be his disastrous end? But if to his own watchful and prayerful efforts, is added the promise of God's faithfulness and unchanging love, then he can adopt the language of Paul (Rom. 8: 31-39), and

lean with confidence on the arm of infinite grace.

The choice then spoken of here, is not the eternal choice embraced in the covenant between the Father and the Son, but as above said, the external call made by Jesus to the Twelve. There were many present, who were as much the subjects of the Father's drawing unto the Son (v. 44), as the apostles themselves; but the Twelve only had been selected to the apostleship. Hence *have not I chosen you twelve*, cannot be referred to the apostles apart from the other disciples, except in regard to this special call to their apostolic office. Is it truly wonderful that any expositors should overlook so palpable a distinction, unless in their eagerness to find scriptural arguments against the doctrine of the final perseverance of saints. *And (yet) one of you is a devil*. As the Greek word here used is the one employed to denote the arch adversary or Satan, it has been a matter of some discussion in what sense it is here to be taken, whether as *devil* or *opposer*. Olshausen at first took the latter view, but in a later edition (the one edited by Prof. Kendrick), he changes his opinion and remarks, "I am now inclined to understand the expression as meaning, one among you is (not a devil but) *the devil*; i. e. what the devil is among the children of God, that is this person among you. *Devil* stands here as a familiar proper name without the article." So Stier remarks: "As we understand our Lord's thoughts, he does not mean merely what otherwise would be *child* or *son of the devil* (for this would be too slight and general for application to Judas, who was the *guide* and head of those who took Jesus), nor does he simply place him in parallel with any individual *demon*, but—one among you is the *Satan* or *devil* in relation to me, that is, *his* elect instrument, *one who has fallen*, through a devilish spirit, into the ministry and as it were the *representation of the Devil*." This seems to be the true sense of the passage, although Luther, Grotius, De Wette, Neander, Webster and Wilkinson, give it

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

a Ch. 5:16, 18.

the softer, or as Tholuck says, the *more languid* sense of *opposer, adversary*, one who is possessed with the heart of an enemy. The Syriac version has it, *one of you is Satan*, and there can be no doubt, that our Lord in the *Syro-chaldaic*, the vernacular language of Palestine, expressed himself in this way. In order to put his chosen apostles on their guard against defection, and startle Judas himself into repentance—for we cannot suppose that our Lord did not earnestly desire his conversion and salvation, as well as that of the others whom he had chosen to be his followers—he used the strongest expression to denote, that the person designated was fully possessed with the spirit of the devil and ready to do his bidding. See Acts 13:10. Peter was denominated *Satan* (Matt. 16:23). But there was this marked and radical difference between him and Judas, that in his friendly interference with the great purpose of God's redemptive love in the death of his Son (see N. on Matt. 16:23), he was unconsciously and temporarily doing the service of Satan; whereas Judas was under the permanent influence of the devil, and in the performance of the great act of his wicked betrayal, was fully possessed by him.

71. *He spake of Judas Iscariot* (see N. on Matt. 10:4). Jesus had given so many marks of superhuman knowledge, that John could not but have referred what was here said to the prediction of Judas' treachery, even if he had not been taught of the Spirit to record the fact. *The son of Simon*. John is the only Evangelist who gives the name of Judas' father. See 12:4; 13:2. *That should betray him*. Some expositors refer this to the divine purpose; others, among whom is Doddridge, suppose the import to be that

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, ^a because the Jews sought to kill him.

even at this time Judas had thoughts of betraying his Lord. But the original clearly denotes a simple future, similar to the use of the word in 7:39; 11:51. The English auxiliary *should*, implies predetermination or a necessary result, and therefore the more literal translation *was about* (or *soon*) *to betray him*, would have been preferable.

CHAPTER VII.

1. *After these things*, i. e. after the events detailed in the preceding chapter. Alford however thinks that reference is had to what took place as reported in Chap. V., the miraculous feeding of the five thousand and the discourse at Capernaum being events which took place in the interval while he was in Galilee. But Dr. Robinson well remarks, that 7:1 contains a reason why Jesus did not go up at this time to the passover mentioned in 6:4, and which was the third in his ministry. This establishes a close connection between the events of the preceding chapter, which took place about the time of the passover, and the declaration here made that Jesus continued his ministry in Galilee, and did not go up with the multitude to Jerusalem on account of the hostility of the Jews. *He walked in Galilee* (i. e. remained in Galilee in the active duties of his ministry), *and would not walk* (literally, *was unwilling to walk, chose not to walk*) *in Jewry*, i. e. Judaea. The idea in the last member is simply, that he did not go up, according to his usual custom, to keep the passover. *Because the Jews sought, &c.* The imperfect tense of the verb denotes the settled determination to effect his death, and thus put an end to his denunciations against their formalism and hypocrisy.

2-10. JESUS GOES UP TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES AND TAKES HIS FINAL

2^b Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

3^c His brethren therefore said

5 Le. 23: 34.

c Mat. 12: 46; Ma. 3: 31; Ac. 1: 14.

DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE. John here passes over an interval of six months, during which time, Jesus goes into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15: 21-28); feeds the Four Thousand at Decapolis (Matt. 15: 29-38); reproves the Pharisees for demanding a sign (Matt. 16: 1-4); heals the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22-26); departs into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi (Matt. 16: 13-20); is transfigured (Matt. 17: 1-13); heals a demoniac (Matt. 17: 14-21); foretells again his own death (Matt 17: 22, 23); exhorts to brotherly love (Matt. 18: 1-35); instructs and sends forth the Seventy (Luke 10: 1-16). It will therefore be seen, that the feeding of the Five Thousand, his miraculous walking upon the sea, and his discourse at Capernaum, are the only events related by John, during a period of about eighteen months of his ministry. Strauss, with his usual tact and readiness to find some flaw in the sacred narrative, seizes upon this as proof, that John was acquainted with Judea only as the theatre of our Lord's ministry; while Matthew, on the other hand, knew only of Galilee as the place of his labors. But not only is there no evidence of the truth of this, but a superabundance of proof to the contrary. All the occurrences of Chap. VI. took place in Galilee, and it is expressly stated in v. 1, that he continued to labor in Galilee, through fear of the Jews who were seeking to kill him.

2. *Feast of tabernacles.* This was the third great annual festival of the Jews. It began in the 15th day of the seventh month Tisri, commencing with the new moon in our month October, and continued for eight days. It was designed, in part at least, to commemorate the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Upon the roofs of the houses and in the streets, booths of green boughs were erected,

unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

in which the people dwelt for seven days. It was also intended as a festival of thanksgiving for the ingathering of the harvest, and hence it was a season of rejoicing and feasting. The first and eighth days were sabbaths to the Lord, and the eighth day, especially, was called the last great day of the feast (see v. 37). Josephus (Antiq. VIII. 4, § 1) says that this was kept as the most holy and eminent of the festivals. Plutarch also speaks of it, as the greatest and most perfect of Jewish feasts. It was at this festival that Solomon's temple was dedicated (1 Kings 8: 2; 2 Chron. 7: 9, 10). The devotion of the church to the worship and service of God, in the time of its future glory and prosperity, is set forth by Zechariah (14: 16-19), under the imagery of a general gathering from all parts of the earth to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shows how great and holy a feast was this in the estimation of the Jews. It also shows, that, while all the other Jewish feasts have been superseded by the fulfilment in the Christian dispensation of that in regard to which they were mere types, the festival of Tabernacles or Booths, in its grand elemental idea of thanksgiving for past deliverances and mercies, will continue to be observed, in a form suited to the spirituality of Christian worship, by God's people in all coming time. The Thanksgiving festival, which has now become with us a national religious institution, is an exemplification of what, under some modifications to suit the habits of different peoples, will become universally prevalent throughout the world.

3. *His brethren*, i. e. his natural brethren. See Ns. on Matt. 1: 25; 13: 55. Tholuck thinks that these brethren who are here introduced to us as unbelieving, were the same as those referred to in Acts 1: 14. This is probably so;

4 For *there is no man that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known

openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

and unless we absurdly suppose that our Lord had two sets of relatives, one hostile, the other friendly to him, we may safely infer that the persons here referred to, were not without some germ of faith, although they had no intelligent belief in him as a spiritual Messiah. Tholuck cites in confirmation of this, what Schaf says in regard to the internal development of James the son of Alphaeus, (?) that "in accordance with a piety of a strictly Old Testament character, he clung to a conception of the Messiah, with which the manner of Christ's appearing was in conflict. He expected him to wield a power in civil matters; to make a brilliant display of himself in the central city of the theocracy." So in regard to these brethren, Tholuck proceeds to say, "that our Lord's works had been done in an extreme corner of Galilee, awakened distrust in their character; a distrust to which the *if* (v. 4) has reference, although it does not necessarily involve a doubt of the mere fact of their having been done." But admitting that these brethren of Jesus were not rank and open unbelievers in him, it must be nevertheless acknowledged that they were far from entertaining just views of the nature of his mission, and were actuated by very low and unworthy motives in urging him to make a public avowal of his claims to the Messiahship, as here related. *Therefore*, i. e. in consequence of the near approach. *Depart hence*, &c. There is an abruptness of expression here, which accords well with the impatience of these persons, in regard to the tardiness with which, in their estimation, Jesus put forth his claims to being publicly acknowledged as the Messiah. *Hence* from this obscure corner of Galilee. *Judea*, where the principal men of the nation reside, and where is the appropriate seat of the Messianic rule. Here we get an insight into the ambitious views of these brethren, who seeing his miracles and having the same mis-

taken notions of his mission, which were common to the whole nation, wished him to hasten matters and proceed at once to Jerusalem, to make a public proclamation of his Messiahship. It must be remembered that he had now been absent from Jerusalem about a year and a half; and his brethren seeing him making no preparations to attend this approaching feast of tabernacles, urge upon him with impatience, if not with ill-temper, the propriety of once more showing himself in the metropolis of the nation, and publicly asserting his claims. *That thy disciples*, such as resided in Judea, or had already gone up to keep the feast. Some find an allusion here to the fact of his having been deserted by so many of his disciples (see 6 : 66). But that defection took place six months previous to this, and could hardly have entered as an element into this remark of his brethren. I am disposed to think that they used this term in a very general sense, of the Jews at large, wishing, however, to conceal their ambitious views under the plausible cloak of recommending him to proceed to Jerusalem, in order to confirm his disciples from whom he had been so long absent. Prof. Crosby remarks that "Jesus must have had many disciples in Judea, made such at his various visits to Jerusalem at the times of the feasts."

4. They base their advice on a common and well-acknowledged principle, that any one who wishes to come into public repute, will take the steps necessary to make known his claims to public consideration. In thus assuming that Jesus was seeking public notoriety and popularity, they grossly misrepresented him. Indeed their whole address, if not insolent, was yet highly impertinent and unbecoming, and richly merited the calm severity with which our Lord replied to it. The grammatical structure of this verse is somewhat obscure. The best solution is to regard the clauses as coördinate, the general idea

5 For ^d neither did his brethren believe in him.

6 Then Jesus said unto them,

d Ma. 3: 21.

being, that there is no one so void of understanding, as to studiously conceal his acts, and yet expect that they will bring him into public notice. The two unconnected acts are combined, as Winer says, in parallelism, the idea being rendered prominent thereby, that nobody does both at the same time. In a sentence constructed like this, the Greeks use the conjunction translated *and*, in the sense of *while*, or make the second verb a participle. The substitution of the form *while he himself*, would remove all obscurity from the passage. The pronoun *he himself*, opposes the personality of the subject of the verbal expression *seeketh to be known*, to the thing done in secret. The word rendered *openly*, literally signifies, *free spokenness*, *frankness* of speech, demeanor, or action, and hence obtains its adverbial use, *frankly*, *boldly*, *openly*, without concealment. It will be seen, therefore, that in the use of this word there is a covert charge, that Jesus had not manifested that bold and open frankness, which might have been expected from one who was laying claim to the high office of Messiahship. Luther says that the word *openly*, corresponds to the German expression *on the field*. Our Lord is charged with not having taken the open field of action, but to have practised undue concealment of himself and purposes, in the more retired portions of Galilee. *If thou doest*, &c. This does not, as Tholuck remarks, necessarily involve a doubt of the fact that Jesus had done these wonderful works. It is hypothetically put as the condition, why Jesus should make a more open and undisguised manifestation of himself. *If thou doest these things* (of which we have no doubt), *show thyself to the world*; i. e. go forth to the metropolis of the nation, and there publicly claim the honors and prerogatives of your Messiahship.

5. This verse fully discloses the motives of these brethren of Jesus. The question here arises, which has in part been discussed in my comments on v. 3, whether the unbelief here spoken of,

was absolute and complete, or relative and partial; whether these kinsmen of Jesus were to be ranked as his enemies, like the scribes and Pharisees, or, while they believed in him as an extraordinary personage sent of God, were so deficient in a true apprehension of the spirituality of his mission, that they might be well said to be without faith in him. That they did not look upon Jesus as an impostor, like the chief priests and rulers, is placed beyond doubt by the fact here stated, that they wished him to display his wonderful powers in the presence of the chief men of the nation. They would not have been so bereft of all prudence, as to have advised him to this, unless fully confident that his miraculous powers could stand the test of the most searching inquisition. Their unbelief must be referred, therefore, to their spiritual dulness of comprehension in regard to the true object of his mission; and this parenthetic clause is inserted to show why it was that they were so urgent for him to go up to Jerusalem, and openly proclaim his Messiahship—because not recognizing in him a spiritual Messiah, they hoped for temporal power and aggrandizement under his reign. Entertaining such views of the Messianic office of Jesus, low and erroneous indeed, yet far different from the cold and malignant unbelief of the Jewish priests and rulers, we are not surprised at finding, some six months from this time, these same brethren of our Lord (Acts 1: 14)—for we cannot, as above stated, believe that two kinds of persons are referred to—continuing with the apostles “with one accord in prayer and supplication,” waiting for the promised descent of the Holy Ghost, having been together with others, enlightened as to the true object of our Lord’s mission, by the wondrous events of his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Such is Doddridge’s view, so far as we may gather from his note on Acts 1: 14. *For neither did his brethren believe in him*, would be better and more liter-

‘ My time is not yet come : but your time is always ready.

7^f The world cannot hate you ; but me it hateth, ^g because I tes-

^e Ch. 2:4; & 8:20; vs. 8, 30.

^f Ch. 15:19. ^g Ch. 3:19.

ally translated, *for his brethren also* (as well as others) *did not believe*, &c. Although so intimately related to him, yet their views were selfish and worldly as others, who had less opportunity to study and learn his real character. The argument here is worth nothing, unless we take *brethren* to denote the near relationship which we understand by this term. This verse is therefore not without good reason adduced, as proof that Mary had other children by Joseph, and that these were our Lord's natural brethren.

6. *My time* (literally, *the time*, viz. *mine*), not as some commentators have thought, the time of his sufferings and death, but of his going up to the feast. There may be implied also a reference to the time, when he should publicly manifest himself as his brethren wished, not however as a temporal, but a spiritual Messiah. He did not make this public manifestation until the next great festival, the passover, thus evincing that his time was not theirs, and that he was actuated by other considerations, than those which prompted them to make this request. Stier with Bengel is disposed to refer *my time is not yet full come*, to the time of going up to the feast of tabernacles, and the repetition of these words in v. 8, to his sufferings and death. But it is better to take both in the same sense. *Your time*, &c. They could go up in safety, but his path was beset with perils. Acting with a view only to their own interests, they were not at all restricted in their movements ; and hence the time was *always ready* for them, which would conduce to their selfish ends. But he had a higher work to accomplish, and one in which he was to be obedient to the will of his Father, both as to the manner and time of its performance.

tify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

8 Go ye up unto this feast : I go not up yet unto this feast ; ^a for my time is not yet full come.

^h Ch. 8:30; ver. 6.

7. This verse contains the reason why his brethren could go up at any time and in safety to the feast, while his attendance exposed him to such peril. They had never borne testimony against the sins of the world, and therefore had no reason to fear its hostility, but his reproof had exposed him to its most deadly hatred. *The world*, i. e. the multitude, the people at large, those to whom his brethren in v. 4, wished him to show himself. *Cannot*. A moral inability, or that which is not in accordance with the course of things. It does not imply that mutual hatred may not exist among the enemies of Christ, but that it is far different in kind and intensity, from that which they entertain towards Christ and his followers. The position of *you* and *me* in the original, places these pronouns in strong contrast. *It hateth*. The present tense is here used of a general or universal truth. *Because I testify of it*. “ Christ in words of reproof places himself over against the world.” Tholuck. *That the works thereof are evil*, shows in what our Lord's testimony against the world consisted. *Works* here denote those acts of men, which may be referred to the standard of God's law, as being right or wrong.

8. *Go ye up* without waiting for me. *I go not up yet*. The word translated *yet*, is not found in several of the oldest and most authoritative copies, and was perhaps added to shield our Lord from the charge of inconstancy of purpose, if not untruthfulness, in going up to the feast, after positively saying that he should not go up. Of two conflicting readings, other things being equal, the more concise form is to be preferred, and the absence of *yet* does not impugn our Lord's truthfulness or constancy of purpose, inasmuch as the present tense of the verb gives the sense : *I am not*

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up

unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

11 Then 'the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

i Ch. 11:56.

going (at present) *up to the feast*. Such is Chrysostom, Lücke, and Olshausen's explanation of the passage. Stier says that "for the brethren it was perfectly true, that He was not going to set forth with them, and therefore in the way which they desired; what He designed to do afterwards was a matter for his own thoughts alone." *Unto this feast*. The presence of *this* has troubled commentators not a little, because it seems to add more definiteness and emphasis to the denial in the reply. As usual therefore in such cases, its genuineness has been disputed. But it furnishes no serious difficulty. The answer of our Lord is brief, and much significance is to be given to every word. The pronoun *this*, contrasts our Lord's conduct on the present occasion, with his previous custom of going up to Jerusalem at the beginning of the feasts. To *this* feast, he declares his purpose not to go up yet, because *his time was not yet full come*, i. e. was not fully completed. He was to stay in Galilee until the very time in which, according to his Father's will, he was to leave for the important duties and trials which awaited him in Judea.

9-10. *He abode*; literally, *remained*. He gave them no indications of his intention to go up to the feast, and hence they departed under the impression that he had determined to remain behind. He did not wish to journey with them, possessed as they were of such unbelief and misapprehension of the nature of his mission, and disposed to annoy him with such untimely remarks, as those recorded in vs. 3, 4. About to enter as he was upon such an eventful period of his ministry, he probably desired the time of his journey for uninterrupted meditation and communion with his Father. *Were gone up*, i. e. had so fully started on their journey,

as to have gone from the place. *Not openly*, i. e. with the great company or caravan, among whom were his brethren. *But as it were in secret*, i. e. as he would go up, if his design was to journey with the greatest privacy. "In as quiet and private a manner as possible; in a manner, secretly." Webster and Wilkinson. Our Lord was probably accompanied by the Twelve, who from the time they were specially chosen to the apostleship, seem never to have left him, except on the mission referred to in Matt. 10:5.

11-53. JESUS TEACHES PUBLICLY AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES. *Jerusalem*. The connection between vs. 10th and 11th, in this portion of John, is found in Luke 9:51-56; 17:11-19. This conversation of our Lord with the Jews at the feast of tabernacles, may be regarded as one continuous discourse, although broken up by interruptions, and modified to meet the cavils and objections of his enemies.

11. *The Jews*, i. e. the priests and rulers, referred to in John in almost every instance of its recurrence, especially in these great conversations which took place with the Jews in the temple, during these closing days of our Lord's ministry. Some commentators, as Tholuck and Olshausen, refer the term here to the populace, who were desirous to see Jesus and listen to his instructions. But the people are referred to in the next verse, where their murmurings and discussions were not so much in regard to the question whether or no he was at that time in Jerusalem, as to his true character as a religious teacher. The idea of hostility to Jesus is implied in the words *the Jews sought him*; whereas in v. 12, the people are represented as discussing his claims to be considered a true prophet. Much light is thrown upon

12 And ^k there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for ^l some said, He

z Ch. 9: 16; & 10: 19.

this subject by v. 1, which shows the deadly malice which had from that time onward taken possession of the mind of his enemies. *And said.* The tense indicates that this inquiry was one of general and frequent occurrence. *Where is he?* They were quite confident that he would not absent himself from several feasts in succession, and therefore the inquiry was not, *has he come up to the feast?* but, *where is he?* Where has he concealed himself? The pronoun *he*, is not here to be pressed to its contemptuous use, but as emphatically designating an absent person who was well known.

12. *There was much murmuring*, &c. This shows the divided state of public opinion respecting him, and how universally he was the predominant theme of conversation. On the word *murmuring*, see N. on Matt. 20: 11. The word *much*, refers to the widely spread discussions and controversies, to which his wonderful claims had given rise. *Among the people*, i. e. the common people in contradistinction from the rulers and priests referred to in v. 11. There is a strong antithesis between the verses. The Jewish priests and rulers were seeking him with malicious intent; but the common people were engaged in earnest discussion, as to his claim to be regarded a true prophet of God. All were however in a state of intense excitement, on account of the extraordinary person who was expected to be present at the feast. There seems to have been, both among his enemies and friends, an expectation that he would make a more open and public manifestation of himself, than he had done on any previous visit to Jerusalem, and hence the desire of the former class to know all about his place of abode and movements, in order to oppose and crush him. *For some said.* The connective *for*, is not in the original. The clauses *some said* and *others said*,

is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit no man spake

z Mat. 21: 46; Lu. 7: 16; ch. 6: 14; ver. 40.

are in explanatory apposition with the words *much murmuring*, denoting the manner in which their conflicting sentiments found expression. *A good man.* If his claims were false and pretentious, he could be no other than a bad man. The declaration that he was a good man, was therefore equivalent to saying, that he was what he claimed to be—the Son of God. But so overawed were they, by the great names which were arrayed against Jesus, that they dared not express this opinion openly and in plain terms. They substituted, therefore, the less offensive declaration of their belief in him as a good man. But no such fear or motives of prudence restrained their opponents from openly and flatly charging him with being a deceiver, that is, of pretending to be what he was not. This was a denial of his Messiahship, and far in advance of a simple denial of what the friends of Jesus had just asserted of him. From this we see how overshadowing was the influence of the Jewish priests and rulers, who were arrayed in such deadly hostility against Jesus. This is brought out more clearly in the next verse. *Nay* (he is not a good man) *but he deceiveth the people.* The parties referred to here as entertaining an opinion of Jesus so diametrically opposite, are thought by some to refer to the Galilean disciples on the one hand, and the unbelieving Jews on the other. But it would be very strange, if there were not many dwellers in Jerusalem and its vicinity, who believed in him as a true prophet, so that among the citizens of the metropolis itself, such a division of sentiment as is here recorded might have taken place. *The people.* This expression shows that the persons speaking espoused the side of the rulers, and talked of the populace as a distinct class from themselves.

13. *Howbeit*, i. e. notwithstanding there were those among the people who

openly of him ^m for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about the midst of the

^m Ch. 9:22; & 12:42; & 19:38.
ⁿ Mat. 13:54; Ma. 6:2; Lu. 4:22; Ac. 2:7.

believed in him. *No man* of the number of believers. They were obliged to express themselves with great caution and reserve. But this was not true of those who regarded him as a deceiver, for they boldly and openly denounced him as an impostor. *For fear of the Jews.* The Sanhedrim is most unquestionably referred to here, and this is proof that the expression in v. 11, in like manner is to be referred to that body. At the time here spoken of, the people stood in awe of the rulers and chief priests; but the reverse of this was true in the closing days of our Lord's ministry, the Sanhedrim not daring to lay hands on Jesus, through fear of the people. See Matt. 21:46; Mark 12:12; Luke 20:19.

14. What is recorded in the preceding verses took place at the commencement of the feast. About the third or fourth day of the festival, our Lord having come to Jerusalem, made his appearance in the temple, and there taught publicly for the first time in his ministry. He had defended himself previously from the charge of having violated the sabbath (see 5:17-47), and in so doing testified of himself as being the Son of God, into whose hands all judgment had been committed; but now, as one who has already given proof that he is a divinely commissioned teacher, he proceeds to the temple and publicly instructs the people who resort to him. Olshausen conjectures that the discourse here referred to, was not pronounced in the open air in the front or fore court, but in the synagogue situated in the court of the women. The tense of the verb *taught*, is the imperfect, denoting habitual or continued instruction. He taught from the day of his public appearance until the last and great day of the feast, when he crowned his discourses by that sublime utterance in the ears of all the

feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 ⁿ And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

people, that if any man thirsted, he should repair to him and receive the water of life. *Jesus went up, &c.* There was great boldness in thus assuming the position of a public instructor, at a time when his enemies were so active and his friends so timid, but there was nothing miraculous, as some suppose, in his sudden and unexpected appearance in the temple. As soon as he reached the city, he probably proceeded to the temple, and hence the first intimation that he was present at the feast, was his unlooked for appearance in that sacred place. His sudden and unannounced presence, and the calm assurance with which he took his place as a public instructor, so impressed his enemies with awe, that he was suffered to teach without any molestation or interruption.

15. There was such cogency and depth of reasoning, such an acquaintance with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, such power of illustration of divine truth, and such directness of its application, that all who heard him were filled with astonishment, knowing as they did, that he had not been taught in the Rabbinical schools. Some have so far lost sight of this great testimony to his divine teachings, as to attribute the astonishment of the Jews to his presumption in arrogating to himself the office of a public teacher. But it hardly need be said, that this exposition furnishes no adequate ground for the deep feeling of amazement which pervaded these proud men, and is refuted by the following context, which refers clearly to his proficiency in the Jewish literature, without having been taught in the schools of sacred learning. *This man*; literally, *this*, the pronoun having evidently here its contemptuous use. See N. on Matt. 26:61. *Letters*, i. e. learning, which with the Jews was confined mostly to the Old Testament.

16 Jesus answered them, and said, ° My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 ^p If any man will do his will,

o Ch. 3: 11; & 8: 28; & 12: 49; & 14: 10, 24.

Alford translates: *Scripture learning*; Olshausen: *Sacred Scriptures*. "With the Jews, learning in general and Scriptural learning, were one and the same. The Lord had given in the temple a most surprising and simply profound understanding of Scripture, and the Evangelist himself (5: 47) uses *letters* for the writings of Moses." Stier. *Having never learned*, i. e. having never been taught in the Jewish schools. The negative employed in the Greek is not the one of positive denial, but imparts the softening sense; *having* (as we presume) *never learned*; or as Winer explains it, 'since we know him to be such a one as has never learned.'

16. Jesus replies to this expression of their wonder, with his accustomed sententious brevity and directness. The implied train of thought is, that whatever might be thought, or however true it might be, that his doctrine or religious system was not derived from their schools, yet it was not a human invention, but came from the Author of all truth—God himself. *My doctrine*; literally, *my teaching*, i. e. the system of religious truth which I teach. *Is not mine*, i. e. belongs not to me as a device or invention of my own, or the result of human wisdom, or something that is acquired by study, as the question (v. 15) would imply. In order to make the divinity of his doctrine the more striking, Jesus places himself on a level with human teachers and founders of schools of philosophy; and openly and explicitly declares that in such a sense, the system of religious truth which he was unfolding, was not his own, but that of the Being who had sent him, whose commission he bore, and who was the source of all truth.

17. Our Lord now proceeds to show how his hearers may arrive at a true estimate of the nature and value of his instructions. *If any man will do his*

he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

p Ch. 8: 43.

will (i. e. desires to love and obey the revealed will or commandments of God), *he shall know of the doctrine* (i. e. concerning my doctrine), *whether it be of God*, i. e. he shall judge correctly as to the source of my doctrine, and fully understand its claims as embodying the system of divine truth. The knowledge referred to is internal and spiritual, a divine illumination of the soul of one who is a doer as well as hearer of the word. Obedience to the divine will is here declared to be essential to a successful inquiry after divine truth. Our Saviour does not deprecate human learning. He gives no ground for the opinion entertained by some, that high attainments in theology and skill in elucidating the Scriptures, will be conferred upon those who specially devote themselves to his service, apart from any effort or mental discipline of their own. Spiritual, as well as earthly knowledge, is to be sought for as for hidden treasure. They who think otherwise indulge in a dream, which, however bright and desirable in their estimation, will never be realized. The sentiment of our Lord's reply was simply this: 'Whatever natural or acquired talents a man may possess, if he is an enemy to God and his government, he will utterly fail of comprehending, in their full and gracious import, the spiritual and sublime truths of revelation. On the other hand, while sanctified learning furnishes great facilities for the investigation of moral truth, yet the humblest and least educated intellect animated by the love of God, will attain to clearer and richer views of redemption by Jesus Christ, than can possibly be reached by the highest order of unregenerate minds.' The form of the hypothetical clause, *if any man will do his will*, is such as to denote the possibility of the act, it being left to the result to decide whether the condition is to be realized.

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

q Ch. 5: 41; & 8: 50.
r Ex. 24: 3; De. 33: 4; Jo. 1: 17; Ac. 7: 38.

18. External proof is here furnished of the truth of our Lord's doctrine, in that he has the glory of God, instead of his own, in view. The general truth, that *whoever spake of himself* (i. e. without expressing the mind of God, or self-moved without being incited thereto by God) *sought his own glory*, was not applicable to him, for his only aim was the glory of his Father. The latter clause, *but he that seeketh his glory*, &c. expresses the converse of the preceding proposition, viz. that it is the highest proof of the truth and integrity of a man, that his sole and undivided purpose is known to be the promotion of God's glory. Our Lord, without expressing it in so many words, virtually challenges his adversaries to bring his life and public teaching to the test of this criterion which he had laid down. *Unrighteousness* as opposed to *truth*, is here to be taken in the sense of *falsehood, imposition*.

19. The reference to Moses in this verse is apparently so abrupt, that many commentators account for it, by supposing some interruption on the part of the Jews, charging our Lord with himself having violated the law in breaking the sabbath (see 5: 16, 18), and thus, according to his own showing, not doing the will of God. But it is quite unnecessary to suppose such an interruption. The train of thought is clear and natural. The enemies of Jesus are charged with being blind to his claims and character, not only through the perverseness of their mind, but also by their violation of the law given by Moses. Had they kept this law, they would have known that his doctrine was of God, because it was based upon the same immutable princi-

ple 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?

s Mt. 12: 14; Ma. 8: 6: ch. 5: 16, 18; & 10: 31, 39; & 11: 53.
t Ch. 8: 48, 52; & 10: 20.

ples of rectitude which constituted the spirit and essence of the law. They had not *done the will of God*, as embodied in the Mosaic code, and hence were unable to judge truly of his doctrine. The principle of judgment was laid down in v. 17; here it is shown that in accordance with that principle, they were and could not be other than blind as to his true character. *Moses*, whom you pretend to honor, and to whom you are so fond of referring as your lawgiver. *Keepeth the law*. They were not charged with violating one precept only, but the law taken in its widest and most extensive sense (see James 2: 10). The expression *none of you*, renders the accusation wide-sweeping and general. *Why go ye about* (literally, *why seek ye*) *to kill me?* Our Lord here specifically charges them with breaking the sixth commandment. Their murderous intention towards him (see v. 1) was a rank violation of this great commandment, and, as Alford remarks, in the killing the Lord of Life, was summed up all the transgression of God's law. So Stier: "By the rejection, hatred, and final crucifixion of Jesus, Israel did indeed break both tables of the law, deny to God his honor, hate their brother in hatred to God, instead of loving him in the love of God (see 5: 42), and utterly refused to be loved themselves." *Why*, i. e. what have I done that you are so eager to take my life? There is both emphasis and pathos in the question.

20. The people (literally, *the multitude*) unacquainted with the murderous designs of the rulers, thought that in making this charge, he was bereft of his senses, or under the influence of a lying spirit. *Hast a devil*, i. e. art

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

possessed or out of thy right mind. *Who goeth about (literally seeketh) to kill thee?* Although our Lord referred in his accusation especially to the murderous designs of the priests and rulers, yet he proposed his question in v. 19 to the people whom he was then addressing. In a spirit of self-exculpation, they ask him to designate the persons, who were thus insanely charged with conspiring to effect his death. Webster and Wilkinson think that the common people who said this, were most of them aware that the priests and elders were seeking to slay him (see v. 25, and compare 5 : 16, 18), and that their hasty disclaimer of all knowledge of such an intention, is accounted for by their servile fear of their rulers. But reference is had in v. 25, to those of the audience who were citizens of Jerusalem (*some of them of Jerusalem*), and therefore more intimately acquainted with the evil designs of the priests and elders, than those who had come up from Galilee to the feast, and composed no small part of the crowd whom Jesus was now addressing.

21. *I have done one work*, &c. In replying thus to their question, there can be no doubt that our Lord refers to the healing of the impotent man on the sabbath (see 5 : 8, 9). This is clear from v. 23, where reference is made distinctly to that great miracle. It was doubtless well known, especially by that portion of his auditors who dwelt in Jerusalem, that the Jewish priests and rulers had become so exasperated against him, in consequence of that miracle and the discourse which followed, that they had ever since been planning his death. A reference to the *one work*, was all therefore that was necessary to show the people, that Jesus did not make an idle or unfounded charge in the words, "why go ye about to kill me?" This passage is valuable, as furnishing evidence that Jesus did not go up to the passover immediately preceding this feast of tabernacles; for had he done so, he

would hardly have made reference to a miracle, wrought at a previous pass-over eighteen months before. *One work*, i. e. a miracle great in itself, and to which public attention had been directed, by the discussion which grew out of the charge made against him of having violated the sabbath in its performance. He had doubtless wrought, on that same occasion, many other miracles, but this was one which particularly challenged the attention of the Jews. Olshausen thinks the miracle recorded in 5 : 1-9, too remote to have been the one here referred to, and that it is far more natural to suppose that a similar case had again occurred, which gave rise to this whole conversation. But if Jesus, as is almost certain, had not visited Jerusalem, from the time when he performed the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, until he came up to this feast of tabernacles, a reference to that miracle which had special prominence at the time, from the violent opposition against Jesus which it excited, is rendered neither improbable nor unnatural, by the length of time which had intervened since its performance. Had Jesus visited Jerusalem subsequently to that miracle, the reference, as has been above remarked, would have pointed less clearly to the cure of the impotent man. *Ye all wondered*. Stier refers this to a wondering excitement, associated with a condemnation of his sabbath-breaking. So also Olshausen and Tholuck include in it the additional idea of censure, or standing aghast as from something dreadful. But perhaps this is pressing the meaning of the word too far in this connection. Certain it is, however, that it was not a wonder and admiration of a kind to draw them in humble belief to Jesus Christ as their true Messiah. The word translated *therefore*, in the next verse, is thought by some to belong more appropriately to this verse. It would then read: *ye all wonder on account of this*; or *ye all therefore wonder*. Olshausen, Stier, Tholuck,

22 "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers; and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath day

u Le. 12:3.

Bloomfield, Doddridge, and other able interpreters, prefer this division of the verses. But Bengel, Alford, Webster and Wilkinson, after Chrysostom and Grotius, take the words with v. 22, as is done also in our common version. The correspondence between the clauses, and the additional emphasis imparted to the *one work*, incline me to the belief that the words are to be constructed with v. 21.

22. The reference here made to the law of circumcision as given by Moses, is intended to show, that if this rite could be performed on the sabbath day, without violating it, much more could this be said of the making a man whole on that day. The argument is *a fortiori* (see N. on Matt. 5:15). The words rendered *therefore* or *on account of this*, if not connected in translation with the preceding clause in v. 21, are to be considered as looking forward to what is said in the following clause, that the law of circumcision was anterior to Moses, and *therefore* he adopted it as a part of his law. The intricacy of this construction is another reason why *therefore* should follow *ye all marvel*, in the sense of *on account of this*. *Circumcision*; literally, *the circumcision*, referring to the rite abstractly considered. *Not because it is*, &c. This responds, as the passage is commonly translated, to *therefore*, or more literally, *on account of this*, in the preceding clause, and denotes the reason why Moses enacted this law, namely, because it had been handed down from the patriarchs as a divinely established institution, which was not to be ignored, much less abrogated by the Mosaic law. It was the superiority of this rite, in its rich privileges and covenant blessings, which gave it the supremacy over the institution of the sabbath, so far at

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?

α Ge. 17:10.

γ Ch. 5:3, 9, 16

least, as that the law of the sabbath furnished no hinderance to its performance, when the eighth day fell upon the sabbath. Now the argument from this is (*a fortiori*), that the restoring a man to health being founded on the law of mercy, might be with even greater propriety performed on the sabbath day. This argument receives additional point from the contrast here presented between the wounding, washing, and remedial applications attending the rite of circumcision, and the simple act of *healing*, which our Lord had performed upon the man who lay at the pool of Bethesda. *On the sabbath day*, if it happened to be the eighth day from the birth of the child. *It is of Moses*, i. e. originated from Moses. *The fathers*, i. e. the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. See Gen. 17:11, 23; 21:4. The institution dated from the time of Abraham. *A man*, i. e. a male child.

23. *The law of Moses*, so called, although handed down from a previous age. Moses reaffirmed this rite by a special enactment. See Levit. 12:3. *That the law*, &c. This denotes the object or purpose of circumcising a man even on the sabbath. *Might not be broken*. The law required the act of circumcision to be performed on the eighth day from the birth of the child. When this day fell upon the sabbath, to defer the rite until the next or ninth day, would be a direct violation of this law. This proves beyond question, that the law of circumcision was not to be set aside, or infringed upon by that of the sabbath. *Are ye angry*, &c. The argument was of the same nature as the one in Matt. 12:11, 12 (on which see Note), but drawn from a different source. *Every whit* (or *altogether*) *whole*. This stands opposed to the rite of circumcision, which was local, par-

24 * Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

z De. 1:16, 17; Pr. 24:23; ch. 8:15; Ja. 2:1.

tial, and the symbol only of ceremonial cleanness. The contrast is evidently to be gathered from the words *every whit*, and not from the word *whole*, which would require the antithesis of wounding, and pain, implied in the act of circumcision. But that this enters not here into the conception of the rite, is evident from the form of the expression *receive circumcision*, which regards it as an act of benevolence and love, rather than one of pain and suffering. The contrast must therefore be between that which is partial and imperfect, and that which is universal and complete. Tholuck has happily hit the idea. "Ye transgress the law to perform a sacred, beneficent work on that one portion of man; will you be angry with me when I perform a work with the same characteristics, on the entire man?"

24. Having thus convicted them of an unjust judgment in respect to his miraculous cure of the man on the sabbath, our Lord proceeds to lay down a rule of general obligation. *Judge not.* The present tense refers to habitual action: 'Be not in the habit (as you now are) of judging,' &c. *According to the appearance*, i. e. from mere outward appearances, or first impressions. *But judge righteous judgment*, i. e. bring every thing to the standard of divine truth, and thus test its true character and reach a just decision. The tense of this second member, refers not to the habit of judging, as does the present tense of the verb in the first member, but to the one judgment which they had formed of him on the present occasion. This special application of the injunction to the case in hand, is rendered still more definite by the use of the article in the original, *judge the righteous judgment*, i. e. that judgment which is just. Stier remarks, that the article very plainly expresses a comprehensive reference to the precept of their neglected law,

25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?

which commanded in vain a righteous judgment.

25, 26. Those who had just expressed their astonishment, that our Lord should make so insane an accusation as he seemed to do in v. 19, were from the country (see N. on v. 20), and therefore comparatively ignorant of the deadly hatred which the Jewish rulers bore to Jesus. But there were some listeners to his discourse, who, being citizens of Jerusalem, were not unacquainted with the evil intentions of the Sanhedrim. These persons, who seem to have been well disposed towards Jesus, although far from believing in him, openly express their astonishment, that one who had thus been denounced by the rulers, and whose death they were conspiring, should be permitted to harangue the people unmolested and uninterrupted. They query whether the rulers have not become convinced of their error in rejecting him, and are half persuaded themselves to admit his claims to the Messiahship. But like the most of their countrymen, they stumbled at his lowly condition and remained in impenitence and unbelief. Such being the general train of thought, there remain but few verbal obscurities to be cleared up. *Is not this he*, &c. The form of the negative in the original is such as presupposes an affirmative answer. Hence it is here an emphatic form of assertion, in the interrogative form, that Jesus was he whom *they* (i. e. the rulers) wished to kill. *But lo!* calls attention to the strangeness of the fact, that the rulers suffered him to preach unmolested. *Boldly*, i. e. openly, without concealment of himself or his doctrines. He was preaching at this time in the very enclosure of the temple, and in hearing of the thousands who came up to the temple worship. *Say nothing to him.* They neither interdict nor interrupt him in his speaking. *Do the rulers indeed know*, &c. The inter-

26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. ^a Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

27 ^b Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

^a Ver. 48.

^b Mt. 13: 55; Ma. 6: 3; Lu. 4: 22.

rogation form here employed presupposes a negative reply. Some find a shade of irony in this question, but the awe which the people entertained for the priests and rulers, forbids this supposition. The serious inquiry, which all were inclined to make in regard to his extraordinary character and claims, would ill dispose any to indulge in light and trivial remarks. *The very Christ*, i. e. the true Messiah. The adverb rendered *very*, is the same as the one translated *indeed* or *truly*, in the preceding member. That has reference to definite and certain knowledge; this, to the fact of his being the veritable Messiah. The interrogative form being dropped, the sentiment may be thus paraphrased: 'It cannot be that the rulers know of a certainty that this person is the true Messiah. Yet if they believe that he is an impostor, why do they suffer him to teach unmolested in this public manner?' They evidently assume that the rulers are half inclined to admit his claims, yet with passive submission to their will, they do not presume to judge for themselves, but are content to follow their superior judgment. But while they are careful not to seem to encroach upon the domain of their rulers in pronouncing favorably upon the claims of Jesus, they are not slow to bring forward in the way of questions as to his birth and parentage, what they deem insuperable objections to his Messiahship. Such appears to be the connection of thought between the question, which is here proposed in regard to the opinion of the rulers respecting Jesus, and the bold declaration in v. 27, that they

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, ^c Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and ^d I am not come of myself, but he that sent me ^e is true, ^f whom ye know not.

^c See ch. 8: 14.

^d Ch. 5: 43; & 8: 42.

^e Ch. 5: 22; & 8: 26; Ro. 3: 4.

^f Ch. 1: 18; & 8: 55.

know all about the man who puts forth these claims for the Messiahship, and therefore cannot admit his pretensions.

27. *We know this man whence he is*; or more in accordance with our own idiom, *we know whence this man is*, i. e. we know his parentage, place of residence, and early life. The *whence*, in this and the following clause, refers to place as well as parentage. They supposed that Jesus was a Galilean by birth (see vs. 41, 42), and either did not call to mind, or were wholly ignorant of the fact, that his birth-place was Bethlehem, the very city pointed out in prophecy as the birth-place of the Messiah. *Cometh*, i. e. makes his public appearance to the nation. *No man*, &c. In regard to the Jewish notion of the sudden and mysterious appearance of the Messiah, see N. on Matt. 4: 5, 6; 12: 38. Webster and Wilkinson say that this current notion of his appearing suddenly, and without being previously known, was due to rabbinical interpretations of such passages as Gen. 49: 10; Isa. 53: 8; Jer. 23: 5; Ezek. 37: 24, 25; Dan. 7: 13; Micah 5: 2; Mal. 3: 1; and perhaps Zech. 9: 9.

28. These dwellers in Jerusalem had carried on the conversation among themselves, and probably in low tones, yet our Lord by repeating the very words they had uttered, showed that he knew all they had said—a circumstance which ought to have convinced them that he was an extraordinary personage, if not the Messiah himself. *Then* or *therefore* connects what our Lord here says, with the preceding colloquy of the Jewish citizens. *Cried*,

i. e. exclaimed aloud. He thus gave prominence and emphasis to the great utterance which he was about to make. Compare Isa. 58:1. Stier thinks that the conversation of the Jews had become so tumultuous, that Jesus was constrained, contrary to his wont, to gain a hearing by crying aloud in the midst of the multitude. But this does not comport with the calmness and dignity which characterized all our Lord's addresses; and besides this, we have no evidence that the assembly became so noisy and tumultuous, that our Lord could not be heard without shouting aloud. The words *as he was teaching*, also show that it was his loud and earnest delivery which is here referred to, and not a shout to gain attention. *Ye both know*, &c. Some commentators, as Olshausen and Stier, take this in an ironical sense; but, as Bengel remarks, we never find our Lord using irony. The passage in Matt. 23:31, which Stier adduces in justification of the use of the ironical by our Lord, is as far in its solemn denunciation from irony as any words can be. Other expositors read it as an interrogative; but the connectives *both—and*, forbid this, for the latter portion of the verse, in that case, must also be regarded as an interrogative, which would give the very opposite of the true sense. Our Lord's reply is therefore to be taken as a concession, that in one sense they knew his origin, but in another and higher sense, they were profoundly ignorant as to who he was, and who had sent him. *Ye both know me*, i. e. are acquainted with my personal history. *Whence I am*, i. e. my parentage and place of residence. The two expressions are put emphatically for a full knowledge of our Lord's person, parentage, and previous residence. By thus conceding that his earthly relations were well known to them, and averring in the very next clause, that he had been sent by one whom they knew not—which was a virtual claim to the Messiahship—he shows that the knowledge which they had of his parentage and place of birth, did not conflict with the truth of his claims, and furnished

no ground whatever for the objection urged against him in v. 27. This declaration of Jesus was aimed, therefore, against the Jewish notion, that the Messiah was to appear mysteriously and suddenly, his immediate parentage unknown, and his early years having been passed in some retired place (see N. on Matt. 4:6). *And I am not come of myself*. The connective *and*, has been usually taken by interpreters in an adversative sense, as a softened form for *but*. Alford however takes it in the sense of *and moreover*, and *besides this*. But it is better to give the conjunction its usual copulative sense, *ye know—and I know*, the two kinds of knowledge being more strongly contrasted by the close connection in which they are placed. The *and* is not therefore antithetical, as Tholuck avers, but the contrast lies in the very propositions themselves thus connected. *Of myself*, i. e. apart from the will of my Father, and without full credentials of my divine commission. *Is true*, and therefore the credentials which I have received from him are to be relied upon. *True* does not here signify *really existent*, as Alford thinks, but refers to God's attribute of truth, or to Him as the God of truth. The argument of Jesus is, that if God the Sender is true, the credentials of the one sent must be true, and therefore the testimony which he bears of his divine character and mission is to be received, however his low birth and condition may seem to conflict with his claims. Thus he bases the proof of his Messiahship upon the veracity of God, and the denial of the one is a virtual denial of the other. The argument is exceedingly simple and convincing. *Whom ye know not*, and therefore in the higher and truer sense, ye know not whence I am. Thus our Lord vindicates his claim to the Messiahship, on the very Messianic sign of a mysterious and unknown origin, which his enemies had denied him in v. 27.

29. Contrasted with their ignorance of the Being whose commission our Lord bore, is his own perfect and intimate knowledge of Him. The word *but*, with which this verse commences,

29 But ⁹ I know him; for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then ^h they sought to take him: but ⁱ no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And ^k many of the people

^g Mat. 11: 27; ch. 10: 15.

is omitted in very many of the MSS. and early versions, and is cancelled by some of the best critics. The antithesis is rendered even more emphatic by its omission. *I know him*, in the highest and most intimate sense. *For I am from him*, is confirmatory and illustrative of the preceding averment. *Am from him* is a condensed form of expression for, *am come from him*. No reference is here made to his eternal generation, as Bengel asserts, but simply to the fact, that he came, or was sent from God. This is brought out more distinctly in the next clause *for he hath sent me*, in which our Lord declares that he was commissioned and sent by God to perform the work assigned him. Two great and distinct truths are here revealed, one that he came from God; the other, that he was sent of Him. The former of these, according to Stier, responds to *ye know me*; and the latter, to *whence I am*, in v. 28.

30. The enemies of Jesus appear to have been greatly exasperated by what had been said (vs. 25-27) of their timid and undecided counsels, or what is more probable, by the emphatic declaration which Jesus had just made of his having come from God as his accredited messenger. They sought therefore to apprehend him in order to put him to death, but failed to accomplish their design, his hour not having yet come. *They*, i. e. the rulers. See v. 25. *To take*, or arrest in a judicial sense. The word is one of strong import, its literal signification being to *press, squeeze, to press tight* so as to make fast; and hence metaphorically, to *press hard, follow close, to catch*, as animals taken in hunting or fishing. *But no man, &c.* The only reason given is, that *his hour*

believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

^k Ma. 11: 18; Lu. 19: 47; & 20: 19; vr. 19; ch. 8: 37.

ⁱ Ver. 44; ch. 8: 20.

^k Mat. 12: 28; ch. 8: 2; & 8: 30.

had not yet come, i. e. the time appointed of God for his apprehension, trial, and death. The proximate cause may have been the fear of the people, numbers of whom probably surrounded him as his resolute and determined friends. There may have been also at this time something in his appearance and manner which inspired them with awe, like that which took place afterward in the garden (18: 6).

31. *The people*, i. e. the multitude, the common people. These were not the dwellers in Jerusalem (v. 25), for they ended their colloquy with an argument against the Messiahship of Jesus, which they regarded as unanswerable. The people now referred to are those who came up from the country, probably from Galilee, where our Lord had made the most frequent display of his miraculous powers. *Believed on him*. There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of their faith, because in v. 32, they are said to have expressed their sentiments in murmurs. So closely watched were they by the enemies of Jesus, embracing almost all the persons of station and influence, that they dared not give open expression to their real sentiments, but carried on their conversation in low tones and whispers. The only question which can be raised is, whether they believed on Jesus as the predicted Messiah, or simply as a prophet. Tholuck adopts the latter view; but that the former is the true exposition, is evident from the question which they here propose to one another, the sentiment of which is, that no higher or more abundantly exerted miraculous power could be expected of the Messiah than had been manifested by Jesus, and therefore there could be no doubt that he was that personage.

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

There were some however (see v. 40), whose faith was too weak to discern in him other than the great prophet, who was to be the precursor or attendant of the Messiah (see 1 : 21). *When Christ* (literally, *the Christ*) *cometh*. The mood in the original imparts indefiniteness to this clause, and implies, as Alford justly remarks, their belief that the Christ had already come. *Will he do* (is it possible for him to do) *more miracles?* i. e. give more convincing proof, as a miracle-worker, of his Messiahship. Their reference to miracles as proof of his being the Messiah, furnishes no argument against the genuineness of their faith, for his miracles constituted the more open and palpable proofs, to which our Lord himself frequently appealed in confirmation of his divine commission. *More miracles* refers to the stupendous character of his works, as well as to their number. It is worthy of note, that in all the reasonings and discussions, which took place among the different sorts of persons who listened to this discourse of Jesus, no one seems to have questioned his possession of miraculous powers, or the reality of the miracles said to be performed by him.

32. Emissaries and spies of the Pharisees were doubtless scattered through the audience, while Jesus was preaching and teaching. Through these informers and others, who might wish to ingratiate themselves with the rulers by conveying intelligence of this nature to them, they learn that Jesus is swaying the people to the belief and acknowledgment of his claims. Alarmed at this report, they determine on bold and decisive measures, and dispatch officers forthwith to apprehend him. *Pharisees and chief priests*, i. e. the Sanhedrim. The Sadducees are not here mentioned, although there were some of that sect

33 Then said Jesus unto them, ' Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

℣ Ch. 13:33; & 16:16.

in the Sanhedrim. The omission seems to indicate what was probably true, that this new and violent persecution proceeded mainly from the Pharisees. *Officers*, the beadles or attendants of the Sanhedrim.

33. These words were doubtless addressed by Jesus to the people, and were suggested by the bold and open measures now beginning to be taken by his enemies, which he well knew would not be intermitted, until they had accomplished their purpose to put him to death. Hence this verse is introduced by the illative *then* or *therefore*. The officers sent to take him were now present, but were restrained from laying hands on him, by the awe with which they were inspired by his presence and words. *Yet a little while*, &c. The general sentiment is that although he had but a short time to remain on earth before he returned to God, yet until that hour came, he was safe from the machinations of his enemies. The expression *a little while* or *a little time longer*, was not a loose, careless utterance, for it was only six months to the time of his crucifixion. *I am with you* on earth. This of course refers to his bodily presence. His spiritual presence was promised to his disciples even to the end of the world. This passage does not therefore deny his omnipresence. *And then I go unto him that sent me*. His reference here to a premature and violent death at the hands of his enemies, could hardly be mistaken. The word *then*, is needlessly italicized by our translators, since it is implied in the conjunction, which makes the latter clause cotemporary with the limitation of time referred to in the preceding member. *Him that sent me*. It is noticeable how constant a reference is made in this discourse, as well as in others which our Lord held with the Jews, to the great fundamen-

34 Ye ^m shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go,

m Ho. 5: 6; ch. 8: 21; & 13: 33.

tal fact, that he was sent of God, and that he came not into the world to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. See N. on 10: 25.

34. *Ye shall seek me.* In what sense are these words to be taken? Some say that reference is had to the inability of his enemies to lay hands upon him, after he had ascended to his Father. But this exposition is absurd, for after having compassed his death, they would not seek to apprehend him. Others say that they would be forced by their miseries at the siege of Jerusalem to seek his aid, but would seek it in vain. But this does not comport with the facts of the case. We have no evidence that the dreadful sufferings endured at the siege and downfall of Jerusalem, extorted from any the confession that they were paying the penalty of having rejected and crucified their Messiah. The same may also be said of their obstinate persistence in unbelief, in all the persecutions which they have suffered at the hands of their enemies since their dispersion among the nations. During the old centuries, down to the present time, they have remained in the most profound spiritual stupidity and unbelief. Another opinion is, that they would seek him in their false Christs, but without success. This, however, is far-fetched and inapposite. Olshausen refers it to the spiritual seeking and longing for Christ, which taking possession of them after they had sinned away the day of grace, would be of no avail to remove the barrier between them and Christ. But is it true, that those who have sinned away the day of grace ever experience afterward any spiritual longing for Christ? We think not. What, then, is the true sense to be attached to this expression? To obtain this, we must consult the context. He was to remain with the Jews a little time

that we shall not find him? will he go unto "the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?"

n Is. 11: 12; Ja. 1: 1; 1 Pe. 1: 1.

longer, and then take his departure from earth. So final and complete was to be his separation from them, that however much they might be disposed to seek him, they should not find him. It is not assumed as a fact that they would seek him, but the supposition is made, in order to bring out more forcibly the truth that he was hereafter to be forever removed from them. The sentiment is, that however long and earnestly they might seek him, so completely separated was he to be hereafter from persons of such impenitence and unbelief, they would never be able to find him. The reason is given in the following words: *and (i. e. for) where I am (when I go to him who sent me) ye cannot come.* If we compare this with what our Lord said to Peter (13: 36), we cannot doubt that the spiritual unfitness of the Jews to enter heaven is referred to. The first clause of this verse indicates, therefore, his complete and final separation from them; and the second, the impossibility of their being with him in their present state of impenitence and unbelief. See 8: 21-24.

35. The Jews who were present so misunderstood his words, as to suppose that he intended to elude apprehension by a sojourn in some distant land. Or it may be that they uttered this in mockery, as though they had said: 'How does he imagine that he can withdraw himself where we cannot find him? Does he think that in those regions where the Jews are dispersed, he can secrete himself from our observation or place himself beyond our reach? What then does he mean by so absurd a statement as he has just made?' Stier considers the words as spoken in bitter mockery, and perhaps this is the true exposition. *That* (in accordance with his declaration, v. 34) *we shall not*

36 What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

find him, i. e. shall not be able to find him. *The dispersed among the Gentiles*; literally, *the dispersion among the Gentiles*, the abstract being put for the concrete. *The Gentiles* is put tropically for the places where those Jews abode, who were scattered among the Gentiles, and living in Gentile countries. Stier contends that *place*, and not *people*, is here intended, as the residence of their people was the great point in all their notions of geography. Alford and Olshausen refer the expression to the Gentile world, or the people of the countries where the Jews lay scattered. The reason which Olshausen gives, that it is only thus that force can be given to the antithesis between the supposed abandonment of Jerusalem and the withdrawal to other lands, is not of much weight. It would surely be a great stoop in their estimation, for one who had claimed the Messiahship to be obliged to leave Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, and the seat of religious worship, and seek converts to his claim among the Jews who were scattered in Gentile countries. Webster and Wilkinson say that the term *Gentiles* (literally *Greeks*), is applied here to all foreign Jews, and refer in proof of this to 12: 20. But reference is had in that passage to Greek proselytes, and I concur with Stier that the Hellenistic Jews are never called Hellenes or Greeks. *And teach the Gentiles (or Greeks)*, i. e. obtain from the dispersed Jews an assent to his claims, and operate through them upon the Gentile world. Neander would almost seem to be right in his conjecture, that the Jews had begun to surmise the tendency of Christ's teaching to embrace mankind universally. It ought to be noted here that the term *Greeks*, from the fact that the Greek language was spoken very extensively in Asia Minor and in other countries, was often employed to denote the

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

o Le. 23: 26.

p Is. 55: 1; ch. 6: 35; Re. 22: 17.

heathen world, or all who were not Jews—that is, *the Gentiles*.

36. This verse implies an ellipsis: [He cannot contemplate so absurd a thing as that], *what manner of saying then is this*; literally, *what is this saying*, what is its real purport? In the dulness of their apprehension in this, as in other instances where our Lord's words were misunderstood or perverted by them, we see that they ever lost sight of the spiritual, and affixed the lowest and grossest sense to his sayings.

37. *In the last day*, &c. This verse has furnished some difficulty, as to whether there were any peculiar solemnities, which would entitle the eighth day to the epithet *great*, here given it. But although in Deut. 16: 13, nothing is said of the eighth day, yet in Levit. 23: 36–39; Numb. 29: 35; Neh. 8: 18, we find that this day was honored, as being the day of a solemn assembly on which no servile work was to be performed. See also Joseph. Antiq. III. 10, § 4. It was not one of the feast days, but closed up the festival as a day of the holy convocation of the people, and one of more than ordinary solemnity. It was denominated a *day of the feast*, because it belonged to the festival, although the people on the seventh day ceased to occupy booths, and offer the prescribed sacrifices. In regard to the question connected with this passage, as to whether water was brought in joyous procession from the pool of Siloam on this day, or whether that ceremony ceased on the preceding day, Alford contends that the ceremony was performed on each of the seven days, and the Hallel was sung, but that on the eighth day, the pouring of water did not take place, although the Hallel was sung. It was this absence of the ceremonial water, which he contends gives greater point and appositeness to

our Saviour's words. Stier, on the other hand, demurs at this as being very beautiful, but too far-fetched and uncertain a foundation for our Lord's words on this occasion. The tradition of the Rabbies is not uniform or concurrent on this mooted question, as is shown by Tholuck in his exposition of this passage. I am of the opinion that the usual view is the correct one; that on this day, as well as on those preceding, and with louder and more general expressions of joy, the priest brought forth, in a golden vessel, water from the spring of Siloah, and poured it upon the altar, and that it was at the time when the water was thus being borne in jubilant procession towards the altar, that Jesus proffered the water of life to all who would come unto him and drink. This receives additional confirmation from the fact, that the Rabbies expressly referred this water to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. As to what is said, that the absence of the water on the eighth day furnished an occasion for our Lord to utter these words, it has little force; for if it had been the custom for centuries to suspend this ceremony after the seventh day, its omission on the eighth would make no chasm in the exercises, or excite the least notice on the part of the people.

If any man thirst, i. e. whosoever thirsts, the words implying no doubt in regard to the fact, that some of those present might be included in this number. Whoever such persons were, they are here invited to approach and slake their thirst from the fountain of living water. It does not appear from the record, that any one of the people took this in the sense of a literal thirsting for water, but of an eager desire for happiness and eternal life. *Let him come unto me and drink*. What our Lord had spoken in the ear of the woman at the well of Samaria, he now publicly proclaims to all the people on the great day of the feast. It is noticeable, that the canon of scripture closes with a renewal of this offer of the water of life, expressed in the most ample terms. See Rev. 22: 17. But

this rich and wondrous gift could only be secured by coming to Christ, that is, by believing on him as the Messiah and Saviour of men. Faith in him was the only condition on which eternal life could be secured. It was to be the personal act of each individual. The water borne from Siloah was poured out upon the altar, being typical of the water drawn from the rock in the wilderness, or, as some think, of the rain which was thus symbolically asked for the ensuing year. But the water which Jesus offered to bestow, was to be sought for and received by them individually, in order that its life-giving properties might be enjoyed. Yet there was a *pouring out* even of our Lord's precious blood, that this fountain of salvation might be opened for men. Some expositors in view of Matt. 5: 6, refer this proffer of our Lord to those who had already believed in him, and were longing for more enlarged measures of grace. But this deprives the passage of all pertinency and force. Did our Lord raise his voice so as to be heard by every person in the spacious enclosure, to proffer the water of life to the few only, in whose hearts the germ of true faith had already been planted? By no means. A more enlarged signification is to be sought in this great utterance. The expression *thirst*, is to be here referred to that strong and quenchless desire which springs up in the soul, ill at ease through the upbraidings of a wounded conscience and a sense of the hollow and deceitful nature of earthly good, for something better, more substantial, and congenial with the cravings of the immortal spirit within. There were doubtless many such in that vast assembly. Under the imagery of one thirsting for water, which everywhere, and especially in countries like Palestine where the want of water is so frequently experienced, would be well understood, our Lord proffers to all such persons that which will forever satisfy the longings of the soul and give it permanent rest. This is unquestionably the true sense of the passage.

38. *He that believeth on me*. The

38 "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, " out

q De. 18:15.

punctuation adopted by some critics, disjoins the words *and drink*, from the preceding verse, and connects them with this. The construction and sense would then be, *and let him that believeth on me drink*. But this makes a harsh construction, and weakens the force of the passage. Nor does the original require such a punctuation. The clause *he that believeth on me*, has no expressed predicate, but the predicate is implied in the words, *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*. Such a construction is quite frequently found in the best classic Greek, and is noticed in the Greek grammars. The words *he that believeth on me*, are a varied expression for what is represented in the preceding verse by *coming and drinking*. This rendered clear to the people what was meant by the invitation which Jesus had just given. *Out of his belly*, i. e. from within him. The belly or stomach is here used figuratively, because it is the receptacle of water taken into a man. Or perhaps the imagery may be founded on a common use of the word *belly*, to denote some hollow and capacious place, in which water may be contained. Thus we speak of the belly of the sea, of a mountain, or of any great and capacious vessel. Tholuck finds a reference to the belly or cavity of the golden vessel, from which the water brought from Siloah into the temple was poured out. But the cavity of a small vessel or urn, is very seldom designated by a word so expressive of that which swells out in large capacity. The general sentiment is clear, that from him, who comes to Christ, and partakes of the living water which he freely gives to all who thus approach him, shall flow refreshing and life-giving streams, so that others also shall be benefited by the gift within him. Bengel refers the pronoun *him*, to the Messiah himself, but this would hardly be consonant with the wants of the passage, which most clearly refers to

of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

r Pr. 18:4; Is. 12:3; & 44:3; ch. 4:14.

the fulness of blessing, even to overflowing, which shall be his who comes to Christ and receives from him the water of life. The great abundance of these living waters, issuing from the believer for the comfort and refreshment of others, is here represented by the term *rivers*. There is probably an implied comparison between the fountain of Siloah, from which was borne the ceremonial water into the temple, and the inexhaustible stream of living water here promised to every believer.

This abundant supply of the water of life, and its full and free intercommunication among those who have drunk of it, is declared by our Lord to be what is represented in the Old Testament Scriptures. *As the Scripture hath said*. Who does not recur at once to such passages as Isa. 44:3; 58:11, where floods of water are promised to him that is thirsty, making him "like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not?" See also Joel 3:18, where abundance of milk and refreshing streams are promised, as blessings to be bestowed plentifully upon the church. Still more in point are the waters of Ezekiel's mysterious city, at first a mere rivulet proceeding from the temple, (so in Joel "from the house of Jehovah,") but gradually increasing in depth and breadth, until it became a great river for a man to swim in. As our Lord is the spiritual temple from which flows this spiritual river, so his people, who are also living temples of his grace, have the like possession of spiritual gifts to be imparted to those around them. He is the fountain from which they are supplied with living water. They are the depositaries of his gift, but not in a sense restrictive and selfish, but to be freely imparted to others. Freely they have received, freely they are to give. Matt. 10:8.

In the light of this great utterance of our Lord, an interpretation may be given to Zech. 14:1-11, which will re-

39 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy

s Is. 44:3; Joel 2:28; ch. 16:7; Ac. 2:17, 33, 38.

deem it from the low and sensuous views of those, who would explain it as referring to great physical changes, and a personal descent of our Saviour to reign in imperial state at Jerusalem. The great convulsion by which mountain barriers were to be rent asunder, and living streams caused to flow forth to the stagnant waters of the Dead Sea, and also to the "hinder sea" (i. e. the Mediterranean), typify a great moral awakening of the church of Christ, whence shall issue streams of salvation to bless and enlighten a dying world. The standing of our Saviour upon the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4), denotes his spiritual presence and power in effecting this moral renovation. The remaining imagery of the chapter beautifully harmonizes with this idea. The annual visit of all the families of the earth (vs. 16-19) to this spiritual Jerusalem, is a figurative representation of the bonds of love and communion, which will bind the churches of Christ to one another and to their Great Head. Nothing tended so much to preserve the nationality of the Jews, as their stated visits to Jerusalem to keep the prescribed feasts, and this custom, with its happy results, is transferred spiritually to the church in the days of her prosperity, to denote the union of God's people, and their public acknowledgment of Jesus as their Redeemer and King.

Let us compare briefly with these passages in Ezekiel and Zechariah, the New Jerusalem of the Apocalyptic vision. This city has also its river of life, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. But with a beautiful diversity of imagery and yet remarkable unity of sentiment, the healing property which belonged to the *waters* of Ezekiel, and Zechariah, is here placed in the *leaves* of the trees which grow upon the banks of the river. These leaves were "for the healing of the

Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet 'glorified.

† Ch. 12:16; & 16:7.

nations." Can any one doubt that the living waters proceeding from the sanctuary in Ezekiel's mystic city, and from Jerusalem in the time of the great moral renovation predicted by Zechariah (see also Joel 3:18), and the healing leaves of John's tree of life, refer alike to the influences which the church in the days of her future glory, shall exert upon the world? Is it not quite clear that these are *the Scriptures*, which affirm that rivers shall flow forth from the church of Christ, and indeed from *the belly* of each believer? The prophetic promise of a fountain which shall flow forth in the Messianic times from the church, the spiritual Jerusalem, is oftentimes repeated in the Old Testament. Here in its application, our Lord avers that each believer who has himself drunk from the Fountain of life, shall be the channel of spiritual blessings to others, so that it may be truly said, that *from his belly shall flow rivers of living water*.

39. John now explains to his readers what was meant by this living water, which the believer was to receive from Christ. *This spake he of* (i. e. concerning) *the Spirit*. It was the Spirit's influence, which was here promised to all such as came to Jesus. It was not simply the gift of the Spirit drawing the soul to Christ, but it was the permanent indwelling of the Spirit, transforming the whole spiritual man into the image of God, and filling the soul to overflowing with all the graces and fruits of holiness. This gift of the Spirit was not yet, however, fully possessed by the disciples of Jesus, *for the Holy Ghost was not yet given*. The word *given*, is needlessly supplied in our common version, the verb *was* having the signification *was present*, a sense not unusual. *Was not yet* is far from implying that the Holy Ghost had not yet any personal existence. His influence had pervaded and directed the

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is "the Prophet.

u De. 18:15, 18; ch. 1:21; & 6:14.

minds of the Old Testament writers (see 2 Pet. 1:21), and His agency in the miraculous birth of our Lord (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35) is clearly revealed. See also 1:32, 33; 3:5, 8, 24. Before the atonement was actually made, by virtue of its anticipated provisions of mercy, the Holy Spirit even from the time of the apostasy had been given to men, and had been abroad in the earth and especially among God's covenant people, regenerating and sanctifying the souls of men, and preparing them for God's presence in heaven. The outpouring of the Spirit, however, in the New Testament dispensation, was so abundant and free, compared with the measure of His influence enjoyed in the preceding dispensations, that it was as though He had not been given to man. See N. on 16:17. Tholuck rightly remarks, that the expression designates something more than the comparative *amount* of activity and power. It denotes a distinction also in the *character* of the outpouring. "The Holy Spirit in the specific Christian sense is that spirit which was wrought, in virtue of the mystic union, with the glorified Christ, the new spirit of adoption which rests on the consciousness of the finished propitiation, the spirit in the power of which the redeemed man knows himself more and more as the organ of that Christ who works in him and through him. This Spirit could descend upon the disciples, only after the propitiation had been actually accomplished, and Christ spiritually glorified." *Because Jesus, &c.* Our Lord promised to send the Spirit, as the Comforter and Guide of his people. This he could not do until he had ascended up to heaven in his glorified body. See 16:7, where our Lord expressly says that his departure from earth must take place before the Comforter, the

41 Others said, "This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come 'out of Galilee?"

ω Ch. 4:42; & 6:69.

γ Ver. 52; ch. 1:46.

Spirit of truth (v. 13), can come to his disciples.

40. The words which our Lord had just spoken in the ear of the people, were so gracious and tender, and his citation of the Scripture so apposite and convincing, that a great change was wrought in the mind of many of his hearers, as to his character. Some were disposed to regard him as *the Prophet* which was to appear. See N. on 1:21; also compare Deut. 18:15. Others went still further, and avowed their belief that he was the Messiah himself. But this was met at once by the oft repeated objection that Jesus had sprung from Galilean parents, the question *shall Christ come out of Galilee?* being so shaped in the original, as to show that a negative answer was expected. The objection expressed in this interrogative form, they fortify by an appeal to Scripture. Thus those even who were friendly to him, were much divided in respect to the position which they should assign him in his official character. Stier remarks upon the ignorance of the people in regard to the scriptural fact, that *the Prophet* and *the Messiah* designate one and the same personage. *This saying*, i. e. the one recorded in vs. 37, 38. It was an utterance of such conscious power and authority in him who made it, and of such compassion, tenderness, and fullness in its terms, that it seems to have stirred the emotions of the people to their profoundest depths.

41. *Others* of the people. See v. 31. *But some said.* This is not in the original the strong adversative conjunction, but the one which is slightly so, and serves therefore to point to these persons as not opposing the claims of Jesus as a prophet or divinely commissioned religious teacher, but as the Messiah. The persons represented by *some* in this clause, I would refer

42 ^a Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, ^a where David was ?

^a Ps. 132:11; Je. 23:5; Mi. 5:2; Mat. 2:5; Lu. 2:4.
a 1 Sa. 16:1, 4.

therefore to those who in the preceding verse, expressed their convictions that Jesus was *the prophet*, but could go no further, through the weakness of their faith, and ignorance that Jesus was born at Bethlehem in accordance with the Messianic predictions in the Old Testament. Some have included these opposers to the Messiahship of Jesus, in the class of persons referred to in v. 27. But the connection in which that verse stands, shows that these persons were our Lord's enemies; whereas all the persons who took part in the discussion as to what rank should be assigned to Jesus, were to be numbered at the time among his professed friends. This however does not forbid our supposing, that the dispute resulted in the going over to the side of his enemies of many of those who could see in him no marks of Messiahship, although willing to concede that he was an eminent prophet. This will serve to explain the words *some of them* in v. 44, who desired to apprehend him. That it may refer at least in part to some who had a short time previous stoutly maintained that Jesus was *the prophet*, no one will deny, who remembers how fickle is that friendship which is not based upon principles of truth and rectitude. The interrogative, *shall Christ come out of Galilee?* is in the original introduced by a particle which implies an ellipsis: (this cannot be) *for does Christ come*, &c. In the following question, *hath not the Scripture said?* the original is so constructed as to require an affirmative answer, and thus this question strengthens the denial implied in the previous question.

42. *Hath not the Scripture said*, &c. See Ps. 89:3, 4; 132:11; Micah 5:2. *Cometh of the seed of David*, i. e.

43 So ^b there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And ^c some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

^b Ver. 12; ch. 9:16; & 10:19.
^c Ver. 30.

shall be a lineal descendant of David. *Out of the town of Bethlehem*. It seems that the people at this time were ignorant of the fact, that Jesus had all those marks of Messiahship, having been born in Bethlehem and of the royal line of David. We see from the objection here advanced against the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, how important were the genealogical tables given by Matthew and Luke. It was in the very outset necessary to enlighten the people on this point, and stop the mouths of those who sought arguments against the claims of Jesus, from his reputed birth-place and low and obscure parentage. John presupposes the knowledge of this on the part of his readers, and therefore passes it by in silence. *Where David was*, i. e. where he was brought up.

43. *So* (or more literally *therefore*) in consequence of their various and conflicting sentiments. *Division*; literally *a rent*, as in a garment (see Matt. 9:16); *a cleft*, as when rocks are rent asunder. Here it signifies a *schism*, reference being had to the violence of the dispute, which ended in irreconcilable division.

44. *Some of them*, i. e. of the multitude who denied his Messiahship. These persons had become so exasperated at what they deemed his false claims to the Messiahship, that they desired to seize him and drag him before the rulers. Doddridge and some other expositors, refer this premeditated violence to the officers sent to apprehend him, some of whom were ready and desirous to execute their commission. But their report made to the rulers (v. 46), does not indicate any such division of sentiment in regard to Jesus. They seem to have reported with singular unanimi-

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."

ty, that "never man spake like this man." *But no man, &c.* This is to be attributed to the awe which his presence inspired, his time of deliverance into the hands of his enemies not having yet come (see Ns. on v. 30, also 18, 6); or to the fear of the opposite party who espoused the claims of Jesus.

45. As it is not very probable that these officers had been listening to the discourses of Jesus for several days, Alford supposes these verses to go back a little from what has immediately preceded. *Then came, &c.* They were obliged to make their official return to the rulers, under whose orders they were acting. *They said* refers to the chief priests and Pharisees. Some refer the pronoun to the chief priests alone, as the Pharisees are especially mentioned in v. 47. But in both instances the whole Sanhedrim is referred to, the Pharisees constituting the principal portion of that body.

46. *Never man spake, &c.* A most remarkable testimony to the power and uncton of our Lord's discourses. These officers make no apology for not having executed their commission. They fear not the censure of the Sanhedrim for not having obeyed its orders. They are not awed into silence by the august presence of the priests and rulers, but exclaim, as though almost beside themselves in wonder and admiration of the person whom they had been commissioned to apprehend, *never man spake like this man.* Olshausen remarks: "doubtless these men were incapable of apprehending the thoughts of Jesus, but the impression of his personal character overcame them." But is it incredible that they should have been affected by the truth distilled from his divine lips; and that some of them, at least, enrolled themselves thenceforth as his disciples? That great saying

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

48 'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

d Mt. 7:29.

e Ch. 12:42; Ac. 6:7; 1 Co. 1:20, 26; & 2:8.

(v. 40), in which the living water of life was proffered to all who would come to Jesus and drink, had been pronounced in the hearing of these officers, and may not this have been the very declaration to which they refer, as in its matter and manner unlike any thing ever spoken by man?

47, 48. *Are ye also* (as well as the multitude) *deceived?* The form of interrogation implies the denial of this, as though they had added: 'it cannot be that you, our trusty and intelligent officers; will suffer yourselves to be deceived by this impostor.' In like manner a negative reply is implied in the following question: *have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?* In this interrogation, the Pharisees seem to be referred to, as a class distinct from the rulers. But the rulers were those whose official rank gave them distinction, while the Pharisees were those of more private station. It is as though they had said: 'have any of the Sanhedrim, or of the Pharisees who have no official rank, but whose opinions are entitled to great weight, believed on him?' These questions are insidiously proposed to these officers, in order to dispossess their mind of the favorable impressions made upon them by the words of Jesus. As to what is here interrogatively asserted that none of the rulers or Pharisees had believed on Jesus, they were doubtless unacquainted with the discipleship of Nicodemus, as they certainly were of that of Joseph of Arimathea (see 19:38). Had they been fully aware, however, of the sentiments which these men and others of their class (see 12:42) entertained for Jesus, we could not look for scrupulous exactness of language, in persons laboring under such high excitement as they were at this time. They would naturally speak of the uni-

49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51 ^g Doth our law judge *any*

^f Ch. 8:2.
^g De. 1:17; & 17:8, &c.; & 19:15.

versal rejection of Jesus by the chief men of the nation in exaggerated terms, in order to produce a greater effect upon the officers, who had brought back this favorable report of Jesus.

49. *But this people, &c.* This contemptuous reference to the people, in contrast with what has just been said of the rulers and Pharisees, was intended to still further influence the officers against the claims of Jesus. *Knoweth not the law*, i. e. understand not the Mosaic code, and have no knowledge of the Scriptures. *Are cursed*, i. e. doomed to punishment, or as Doddridge paraphrases, are cursed with judicial blindness. Bloomfield interprets: "as to this rabble who are ignorant of the law, they are a *parcel of poor wretches*." Alford regards the words as not a formal ban upon the followers of Jesus, but merely a passionate expression of contempt. There is hardly any passage in the gospels, which presents in stronger colors the arrogance and pride of the rulers and Pharisees. While they openly express the most sovereign contempt for the common people, they arrogate to themselves a perfect knowledge of the law (see N. on Matt. 23:13), and claim to be its authentic interpreters. Richly did they deserve the tremendous woes pronounced against them by our Lord, on the day of his taking a final leave of the temple (Matt. 23:13-39).

50, 51. In view of their infuriated and unjust course of procedure against Jesus, Nicodemus now ventures to expostulate with them and to protest against their illegal doings. Doddridge finds in the question which he here proposes, a severe sting, that while the rulers professed such a knowledge of the law and zeal for it, they either

man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for ^h out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

^h Is. 9:1, 2; Mat. 4:15; ch. 1:46; ver. 41.

knew not or regarded not its plainest precepts, so far as justice was demanded of them as a court of judicature. The *law* to which Nicodemus here refers, is that portion of it pertaining to civil rights and duties. In accordance with its spirit and express provision, the weak and friendless, as well as the great and influential, were entitled to a full and impartial hearing, before judgment was pronounced. See Deut. 1:16, 17; 19:17; Ezek. 23:1-3. *Judge*, i. e. condemn. *Any man*; literally, *the man* arraigned at the tribunal of judgment. *Before it hear him* in defence, and *know* on valid testimony *what he doeth* worthy of punishment. This question of Nicodemus was in keeping with the true spirit of the Mosaic law, but there is some reason for the remark of Webster and Wilkinson, that the feebleness of his defence of Jesus has a strong contrast in the fierceness of the rejoinder of the Pharisees.

52. Without acknowledging the justice of his remarks, the Jews endeavor to cast odium on Nicodemus, by insinuating that he belongs to the Galilean party. Their question assumes that none but the rude and turbulent Galileans favor the pretensions of Jesus, and hence the espousal of his cause by Nicodemus shows that he also is from that section of country. Olshausen calls it a derisive jest, in order to weaken the force of the disagreeable truth he had just uttered. It is worthy of remark how many negative interrogatives, or those having that form in the original which implies a negative answer, are to be found in this chapter. Such is the form of interrogation made use of by the rulers in their reply to Nicodemus. The sense is this: 'Is it possible that you, Nicodemus, whom

53 And every man went unto his own house.

we have regarded hitherto as our sagest counsellor, are led away by this strange delusion, as though you yourself were one of these ignorant and deluded Galileans? It cannot be so. We will not believe it.' Also connects Nicodemus with the party spoken of so contemptuously as favoring Jesus. *Search* most thoroughly and accurately. The verb is used of that careful and accurate examination, by which the tracks of animals are discovered and traced, or lost articles are searched for and found. *Search and look*. When two imperatives are thus joined in construction, Winer makes the second to denote the inevitable result of the first: *search and you will see*. The result of the search is so certain, that the exhortation to search is equivalent to an invitation to look at or behold what is asserted. But I prefer to take the second verb, as an emphatic repetition of the first. *For out of Galilee, &c.* The mention of Galilee in the derisive question put to Nicodemus, suggested to them the old and stale argument against the claims of Jesus, that he was a native of Galilee. Had they taken pains to inquire, they might have ascertained the truth, as it regarded the place of his nativity. But they not only assume without investigation that he was born in Galilee, but state an untruth in asserting that no prophet ever arose out of that country. Alford notices Jonah of Gathsepher, and that greatest of the Old Testament prophets, Elijah the Tishbite, and perhaps Nahum and Hosea. Their falsification of historic facts is what might be expected from men, who did not hesitate to employ false witnesses (Matt. 26 : 59, 60; Mark 14 : 55-57), in order to compass the death of Jesus. In the high excitement produced by the report of the officers (v. 46), the inclination of the people to Jesus, and the mild expostulation of Nicodemus, they totally ignore or regard as worthy of no mention, the few prophets which had arisen in Galilee,

CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives.

lee, compared with the numerous seers and prophets of Judea. Bloomfield thinks that the tense of the verb, implies, that at no recent date had any prophet arisen in Galilee. But this is a less satisfactory solution, for even in Judea no prophet of recent times had appeared, with the exception of John the Baptist, in regard to whose claims the Sanhedrim was careful not to commit itself. See N. on Matt. 21 : 25, 26.

53. *And every man went, &c.* It is clearly implied here that the assembly broke up in a tumultuous manner. It had been an eventful day. The discourse of Jesus, especially his great utterance in vs. 37, 38, had stirred the hearts of his auditors, friends and enemies, to their lowest depth. High disputes had arisen among his friends in regard to the position, as a religious teacher, which should be assigned him. Some whose views of him were low and selfish, had changed from lukewarm friends to bitter and implacable enemies (see N. on v. 44). Officers were sent to take Jesus, but instead of laying hands upon him, stood at a distance, and listened in rapt astonishment to such words as mortal man never spoke. The Sanhedrim had been thrown into a state of unwonted excitement at the report of the officers, and the stand taken by Nicodemus in favor of truth and justice. In anger and bitter recrimination, without any orderly adjournment, the assembly broke up, and each man went to his own house. This verse is by many of the best critics regarded as belonging to the first verse of the following chapter, the connection requiring the translation, *but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives*.

CHAPTER VIII.

1-12. THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY, *Jerusalem*. This passage is regarded by many commentators as spurious. Olshausen decides against its genuineness, and Tholuck regards it

as "more than doubtful." Alford thinks that "the Evangelist in this solitary case, may have incorporated a portion of the current, oral tradition into his narrative; that this portion may have been afterwards variously corrected from the gospel of the Hebrews, or other traditional sources; that being seen in early times to be alien from John's diction, it may have been by some replaced in the synoptic narrative, in its apparent chronological place at Luke, the end of v. 21, or inserted variously in this gospel, from the mere fact of having dropped out here." It is wanting in the Syriac version, as well as in the Alexandrine and Bodleian copies. Bloomfield says that it is wanting in fifty-six MSS., in thirty-three Evangelistria, and in several MSS. of the Syr., Copt., Sahidic, Armenian, and Italic versions; nor is it treated of by Origen, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Tertullian, and others of the Fathers. On the other hand, it is found in 284 MSS. and six Evangelistria. In forty others it is found with the obelisk. In fifteen others it is found with the asterisk, and in eight it is found at the end of the gospel. The balance of external proof is therefore greatly in favor of the genuineness of the passage. The variety of readings in those MSS. where it is found is regarded, however, by many as furnishing additional evidence that it is spurious. But these various readings are characteristic of other portions of the gospel, and are far from furnishing evidence in themselves of the spuriousness of any given passage. The reason why it is wanting in so many of the early MSS. is supposed to be, that it was expunged by copyists and others who strangely and unwarrantably feared that license for the violation of the seventh commandment was contained in it. This may have been the reason also why the passage is so ignored by the Fathers and other ancient commentators; not that they themselves doubted its genuineness, but were apprehensive that it might be perverted by others, on account of the slightness of the rebuke administered by our Lord to the woman. It will probably remain

through time a disputed question as to its genuineness; but we think that no candid reader, who looks at the whole scope of the narrative, can fail to discern satisfactory evidence that it is a part of that record which the Spirit of inspiration has given for our instruction. The general style is like that of the Evangelist; it comports with the character of these priests and rulers to be trying Jesus with difficult and ensnaring questions; his conduct on this occasion and treatment of the woman harmonize with his known character and some of his express declarations (see v. 15; 3: 17; 12: 47; Luke 9: 56; 12: 13-15; 19: 10, cited by Webster and Wilkinson); and besides this there is far more probability in itself that a genuine passage should be omitted in some MSS., than that a story should be fabricated and foisted into MSS. as genuine. Stier well sums up the internal evidence in its favor: "The narrative in itself was assuredly not such as could have been invented; it exhibits no traces of having been apocryphal; betrays no marks whatever of fiction; on the contrary, it is throughout, and especially on the stooping down and writing upon the ground, as original as it is in harmony with the spirit and mind of Jesus."

As to the ground above given for its being found wanting in so many MSS., if it is the true one, certainly it must have arisen from a radical misconception of the words of Jesus to the woman, and of the great lesson which he designed to inculcate. This will be more fully shown in the comment on our Lord's words to her, when she was dismissed from his presence. I am fully convinced that the balance of authority and critical argument is in favor of its genuineness, and shall proceed to explain the passage in detail, remarking in the outset, however, that its exposition in some of its parts, is attended with much difficulty.

1. This and the following verse are found in many MSS. which omit the narrative of the woman taken in adultery. There can be little doubt, therefore, in regard to their genuineness. This furnishes additional testimony to

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 fact that some narrative or circumstance must be here interposed, for the transition from v. 2 to v. 12, is too abrupt to allow us to suppose that they are to be immediately connected in the narration. *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.* This is the only place where John speaks of this mount by name. In 18:1, he simply says that Jesus "went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron;" while the three other Evangelists speak of his going forth to the "mount of Olives." But this cannot be advanced as an argument of any weight against the genuineness of the verse. Jesus often retired from the city to this mount for meditation and prayer, either spending the night in the open air, or else enjoying the hospitality of some friend and follower who resided there or in its vicinity. There is here a slight contrast with the preceding clause, "every man went unto his own house," Jesus, who had no house, nor "where to lay his head," went forth from the city to the mount of Olives.

2. *Early in the morning.* This shows his zeal and faithfulness in the work of instructing the people. This practice of our Lord to return at an early hour into the city, is corroborated by Mark 11:20. A comparison of these passages throws light upon the extreme hunger with which he approached the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14), he having left Bethany too early to take his morning meal. *All the people came unto him.* They doubtless expected him to resume his public work of instruction, and hence repaired at an early hour to the temple to hear him. This ready zeal on his part to communicate instruction, and the strong desire of the people to listen to his teaching, constitute the reason, doubtless, for the insertion of this fact in the present narrative, since nothing is said of the contents of his discourse. The

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

word rendered *people*, is different from the one employed in vs. 20, 31, 40, 49 of the preceding chapter, where the word refers to the masses or throngs who attended the feast. There was doubtless on this day a diminution of the number present, the festival being now ended, and many having left the city that morning for their country homes. It may be presumed, however, that in consequence of the remarkable discourse of Jesus on the preceding day, many even of the country people remained in the city to attend further upon his ministry. The term by which they are now designated, is the collective *people*, in contradistinction from the word used in the preceding chapter, signifying *crowds, multitudes, throngs* of people. This shows that the assemblage of persons who gathered together thus early to hear him, was more homogeneous in its character, and was doubtless composed mostly of those who were sincere inquirers after truth. It will be seen that the persons who opposed Jesus on this day, are always characterized by the appellation *Jews*. *He sat down* after the custom of public teachers. See N. on Matt. 5:1. We find in 7:37, that he stood and preached, his object at that time being to make himself heard, if possible, by the whole multitude. The company whom he now addressed was more orderly and quiet.

3. The scribes and Pharisees not being able to lay violent hands upon him, through fear of the people, now change their tactics, and begin to ply him with insidious questions, hoping thereby to entangle him, so that some ground of accusation might be found against him. *Scribes and Pharisees.* The same class of persons are referred to, who in v. 32 of the preceding chapter are designated "Pharisees and chief priests;" in v. 45, "chief priests and

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Pharisees;" and in v. 48, "rulers and Pharisees." They were members of the Sanhedrim, who in united body or in smaller companies, were thenceforth watching him, and seizing every opportunity to compass the end which they had in view, namely his death. Stier contends that these persons were private individuals of the learned caste, who had made themselves extemporary accusers, and who regarded the occurrence as a welcome opportunity for laying a snare in the presence of the people to entrap Jesus. But the argument by which he seeks to support this opinion, that the chief rulers would not have referred such a question to Jesus as to a higher tribunal, is not of much weight, for it may be presumed that they acted in the capacity of private individuals, and not as members of the supreme council of the Jewish people. Besides this, if Jesus were the true Messiah, his authority would be far above theirs, in all matters which pertained to the civil or religious law. In thus approaching him, they ostensibly yield for a moment to his claims as a religious teacher and expounder of the law, in order thereby the more effectually to compass his death, or render him obnoxious to the people. *In the midst* of the people who were then in attendance upon his teaching. Their interruption of his discourse was impertinent and rude. So confident were they that he would fall into the snare thus artfully prepared, that they chose an occasion in which there would be the greatest publicity given to the transaction.

4. *Master*; literally, *teacher*, the idea being conveyed that here was a case, which would test his claim and qualification to be a public teacher of religion. They were so sure of success, that they address him in courteous terms, in order to render more deep and lasting the disgrace which awaited him. See Matt. 22: 16, 24; Mark 12: 14; Luke

5 "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"

a Le. 20: 10; De. 22: 22.

20: 21, 28. The malignant cunning and hypocrisy of these men, stand out in bold relief, such as hardly find a parallel in the history of man. The heavenly purity and innocence of Jesus Christ, seem to have come in contact with their diabolical craft and malignancy, in order by contrast to show how utterly antagonistic and irreconcilable were the two great principles of light and darkness, referred to in 1: 5. *Was taken*, &c. This crime was of frequent occurrence at their feasts. *In the very act*. Although the word in the original refers to a stealthful act, as theft, fraud, adultery, yet the question in the present instance was free from all doubt as to the fact of the woman's guilt. Nothing stood in the way of an open and immediate decision.

5. *Now Moses in the law*, &c. The penalty of adultery was death, and a comparison of Levit. 20: 10, with Deut. 22: 21, makes it quite evident that stoning was the kind of death prescribed. *But what sayest thou?* The pronoun in the original is emphatic, and places Jesus in strong contrast with *Moses* in the preceding verse. It would seem to hint that the teachings of Jesus were antagonistic to those of the Hebrew lawgiver. The literal translation is, *therefore what sayest thou?* which brings out more distinctly the insidious question. It was of such a nature that a reply either in the affirmative or negative, would involve him in difficulty. If he decided against the death penalty, he would be regarded as abrogating the Mosaic law. On the other hand, if he decreed that she should die, he might be accused to the Romans, who had taken away from the Jewish courts the power of capital punishment. This extreme severity of judgment would also render him unpopular with the people, as one disposed to visit offences with the utmost rigor of the law. Alford in opposition to this view, that a political snare was

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*.

laid for him, whereby he might become obnoxious to the Roman authorities, adduces the example of Stephen who was put to death by the Jews. But the case is not in point. The death of that proto-martyr was effected by an infuriated mob, and not by a calm and deliberate legal decision. Had the Jewish Sanhedrim possessed this power, they would not have run the hazard of the acquittal of Jesus, by bringing him before Pilate's bar; but would have pronounced sentence themselves upon him, and hurried him away to speedy execution. It is evident from the manner in which the Mosaic statute respecting the punishment of adultery is here referred to, that for some reason or other, it had fallen into disuse, and was practically abrogated. This may have resulted in part from the frequency of the crime, especially among the powerful and influential, and the severity of the Mosaic penalty which rendered the execution of the statute a thing of rare occurrence, even when the power to inflict death resided in the Jewish tribunals.

6. We are here distinctly informed of their real design in proposing this question. It is strange that Olshausen can see in this transaction no attempt to embarrass or entangle Jesus, and that he should, therefore, take *tempting*, in the sense of a "well-meaning desire to gain information," as in Matt. 22:35. There is a marked difference between the spirit and temper with which the lawyer approached Jesus, and the proud and captious spirit with which these persons presented the offending woman to our Lord. Alford thinks that this question belongs to the last days of our Lord's ministry, synchronizing with similar questions put in the synoptic gospels. See Matt. 22:15-22; 23-33; 34-40, also the parallel

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, ^b He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

^b De. 17:7; Ro. 2:1.

passages in Mark and Luke. But this constitutes no valid reason against supposing the question to have been put to him, in the time and manner here reported by John. No one surely will presume to say, that these insidious questions were proposed only in the very last days of his ministry. What more natural and appropriate time for this ensnaring question than now, when they had just been baffled in their attempts to forcibly apprehend him. There can be no doubt that this narrative is recorded in its proper chronological place by John. *Might have to accuse him* either to the people, or to the Romans, as the nature of his reply might furnish opportunity. This puts it beyond doubt, that the design of their question was malevolent, and not as Olshausen says, "to gain information."

Wrote upon the ground. Various explanations have been given of this passage. It has been thought by some expositors to have been a symbolical act, indicative of his power to write or promulge a law, that should supersede the Mosaic code. Others suppose that it was intended to designate his power to acquit or condemn those who brought this accusation against the woman; and that all were eventually to come before his bar of judgment, where every question would be finally adjudicated. But these interpretations are fanciful and far-fetched. Still less tenable is their view, who suppose that Jesus wrote words indicating the particular sins of each of the woman's accusers, reading which they were so conscience smitten, that when he pronounced the words: *He that is without sin among you*, &c. they stole away convicted and self-condemned. How could particular words be written on a paved floor, and one which was kept

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

scrupulously clean? Stier regards the general sense to be, that there was much recorded against them all, which he would rather bury in silence; and that this gesture intimates what he afterwards said (Matt. 22 : 18), *why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?* The interpretation of it in brief would then be, 'the matter concerns me not, I will know nothing of it judicially.' So Olshausen: "Jesus first showed them that such matters did not belong to him (just as in Luke 12 : 14); and afterwards, when they pressed him more urgently, he pronounced no sentence concerning her, but indirectly rebuked the accusers themselves." So Tholuck well says: "The writing or drawing on the ground, was in the ancient world as among us, the sign of profound meditation and of abstraction from all that is going on around; also of irksomeness, which, occupied with nothing external, is absorbed in the train of thought which passes within. Jesus consequently, expresses in this way, first of all, that he is giving no heed to the question. And wherefore? Probably on the same ground as in Luke 12 : 14, because he is not willing to interfere in decisions on questions of civil law." This is substantially the opinion of Neander, Webster and Wilkinson. Such also is Luther's view: "Our Lord means to say, why do you question me? and will not favor them with a word, turns himself in another direction, and will not attend to them nor answer them." Such I conceive to be the simple and obvious interpretation. It was designed to be a symbolic act, strongly expressive of the disregard with which he might treat all questions of this sort, intended to draw him away from the legitimate object of his ministry, and embroil him in disputes and discussions pertaining to the administration of the civil law. The expression, *as though he heard them not*, is an unnecessary gloss, and is justly italicized by our translators. If a comment of this sort were at all proper to be introduced into the sacred record, it would

9 And they which heard it, ^c be-
c Ro. 2: 22.

have been better, as Prof. Crosby remarks, to have added, *as not caring to argue with them. When they continued asking him*, and manifested their determination to draw from him some reply to their question. This was highly characteristic of the rude impertinence and disrespect, with which these bad men interrupted Jesus in his discourses, and pressed upon him their frivolous and ensnaring questions. *He lifted up himself*, i. e. he stood, or sat erect as before.

7, 8. *He that is without sin*, &c. This is one of the most profound and searching remarks to be found in the whole gospel. 'Who are you that ye should be so clamorous for the meting out of punishment to this woman? Have you no sins of your own to be repented of? Is it your appropriate task to sit in judgment upon your fellow-men, as though you yourselves were perfect and deputed of God to do this? *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast* (literally, *be the first to cast*) *a stone at her*. Otherwise, look to your own hearts, inspect your own conduct in the light of God's law (see Matt. 5 : 28, 32), and be less solicitous in respect to the exact degree or kind of punishment to be meted out to your fellow-men.' Alford refers this freedom from sin, not to sin in general, nor yet to the sin of adultery in particular, but to the sin of uncleanness generally. But his argument against referring it to sin in general, on the ground that the Pharisees can hardly be supposed to have held themselves sinless, may be met by referring it not so much to what they really were, and knew themselves to be in this respect, as to what they *pretended* to be in the eyes of the common people. See Luke 18 : 11, 12. As it regards the objection urged against this view, that our Lord would thus require an innocence, which no judge or accuser could lay claim to, the sentiment is not dissimilar to the rule laid down in Matt. 7 : 1-5, where it is clearly shown, that no one is a fit critic or

ing convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto

judge of others' sins, who has not first discerned his own faults and striven to correct them. Our Lord intends by no means to teach, that judgment cannot be pronounced upon transgressors until the judge has himself attained to immaculate purity and innocence; but his words are aimed against the lynx-eyed vigilance with which the sins of others are ferreted out, and brought to light, and the blindness which at the same time is manifested in regard to personal demerit; against an undue severity in pronouncing judgment upon others, and a corresponding lenity in regard to that which should call forth the severest self-condemnation. As it respects the wisdom of his reply, in avoiding the snare which they had set for him, we may compare it with the answer which he made in regard to the tribute money (Matt. 22: 15-22)—a great truth being advanced, by which the question proposed and all similar ones might be easily solved. After they had taken all due measures to reform their own heart and conduct, and thus render their example worthy of imitation, there would be comparatively little difficulty in executing the laws against bold and open transgressors. A general reformation, from the rulers down to the lowest and most ignorant of the people, was a duty at that time much more urgent and imperious, than the decision of nice legal technicalities. *Let him first cast a stone*, does not imply the actual infliction of the punishment here spoken of, for that was to be judicially administered; but it is equivalent to, *let him condemn, or pass sentence of condemnation upon her*, that she shall be stoned. The words *at her*, are literally *upon her*, reference being had to the recumbent position of the criminal, who was probably thrown on the ground to receive his punishment. In v. 59, the expression is literally *at him*, our Lord being in a standing posture. The expression in the present instance, conforms to the punishment administered ac-

the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

According to judicial and prescribed form; in v. 59, to the punishment inflicted by an infuriated mob, casting stones at the victim of their rage as he was passing along. *And again he stooped*, &c. He thus indicated that he had no further reply to make to their question. This throws light upon the meaning to be affixed to the act of writing upon the ground in v. 6. In both instances, abstraction from the questioners and an occupation of the mind with other thoughts are undoubtedly intended.

9. There was a secret but powerful energy accompanying the words of Jesus, which so smote their consciences, that they stole away one by one, the eldest and most hardened taking the lead, and left the woman alone with Jesus. Tholuck takes the word rendered *eldest*, in the sense of *first in rank*, and finds no reference to a withdrawal in the order of rank, but simply the retirement from his presence of all ranks, the highest as well as the lowest. But while rank may have been implied in the expression, the general usage of the word by John (see 2 John 1: 3; 3 John 1), attaches to it the idea of age. The word *last*, would of course conform in the sense of *youngest*, to the idea contained in *eldest*, with which it stands opposed. I therefore prefer the natural and obvious sense. If such deep conviction of sin was flashed in upon them by the potent words of Jesus, that they all to a man stole away from his presence, there is nothing strange in the fact here asserted, that the eldest and leading persons, upon whose consciences the sins of years lay with crushing weight, should be the first to retire. *Convicted by their conscience*, or consciousness of sin. The faculty of conscience, is the power of approval or disapproval, which a man has over his moral acts. If his actions are right, conscience pronounces a verdict of approval; if wrong, the verdict is one of censure and condemnation. But conscience through

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?

long indulgence in sin, oftentimes becomes torpid and inactive (see 1 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:15). It is the office work of truth to arouse the conscience, to produce conviction of sin, and to lead the soul to Christ. In the case before us, the power of conscience was excited to no ordinary degree of activity; but deplorable result—the convicted persons left the only Being who could forgive sin, and thus through life carried with them the despairing remembrance of this hour, an earnest of what awaited them, when conscience should be fully aroused beyond the grave, and enter upon its retributive work. Isa. 50:11. Tholuck quotes Calvin approvingly, that these persons may have hurried forth in order to avoid a second rebuke, which they had reason to apprehend, when our Lord should raise himself a second time from his stooping posture. *Was left alone*, so far as the accusers of the woman were concerned. The people to whom he had been preaching when thus interrupted, were present (see v. 12). *Standing in the midst*, i. e. in full sight of all. The scene is now one of the greatest interest. No uninspired writer would have dared to conjecture how it was to end; and this is a great argument in favor of the genuineness of the whole passage. If any portion of God's word has the stamp of divinity impressed upon it, from the simplicity, purity, and heavenly sublimity of its sentiment, this passage has the divine mark. Here was a woman who had committed a sin, deemed by all nations one of the greatest turpitude, and who had been expressly brought into the presence of Jesus for him to pronounce sentence upon her. On the other hand was One who was infinitely pure, and who could not look upon sin without the deepest abhorrence, but whose mission

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and 'sin no more."

α Lu. 9:56; & 12:14; ch. 8:17.
ε Ch. 5:24.

to this world was not to condemn it (3:17), but to save it from sin and eternal death. Matt. 18:11; Luke 19:10. In this interview thus suddenly and unexpectedly brought about, is Jesus to act the part of a condemning judge, or an almighty Saviour (Isa. 63:1)? Is he to furnish an example of his avenging wrath against the sinner, or of his forgiving love? We shall all reply, that the latter will be more in keeping with the merciful nature of his mission and office. And yet it was doubtless because he did not send this poor woman from his presence, under the weight of a condemning sentence couched in the most severe terms, that the whole narrative has been expunged from so many of the early MSS. A vain and baseless fear was doubtless indulged, that if suffered to remain in the sacred text, our Saviour might be thought to have compromised with this sin, or at least to have treated it as a comparatively light offence. It will be seen in the comment on v. 11, how ill-founded and unwarrantable was this apprehension.

10, 11. Our Lord continued to draw characters upon the ground, until all the woman's accusers had gone forth. The fact that he withdrew from them his observation, made it easier for them to steal away. "He did not continue to fix his eyes upon them, being very far from desirous to take pleasure in their humiliation before the people, but rather being grieved that their persistence to press the question upon him had enforced from him this revelation." Stier. *None but the woman*. His disciples and the people, however, were present. See N. on v. 9. *Where are those thine accusers?* This question was not put for the sake of information, but to call her attention to the self-condemnation of her accusers, and

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, ^fI am the light

^fCh. 1: 4, 5, 9; & 3: 19; & 9: 5; & 12: 35, 36, 46.

also what he was about to say. Her eyes were probably cast down in shame and conscious guilt. *Hath no man* (of all thy accusers) *condemned thee?* i. e. pronounced judgment, passed a condemning sentence upon thee. *She said, No man, Lord.* She was therefore legally free, or to use a technical phrase, their voluntary withdrawal from the tribunal to which they had conducted her as her accusers, was a virtual *nolle prosequi*. Nothing remained then for our Lord, but to dismiss her from his presence. *Neither do I condemn thee.* Reference is unquestionably had in these words of our Lord, to a judicial condemnation, like that alluded to in the preceding question. It is a simple disavowal in the hearing of the people, of its being his mission to act the part of a judge, in regard to an offence cognizable in the Jewish courts of justice. No inference whatever can be drawn from his words, that he did not disapprove of her sin, or that she was undeserving of punishment. It is a strange perversion of the obvious sense of the passage, to seek to elicit from it a sense so utterly at variance with our Lord's well-known abhorrence of all sin, and especially his strict interpretation of the law pertaining to the violation of the seventh commandment (Matt. 5: 27-32). This is placed beyond a doubt in the following clause, where it is not said, *go thy way in peace, or thy sins are remitted*, but simply and touchingly, *go, and sin no more.* The enormity of her sin is here clearly recognized, and she is admonished not to repeat it. What effect these gracious words had upon the woman, we know not; but the hope may be reasonably indulged, that through the atoning blood and forgiving love of Him into whose presence she had been thus strangely ushered, she was brought to repentance, and joined the company of those pious and faithful women who followed him to the cross (Luke 23: 27; Mark 15: 41),

of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

and who after his ascension, awaited in the company of the apostles the promised descent of the Spirit (Acts 1: 14).

12-59. JESUS CONTINUES HIS PUBLIC TEACHING. *Jerusalem.* Commentators are divided, as to the connection between this and the closing verses of the preceding chapter. Tittmann, Olshausen, Alford, and some other critics of note, connect it with 7: 37, 38. He had there in view of the pompous procession with which water was brought from the fountain of Siloah, declared himself possessed of the waters of life, to which all were invited to come and drink. Now he draws his theme of discourse from another usage of the feast. It is said by Dr. Jahn on authorities adduced by him (see also Wetstein cited by Alford), that "in the court of the women, lights were burnt during every evening of the feast, in four candlesticks of gold, said to be 50 cubits high, while the priests and Levites standing on the fifteen steps of the inner court, sang the *songs of degrees*, viz. Psalms 120-134. They accompanied these songs with instruments, and the chief men of the nation were at the same time dancing in the women's court, with burning torches in their hand, while the women looked on from a retired apartment surrounded by a sort of latticed enclosure." How natural, amidst such circumstances, is the allusion of our Lord to the light, which proceeding from two large golden chandeliers, Wetstein says, was sufficient to light up all Jerusalem. But Jesus said, *I am the light of the world*, not a light which blazes up and illumines for a while, and then expires in utter darkness, but one which shall never be quenched or dimmed; not a light to Jerusalem only, but to the whole world. The connection with 7: 37 is then so natural and apposite, that some excellent expositors, in addition to those above named, are strongly inclined to the belief that the incident

related in vs. 3-11, took place on some preceding day of the feast, and that this discourse of our Lord, either immediately preceded or followed the proclamation made in 7:37, 38. Opposed to this view, however, are weighty objections. One is that at the close of the preceding day, which was the last great day of the feast, Jesus is said to have gone to the mount of Olives, and on the next day early in the morning, to have repaired again to the temple and resumed his public teaching (see vs. 1, 2). But the discourse of our Lord upon which we have now entered, is abruptly closed by an attempted act of violence, which compels Jesus to leave the temple and secrete himself for a season. In other words, the two discourses recorded in chaps. VII. and VIII. are brought to a close in far different circumstances, and cannot, therefore, have been pronounced on the same day. It is no valid objection to this, that the Pharisees are present at this second discourse (see v. 13), whereas they are just before said through conviction of conscience to have left him (v. 9); for the persons mentioned in v. 13, may have been other Pharisees, perhaps of less note, yet actuated by the same bitter hatred to him, and equally alert to find some ground of accusation, by which he might be removed out of the way. I am of opinion, therefore, that the narrative of the woman taken in adultery is recorded by John in the right place chronologically considered, and that the discourse, in which Jesus proclaims himself the Light of the world, was pronounced on that same day, which was the one following the day on which the festival was closed. The allusion to the Light would be as apposite on this day as on the preceding one, since the splendid chandeliers with their flood of light would be readily recalled to the memory of the people. Tholuck denies this, and supposes that our Lord's language was suggested by the rising sun. But the sun must have been quite high in the heaven, before the close of the incident recorded in vs. 3-11; and certainly if

the temple was illuminated each evening during the feast which had just been brought to a close, the fact could not have so passed from the mind of the people as not to be easily recalled by the words of our Lord.

12. *Said again.* He now resumes his discourse to the people, which had been interrupted in the manner related in vs. 3-11. *I am the light of the world.* It was in view of this great utterance of our Lord, that John made the declaration recorded in the very beginning of his gospel, 1:9, on which see Note. See also N. on Matt. 5:14. Our Lord here declares most expressly, that his office was not to enlighten the Jews only, but the whole world of mankind. See Luke 2:32. The allusion to the golden chandeliers lighted up on each night of the feast of tabernacles, has been referred to. If, as we believe, this discourse was preached on the day following the last and great day of the feast, the allusion to the artificial light would be well understood by the people. Bengel thinks that *light* is here contrasted with the works of darkness, as seen in the woman taken in adultery. However the allusion may have been to the artificial light above referred to, or to the rising sun, or to moral light by way of contrast with the sin of the woman, the idea is that the only true light adequate to dispel the shades of sin and death, is the Lord Jesus Christ. In thus declaring himself the light of the world, he virtually proclaimed his Godhead, since it is the prerogative of God, that light dwelleth in Him. Compare Ps. 27:1; Isa. 60:19, 20; Dan. 2:22; 1 John 1:5. *He that followeth me*, i. e. believes on me and obeys my word. Bengel says that he shows by this declaration, that adultery is in no manner approved by him, although he did not condemn the adulteress who had just gone from his presence. So Rieger remarks: "He himself secures his dealing with the sinful woman from all perversion." Tholuck says that "by speaking of following him, he introduces the image of a guiding star, by which we are led on our pathway, and he who follows him receives the light

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, ^gThou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said

^g Ch. 5: 31.

of life into the soul." *In darkness*, i. e. in the way of sin and death. *But shall walk*, &c. The same idea is here repeated conversely in the positive form. This twofold form of expression is common to John. *Light of life*, i. e. the true knowledge of God and his ways, which shall lead to eternal life. Perhaps also the idea may be imparted of enduring light, or that which shall never become extinct. Some find an allusion here to the great principle in the vegetable kingdom, that light is necessary to the life and growth of plants. *Shall have* is not opposed to immediate possession of the *light of life*, as soon as the condition of discipleship is complied with; but the idea is, that the full fruition of the promised blessing is reserved for the believer beyond the grave.

13. The Pharisees now interrupt him with the charge of his bearing witness of himself. *Therefore*, in view of what he had just claimed to be. *Thou bearest record* (or *art a witness*) *of thyself*, i. e. you testify in favor of yourself. They do not in express terms deny his claim, but seek to throw discredit upon it, by averring that it is supported by no testimony save his own. *Thy record* (literally *thy testimony*) *is not true*, i. e. its truth is not substantiated by valid evidence. Perhaps they have their eye on his own words (5: 31), which they turn against him, overlooking, however, his express declaration, that his testimony was supported by other witnesses, viz.: John the Baptist, his own miracles, the Scriptures, and the Father himself. The saying was doubtless a proverbial one, and while he condescended to admit its application to himself in 5: 31, by way of accommodation to Jewish prejudices; yet now, when it is pressed upon him with the design to impeach his veracity, and

unto them, *Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true*: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ^hye cannot tell whence I came, and whither I go.

^h See ch. 7: 23; & 9: 29.

render him self-convicted as unworthy of all credit, he solemnly avers that even though he were dependent solely upon his own testimony, yet he knew it to be true. There is therefore no real disagreement between the words of Jesus in 6: 31, and his reply here to the same saying, as uttered by the Pharisees.

14. *Though I bear record of myself*. As our Lord drew near to the close of his earthly mission, his language in regard to his own preëxistent nature, and his power to bestow spiritual blessings upon those who believed in him as the Son of God, became more and more full and explicit. He now declares that although he bore witness of himself, yet it was to be received as truth, for as none but himself knew whence he came, so no other one could testify to the truth of his affirmation. In v. 18, he condescends, however, to appeal to another, whose testimony all would acknowledge to be final. *For I know*, &c. Jesus adduces his perfect knowledge of his origin, as an argument in favor of the truth of that which he had affirmed. He had come from the God of truth, and after his earthly mission was accomplished, he would return to the bosom of his Father (see N. on 1: 18), where from the ages of eternity he had dwelt in the closest and most indissoluble union. Hence although he bore witness of himself, his divine origin which he alone knew, was of itself a sufficient attestation to the truth of his declarations. As Alford well remarks, "this reason binds his testimony to that of the Father, for he came forth from the Father (16: 28), and was returning to him." The adverb translated *whither*, is one which contains in it also the idea of *rest* or *permanent residence* in the place to which our Lord was soon to go. This imparts great emphasis to

15 'Ye judge after the flesh;
* I judge no man.

the declaration, showing that it was not a transient state of glory and exaltation to which he was about to ascend, but one which was to continue forever. *But ye cannot tell, &c.* Literally, *but ye know not, &c.* They knew nothing of him, except as they were divinely taught, and therefore could oppose to his testimony of himself no contradictory or invalidating evidence. Hence to his full and perfect knowledge of his glorious pr  xistent state, and of the equally glorious return to it, when his earthly mission was ended, is opposed in a way calculated to humble their pride, the profound ignorance of his adversaries, in regard to every thing which pertains to the subject. But this ignorance, resulting as it did from their obstinate rejection of Him as their great Teacher and Illuminator, so far from excusing their unbelief in him, rendered it culpable to the highest degree.

15. *Ye judge after the flesh*, i. e. according to the external appearance and with harsh judgment. This is advanced as a reason, why they rejected his testimony respecting himself. They looked only upon his external poverty and low condition of life. All that he said respecting his divine origin and claim to the Messiahship, was regarded by them as the wild dreams of a fanatic, or the pretensions of an impostor. *I judge no man* as yet, that function of my Messianic office being reserved for the future. So Doddridge, Alford, Bengel, and others. Such also was the interpretation of Augustine. Stier takes this as the sense: "Like you, after the flesh, in the sense in which ye judge, I judge no man." But this is opposed by the next clause, *and yet if I judge*, where the interpretation of Stier would compel us to supply *after the flesh*, which would give the very opposite sense to that which is intended, and contradict the affirmation *my judgment is true*. The words *I judge* and *if I judge*, must in the nature of the

16 And yet if I judge, my

*i Ch. 7: 24.
& Ch. 3: 17; & 12: 47; & 18: 36.*

case refer to the same kind of judgment, namely, one which is righteous. Hence Olshausen does not quite reach the precise meaning in the first member by his paraphrase: "I teach peacefully and misconstrue no one, but ye assail me with your sentences of condemnation; if, however, ye in this manner oblige me to judge, I pass a *true* sentence, for I judge in the strength of God." Tholuck attaches to the kind of judgment referred to in the words *I judge no man*, the same evil sense which it has in Matt. 7: 1, and thus paraphrases the passage: "that Christ has no pleasure in judging, inasmuch as when pleasure is felt in it, it is the infallible sign of a heart of impurity; that he judges, however, but only in fellowship with the Father; it springs therefore from motives which are objective and pure." But this interpretation has the same fault as that of Stier, above referred to; it takes the word *judge*, in the clauses, *I judge no man*, and *yet if I judge*, in totally different senses, whereas the connection obviously demands, that the word in both clauses shall have one and the same sense. It is undoubtedly true, however, that while our Lord disclaims all judgment for the present, his office of Judge being that upon which he will enter at a future period, he at the same time places in striking contrast the censorious judgment and fault-finding spirit of these Pharisees, and his own peaceful, charitable temper; so that in addition to the idea that he had not yet assumed the office of Judge, it is also implied that he does not judge *after the flesh*, in the manner of their judgment. But this is implied rather than directly taught in the passage, the plain meaning of which is, that while the present was the time in which his adversaries might indulge in their unrighteous judgments, yet his time to judge lay far in the future; but if he anticipated that season, and should even then at the present moment pronounce judge-

judgment is true: for ¹ I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

1 Ver. 29; ch. 16:32.

ment, such was his relation to the Father, that his judgment would be true and righteous. This makes the connection clear and obvious.

16. *And yet if I judge*; or better, *but if I also judge*, i. e. if I assume the office of sitting in judgment as you now do. *My judgment is true*. This is opposed to the judgment of the Pharisees, which was *after the flesh*, and therefore false. Some expositors refer the judgment here spoken of, to his own character and mission, which they had so misconceived, but in reference to which his judgment was true. But the testimony which he bore, was respecting himself and the Father; the judgment was that which was to be passed upon men, as is evident from the preceding context. There is, however, a close and intimate connection between the *bearing witness* in v. 14, and the judgment spoken of in the present verse. It was in consequence of the witness which he bore to his high preëxistent nature, that their censorious and false judgment was evoked. He also was to sit in judgment—not in the immediate present—but at a future period. Yet if he were to pass judgment upon them immediately, his judgment would not be after the flesh, but in accordance with the principles of eternal truth. We find a similar close connection between his office work of bearing witness to the truth, and of final Judge, in 5:30, 31. As Stier remarks: “it was the judging element in his testimony, which excited their hatred and opposition.” In regard to the present tense, which instead of the more common future here follows the hypothetical clause *if I judge*, it is employed to denote a general truth. The assertion here is that whenever Jesus judges, his judgment is true. *For I am not alone* furnishes a reason why his judgment was true. He was not alone in forming it, but

17 ^m It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

m De. 17:6; & 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2 Co. 13:1; He. 10:28.

acted in full concurrence with the Father. This is expressed more fully and positively in the next clause, *but I and the Father that sent me* agree in the judgment which we pronounce. The words *that sent me*, indicate our Lord's divine mission and origin. Thus this great truth, that Jesus Christ came from God, which was so offensive to them, was constantly kept before their mind. Their fierce opposition did not cause him to make the least abatement in his claims to divinity.

17. Having thus asserted that his judgment is the same as that of the Father, and by implication that their testimony fully agrees, our Lord appeals to their law, and shows that its condition in requiring two witnesses, is fulfilled in the twofold testimony borne of him by himself and the Father. *It is written in your law*. The reference is to Deut. 17:6; compare also Deut. 19:15. *Your law*; literally, *the law*, (viz.) *yours*. The second person is here used, because the Pharisees arrogantly appropriated to themselves the law, as if it were peculiarly their own, and claimed to be its especial conservators and interpreters. See v. 5, where they say “Moses commanded *us*.” We are not to gather from this, that our Lord undervalued the law, or spoke contemptuously of it. He came not to destroy or abrogate it, but to fulfil it (Matt. 5:17). But in order to give point and force to his argument, he accommodates his expression to the arrogant assumption of his adversaries, that the law was peculiarly their own inheritance. It is as if he had said: ‘your own law, in which you so much boast, forbids the rejection of testimony supported by two witnesses. On your own ground, therefore, I will convict you of sin and unbelief in rejecting my claim to be your Messiah.’ *That the testimony of two men is true*. The word rendered *that*, should be omitted in the transla-

18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and ⁿthe Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus

ⁿ Ch. 5: 37.

tion, as it is a direct quotation, although not in the very words of the original. It is not here implied that two witnesses may not perjure themselves, or that their testimony even when honestly given will be always true in every particular, but simply that such testimony is legal, and sufficient to convict or acquit. This law of evidence rendered the testimony in his favor by his Father and himself so valid, that they had no excuse whatever for rejecting him.

18. Although as Son of God, he was under no necessity of appealing to any further testimony than what proceeded from his own mouth, yet Jesus condescends, in accordance with this principle of human law that two witnesses are necessary to legally establish the truth of any declaration, to declare fully and unequivocally who the two witnesses are, to whom he appeals in justification of his claims. The testimony advanced by these witnesses was unimpeachable, for none could be better acquainted with his character and mission than himself and the Father who sent him, and who was his co-witness. *I am one that bear witness*, i. e. one of the two witnesses legally required to substantiate a fact. *Beareth witness of me*, by the miracles wrought by me in his name, and also by the divine voice heard at my baptism (Matt. 3: 17; Mark 1: 11; Luke 3: 22). The requirements of the Mosaic law in regard to valid evidence, were therefore fully met in the case of Jesus.

19. The question here proposed to Jesus, does not so much imply ignorance of the nature of his affirmation respecting his Father, as scorn and displeasure at the apparent presumption of his language. It is taking a low and incorrect view to refer the question to

answered, ° Ye neither know me, nor my Father: ^p if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

° Ver. 55; ch. 16: 3.

^p Ch. 14: 7.

his earthly Father, for they were too well acquainted with the usage of this term as applied to God, to make so gross a mistake. They assume, however, ignorance of his true meaning in order to draw him out further on the subject, hoping thereby to find occasion to accuse him of blasphemy. *Where is thy Father?* 'Make known to us this fact, and we can the better determine whence thou art.' Perhaps the idea is sarcastically implied of a desire to see and judicially interrogate this Father of Jesus, or as we should say, to put him on the witness' stand in regard to the nature and mission of Jesus. The most intense hatred and scorn were concentrated in this brief question, which accounts for the severe and appalling reply of our Lord, that they had no acquaintance whatever with him or his Father. *Ye neither know me, &c.* Their question on its very face evinced their total ignorance of God, although they were the last persons to admit this. Our Lord, however, goes further, and charges them with equal ignorance of himself, which could not have been true, had he not been in his own underrived being, equal with the Father. This is rendered still more plain and emphatic by the following declaration, that a knowledge of him involves also a knowledge of the Father. *If ye had known me*, that I was the image of the Father (Heb. 1: 3), and sent of Him into the world, *ye should have known my Father also*. Thus our Lord avers distinctly that the knowledge of the one embraces the knowledge of the other. It would be difficult to find a more lucid and unanswerable argument than this, for the supreme divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tense in the verb *had known*, refers the knowledge spoken of as something which might and ought to have been attained to, in

20 These words spake Jesus in ^r the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and ^r no man laid hands on him; for ^s his hour was not yet come.

q Ma. 12:41. r Ch. 7:30.
s Ch. 7:8.

the beginning of our Lord's ministry. If at that time, they had admitted the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship, and believed on him, they would have arrived at a knowledge of the Father, which would have precluded such an inquiry as they had just made. The whole argument of our Lord, is based on his essential union and equality with the Father. They are introduced as co-witnesses of the preëxistent glory and divine mission of Jesus, and the knowledge of the one is necessary to, and implies the knowledge of the other.

20. *In the treasury.* See N. on Mark 12:41. The word *treasury*, is here put for the court of the women, where the treasure-chests were placed. In this much frequented place, did our Lord discourse with the people and put to silence these malignant and cavilling Pharisees. The words *as he taught in the temple*, should be so collocated as to read, *as he was teaching in the temple in the treasury*. As we have no account that our Lord had changed his position, it was doubtless to this part of the temple, that the woman taken in adultery had been brought. The place where Jesus was teaching, as Webster and Wilkinson well observe, corroborates the authenticity of the narrative in vs. 2-11. Although he taught in a place frequented by such crowds, and uttered such open reproof to the Pharisees, *no man laid hands on him*, &c. This does not imply that they were not eager to apprehend him, or desisted to make the attempt, but that they did not succeed in effecting their purpose for the reason given in the following clause, *for his hour was not yet come* (see N. on 7:8, 30). It was not the Father's will that he should yet be delivered into the hands of his enemies.

21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ^r ye shall seek me, and ^r shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

t Ch. 7:34; & 13:33.
u Ver. 24.

21. This discourse which continues on to v. 59, is not to be referred to another time and occasion, but is connected with the preceding one, there being doubtless some pause between the two. Stier calls this "his last great conversation with the Jews, in which is exhibited the most rigorous conflict and opposition." *Then or therefore*, shows that this discourse is resumed from the conversation before recorded. The word *again*, refers to the repetition of the saying now about to be uttered. See 7:34. *I go my way*. He now solemnly declares that he is soon to depart, and leave them to the consequences of their rejection of him as the Messiah. He had incidentally in v. 14, referred to his departure, but now he repeats it in the most emphatic language. *Ye shall seek me*. See N. on 7:34. The words *shall die in* (or *on account of*, as Prof. Stuart interprets) *your sins*, correspond to *shall not find me* in 7:34, and serve to interpret those words. Christ was soon to return to heaven. Into that place of holiness, none but those who had clean hands and pure hearts (Ps. 24:3, 4), who walked uprightly and worked righteousness, could enter (Ps. 15:1-5). As these rulers and Pharisees through impenitence and unbelief, had rejected the only way by which they could be made clean from their transgressions, they would die in their sins, and be forever excluded from the bliss and purity of heaven. Thus they would never be permitted to come again into the presence of Him whom they were now rejecting. *Whither I go ye cannot come*, is the inevitable and natural result of their dying in their sins. This shows that there is no repentance or restoration to God's favor beyond the grave.

22. *The Jews*, i. e. the rulers and

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

23 And he said unto them, ^z Ye are from beneath; I am from

^ω Ch. 3: 31.
^y Ch. 15: 19; & 17: 16; 1 Jo. 4: 5.
^z Ver. 21.

Pharisees. *Will he kill himself?* Suicide was regarded by the Jews as one of the most heinous sins, and the souls of self-murderers were thought to descend to the lowest and most dismal part of Hades. The form of the question implies the expectation of a negative reply (see N. on 4: 33), as though they had added, 'we cannot think that he will kill himself.' Yet this was but an ironical mode of asserting their belief that he contemplated suicide, and was about to go to a place of horror and darkness, which they, the children of Abraham, would never enter. Their reply is therefore in a vein of deep and malignant scorn, far in advance of the question they put to him on his first declaration (7: 35), that he was about to go, whither they could not find him. *Because he saith*; more literally, *in that he saith*, the clause assigning the motive or ground of the preceding inquiry.

23. Our Lord apparently takes no notice of their taunting inquiry, yet in reality he replies to it, by assigning the true reason, why they could not be with him after death. It was not because he was about to put an end to his own existence, thus shutting himself out from their fellowship in heaven, but because *they were from below* (i. e. of the earth and affected by its carnal ends, aims, and pursuits), while he was *from above*, i. e. from heaven. The inference which they would not be slow to draw from his words was, that he would return to the place whence he came, namely, to the bosom of his Father; while they would return to the earth, or by force of the obvious antithesis, they would descend to that dark and gloomy place in Hades, that abyss of woe and despair, which they had

above: *'ye are of this world; I am not of this world.*

24 ^z 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.*

^a Ma. 16: 16.

tauntingly marked out for him in the question they had proposed. The reason why they must remain forever severed from him, was founded on the endless separation between the good and the bad, which would take place beyond the grave. *Ye are of this world*, &c. These clauses explain the sense in which the words *from beneath* and *from above*, in the preceding sentence, are to be taken. The former of those phrases denotes the carnal aims and purposes, the hatred to God and all holy beings, the selfishness, moral pollution, alienation from every thing holy and good, which mark the character of the wicked; the latter, *I am not of this world*, is expressive of heavenly desires and aspirations, of sympathy with God's will and purpose, of obedience to the divine law, in short, of the holy emotions and heavenly aspirations which are characteristic of all good beings. Between these classes of persons—those *from beneath* or *of this world*, and those *from above* or who are *not of this world*—there is a gulf fixed, which in the eternal world will never be passed. This is the great idea of our blessed Lord, in these awful words which he addressed to his malignant and scoffing enemies, and should be earnestly pondered over by all who are in this life preparing for the destinies of eternity.

24. The principle laid down in the preceding verse, is here advanced as a reason why he said that they should die in their sins. They were possessed of such worldly and corrupt dispositions, that unless renewed by the grace of God, they would die in impenitence and unbelief. As this moral change could result only from belief in him as the Messiah, their rejection of him

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^b he that sent me is true; and^c I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

^b Ch. 7: 28.

^c Ch. 8: 32; & 15: 15.

proved the truth of his declaration, that they would die in their sins. This is distinctly affirmed in the following clause, *for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die, &c. I am he*; literally, *I am*, on which form of expression, see N. on 4: 26.

25. *Who art thou?* This inquiry is not to be imputed to their ignorance; for the declaration, *I am* (equivalent to *I am he*), was a Messianic one well understood by the Jews. It was a question of scorn and contempt, that a person whom they regarded as an impostor, should pretend to lay claim to the Messiahship. This appears more clearly in the original, where the pronoun *thou* is emphatic, and contrasts his low condition with the high birth and rank of their expected Messiah. It may also have been intended to draw forth from him some response, which they might make the basis of a judicial charge against him. *Even the same, &c.* As it was the obvious purpose of his adversaries to entrap our Lord, his reply is couched in terms intentionally obscure. Pretending not to understand his declaration respecting his Messianic office (v. 24), they demand a plain and open avowal of his real character. This he does not condescend to give them, but merely says that he is what he has ever declared himself to be. 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." This same acute critic proceeds to say, "He is the Logos. His discourses are the revelation of himself. And there is a special propriety in this:—When Moses asked the name of God, '*I am that which I am*,' was the mysterious answer; the hidden essence of the yet unrevealed One could only be expressed by self-comprehension; but when God manifest in the flesh is asked the same question, it is '*I am that which I speak*:' what he reveals himself to be, he is." Such is substantially the exposition of Stier, Webster and Wilkinson, and Tholuck. Olshausen, by altering the punctuation, and uniting vs. 25, 26, explains the passage thus: "first I have, as I plainly tell you, much to say to you in the way of censure and rebuke, and thus I am your serious admonisher." But in reaching this exposition, Olshausen seems to have taken an unwarrantable liberty with the text; and the reply also loses much of its point and sententious force, by reducing it to the simple assertion, that he was their admonisher and reprover. We can hardly believe that our Lord, at this crisis of his controversy with them, abated in the least his high claim, or sought to divert the argument from the great fact to which he had just before given utterance, that He and his Father were co-witnesses to his preëxistent nature and divine mission, and that therefore his record of himself was true (v. 14).

26. *I have many things to say and to judge of you*, i. e. I could say much of your pride, unbelief, and cavilling temper, and could easily convict you of sin. "Like a judge with us, he would first give his reasons for his judgment and then pass it." Webster and Wil-

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have ^d lifted up the Son

^d Ch. 3:14; & 12:32.

^e Ro. 1:4.

kinson. Compare 16:8, where to the Spirit which our Lord was to send, is committed the conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, to which reference is here doubtless made. *But he that sent me is true*, stands connected with the preceding context, as the reason why he will not turn aside from the great object of his mission to parley with them. The absolute truth of the Father, so opposed to their falsehood and spiritual blindness, renders it more suitable that he should *speak to the world* (i. e. to mankind at large, as opposed to the Pharisees), these things which he had heard from Him. As the Logos and Revealer of the ways of God to men, he had things to say of vastly greater moment than those topics, which served only to satisfy the vain curiosity of these wicked and designing Pharisees. That this is the general sense of this verse, is clear from the antithesis between the *many things which he had to say to them* (or could say, if he had not other and weightier duties to perform connected with his mission), and his public teaching, here denominated *speaking to the world*. This antithesis is rendered the more striking, by the different verbs employed in the two clauses; the one in the former member signifying to *talk, chat, converse*, in a conversational way; the verb in the second member, having the more grave meaning to *discourse, relate, make known, declare*. Prof. Crosby suggests this as the connection: "I have much to say and to judge about you, and you will oppose me, but he that sent me is true nevertheless." But the ellipsis, "and you will oppose me," is somewhat harsh, and the explanation seems to overlook the obvious antithesis between the *not speaking to them*, and the *speaking to the world*, above referred to.

VOL. III.—9

of man, ^e then shall ye know that I am *he*, and ^f *that* I do nothing of myself; but ^g as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

^f Ch. 5:19, 30.

^g Ch. 3:11.

27. *They understood not*, &c. It is strange that they did not refer the words *he that sent me*, to the Father, for in v. 18, he had expressly declared that it was the Father who had sent him. But their ignorance of this identity between the two, is here positively declared by the Evangelist, and we must receive it, unless with some expositors, we suppose that reference is had to their wilful and persistent determination not to understand or admit the truth that God who sent him was his Father, or in other words, that he was the Son of God. Tholuck refers the ignorance predicated of them to the *matter*, and consequently to their unbelief of the great truth revealed. So Olshausen remarks on the passage, that the Jews did not apprehend the *meaning* of the words of Christ. This view is perhaps the freest from objections, and answers all the demands of the context, especially of that which follows, which speaks of the effect of his death in bringing them to a recognition of him as the Messiah (see N. on v. 28).

28. In this verse which follows in immediate connection v. 26, our Lord hints at the kind of death which would be inflicted on him. *When ye have lifted up*, i. e. elevated upon the cross. That this is the meaning is clear from the form of the words, *ye have lifted up*. In no other way did his enemies lift up or elevate him, than upon the cross of death, which their malice and false charges before the Roman governor prepared for him. There is no doubt, however, but that they mistook the sense in which he intended the expression should be here taken. The verb rendered *lifted up*, is often taken in the sense to *exalt*. See Acts 2:33; 5:31; Luke 1:52; Matt. 23:12. In this sense the Jews doubtless understood

him to use the word in the present instance. It was in their estimation a sort of braggart assertion, that he would soon be exalted to the Messianic throne, and the whole nation pay him homage and obedience. There was indeed in the remarkable words which he uttered, a claim to honor and exaltation, such as no Jew who looked for a temporal Messiah ever conceived of; but it was a declaration that the way to this glorification to which he was to be exalted as Lord and Sovereign of the universe, was through pain, ignominy, and death, even that of the cross. *Then shall ye know, &c.* Their future recognition of his Messiahship, is here contrasted with their present ignorance of his relation to God as his Son. This ignorance was so great and inveterate, that the Evangelist deemed it proper to refer to it (v. 27), in order that his readers might know the exact state of the Jewish mind, in regard to the sublime truths to which he was then giving utterance. This ignorance or persistent blindness to his claims, our Lord declared should be removed when they had lifted up the Son of man. How was this verified by the event? Manifestly by the wondrous circumstances attending his crucifixion (see Matt. 27: 51-54; Mark 15: 38, 39; Luke 23: 45-49); by his resurrection and ascension; and above all by the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In view of these great manifestations many would acknowledge his Messiahship, some being led to this by the teachings and drawings of his grace through the promised Spirit; others compelled thereto by the awful judgments, which befell the nation for its rejection of him as their promised Messiah. This very prediction of the kind of death which he should suffer from their hands, was doubtless in itself a means of bringing some present to a knowledge of his true character. The lamentable fact, however, cannot be denied, that the mass of these unbelieving and hardened Pharisees, even when overwhelmed with the judgments which befell their city and nation, and convinced of their great error in put-

ting Jesus of Nazareth to death, were yet so hardened as to refuse to acknowledge his Messiahship, and therefore died in their sins, according to the prediction of Jesus (vs. 21, 24). But these even, although in this life they refused to yield to the overwhelming evidence of his divine mission, would be compelled thereto, when they should see Him coming to judgment, invested with all the glories of the Father. Thus the declaration of Jesus that they shall not always remain in ignorance as to his true character, will in the end be verified in the history of all those who heard him, and of all who shall come after them, possessed of a like character of unbelief. It is worthy of remark that the words, *ye shall know that I am he* (literally *that I am*), correspond with *if ye believe not that I am he* in v. 24. Evangelical or saving faith was there referred to; here, absolute knowledge or an intellectual perception of the Messiahship of Jesus, which although it is found as an accompaniment of true faith, is nevertheless by itself wholly inoperative and dead. The word *that*, in the clause *that I do nothing of myself* (i. e. independent of my Father's will, see N. on 5: 19), is thought by some to be erroneously supplied by our translators, on the ground that the sentence is co-ordinate with the preceding one, and not at all dependent thereon. But there is clearly the dependence of thought, for the knowledge had a twofold reference, one to the Messiahship of Jesus (*ye shall know that I am he*); the other to his inseparable union with the Father, *that I do nothing of myself, &c.* Both these great truths, the one referring to his office as Messiah, the other to his essential divinity, are declared to be that of which his adversaries, after they had lifted him up on the cross, should have the most full and perfect knowledge. There is a noticeable interchange of the words *I speak*, for *I do* in the preceding member. See N. on v. 25. The work of Christ was to reveal the Father to men, and hence his words and work are often used interchangeably. The verb *speak*, is the

29 And ^hhe that sent me is with me: ⁱthe Father hath not

^h Ch. 14: 10, 11.

ⁱ Ver. 16.

same here, as in the first member of the sentence in v. 26; but the lighter signification which the antithesis there imparted to it, here gives place to the more grave meaning *to discourse, declare, &c.*

29. A new and important truth is here announced by our Lord, implied indeed in the knowledge to which his enemies should attain when they had lifted up the Son of man, but not fully and formally expressed. He was at this time surrounded by his most bitter and implacable enemies. The rich and powerful were all arrayed against him. Yet friendless and deserted as he appeared to be, he takes occasion to say that he is not alone, for the Father, at whose appointment he came into the world, was with him. The *and*, with which the verse commences, is therefore a general connective. *He that sent me.* It is worthy of remark, how frequently this phrase occurs in the discourses which our Lord held with the Jews. He makes no claim in his Messianic office to independent and undervied power, but always refers to himself as one sent of God to do His will.

With me. The preposition here denotes in the original the most intimate connection and proximity, so that the persons thus connected are affected by the same action, as though they were one and the same. The Being who sent Jesus into the world, was in such close companionship with him, that he shared with him, so to speak, all the opprobrium and hostility with which his mission was met, and would be present to his aid in every danger. *The Father* is explanatory of the words *he that sent me.* *Hath not left me alone;* literally, *did not send me forth alone* (i. e. without his aid and presence), when he appointed me to the office which I bear. The clause repeats negatively the positive affirmation of the preceding member. This twofold form of assertion imparts great emphasis to the declaration. See N. on 1: 20. The

left me alone; ^kfor I do always those things that please him.

^k Ch. 4: 34; & 5: 30; & 6: 38.

verb in this clause, although in a past tense, embraces, as Stier remarks, "the whole extant period since His sending into the world, passing onward to the great futurity." *For I do, &c.* The filial obedience of the Son is here advanced as a reason, why he always enjoys his Father's aid and presence. Who does not here revert to the testimony of the Father at our Lord's baptism: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It should ever be borne in mind that this obedience of the Son, although strictly predicable of him only in his Messianic office, is to be regarded as proceeding from his essential unity with the Father; else, as Olshausen well remarks, the declaration here put forth would argue a moral union alone, which would depend for its perpetuity upon the fidelity of the Son. The obedience of the Son is based upon those immutable relations of companionship springing from the essential unity of the Father and Son, and referred to so emphatically in the preceding words *is with me*, on which see Note. *Always doing those things that please him*, implies in the one of whom such language is used, a sympathy and fellowship with the Father, which can be predicated of no being save one who is coequal and co-essential with the Father. It is this essential unity, manifested by the love and obedience of the Son to the Father, which rendered it impossible for the former ever to be forsaken of the latter. Hence this clause introduced by *for*, contains the cause or reason of what has just been affirmed.

30. *As he spake these words.* His discourse is introduced as the ground of the belief spoken of in the next clause. *Many believed on him.* The following context shows that with some this was a transient impression of his Messiahship, which was soon displaced by unbelief and open opposition. Their hearts were warmed for a little time with his discourse, but like the stony

30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If

l Ch. 7: 31; & 10: 42; & 11: 45.
m Ro. 6: 14, 18, 22; & 8: 2; Ja. 1: 25; & 2: 12.

ground hearers (Matt. 13: 20, 21), they had no root in themselves, and endured only for a while. Stier remarks that "their faith was something more than that first mentioned in 2: 23, 24; more than that of 7: 31; yet as being a sudden impulse and excitement, it is something less than that recorded in 10: 42, as the result of a comparison of his words and works, and the testimonies of John and of Christ." Whether these persons gave open expression to their faith, is unknown to us. Their fear of the Pharisees, however, renders it quite probable that they kept their impressions in his favor somewhat to themselves. So far as our Lord's knowledge of their change of views respecting him was concerned, it mattered little whether they indicated it by any outward manifestation, or kept it wholly to themselves. He was acquainted with the thoughts of their heart, and stood in no need of any outward profession of theirs to know how they were affected towards him.

31. Our Lord now addresses himself directly to the persons referred to in the preceding verse. Their faith was new-born and weak. They needed instruction. Especially was it fit that they should be informed of the permanent nature of true faith, and what was necessary to Christian discipleship. They were to continue in his word; they were to remain steadfast in the doctrines and duties taught by him. *Then* would have been better translated *therefore*, as the words of Jesus were spoken in consequence of the change of views which he had discerned in these persons. *If ye continue* has reference to a permanent belief in him as their great Messianic Teacher. The word *my*, in the original is emphatic, and opposes our Lord's doctrines and precepts to those of the Pharisees. *My*

ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and ^m the truth shall make you free.

disciples indeed, i. e. my true followers. It was continued and steadfast obedience, and not a mere outward profession, which constituted them his true disciples. The word *indeed*, is plainly opposed to spurious discipleship, of which the world has seen much from the days of Christ to the present time.

32. *Ye shall know the truth* refers to such an experimental or inner knowledge, as puts away all doubt and misgiving from the mind. *The truth* is used here in a most enlarged sense, referring, among other things, to what he had told them of his own origin and mission, his intimate and essential relation to the Father, and also that which subsisted between him and his followers. The whole truth as taught in the word of God, must be believed, in order that the soul may come fully under its transforming and saving power. *The truth* (through its purifying and transforming influence) *shall make you free* from the bondage of sin and death (see v. 34). Reference is doubtless had to the notion entertained by the Jews, that the Messiah would free them from the Roman yoke, and enable them to triumph over all their enemies. He now promises them freedom, but that only which results from obedience to the truth. Stier would take the freedom here promised in the most enlarged sense, as embracing not only freedom from sin, and its consequences in the eternal world, "but deliverance from all the bonds of error and delusion which may hold the soul under its influence, and emancipation from all human ordinances of dogma or discipline, from all servile homage to genius, from all predominance of human leaders of the blind (see 7: 26), as well as from every political yoke borne only under constraint." It was remarked by Stolle the missionary, that "if all the Jews

33 They answered him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never

n Le. 25:42; Mat. 3:9; ver. 39.

were kings they would be but slaves; and if all kings made all Jews free, they would not yet be free." There is no doubt that freedom from sin would be followed by the blessed results enumerated by Stier; yet it is quite certain that the sole reference here is to spiritual freedom, the same as that spoken of in Rom. 8:2; Gal. 4:22-31.

33. A question arises, whether the persons here introduced were those referred to in vs. 30-32, as believing on him; or the Jewish rulers and Pharisees, who from v. 21, had been the speakers. Tholuck—who adopts the latter view, on the ground that it is quite improbable, that Christ should have charged those whom he had so kindly addressed in vs. 31, 32, with purposes of murder, and have directed against them what may be considered altogether one of his severest discourses—claims that the majority of interpreters decide, that those persons resume, who from v. 21 on had been the speakers. So Calvin says, that "as is common in a mixed crowd, a confused response was made to Christ." But of the expositors before me, such as Doddridge, Olshausen, Stier, Bengel, Alford, Webster and Wilkinson, indeed all but Bloomfield, consider that reference is had beyond all question, to those persons whom Christ addressed in the verses immediately preceding. The whole narrative shows this. In v. 36, the same proffer of freedom is made to these persons, as was offered to those in v. 32, on condition of their continuing in his word. This shows that there was no change in the persons addressed. As to the severity of our Lord's discourse to them, the low and sensual views which they entertained of the glorious freedom into which he would introduce them, demanded of him a severe reproof; and in regard to the other ground of objection advanced by Tholuck, namely, the murderous intentions charged upon them in v. 37, there can be no doubt, that many of these

in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

persons who gave in their temporary adhesion to him, relapsed speedily into unbelief, and joined themselves to those who were plotting the death of Jesus. He who knew their hearts, and to whom the future was as the present, could pronounce with unerring certainty upon their position in the great contest between light and darkness, which was then going on. They were not the less his murderers, because for a brief space they yielded to the force of his reasonings, and professed themselves his disciples.

These persons, of whom some at least, as our Lord's words clearly show, were not disciples indeed (v. 31), seem to have been irritated that they were not received and acknowledged at once as true disciples. The implication that they were in bondage, which with their accustomed obtuseness in regard to spiritual things, they interpreted of that which was temporal and political, added to their resentment. Forgetful of their servitude in Egypt, Babylon, and at that very time to the Romans, they indignantly deny that they were ever in bondage to any man. How they could have uttered so palpable an untruth is inconceivable, unless on the general principle, that angry men do not pause to consider what they are about to say, and in consequence, often give expression to sheer fabrications. Some regard the reply as being craftily made, in order to lead him to speak of their bondage to the Romans, a theme so unwelcome and distasteful especially to the common people. But at the present moment, we can hardly attribute so mean and malignant a purpose to the persons addressed, however they afterward may have united with his enemies to effect his death. Others refer the words to their present condition, in which they enjoyed so many privileges and so many of the forms of self-government, that in their judgment they could hardly be said to be in bondage. But against this last view, the

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Who-soever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

word *never*, belongs to *we be Abraham's seed*, and, as Alford remarks, generalizes the whole expression. This same critic thinks that they attached some technical meaning to the phrase *were in bondage*, in which their words may have been correct. But the simplest and most satisfactory solution, is to refer their reply to the loose and inconsiderate manner of speaking which characterizes persons in a state of high excitement, such as that into which these persons were thrown by the answer of Jesus.

We be Abraham's seed was an arrogant boast, for in all the qualities which rendered him the friend of God (2 Chron. 20 : 7; Isa. 41 : 8; James 2 : 23), they were deficient, and this showed that although they were the natural descendants of Abraham, they were not in the highest sense his children (see Gal. 3 : 8). Our Lord in v. 39, corrects this mistake of theirs, in supposing that because they were descended from Abraham, they were like him, the especial favorites of God. *How* (i. e. how in accordance with truth) *sayest thou?* The question is one of surprise that he should have uttered such a sentiment: 'How can it be said to us, the descendants of Abraham, who were never in bondage to any man, *ye shall be made free?*' Our Lord's words were *the truth shall make you free*, but they suppress the words *the truth*, which should have served as the key to his meaning. This argues an intentional misunderstanding, or at least, great spiritual dulness, and may account in part for the severity of our Lord's reply. Webster and Wilkinson refer their understanding of our Lord's words to a spiritual bondage, and give to their reply the sense: 'We are the children of the Father of the faithful, the children of the covenant and the promises. How then can we be in ignorance, error, or unbelief?' But the words

35 And ^r the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

o Ro. 16 : 16, 20 : 2 Pe. 2 : 19.
p Ga. 4 : 30.

never in bondage to any man, clearly indicate that temporal and not spiritual servitude was understood by them.

34. The error into which they had fallen, whether intentional or otherwise, was so fatal to genuine discipleship, that our Lord condescends to instruct them as to the kind of servitude to which he alluded. *Verily, verily*. See N. on 3 : 3. *Whosoever committeth sin*; literally, *doeth the sin*, where the verb denotes the habitual practice of sin, and the article refers to sin in its most generic nature, out of which all offences against God arise. *Is the servant* (or stronger *is the slave*) *of sin*. He is under its full power and influence. Evil habits and inclinations usurp such dominion over him, that he becomes their abject and willing slave, and loses not only the power, but the will to become free. This servitude of the passions, emotions, and affections, to the principle of evil, is often referred to in the New Testament (see Rom. 6 : 16; 7 : 23; 2 Pet. 2 : 19), and is a sentiment not wholly unknown to heathen philosophers. It is said by some that the idea of slavery to sin is not found in the Old Testament. But the reader has only to turn, in proof of the falsity of this assertion, to such passages as Gen. 4 : 7; 1 Kings 21 : 25; Ps. 119 : 133; Isa. 42 : 7; 49 : 24.

35. There is a striking allusion in this verse to the family of Abraham, whom they had so boastfully referred to as their father. In that family was one who was born in a servile condition, and who with his mother was cast out (see Gen. 21 : 10), while Isaac the free-born son, was cherished and brought up at home, as the heir of Abraham's possessions (Gen. 25 : 5). The application is obvious. Although the Jews were Abraham's lineal descendants, yet because of their servitude to sin, they would be cast out of their spiritual inheritance; or in other words, the fact

36 ^r If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

q Ro. 8:2; Ga. 5:1.
r Ch. 7:19; ver. 40.

that Abraham was their natural father, would be of no more avail to them, if they remained the slaves of sin, than it had been to the son of the bond woman. *Abideth not in the house forever*, i. e. has no permanent dwelling place in the house of his master, but is liable at any moment to be thrust out, or sold to another master. So the expression *abideth forever*, in the next clause, signifies by contrast, a fixed and permanent residence of the son in the paternal house, his future inheritance. The word *son*, improperly commences with a capital in our common version, as though it referred to the Son of God. It stands here opposed to *servant*, and is generically put for all those born to a state of freedom, and consequently heirs to the paternal inheritance and privileges. In the next verse, the word *Son*, is properly capitalized.

36. The preceding illustration is here applied to the case in hand. The son has power, with the approbation of his father, to free a servant; but the servant cannot free himself. If then they were slaves to sin, their bondage was hopeless, unless the Son of God, who had been sent from the Father on this errand of mercy, should set them free. Such was his power and grace, that whomsoever he undertook to free would be *free indeed* (i. e. enjoy a freedom, compared with which release from temporal bondage is as nothing), and entitled to all the privileges of the sons of God. Luke 1:12; Rom. 8:14; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1, 2. Alford well remarks, that the best commentary on this verse is Gal. 4:19-31. It is worthy of note that Isaac was the type of Christ, as well in his being the son of the free woman, as in the transaction recorded in Gen. 22:1-14. In regard to the hypothetical clause, *if the Son shall make you free*, it is unlike the one employed in 7:17, inasmuch as it lays down a general truth,

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ^r ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

without reference to its being decided by the actual result, whether the persons spoken of shall be made free or not. The realization of the condition is left in uncertainty, but when it is realized the result is declared to certainly follow. *Indeed*, truly, really, as opposed to that which is false and fictitious.

37. Our Lord admits that the persons whom he is addressing, are Abraham's seed according to natural descent. There is an implied denial, however, that they are the spiritual descendants of this patriarch. The general train of thought is this: '*I know that ye are Abraham's seed*. I freely admit this fact. But ye are possessed of a far different temper and spirit than his, for *ye seek to kill me*, and are even now planning my death. In the higher and more spiritual sense, therefore, you can claim no descent from Abraham.' In reference to the fact, that such language is addressed to those who in v. 30 are said to have believed in him, see N. on v. 33. The charge here made is not of necessity a general one. There may have been many of those referred to in v. 30, to whom it had no application. Even to those whose faith was evanescent, the accusation may have been proleptically made of what would in future be their disposition, when their unbelief became more rank and deadly. It is evident that Jesus saw in some, if not a majority of them, a disposition, which rendered them even then, more fit associates of the rulers and Pharisees, than of his true and devoted followers. *Because my word hath no place in you*; or more literally, *has no entrance among you*, i. e. has not penetrated your hearts. The preposition in the original is one, which communicates to the verb the idea of subsequent rest in the place whither the motion tends, so that the idea of the interpenetration of the word is accom-

38 * I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said

s Ch. 3: 32; & 5: 19, 30; & 14: 10, 24.

panied also by that of a permanent abode of it in the inner man. The translation *hath taken no possession of you*, would well express this twofold idea of entrance and permanent rest. Our Lord makes no direct reference here to their sinful and corrupt nature; but assuming this fact, he attributes their evil conduct to the rejection of the only remedial agent for overcoming the incitements of sin, namely, the word of truth which he was then dispensing. Had they given this a place in their hearts, their hostility to him would have ceased; and hence their rejection of his word is rightly regarded, as the cause of their desire to effect his death. The *word* here spoken of, is the revelation which he had made of himself as the Son of God, comprising also the doctrines and duties which are embraced in the great central truth of his Messiahship and divine nature.

38. Our Lord continues his searching discourse, by showing how diametrically opposite are his conduct and principles to theirs—he revealing that which he had seen with his Father, and they doing that which they had seen with their father. *I speak—ye do*. The same distinction between speaking and doing is here observed as in v. 28, but with much greater emphasis, inasmuch as they are placed here in direct antithesis, and are not as there used interchangeably. Christ was the Revealer of the ways of God to men. Hence his work was to declare the will of his Father. But such was not the office work of his adversaries. They acted out the works of their father, and thus by their *deeds* declared their true parentage (see v. 44). The pronouns *I* and *ye*, have an emphasis in the original, which can only be denoted in English by the stress of voice. In regard to the corresponding phrases, *with my Father—with your*

unto him, 'Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

t Mat. 3: 9; ver. 33.

u Ro. 2: 28; & 9: 7; Ga. 3: 7, 29.

father, the best text reads *from your father*. This would place in strong contrast the intimate and essential union of the Son and the Father, with the fact that the devil, their father, was the originating source of their wicked deeds. If however the reading followed by our translators is to be preferred, then the second member must be taken in a more restricted sense; for these persons had not abided in a preëxistent state with their father, the devil, as our Lord had dwelt from eternity with the Father. *Have seen* in the second member, must then be regarded also as used in the sense of *have learned*. In thus contrasting his Father with theirs, he prepares the way for that appalling declaration (v. 44), in which he not only denies their Abrahamic paternity in the truest, highest sense, but makes them the offspring of the devil, the father of lies and all wickedness.

39. The contrast just drawn between our Lord's Father and theirs, was so pointed, that they could not but feel that the latter was referred to in a bad sense. Our Lord had acknowledged (v. 37) that they were Abraham's seed. Now he so plainly intimates that their father is opposed to his Father, that they cannot but perceive that he hints at a parentage of theirs, less honorable than Abraham, and therefore reassert (see v. 33) with warmth, that he and no other is their national ancestor. In all this we see that our Lord was dealing with shrewd and subtle adversaries, who would not be driven or drawn away from their vantage ground, as children of Abraham and entitled thereby to rich covenant blessings. *If ye were Abraham's children*. This is reconciled with our Lord's admission in v. 37, by taking *children*, in the sense in which Paul used it in Rom. 4: 11, 12; 9: 7, 8, of Abraham's spirit-

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.

ω Ver. 37.

ual seed, or those of like spirit and temper with him. It should be noted that the word here rendered *children*, is a different one from that translated *seed*, in v. 37, which refers, when placed as here in strong contrast with *children*, to natural descent. *Ye would do the works of Abraham*, i. e. you would imitate his character and ready obedience to God. "Mark how the Lord, who elsewhere bases every thing like his Apostle Paul, upon *faith*, here lays also stress, like James, upon the evidence of *works*! He himself recognizes and distinguishes the works of Abraham!" Stier.

40. He proceeds to show them, in confirmation of what he had just said, that their conduct in seeking to kill him for declaring unto them the truth, is very unlike what might be expected from the true children of Abraham. Hence the verse begins with the adversative *but*, contrasting their conduct with the real children of Abraham, who would delight to follow in the footsteps of their father. *A man that hath told you the truth*. This appositional clause serves both as a reason why they conspired to kill Jesus, and as an aggravation of their guilt, in thus seeking the death of one whose only crime was, that he frankly and fearlessly declared to them the truth which he had received of the Father to make known to men (v. 28). It is worthy of note that our Lord continually refers to himself as the great Revealer, that is, as one who speaks rather than acts. All his works and miracles were subordinate to this great office of Teacher, being designed simply to confirm the truth of what he made known in his discourses. In the form of expression *a man*, in which our Lord refers to himself, we surely need not caution the reader against so unwarranted a conclusion, as that Jesus

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.

γ Ver. 26.

ζ Is. 63: 16; & 64: 8; Mal. 1: 6.

regarded himself a mere man. He employs this word, because he was only a common man in their estimation; and to show also, that it was a sin of no small magnitude, to proceed maliciously to compass the death of an ordinary man, for the simple fact of his speaking the truth. But although our Lord, in accommodation to their view of him, speaks of himself as *a man*, yet the following words *which I have heard from God*, bring out again his high preëxistent nature, as Son of God. Stier very justly finds in this passage a threefold progression: "they would kill a man—more than that one who had told them the truth—and finally truth as derived and transmitted from God." *This did not Abraham*. No act or design like this was ever chargeable upon Abraham. Alford refers to Gen. 18: as illustrating the benevolence of Abraham's character. The word *this*, is employed not with special reference to the desire of the Jews to put Jesus to death; but generically for this and every similar form of transgression.

41. *Ye do the deeds of your father*. Having thus emphatically denied that they evinced themselves to be the true children of Abraham, our Lord reiterates his assertion (see v. 38), that they had a father, whose offspring they fully showed themselves to be, by doing so faithfully and assiduously his works. They now begin to perceive the drift of his argument, and seek to parry off its force by claiming God to be their spiritual Father. *We were not born of fornication*, i. e. we were not born of a concubine as was Ishmael, but are the true descendants of Abraham. This first portion of their reply was designed to convict our Lord of an untruth, in denying that they were what they claimed to be, the true children of Abraham. But in the words *we have*

42 Jesus said unto them, 'If God were your Father, ye would love me: ^bfor I proceeded forth

a 1 Jo. 5: 1.

one Father, even God, they advance a step further, and aver that not only is Abraham their father so far as human paternity is concerned, but they have also one spiritual Father only, and he is God. Thus arrogating to themselves the highest parentage human and divine, they sought to evade the declaration that their father was the devil, which they suspected our Lord was about to make. Some commentators take the words, *we were not born of fornication*, in a spiritual sense: 'we are not children of spiritual fornication, that is, of idolatry, but are the worshippers of one God. In this great and essential feature by which we are distinguished from the nations around us, as Abraham was distinguished from the idolatrous people among whom he dwelt, we show ourselves to be his real descendants.' I prefer the other interpretation, but yet the general sense is much the same, their design being to convict him of falsehood in denying that they were the children of Abraham. Stier's objection to this view, that Abraham's connection with Hagar was not fornication, and therefore spiritual fornication must of necessity be referred to here, is of little weight, when the excited feelings of the speakers are taken into view, which would lead them to characterize by a strong and opprobrious term that connection, to make it the more clear and impressive that they did not spring from any such parentage.

42. Our Lord had shown them that they had no such spiritual descent from Abraham, as to entitle them to the blessings covenanted to that patriarch and his posterity. He now proceeds to reply to this new claim of theirs, that they had one Father, even God. *If God were your Father* (in the spiritual sense which you claim him to be), *ye would love me*. Children of the same parent love one another, and this in propor-

and came from God; 'neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

b Ch. 16: 27; & 17: 8, 25.

c Ch. 5: 43; & 7: 28, 29.

tion to the respect and veneration they feel for their father. To this common and well-known principle in the family relation, our Lord appeals in proof of his assertion, that his parentage and theirs were diverse and antagonistic. They had no sympathy with him in his divine work and mission; they sought in every way to thwart and embarrass him in his labors; they were even now planning his death, for the sole reason that he had honestly and plainly told them the truth. How then could they claim to be children of that God, who was in the highest and most peculiar sense his Father? *For I proceeded forth and came from God*. This shows his divine paternity, and establishes his claim to their love, if they were, as they professed to be, the children of God. Hence as explanatory of the preceding clause, it begins with *for*. The pronoun *I*, is here also emphatic, there being a continual reference in the discourse to his low human condition as Jesus of Nazareth, which was to the Jews so fatal a stumbling-block in the recognition of his true character. Some refer the words *proceeded forth*, to his Eternal Sonship, and *came*, to his office of Legate, Mediator. But no such difference is to be sought for in the words, as the last simply designates the completion of the act denoted by the former, or his fully entering upon the duties of the mission which he had come forth from God to take upon himself. *Neither came I of myself*, i. e. without being commissioned and sent of God. This is evident from the next clause *but he sent me* (i. e. commissioned me to come), which according to John's manner (see N. on 1: 20), repeats the same sentiment in the form of positive affirmation. With what frequency and emphasis did Jesus give utterance to this great truth, which underlies the whole scheme of redemption, that there was such essential unity between him

43 ^a Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.

44 ^e Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer

d Ch. 7:17.

and the Father, that no act of the one was to be regarded apart from or independent of the other. It is not therefore to be considered as a matter of little moment, or an unessential dogma, that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, and has the highest claims upon the adoration of all, as coeternal and coequal with the Father.

43. *Why do ye not understand my speech?* This question implies wonder at their spiritual dulness. Every thing he said, they interpreted in a gross and literal sense. The word rendered *speech*, literally signifies *manner* or *mode of speech, dialect*, and is used here in the sense of *saying, words, doctrines*, with particular reference to the external form or verbal costume in which they were spoken. Our Lord's whole discourse was eminently spiritual, and his manner of speech or spiritual dialect, they did not understand. *Even because, &c.* This answers the question. *Ye cannot* (a moral inability) *hear my word*, i. e. as Alford rightly remarks, the *matter* or contents of his discourses, the *word* itself. Had they been enlightened to discern the full and heavenly import of his doctrines, they would not only have understood his manner of speech, but have been enabled to take part in it themselves, as his chosen disciples doubtless often did, while they were journeying from place to place. But not being possessed of this spiritual discernment, they were always ready to attach to his words the most low and sensual meaning. They thus shut from themselves every ray of divine truth, which otherwise would have shone into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).

44. This verse brings out in climac-

derer 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.

e Mat. 13:38; 1 Jo. 3:8.

f Jude 6.

teric prominence, the awful reason why these persons had so little spiritual discernment, and were so averse to the truth. Their true paternity had been hinted at in v. 41, but now our Lord declares it in the plainest and most emphatic terms. *Ye are of your father the devil*, i. e. you are spiritually like him, bearing his lineaments as children resemble their natural father, practising his works, and joined with him in all evil. The pronoun *ye*, places in emphatic contrast their pride of ancestral descent as children of Abraham, with their true paternity as children of the devil. *Of your father*, i. e. deriving your character and mode of life from your father the devil. This intimate and internal relationship is expressed by the preposition, which is not simply *of* or *from*, but *out of*, referring not only to source, but to a participation in the qualities and character of the one from whom source is derived. The word *your*, need not to have been italicized in the English version, since it is expressed in the original by the force of the article. *And* (according to the well-known fact that children imitate the example of their parents) *the lusts of your father* (the devil) *ye will do*. The word *lusts* (literally, *earnest desires, longings*), in the New Testament, is generally employed in an evil sense, of those *desires* with which the mind is fixed on sensual or worldly objects. Here it is metaphorically put for the *objects*, upon which the mind, alienated from God and filled with irregular desires, fastens its supreme affections. *Ye will do*. An emphatic form of expression for *ye are determined to do*. "Your will is to do." Alford. The word *will*, is not here the auxiliary, but a verb having the sense of *to wish, will, desire*. It was a remark of Origen,

that the internal will of itself without its external accomplishment, is sufficient to constitute children of the devil, for they will what he wills and accomplish his lusts." *He* (emphatic in the original) *was a murderer*; literally, a *manslayer*, reference being had to the introduction of sin and death through his agency. Compare 1 John 3:12, where the murder of Abel is clearly affirmed to have been [suggested] "of that wicked one." Olshausen denies that reference is had here to the murder of Abel, a fact too isolated to justify the appellation of *murderer* here given to Satan. But was the murder of Abel, which led the bloody procession of murders that have come down the centuries, and which was the type of all the violence and bloodshed that have since desolated the earth, an isolated and comparatively unimportant event? Has it not a prominence in the sacred record (see Gen. 3:8-15; Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11), such as to justify the appellation here given by our Lord to Satan, as the instigator of Cain to this unnatural and wicked deed? So it seems to me, and with this exposition the context remarkably harmonizes. The evil designs of the Jews towards Jesus, which he had charged upon them (v. 40), were proof that they were the children of that wicked one, who in the very beginning of the history of our race, manifested his murderous nature in the instigation of Cain to the crime of fratricide. This is more simple and natural than to refer it, as do Olshausen, Tholuck, Alford, and others, to the temptation and seduction of Adam into a sin which brought death upon the whole human race. It is true that Adam's first sin, to the commission of which he was tempted by the adversary, was the type and source of all the subsequent transgressions of our race; but here the reference is not to sin in general, but to the particular crime of murder, which being already conceived in their mind (v. 40), was clear proof that they were the children of that "wicked one" (1 John 3:12), who incited Cain to slay his brother, and thus

showed his murderous nature from the very beginning of the history of our race. There are not wanting expositors who find in the words *from the beginning*, a reference to the murderous spirit possessed by Satan from the time of his first rebellion in heaven. This interpretation, although based on a truth, contains a reference too general and remote to suit the wants of the passage, and is therefore untenable.

Abode not in the truth; more literally, *stands not in the truth*. The idea is that from the time of his fall, he has been persistent in his apostasy from the truth. This clause according to John's usage, is the emphatic negative repetition of that which was affirmatively expressed in the preceding clause. There is no tautology in these great utterances, but an emphatic fulness in order to bring out the thought with point and precision. *Because there is no truth*, &c. Here *truth* is used subjectively: 'he abides not in the truth of God, because truth or truthfulness is not in him.' Robinson (Lexicon) gives this translation: "*he abode not in the truth* (as a rule of duty), *because there is no* (love of) *truth in him*." When (literally, *whenever*) *he speaketh a lie*. It is remarkable with what copiousness and energy of utterance, our Lord here depicts the character of Satan. In the preceding clause, a total absence of the principle of truthfulness was predicated of him. Here he is declared to be the very impersonation of falsehood, and the author of every lie. It is assumed that lying is his habitual practice, and whenever a falsehood is uttered by him *he speaketh of his own*; he gives outward expression of an inward and abiding principle essentially possessed by him, and in that sense, peculiarly and wholly his own. Alford remarks, that the article which accompanies the word *lie*, in the original, gives it a generic sense, as in the English expression *to speak the truth*, of which there is no corresponding form in regard to speaking or telling a lie. But a better explanation is to refer the article, to the idea of a lie implied in the negative clause, *there is no truth in*

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

him, which precedes. The word *lie*, is not therefore a generic term, but represents every falsehood which he utters, as evincing clearly that the principle of truthfulness is not in him. It must not from this be inferred, that intellectual or objective truth is not in Satan, for in James 2 : 19, it is said that "the devils believe and tremble." They have an intellectual perception of the great truth of God's existence and the future retribution of the wicked; but subjectively and as an object of love, truth has no residence whatever in them. *For he is a liar.* This is his true character, and hence *whenever he speaketh a lie*, he speaketh what is truly and appropriately *his own*. This sentence therefore explains and confirms the preceding one, and is introduced by the causal *for*. These reiterations are designed to give emphasis to the fact, that the devil is the arch deceiver, and the source of all error and falsehood. *Father of it.* Of what? Some expositors take the pronoun in the masculine, and render *of him*, that is, of the liar implied in the preceding clause, and referring, (as Bengel, Stier, and Alford think,) in a collective sense to the wicked and lying Jews. But this would be so sudden and abrupt a reference to the persons whom he was addressing, that I prefer the more usual interpretation, which refers the pronoun in the neuter, to *the lie* or *lying*, implied in the preceding word *liar*. So Winer: "*father of falsehood* is a notion more appropriate to John, who has a predilection for abstract terms." All lying is here declared to be traceable to the paternity of the devil. Hence by an easy transition of thought, all who practise lying, that is *all liars*, are of their father the devil. The Jews could not have failed to perceive the drift and intended application of these words of Jesus. But no special reference in direct terms was made to them, as the above named commentators suppose. Against their interpretation also it might be said, that *father of you* would be a weak and

46 Which of you convinceth

unmeaning repetition of, *ye are of your father the devil*, in the first clause of the verse; whereas this declaration of the twofold paternity of the devil as the father of these wicked Jews, and of all lies, would be justly regarded by them as equivalent to saying that they were liars and deceivers.

45. This verse stands connected with the preceding one, as the result of what is there affirmed. The Jews being children of the devil, and possessed of his moral traits, it was not singular that they loved the way of error and sin, and embraced falsehood rather than truth. Of course they rejected Jesus, who was the impersonation of truth, and therefore in his character the very opposite of the father of lies, by whom their conduct was influenced. *Because I tell you the truth.* This reason for their unbelief and hostility to him, shows that the causal sense given to the clause, *a man that hath told you the truth* in v. 40 (on which see Note), is the true one. It was our Lord's unwavering adherence to truth, and his frank and open expression of it, uninfluenced by the fear or favor of men, which excited against him the deadly hostility of the rulers and Pharisees. *Ye believe me not.* This shows that their rejection of the truth was wilful, and not the result of its being either dimly revealed, or beyond their natural capacity to understand. In the original a strong emphasis is given to *I*, as though our Lord interposed his low condition, as a reason why his declaration of his Messiahship was not credited by the Jews. 'Because *I*, a man whom you regard as so much your inferior in rank and station, have disclosed to you great and weighty truths, you make this the ground of rejecting my message and regarding me as an impostor.'

46. *Which of you convinceth*, &c. In this question our Lord challenges the Jews to convict him of any sin, which would render him unworthy of belief. The interrogation is equivalent to:

me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 ^o He that is of God heareth

g Ch. 10: 26, 27; 1 Jo. 4: 6.

'who of you impeaches my testimony, by convicting me of any sin?' His well-known sinless character was the highest proof of his truthfulness, and he therefore proceeds to inquire why, in view of this, they withhold from him their belief. To this there could be but one answer given. It was because of their deep-rooted aversion to the truth. Their father was the father of lies, and they partook of the same moral qualities which he possessed. Thus Jesus substantiates his charge made in v. 44, from their conduct on the present occasion. Infidels and rationalists, as Strauss and Müller, give to our Lord's question this low sense: "Can ye prove any error against me, any error in my conclusions?" But in that case, we should have expected a word in the original, of which there are several, signifying *error, falsehood, deceit*, and not the very word which signifies *sin* abstractedly considered, or as an actual transgression, having this meaning, as Stier correctly affirms, in this chapter (v. 34), throughout the whole gospel, the entire New Testament, and all the Scriptures. We cannot therefore agree with Tholuck, that Melancthon and Calvin hit the true point, when they retain indeed the signification *sin*, but comparing 1 Cor. 4: 4, interpret the expression only of transgression within the sphere of his office, and so far only of error. It is not simply a challenge, that no fault could be found in him in regard to his performance of the duties of the Messianic office. It rises high above this, and embraces all his acts and manifestations, in a word, his whole being and character, challenging the minutest inspection, and defying his enemies to point out a single instance in which he had committed a sin. Nothing short of a claim to absolute sinlessness fully meets the demands of the passage, especially in this connection, where Jesus stands

God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

as the living impersonation of truth, as opposed to the devil the father of lies, and instigator of all falsehood and error.

47. The reason is here given for their want of faith in him. They were not of God, and hence did not receive the words of God's Son. *He that is of God* is the same as *he that is born of God*, and is opposed to *ye are of your father the devil* in v. 44. The preposition *of*, has here the same signification of internal and intimate relationship as in v. 44. The children of the two kingdoms of light and darkness, bear a moral resemblance to those towards whom they sustain this relationship of children. Hence they are radically opposed to one another, and are placed here in strong contrast, there being between them this wide distinction, that those who are of God, place full confidence in all which He or his accredited messengers may say; while the very opposite to this is true of those who are opposed to his rule and authority. *Heareth God's words*, i. e. believes them and regulates thereby his life and conduct. This is the evidence of his filial relationship to God. The Jews did not furnish this evidence, and therefore the claim which they set up in v. 41, was proved to be false. This is distinctly reaffirmed in the next clause, *ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God*, which stands as the inevitable inference of the great truth here laid down. Thus ends our Saviour's argument, by which he fully supported his allegation that these wicked Jews were not the true children of Abraham, much less of God, as with such boasting confidence they claimed to be. It would be difficult to find elsewhere so close and convincing a train of argument, as that with which our Lord confounded his adversaries on this occasion.

48. *Answered the Jews.* The scribes and Pharisees during the preceding dis-

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and ^h hast a devil ?

cussion, which, as has been shown (see N. on. v. 33), was begun and carried on with those who professed to believe in Jesus, were doubtless gathering around him and listening intently to the words which fell from his lips. Either taking advantage of some pause of his discourse, or else interrupting his argument, they commence to heap abuse upon him. We can hardly believe that the words here recorded, were spoken by those who a little before were professing their belief in him; although it is not strange if some very speedily made shipwreck of their faith, which, as we learn from v. 31, was not yet deeply rooted or genuine. The term *Jews*, must therefore be referred here to the rulers and Pharisees, who now come forward again to annoy him and find some occasion by which to effect his death. *Say we not well?* The question is evidently grounded on the charge which our Lord had just made, that the Jews were not of God, inasmuch as they hated the truth, and loved falsehood and deceit. They tauntingly reply: 'However this may be, you cannot deny that we *speak well*, (i. e. with truth,) in charging you with being a *Samaritan and possessed of a devil*. To be a Samaritan was in their estimation to be an outcast from Israel, and unworthy a place or name among the people of God. Hence for a person to be so called, was the greatest reproach which could be heaped on him. The tense of the verb *say*, indicates that they had frequently made this remark respecting him. Their reply may therefore be thus paraphrased: 'Is not that common remark which we have made of you, well said, that you are a Samaritan? If we had no evidence of this before, the words which you have just spoken are amply sufficient to convince us of its truth.' *Hast a devil*. See N. on 7:20.

49. Two of the vilest charges had been made against our Lord, the first

49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.

h Ch. 7:20; & 10:20; ver. 52.

of which, as Stier remarks, sundered him from communion with Israel; the second, from that of Israel's God. To the former of these charges he makes no reply, thus evincing that Jew and Samaritan were both alike in his estimation, and that his purpose of love embraced all, Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. But to the second, which contains a serious charge of rebellion and opposition to God, he mildly replies by denying its truth. *I have not a devil*. 'I am neither insane, nor acting in rebellion to God. So far from this being true, *I honor my Father*; and it is because I do this, that *ye dishonor me*, by loading me with such opprobrious epithets and rejecting my words.' Such is the purport of his reply, which is couched in brief and modest language, and finely illustrates the testimony borne by Peter (1 Pet. 2:23), who may have had in mind just such occasions as this, as well as his trial before the Sanhedrim, on the morning of his crucifixion. The honor which he rendered to his Father, is here placed in strong contrast with the dishonor he was receiving from them; and the argument, the drift of which they could not but perceive, was, that in dishonoring him whose whole mission was to honor the Father, they likewise dishonored God.

50. *And* (literally *but*, with a slight adversative sense) *I seek not mine own glory*. 'Worldly honor or applause is a small thing in my estimation. The glory of the Father is the great object and aim of my mission. Hence in doing my Father's will, while I seek not mine own glory, I have no fear that it will be overlooked, or that my innocence will not be vindicated.' There is in the original an emphasis given to the pronoun *I*, which silently contrasts his humility with their habit of self glorification. *There is one that seeketh* (to promote my honor), *and judgeth* between me and you. See N. on 16:10, where this judgment to which our Lord looks

50 And 'I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

i Ch. 5:41; & 7:18.

for vindication from the charges of his enemies, is particularly referred to as the work of the promised Spirit. The humanity of Jesus appears very distinctly, in this affecting reference to the vindication of his character by the One whose commission he bears. As a man, he was not insensible to the obloquy and contempt which were so publicly heaped upon him; but his ardent love and devotion to the Father, caused him to lose sight of every other consideration, than the work which had been given him to do. He calmly reposes his honor in the keeping of his God, and relies on Him for judgment against his enemies. There is no discrepancy in this reliance upon his Father to judge between him and the wicked Jews, and what is declared by him in 5:22, that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" for this is a judgment between Christ and his enemies, in which he condescends to confront them before the tribunal of Infinite Justice, in order that it may be seen how false and malicious were the charges made against him. This being done, and our Lord's integrity fully vindicated, at the appointed time (Acts 17:31), he will himself come to judgment in all the glory of his Father, and with his holy angels, and pronounce sentence upon all mankind, according to the immutable principles of righteousness as contained in his revealed word. A question may arise as to the time when this judgment, so vindictory of our Lord's character, was to be passed. The answer is given in 15:8-11. It was not to consist in one judicial act at a given period of time, but was to be a continuous process of judgment, carried on by the Spirit and enduring to the end of time. It began on the day of Pentecost, and from that time to this, wherever the Spirit has been poured out, His great work has been to lead men to honor and glorify Jesus as their

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^kIf a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

k Ch. 5:24; & 11:26.

divine Saviour, apart from whom there is no way of escape from sin and death. See further, Note on 15:8-11.

51. Inspired with new and holy ardor, in view of his Father's protecting care and jealous concern for his honor, our Lord now declares in the most express terms, that the way to escape eternal death, is to keep his sayings. No one can fail to perceive a strongly marked contrast between the sorrowing spirit which threw itself for relief in the preceding verse, upon the paternal love of the Father, and the exultant joy, with which is announced in this verse, the great truth that in the keeping of his words is eternal life. Such passages bring out the humanity of Jesus in bold relief, and show that he fully shared in the joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, which are incident to human life. The calmness of mind and holy zeal which followed our Lord's committal of his cause to his Father, have oftentimes been witnessed in his followers especially in times of persecution. When they were brought to abandon all hope in themselves, and to place their reliance only in God, they became armed with new zeal for the conflict, and thus in their weakness and self-distrust found the element of their greatest triumph and success.

Verily, verily. A great truth is here to be announced, as in v. 34, and is therefore introduced by our Lord's usual form of solemn asseveration. *If any man* (see N. on 7:37) *keep my saying*, is equivalent to *abiding in my word*, in v. 31, on which see Note. The verb rendered *keep*, is a word of stronger signification in the original, signifying, *to have an eye upon, to give heed to, watch narrowly*; and hence does not here refer to the mere external act, but to the principle of obedience, founded upon the living word of Christ cherished in the heart of the believer, and leading him to have continual reference to the divine command in all

52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. 'Abraham is dead,

7 Zec. 1:5; He. 11:13.

that he does. This seed sown in the heart, will ever produce the fruits of obedience to Christ's commands. The original for *word*, in v. 31, and *saying*, in the present passage, is the same; and our translators would have done well, to have rendered them by the same word in our English version. *He shall never see death*; a Hebraism for *shall never die*, which in accordance with John's manner of speech, is by a denial of the contrary, a most emphatic declaration of the affirmative, *he shall have eternal life*. The form of negation in the original is intensive, *not at all, by no means*. Death is here taken in its highest and most essential sense. It is worthy of note, how our Lord progressively unfolds in terms more and more clear and unmistakable, the consoling truth, that death in its highest and most dreadful sense, shall never be visited upon the believer. In 5:24, it was incidentally referred to as a passing from *death unto life*. In 6:50, 51, 58, it is developed more fully, but in connection with the resurrection of the body. Here it is asserted in unqualified terms, that whoever keeps the word of Jesus *shall never see death*, and in 11:25, 26, the idea is expanded and enforced in the strongest and most unmistakable language.

Such calm and unshaken confidence in his Father, and so bold and, in their estimation, impious a declaration as that made in v. 51, call forth from his adversaries a repetition of the charge made in v. 48, in terms of still greater severity. There it was: 'Have we not spoken well when we charged you, as we have done repeatedly, with being a Samaritan and having a devil?' But now they repeat the charge in the most positive terms. It is no longer with them a matter of conjecture but of certain knowledge, that he is one doomed of God for his shocking impiety and blasphemous assumptions. 'Now we know (what before might admit of some

and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.

little uncertainty) *that thou hast a devil*.' With the same spiritual obtuseness which characterized all their opposition to Jesus, and either really or wilfully ignorant of what death was in its highest and most essential sense, they refer his words to the death of the body and are ready to exclaim: 'who is this that proclaims exemption from paying the debt of nature, on condition of obedience to his word? He must certainly be mad. He has a demon.' *Abraham is dead*. As physical death is here evidently referred to, it shows how strangely they had perverted the meaning of our Lord's words. Their continual reference to Abraham, evinces their determination to adhere to their declaration that he was their father. This is plainly reaffirmed in v. 53. *And the prophets*. They associate the prophets with Abraham, in order to make the absurdity of his words the more glaring. *And thou sayest* (notwithstanding the fact that Abraham and the prophets are dead), *If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death*. The construction *taste of death* in the original, is very emphatic, the literal meaning being *to have any taste whatever of death, to taste of it in any degree*. Their evident design in thus misquoting our Lord's words *shall not see death*, was to make them stronger and therefore more absurd and offensive. But Jesus might well have accepted the form of language in which they had given expression to this great truth, for in the sense in which he uttered it, the believer would neither see nor taste death. He would have no experience whatever of its power, being redeemed from the curse of the law by faith in Christ, and therefore wholly exempt from all its pains and penalties. The experience of death is often referred to in the Rabbinical writings, by the expression *taste of death*, the allusion, however, not being so much to a cup or goblet of which one tastes

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, "If I hon-

our myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God:

m Ch. 5: 31.
n Ch. 5: 41; & 16: 14; & 17: 1; Ac. 3: 13.

or partakes, as to the *bitterness* of death, a metaphorical expression familiar to us at the present time. Compare 1 Sam. 15: 32; Eccl. 7: 26.

53. *Art thou greater, &c.* This question presupposes him an impostor, for it was a matter of universal belief with the nation, that the Messiah was to be superior to any who had preceded him. The question partakes of the same national pride and folly, which characterized the woman of Samaria (4: 12), when she arrayed the greatness of Jacob against our Lord's apparent presumption in claiming to have at his disposal living water. *Which is dead.* The pronoun is masculine in the original, and should have been rendered *who*. They repeat the assertion in order to make it emphatic, and because they regarded it a triumphant refutation of his absurd statement. *And the prophets are dead.* The departure from the regular construction is suited to their excited feelings. *Whom makest thou thyself?* i. e. whom do you pretend to be, that you utter such absurd and impious sentiments?

54. The reply of Jesus is first to this last inquiry. Their assertion that Abraham was dead is virtually answered in v. 56. *If I honor myself*, i. e. arrogate glory to myself. *My honor is nothing*, i. e. all such glory would be of no account. Jesus refers here to a common principle, which all would acknowledge, that self-praise not only adds nothing to a man's reputation, but even damages it in the estimation of the wise. Hence he will not in reply to their question, trumpet forth his own praise by reiterating his high dignity and mission. In thus disclaiming all self-commendation, he prepares the way for a further disclosure of his intimate relations with God the Father, which we shall see in the sequel infuriated them to the highest degree. *It is*

my Father that honoreth me, and he in his own way and time will vindicate my honor by making known who I am. The expression *honoreth*, is what grammarians call the absolute present, and is designed to cover the past, present, and future, the whole office work of Jesus, from the time when he first took upon himself the work of human redemption, to the consummation of all things spoken of in 1 Cor. 15: 24-28. The honor here spoken of has primary reference to the power to offer eternal life, at which the Jews had taken such offence. But that power nevertheless presupposes the high dignity which Jesus claimed as the Son of God. *Of whom ye say, &c.* His testimony you cannot reject, for Him you claim to be your God. Stier says that "almost all expositors glide rapidly over the most weighty assurance given here, in which Jesus declares *His father* and the God who revealed himself in Israel, though by Israel He was not truly known, to be the same." The word *say*, refers to the boastful spirit with which their claim to the worship of the true God, was put forth. Our Lord does not deny that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was Israel's God, but simply rebukes the Pharisaic self-righteousness with which this was claimed by the Jews. Nor should any inference be drawn from these words, that the ruling Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Incarnate Word of the New, was not one and the same Being. See N. on 12: 41. Our Lord's words are to be taken in an objective sense, that is, as the thing appeared to the Jews.

55. *Yet ye have not known him*, although you make such pretensions of being his children (v. 41), and boast that He is your God. Some critics connect this clause with the preceding, and translate *of whom ye say, 'he is our God', and know him not.* But this

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.

presents less forcibly the contrast between their arrogant claims and real ignorance of God, and I prefer, therefore, the common punctuation and arrangement. *Ye have not known him* in the high and spiritual sense referred to in v. 19. Intellectual knowledge of God is not here meant, for no finite being can comprehend the Infinite One (Job 11 : 7), but correct views of his holiness, the spirituality of his worship, his designs of grace to fallen man as revealed in the Old Testament, in a word, all those great and fundamental views of God, which tend to abase and humble the creature, and to excite aspirations to be transformed to the moral image of the Most High. These were as unknown to them, as though hidden in impenetrable darkness. This ignorance of the Divine Being and perfections, was to the highest degree blameworthy, for had the Old Testament been read by them with a teachable spirit and sincere desire to know the truth, it would have made so clear a revelation to them of God, that they would at once have recognized Jesus as his Eternal Son. *But I know him.* The knowledge here spoken of not only embraces God's moral attributes revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, but also that cognition of his essential nature and being, of which Jesus was conscious, from the profound and intimate relations which from eternity had subsisted between him and the Father. The verbs translated *have known* and *know*, are different in the original, the latter referring to immediate knowledge, the former to that which is gained by observation or investigation. Our Lord's denial that the Pharisees had any knowledge of God, even such as resulted from the investigation of his word and works, and his own claim to full and perfect knowledge of Him, and that too by immediate cognition or intui-

56 Your father Abraham ^r rejoiced to see my day : ^q and he saw *it*, and was glad.

o Ch. 7 : 28, 29.

p Lu. 10 : 24.

q He. 11 : 13.

tion, apart from and independent of all those manifestations by which the Deity has revealed Himself to man, must have exasperated them to the highest degree, and prepared the way for their attempt upon his life in the manner recorded in v. 59.

If I should say, &c. As they had proved themselves liars by claiming God as their Father, so he avers that he would utter a falsehood by denying all knowledge of the Father. The antithesis is here strongly kept up between his perfect knowledge and their absolute ignorance of God. *Like unto you* has not the form of construction in the original, which denotes external resemblance, but a likeness of conduct and character, as in our expression of *your kind*. The next clause *but I know him*, is an emphatic repetition, and also designed to bring that declaration into close connection with *and keep his saying*, which is added, as a proof from his filial obedience, that his knowledge of the Father was genuine. We should never lose sight of the fact, that such expressions as *keep his word* or *saying*, refer to the obedience of the Son, as Messiah, God-man, in a state of voluntary subordination to the Father who sent him into the world. Olshausen, overlooking this great fact, says that "this language seems to favor the Socinian view of Christ." But such a remark he would have had no occasion to make, had he not interpreted the passage erroneously of the receptive act of the creature toward grace conferred, and lost sight of its natural and obvious meaning, *to keep or obey the divine command*.

56. The reference to Abraham seems to have a twofold object ; one, to confute the error of their assertion that Abraham was dead (vs. 52, 53) ; the other, to show how different was his estimation of the dignity of Jesus, from

theirs who boasted of being his children. *Your father Abraham*, i. e. Abraham your boasted father. *Rejoiced to see my day*; literally, *rejoiced* (in this) *that he should see my day*, i. e. in the anticipation of seeing me in my state of incarnation. The word rendered *rejoiced*, is the same as the one used in Matt. 5:12, and refers to a joy so great and exultant, that it finds expression in leaping and dancing. There can hardly be a doubt that *my day*, refers to the time of our Lord's incarnation or appearance on earth. The *days of Noah* (Luke 17:26), and *one of the days of the Son of man*, in v. 22 of the same chapter, have unmistakable reference to the time in which Noah lived on earth, and to the time of the manifestation of the Son of man. The *day of Christ* in Phil. 1:6, and the *day of the Lord* in 1 Thess. 5:2, are clearly referred by the context to the day of judgment, when Christ shall make his second advent in glory. But no such remote reference would suit the connection in which the expression *my day*, stands here; but on the contrary, the discussion, which hinges on the present condition and claims of Jesus, demands that it should be interpreted of Christ's appearance in the flesh, to achieve the work of human salvation. In the anticipation of a day so important to the destinies of man, Abraham greatly rejoiced.

And he saw it. This shows that Abraham was not dead in the essential sense of the term; and the argument which they had advanced against his proffer of eternal life, from the death of Abraham, was thus deprived of all its force. Abraham was declared to have enjoyed the actual vision of that in anticipation of which he so much rejoiced, and was therefore still living. This ought to have shown them in what sense our Lord employed the words *life* and *death*, in his present discourse. But in their reply, they stupidly and wickedly persist in attaching the low temporal sense to his use of those terms. We have no clue to determine the precise time when Abraham was favored with this sight of our Lord, in

the day of his manifestation in the flesh. The tense of the verb *saw*, shows that the event had already transpired. Some suppose that it was some time during the forty days of his temptation in the wilderness. Others with more probability, refer it to some season when he was by himself in meditation and prayer. But the precise time of the event is comparatively of little moment. The fact is all with which we have to do. The mount of Transfiguration shows that not only the sight of our Lord, but intercourse with him might be enjoyed by the blessed above, to whom might be accorded this special favor. There is therefore nothing strange or incredible in the assertion here made, that Abraham saw Jesus in his incarnate state. That this sight was one of special favor and blessedness, and that it bore some resemblance to the intimate communion which Moses and Elias enjoyed with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration, there can be little doubt, when reference is had to the great joy which Abraham felt even in its distant prospect, and the promise here given to it by our Lord himself.

Many attempts have been made to refer this to some theophany in Abraham's lifetime on earth. Some refer it to the manifestation of the Son of God among the three guests at Mamre (Gen. 18:2); especially to the promised visitation in v. 10. Others refer it strangely to the birth of Isaac, at which Abraham laughed; and others still, to Isaac's restoration from death (Heb. 11:19). Olshausen explains it of some vision of the "revelation of God realized in Christ," which Abraham enjoyed while he lived on earth. Had it referred to a sight of Christ in the actual days of his ministry, this distinguished expositor maintains that the verb should have been in the present tense, "*Abraham sees my day and rejoices*," because the ministry of Christ on earth was still continuing. But Olshausen seems to forget, that it may not have been a general or extended vision of the incarnate Redeemer during his whole earthly ministry, which is referred

57 Then said the Jews unto

him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?

to, but a beatified view of him at some particular period, which at the time when Jesus here spake of it, was already past. Such certainly is the sense which lies upon the face of the passage. Besides, as Tholuck well observes, if reference is had to a prophetic vision merely, in what then had Abraham a prerogative beyond that of other prophets? Another view, to which Stier refers as one which was held by Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, and Beza, is that it refers to a *spiritual prospective view* of the day of Christ (see Heb. 11:13), which some of these expositors regarded as the great day of revelation in judgment. So Bengel refers it to the anticipation of the day of the Lord's glory, "the day of the majesty of Christ." But how is this anticipated sight of a day of future glory reconcilable with the simple announcement, *and he saw it*? Language could not express in plainer terms the fact, that Abraham had already enjoyed that vision, to which, while on earth, he had looked forward with such joyous anticipation. Stier well remarks that the Lord gives a sublime assurance, that he was privy to the actual joy of Abraham at his manifestation in the flesh, as the object for which he had while in the flesh waited with the joy of hope. This excellent and profound commentator believes also, that there was an actual intercourse, though secret, between Abraham and Christ. No other view seems to me to meet the wants of the passage, which evidently hints at a mystery, which finds its counterpart and partial explanation at least, in the scene on the mount of Transfiguration.

57. The Jews refer the vision of Christ here spoken of, to the time of Abraham's life on earth. The point of their reply is this: 'If Abraham saw your day, you must have seen his, and how could that be, when you are not yet fifty years old?' It was this understanding of our Lord's words by the Jews, which has led so many commen-

tators to refer the vision of Christ to an event which took place during the lifetime of Abraham. But is it not quite clear, that according to their usual habit, they grossly perverted our Lord's meaning, in order to evade the force of his argument, and hold him up the more conspicuously as a madman possessed of a devil? If their understanding of the words as referring to a sight which Abraham enjoyed in his lifetime, was the correct one, how do our Lord's words prove or illustrate his argument that Abraham was not dead, as they had affirmed in v. 53? Although it was true, what they captiously advanced and with sinister purpose, that he had seen Abraham's day, and although he meets this new charge with the sublime declaration that such was the fact; yet there can be no question that they grossly perverted his words in this inference, his simple statement being, that the patriarch had looked forward with joyous anticipation to the time when he should see Him in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, while manifest in the flesh, and that he had actually enjoyed that sight in its full and glorious reality. The Jews had no license to affix to the words of Jesus any other than their plain and obvious sense; nor do commentators act wisely in attempting to reach the meaning of the passage by resorting to their reply, which is so manifestly a misrepresentation of his words. *Not yet fifty years old.* They speak in general terms, allowing him the greatest age which he or any of his friends could claim. *Fifty years* was the term of active human life, an age when the Levites vacated their office. This was the limit of a full life, which Jesus had not yet reached, but no inference is to be drawn from the passage, that he was at this time nearly fifty years of age, which would conflict with Luke 3:23. *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,

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, ^r I am.

59 Then ^s took they up stones

^r Ex. 3:14; Is. 43:13; ch. 17:5, 24; Col. 1:17; Re. 1:8.

they seek to convict him of an absurdity, such as no sane man would have uttered. Nothing short of a wilful misunderstanding could have led them to suppose that by the term *my day*, he intended to convey the idea of his actual abode on earth during the patriarch's lifetime. But in thus attempting to fasten upon him an absurdity, which should destroy his reputation as a sane man in the eyes of the people, they conduct him to that very point in the great argument which he has held with them, in which under the modest form of a reply to their direct question, he declares in the most sublime and explicit language his preëxistent state (*before Abraham was*), and his supreme divinity (*I am*). See N. on v. 58.

58. *Before Abraham was I am.* This is one of our Lord's great utterances, and teaches beyond all question the preëxistence of Christ. Many attempts have been made to elicit from the passage a different and inferior sense, but it has remained true to its testimony, and always will do so as long as the word of God endures. But not only does it teach Christ's preëxistence, but also his supreme divinity. The verb in *I am*, is a present which includes the entire duration of the past; a state of continuance through all past time down to the present moment. In this great sense, embracing the eternity past, and connecting it with the present, and by implication with the future, the expression answers to the word *Jehovah*, the *which was*, *which is*, and *which will be*, denoting continual and uninterrupted existence. See Ex. 3:14; 6:3; Rev. 1:4. It would have been the rankest blasphemy for our Saviour, to have declared this of himself had he been other than God. There is a strong antithesis between the verbs *was* and *am*, in the reply of Jesus, the

to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, ^t going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

^s Ch. 10:31, 39; & 11:33.
^t Lu. 4:30.

former literally signifying *became*, *came into existence*, *was born*; the latter, simple, continued, and necessary existence. This is rendered more emphatic by the use of the present tense in reference to time anterior to the birth of Abraham. It is what is called the universal present employed in reference to continued existence, embracing the past, present, and future.

59. The rage of his enemies became too ungovernable for them to listen to him any longer. Conceiving that he had uttered blasphemy—which indeed he had on the Socinian view—they took up stones, and would have killed him on the spot, contrary to all law and usage in regard to the place of punishment (see Numb. 15:36; 1 Kings 21:13; Acts 7:58; Heb. 13:11-13), had not Jesus eluded their violence in the way here mentioned. "Instead of *worship* follows *stoning*." Stier. The idle question has been started by some, where they obtained these stones. Repairs were almost continually going on in the temple, which would furnish abundance of these missiles. Stier cites from Josephus an instance where stoning in the temple is narrated. Their fury was too sudden and violent to warrant us in supposing that they went out of the precincts of the temple for these stones; and this also would be incongruous with so immediate a result, as is indicated by the words *Jesus hid himself*. In regard to this last mentioned act, there is no need, with Webster and Wilkinson, of supposing a miraculous withdrawal of himself (see N. on Matt. 4:3 end), although, as Tholuck very justly observes, there is an intimation of a special providence in the transaction. His hour had not yet come (see v. 20). He doubtless concealed himself in the crowd of friends, who gathered around him to

CHAPTER IX.

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

2 And his disciples asked him,

protect him from violence. *Went out of the temple*, as soon as he could do so without observation. *Going through the midst of them*. This is not strange nor necessarily miraculous, for after *Jesus* had withdrawn himself from their observation, they were doubtless engaged in warmly discussing the points of his discourse, and planning their future course of action in reference to him. Being thus gathered into groups and their attention abstracted from every thing around them, he could quite easily *go through the midst of them*, and so *pass by* them to a place of retirement and safety. The latter portion of this verse, from the words *hid himself*, is regarded as spurious by many of the best commentators, but, as it appears to me, without sufficient reason.

CHAPTER IX.

1-41. A MAN BORN BLIND IS HEALED ON THE SABBATH. OUR LORD'S SUBSEQUENT DISCOURSES. *Jerusalem*. In the interval between the occurrence with which the preceding chapter closed, and the healing of this blind man, those events took place recorded in Luke 10: 25-42; 11: 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 8: 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. I cannot agree with Stier, Olshausen, and Webster and Wilkinson, that the incident of the healing of the blind man took place on the same day in which he was driven from the temple; and especially with the view of the latter of these commentators, that it was the last day of the feast, for it would crowd that day with incidents and discourses which

saying, Master, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

a Ver. 34.

could not be well compressed into so short a period. Besides, as Alford remarks, "the circumstances under which *Jesus* here appears, are too usual and tranquil to have succeeded immediately to his escape in 7: 59." To this reason for rejecting Stier and Olshausen's view may be added another. Is it to be supposed that when he was fleeing for his life from his infuriated enemies, that his disciples would remain gathered around him, as the question put in v. 2 presupposes? Is it not far more likely that they dispersed in different directions, and were not reunited to him until he had reached a place of safety? See N. on 10: 22.

1. *Passed by*, i. e. passed along through the city. This is the participle of the same verb employed in the last clause of the preceding chapter. Webster and Wilkinson therefore give this explanation: "*passing on* as just related, in his way from the temple." There is no doubt that the blind man sat near the temple, like the one mentioned in Acts 3: 2, but this furnishes no reason, why the incident here related happened at the time when *Jesus* fled from the temple to avoid being stoned. *He saw a man*, &c. This would seem to indicate that no application for aid or restoration to sight had been made by the blind man, either to *Jesus* or his disciples. It is probable that as our Lord passed along, at sight of him he paused in commiseration of his unhappy condition. This gave opportunity for the question here proposed by his disciples. *Blind from his birth*. His blindness was therefore incurable.

2. It was the commonly entertained opinion of the Jews, that severe and malignant diseases and all special judgments, were referable to sins of more than ordinary magnitude. It was in accordance with this view, that Job's

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

^b Ch. 11:4.

three friends attributed his calamities to heinous sins of which he must have been guilty, to incur to such a fearful extent the judgments of God. Natural reason would always come to this conclusion in regard to special afflictions, unless enlightened by the word of God. *Asked him, &c.* The disciples felt assured that Jesus could solve the peculiar difficulty which rested upon this case. Had the man been stricken with blindness some time during his life, they would have felt no hesitancy in referring the cause to his own personal sins. But his blindness from birth seemed to fasten the sin, of which this was the expression of God's displeasure, upon his parents. As to the supposed belief of the Jews, that the souls of men preexisted before their birth into this world, no argument whatever can be drawn in proof of this from the passage before us; for while it is true that the man could not have been the cause of his own blindness, unless he had sinned before his birth, the whole question turns on the supposed sin of his parents, the first clause being introduced to give the only alternative, without implying that it was the probable or even possible cause of his calamity. The sentiment is: 'did this man sin (before his birth, a thing hardly supposable), or his parents which is the more probable supposition?' Trollope says that it was a Rabbinical notion, that unborn babes were capable of sin in the womb. His authority for this assertion, I have been unable to find. *That he was born blind, not became blind*, for the calamity itself was not so much the object of wonder, as that he should have been *born* in this sad condition. This clause denotes the result or effect of the supposed fact, that either he or his parents had sinned. See N. on Matt. 1:22.

3. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor*

4 I 'must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.

^c Ch. 4:34; & 5:19, 36; & 11:9; & 12:35; & 17:4.

his parents, in such a sense as to have been the occasion of his blindness. There is here no denial of actual transgression proceeding from a sinful nature, but simply that it was a special judgment inflicted for some sin of great enormity committed by him or his parents, as was assumed in the question proposed by his disciples. *But* (he was born blind) *that the works of God* (i. e. God's power) *should be made manifest in him*, i. e. in his being miraculously restored to sight. There is some doubt whether the word *that*, denotes here the cause of his being born blind, or the result of that great calamity. Olshausen adopts the latter view, that "it simply denotes the agency of divine grace, which in the phenomena of suffering again opens fountains of happiness." But with Tholuck, Webster and Wilkinson, and Stier, I prefer the former of these senses, as suiting better the doctrine of divine providence, by which every event has its use and design, and helps to form a combined and harmonious whole.

4. Our Lord had his prescribed work to do, which admitted of no delay or interruption. *I must work the works of God*, i. e. I must perform those miracles of love and mercy, which it was designed that I should accomplish when I was sent into the world. This is spoken in reference to the miraculous cure which he was about to effect upon the blind man. There can be no doubt that the *works of God* here spoken of, are the miracles of healing which our Lord was to perform while on earth, and this shows in what sense the *works of God* in v. 3, is to be taken. The word *day*, is here put for the allotted time of his earthly ministry; the *night* refers to its termination by his apprehension and death. The sentiment is similar to that of Luke 13:32, 33. A short time previous to

5 As long as I am in the world, ^dI am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken,

d Ch. 1: 5, 9; & 3: 19; & 8: 12; & 12: 35, 46.

this, he had narrowly escaped being stoned; but his work was not for that reason to cease, inasmuch as here was a blind man, whose cure was to give occasion for the utterance of several great and important truths relative to his own character and mission. *When no man can work.* A general and well-known truth is here asserted, that man's earthly work ceases at the hour of his death. Our Lord's allotted work on earth would therefore be soon brought to a close, by the violent death which was to be inflicted upon him. As God-man, Mediator, Intercessor, and final Judge, he had a great work to perform in the future, but here reference is had solely to his earthly ministry.

5. *As long as I am in the world.* This explains the preceding phrase, *while it is day*, and shows that no reference whatever is had to the waning day, which rendered it necessary for Jesus to heal the blind man immediately, lest the shades of night should interfere with his benevolent act. *I am the light of the world*, is to be taken in a spiritual sense, although suggested by the presence of the blind man, to whom he was about to impart the gift of natural vision. His restoration to sight was the type or symbol of the spiritual vision, which it was our Lord's province to give as the Light of the world. It was befitting him while on earth to give sight to those naturally as well as spiritually blind; and this verse, therefore, confirms and illustrates the preceding sentiment, that he was under a moral necessity to actively discharge the duties of his ministry, as long as he was upon earth, inasmuch as he was the light of the world, and the spiritual vision of men was so impaired by sin. The repetition of *the world*, in the second member, gives emphasis to the antithesis between Je-

he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.

e Ma. 7: 33; & 8: 23.

sus, the source of all moral light, and the *world*, into which he came to impart light and salvation to men. See N. on 12: 47.

6. Our Lord now proceeded to give sight to the blind man. So far as the narrative is concerned, he seems, contrary to his usual habit, to have said nothing to the man, either in regard to his faith in him, or his desire to be healed. As our Lord's reply to the question of his disciples (v. 2), had doubtless been heard by him, there is nothing improbable in the conjecture, that he was brought thereby into such a state of believing desire, that Jesus, who knew his heart, saw fit to effect his cure without any preliminary questions, as to his faith or desire to be cured of his blindness. *He spat on the ground.* Some expositors, who are ever seeking to avoid the supernatural in the works of Jesus, claim that there was some medicinal virtue in this ointment made of the ground and spittle. Had there been any such virtue, it could only have been effective upon eyes rendered weak through disease or over use, and must have been utterly powerless to restore to sight one who had been blind from his birth. The act of Jesus must be regarded, therefore, as only an external sign, serving to establish a visible connection between him and the blind man, so that all who witnessed the miracle, might be satisfied that the healing virtue was imparted from him. See N. on Matt. 8: 3. It was also designed to awaken and confirm the man's faith, that he underwent this process, and was afterwards sent, as Naaman was sent to Jordan by Elisha (2 Kings 5: 10), to the pool of Siloam with the directions here given. *Anointed the eyes*; literally, *laid on the ointment upon his eyes*. The idea is that his eyes were well covered with the ointment.

7 And said unto him, Go, wash
 in the pool of Siloam, which is
 by interpretation, Sent. ⁹ He
 went his way therefore, and wash-
 ed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbours therefore,

^f Ne. 8:15.

7. The verb rendered *wash*, does not refer to the ablation of the whole body, the Greeks having another word to express that idea; but it is used here of the eyes only. It is evident from the nature of the case, that the blind man must have been conducted by some one to the pool, although some persons in his condition pass from place to place with almost the certainty of those endowed with vision. *The pool of Siloam*. See N. on Luke 13:4. Dr. Robinson locates this pool at the mouth of the valley of the Tyropœan. There was an upper or northern one, in a small reservoir under the western wall of the city. From this the stream flows about a quarter of a mile to the lower pool, and thence onward, a beautiful rill, winding its way to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Dr. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 524) says that it is a small rill, which runs across the road to some gardens in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and is soon exhausted among beds of radishes and cucumbers. *Which is by interpretation* from the Hebrew into the Greek. *Sent*, or more in accordance with the original Hebrew *a sending forth*, referring doubtless in its primary use, to the artificial sending forth of water by means of a trench or aqueduct. Some expositors make the name symbolical of the water of life sent from above, or the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. There can hardly be a doubt that John referred to its name, as very appropriate to the sending of this blind man to its waters to perfect his cure; but that it was given with the specific prophetic view of this act, or as symbolical of Christ who was sent into the world, is more than we should dare to affirm. *He went his way*; literally, *went away* to the pool, as he was directed.

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*.

^g See 2 Ki. 5:14.

Washed. The original shows that he performed this act himself. *And came* to his own house, as is evident from the next verse. The simple terms in which this remarkable miracle is related, so different from the usual description of that which is uncommon and marvellous, cannot fail to be observed by every intelligent reader. *He went, washed, and returned seeing*. These are the great outlines of the picture, which are delineated in the original by the employment of only seven words. But what hopes and fears must have agitated this poor man, as he groped his way to the pool; with what trembling excitement must he have applied the water to his eyes; and above all, how sudden and overwhelming the joy with which he first had blessed experience of light—that glorious gift of heaven, to which through all his dark and weary pilgrimage up to that hour, he had been a stranger.

8, 9. *Neighbors* is here taken in its usual sense, of those who lived near to him. *They which before had seen, &c*. Literally, *they who were in the habit of seeing him that he was blind*. The passers-by had often noticed him, and hence he was well known to many. In some editions, the reading is *that he was a beggar*, instead of *that he was blind*. Alford adopts this reading, on the ground that his sitting as a beggar, was a much more natural question on which his identity would turn, than the fact of his having been blind. But this would seem to me a reason why the reading was altered in some Codices to a *beggar*, by over-wise copyists who wished to improve on the text. *Is not this he, &c*. Such an astonishing change had been wrought upon him in his restoration to sight, that they who knew him best, could hardly believe the evi-

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, ^a 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,

dence of their senses, that he was the same blind beggar, that had so long sat by the wayside. The question here is of that sort in the original, which implies an affirmative answer. Some of these persons reply in the most positive terms, *this is he*. Others admit a close resemblance, but can hardly be persuaded that he is the poor blind man, that had so often attracted their notice while passing by. He himself puts the matter to rest, however, by declaring himself to be the very man, who a little before was blind.

10, 11. *Therefore* in view of so astonishing a change. *How were thine eyes opened?* The question here proposed was one of natural curiosity. We have no reason to suppose, that they were influenced by any sinister motives in proposing it. They may have suspected that it was Jesus, who had wrought this miracle upon the man; but of this they had no certain knowledge, until they were informed of the fact by the man himself. His reply brought out all the particulars of the transaction. It was not however so, when he was interrogated by the Pharisees (v. 15), towards whom he was far less communicative. *I received sight*; literally, *I saw again, recovered my sight*. "Without much impropriety a person may be said to *recover* or be *restored* to that which is the general condition of mankind, though individually he was never before in that condition." Webster and Wilkinson.

12. From their officiousness in bringing this man to the Pharisees, it is evident that if the question proposed in v. 10 arose from curiosity, the referral of the miracle to our Lord so aroused

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.

h Ver. 6, 7.

their prejudices, that they put the second inquiry as to where Jesus was, with evil intention. Some expositors, however, put a more favorable construction both upon the inquiry *where is he?* and their subsequent visit to the Pharisees, imputing both these acts to a desire to have the matter investigated, and the fraud, if any there was in the transaction, fully exposed. Such is the view of Doddridge.

13, 14. The Pharisees here referred to evidently constituted a tribunal, probably, the one sometimes called the lesser or petty Sanhedrim. *Him that aforetime was blind*; literally, *they brought him to the Pharisees, the one formerly blind*. His previous blindness is thus referred to in a more emphatic manner, than though the pronoun had been placed in juxtaposition with the clause expressive of the previous condition of the man. *And it was the sabbath day, &c.* This contains the ground of the proceedings sought to be instituted by the Pharisees against Jesus. It does not constitute the reason why the man was brought to the Pharisees, as some expositors interpret the connection. The words *when Jesus made the clay*, are especially inserted, because, as Lightfoot has shown, the application to the eyes of any ointment or mixture was forbidden on the sabbath day. In the estimation of the Pharisees, our Lord had violated the sabbath, by having made clay and anointed with it the eyes of the blind man.

15. *Then again* in reference to the inquiry made before in v. 10. This inquiry is to be regarded in the light of a judicial investigation. Hence the

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.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the

‡ Ver. 33; ch. 3:2.

man, who seems to have been possessed of more than ordinary intelligence and shrewdness, is more brief and guarded in his reply. See N. on v. 11. The question as to *how he had received his sight*, is an admission on the part of these Pharisees that a miracle had been performed on the man; and yet their inference in v. 16, is that the person whom they acknowledged to have wrought the miracle, was a wicked man, because he kept not the sabbath. *Therefore* is illative in time, *then, upon this*, and also slightly so in thought; for it introduces a conclusion from what had just been said of the mode in which Jesus effected the cure, which they pretended to regard as labor forbidden by the law of the sabbath. *Is not of God*; literally, *is not from God*, i. e. is not a prophet, as he declares himself to be. They seek to overthrow the official standing of Jesus, and hence are hasty to express their opinion that he can be no true prophet, who would thus violate the sabbath. They overlooked the beneficent deed of Christ, and the evidence, which the man was not slow to perceive (see v. 17), that he was a prophet, endowed with miraculous powers, and thought only of making this an act which they might turn to his prejudice. *Others said, &c.* These were probably, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Gamaliel, and others of like integrity of character, who took more correct views of this affair. The clause *that is a sinner* (i. e. a contemner and violator of God's law), refers to the words *not of God*, in the preceding sentence. The same idea is contained in both clauses, only the one is positively expressed;

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.

‡ Ch. 7:12, 43, & 10:19.

† Ch. 4:19; & 6:14.

the other, negatively. There were but two views that could be taken of Jesus, either as one commissioned of God, or a most vile and consummate impostor. *Such miracles*, evincing such benevolence and unheard of power. The miracles of Jesus all comported with what he professed to be—the Messiah of God. The tricks of jugglers were as unlike the stupendous miracles he performed, as their low and debased character differed from his life of sinless purity. This heaven-wide difference between his miracles and those pretended to be wrought by experts in legerdemain, was fully apprehended by the wise and good men of the Sanhedrim, and advanced by them as proof positive, that he could not be the impostor they charged him to be. Webster and Wilkinson remark, that "the unbelieving party rely on their one objection [the pretended violation of the sabbath], in opposition to a great number of proofs in his favor—the others rely on the many proofs [from his miracles and other sources], as more than counterbalancing the single objection." *A division*. See N. on 7:43.

17. As we hear no more on this occasion, of the party friendly to Jesus, it is probable that, finding themselves in a decided minority and that their expostulations were of no avail, they either remained silent spectators, or else left the assembly. *They* (i. e. the party inimical to Jesus) *say unto the blind man* (so called not from his present but his former condition) *again, &c.* They had before questioned him (v. 15), and now they resume their inquiries, hoping that something might be elicited from him prejudicial to the

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.

character of Jesus. Hardly in any instance does their conduct appear so pitifully mean, as when by these repetitious and puerile interrogatories, they seek to draw something from this poor man, upon which they may found an accusation against our Lord. *What sayest thou, &c.* There is here but one question, the words, *that he hath opened*, being equivalent to *in that he hath opened*, or, *as to his having opened*, for they could not have expected a denial from him that Jesus had restored him to sight, which he had twice before affirmed (vs. 11, 15), giving at one time all the particulars of the cure wrought upon him. The question is simply this: 'What hast thou to say in regard to what you have already stated, that he opened your eyes? You have heard the opinion of others in regard to this matter. Let us now have yours.' The pronoun in the original is very emphatic, bringing the man in prominent contrast with those whose opinions have just been given. *He said, he is a prophet.* What a noble and courageous testimony from this poor and obscure man, before the most powerful and learned of the nation. They could see nothing in this wondrous miracle but evidence that Jesus was an impostor; he felt that no human being without the aid and favor of God, could have performed such a cure, and therefore modestly but boldly avers his belief, that Jesus is nothing less than a prophet. The answer of this man shows that the previous question of the Pharisees contains but one interrogation. Some expositors find in the man's use of the word *prophet*, instead of *Christ*, a desire to avoid exasperating them too highly. But I should rather infer that he had not yet attained to the conception of Jesus as the Messiah. See vs. 35-38, where our Lord indoctrinates him into his divine Son-

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

ship, of which he had no previous knowledge.

18. 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. They summon therefore his parents to be interrogated on this point, hoping to intimidate them to some admission of deceit in this matter. *The Jews* (i. e. the members of the Sanhedrim) *did not believe*, i. e. they pretended not to believe, for sufficient evidence of the man's blindness had already been furnished them in his own statement, corroborated as it was by the testimony of those persons who brought him before the council (v. 13). The phrase *that he had been blind*, is added to explain the words *concerning him*, the construction in the original being more lively and emphatic, than though it had been *concerning his having been blind*, or *that he had been blind*. In the words *and received his sight*, the denial does not refer to the fact that the blind man had now the possession of the gift of sight, but that he had been blind and recovered power to see, as he had stated. *Until they had called, &c.* This does not imply that even then, they believed the fact which they here deny; but only that they required more evidence, and avowed their determination to regard the whole affair as a wicked fabrication, unless corroborated by further and more satisfactory testimony. See N. on Matt. 5: 18. *The parents.* Ebrard thinks that these were aged beggars. But we have no evidence of this. *That had received his sight.* The definiteness of the assertion, shows that these words are to be conceived as those of the Evangelist.

19. The form of the interrogation here put by the Pharisees to the pa-

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:

m Ch. 7: 13; & 12: 42; & 19: 38; Ac. 5: 13.

rents of the blind man, is one which on its face evinces their doubt that he had ever been blind. By thus intimating their belief that some deceit had been practised, they hope to induce the parents to acknowledge it, in order to curry favor with persons of such high station and influence. *Is this your son, &c.* The question is threefold and was so understood by the parents. 'Is this your son? Do you mean to affirm that he was born blind? How then do you pretend to account for the fact that he now sees?' This fulness of interrogation furnished a better opportunity, if the parents of the blind man were so disposed, for them to deny some one or more of the facts here presented, and thus to confess for the purpose of ingratiating themselves with the rulers, that they or their son had been guilty of collusion with Jesus, in pretending a miracle where there had been none. *Whom ye say* (but probably without the shadow of truth) *was born blind*; literally, *that he was born blind*, the subject of the dependent clause being made the object of the principal one for the sake of emphasis.

20, 21. The first two questions of the Pharisees are answered by the parents of the blind man in the affirmative; but in view of the excommunication from the synagogue, with which they were to be visited who should confess that Jesus was Christ (v. 22), they are cautious and non-committal in regard to the third inquiry. *By what means, &c.* They disavow all knowledge of the means by which their son had recovered his sight, and in order to rid themselves of all complicity in the affair, deny that they have any knowledge whatever of the person who ef-

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

n Ver. 24; ch. 16: 2.

fected the cure. They prudently refer the Sanhedrim to their son for the explanation of this strange affair, and as it will appear in the sequel, they could not have put the vindication of the miracle into better hands. It is not necessarily to be inferred, that these parents told an untruth in denying all knowledge of the means by which their son had been restored to sight, for they may not yet have had opportunity to learn from him the full particulars of his cure. They could hardly have been ignorant, however, of the name of the person (see v. 11) who had performed the cure, and were certainly deficient in that straightforward boldness which, on this occasion, marked the honest and manly demeanor of their son. *He is of age, i. e.* has arrived to years of discretion, and is capable of replying for himself. *Ask him: he shall speak for himself, i. e.* answer in regard to his own matters. The repetition of the pronoun in these clauses, although necessary in the English construction, is not so in the Greek, and therefore emphatically indicates the perturbed and anxious state of mind of these parents, who would thus shift the responsibility of replying to the Pharisees upon their son, making the most emphatic reference to him, as the one who should properly be questioned.

22, 23. These verses contain the reason why his parents devolved the responsibility of replying to the Pharisees, upon their son. It is a fair inference that it was fear rather than ignorance, which kept them from naming Jesus as the author of the cure. The question is open, however, how far they had been made acquainted with the particulars of the miracle (see N. on v. 21). *For*

should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

24 Then again called they the

man that was blind, and said unto him, ^c Give God the praise: ^p we know that this man is a sinner.

o Jos. 7: 19; 1 Sa. 6: 5. *p* Ver. 16.

the Jews (i. e. the Sanhedrim) *had agreed, &c.* We are not informed as to the time when this agreement was made. It could not, however, have been a long time previous. Perhaps it was in the interval between his escape from the temple (8: 59), and his reappearance in public on this present occasion. Reference is had no doubt to an agreement or understanding, which was noised about among the people, and not to any formal or written decree of the Sanhedrim. *Did confess*, i. e. openly acknowledge. *That he (Jesus) was Christ*. Had the parents referred the miracle to the healing power of Jesus, they feared that this would have been regarded by the Sanhedrim, as a virtual confession that Jesus was the Messiah. They are too honest to admit that any deceit was practised, as the Pharisees hoped they might be overawed to do; and yet too timid to make any avowal, which would compromise them as the followers of Jesus. *He should be put out of the synagogue*, i. e. should be excommunicated. There were three kinds or stages of excommunication. "The first continued thirty days, the person being debarred the bath, shaving the head, and any nearer approach to another, than four cubits; he was a mourner, but might be present at public assemblies. If he remained obstinate at the end of thirty days, the *second* kind was superadded; by which he was laid under a heavy curse, was excluded from all assemblies, and from all intercourse with others. The *third* species mentioned by the later Rabbins, who describe it as an utter and perpetual exclusion from all the privileges of the Jewish people, both civil and religious." Rob. Lex. This third form of excision was oftentimes punishment by death. See N. on 16: 2. It was probably the first of these forms here referred to, to be

followed by the others, unless the ban were removed on evidence of repentance. *Therefore* through fear of incurring this sentence of excommunication. It shows how terrible was this ban of excision, that these parents, rejoicing as they must have done over their son thus unexpectedly restored to sight, should have yielded to their fears, and exposed him to the dangers from which they themselves shrunk in dismay.

24. Finding that they could elicit nothing from the parents, which would be condemnatory of Jesus, or throw suspicion on the genuineness of the miracle, they recall the man, who during the examination of his parents had been caused to withdraw from the court, and in blustering tone, demanded of him that he should *give God the praise*, and no longer attribute his cure to a man who was a sinner. Such appears to be the obvious sense of the passage, although Stier, Olshausen, and Alford, take the words *give God the praise*, as a solemn adjuration to tell the truth, and acknowledge that there was some error or deception in the matter. But this is a forced interpretation, and the reference to Josh. 7: 19 is not in point, for the glory there to be given to the God of Israel, as is evident from the next verse, is repentance and confession of sin to God; while confession to man or the revelation to Joshua of the truth, is urged upon Achan in separate and distinct terms. This translation, moreover, assumes that the Pharisees were still disposed to deny that the man had been blind and restored to sight; a thing very improbable, when the testimony of the parents in these particulars so fully corroborated that of their son. It is better to consider the question as resulting from a change of tactics, so to speak, which was to acknowledge the miracle wrought upon the man, but attribute it to the direct

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.

26 Then said they to him

power of God, with which Jesus had no connection other than a pretended one. The sentiment then would be: 'We acknowledge that you have been wondrously endowed with the gift of sight, but let God have the glory of the transaction, for *we know that this man is a sinner.*' The pronoun *we*, is in the original emphatic, and imparts this sense: '*we* the highest council in the land, in view of all the circumstances, have now deliberately formed this judgment of his character, and we expect from *you* a ready acquiescence in our superior wisdom and discernment.' This view makes the answer of the man pertinent, which would be far otherwise, if the other interpretation is the true one. We are the more confirmed in this exposition by Luke 17: 18; and Acts 12: 23, where this form of expression is used in the sense which is usually given to the passage before us. The two clauses, *give God praise* (the article is wanting in the original), and *we know that this man is a sinner*, are evidently antithetic; God the Giver of all good and Author of all mercies being contrasted with a low and worthless impostor, who would arrogate to himself the glory of this miraculous cure which was to be referred to God alone.

25. The man prudently forbears to argue the question as to the character of Jesus, but sturdily repeats his statement, that he was once blind but now was restored to sight. He had no need to repeat the name of him who had performed so miraculous a cure. His reaffirming one item of his story was a reaffirmance of the whole. Hence the Pharisees in their impotent endeavors to make something out of this transaction, begin to question him again on the manner in which Jesus effected the cure, hoping even yet to draw something

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?

from his examination prejudicial to Jesus, or at least which would impugn the man's veracity.

26, 27. To their reiterated inquiries as to the particulars of his cure, the man refuses to repeat the story, referring them to his former statement, and boldly and with somewhat of irritation recharging them with wilful unbelief. *I have told you already (or just now).* He had twice before related the essential particulars of his cure, once to his neighbors and acquaintances (v. 11), and again to the Sanhedrim (v. 15). *Ye did not hear*, i. e. did not believe my statement. It was not necessary for him to learn this from any positive declaration on their part. Their contemptuous opinion of Jesus (v. 24), who he felt assured was a prophet, was sufficient evidence that they rejected his statement. *Wherefore*, i. e. to what purpose. The question is a strong denial on his part of the utility of repeating the story of his cure. *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 v. 24, they declared themselves to have formed in regard to the character of Jesus. It is as though the man had said: 'Is there any hope that such unbelievers as you will ever become the disciples of the man whom you so bitterly hate?' So Alford explains: 'You seem so anxious to hear particulars about him, that you must surely be intending to become his disciples.' The man's words are full of honest scorn and indignation at their injustice and hypocrisy.

28. Stung to the quick at such a re-

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,* ² we know not from whence he is.

ply from one so much their inferior, instead of rebuking with dignity his want of respect for the presence in which he stood, they lose their temper and fall to abusing and railing at him. *Then*, better *therefore*, as their abuse was the result of his courageous and cutting reply. *They reviled him and said*; literally, *they reviled him, saying*, i. e. they taunted him with the words here spoken. *Thou art his disciple*, but do not imagine that we have any such intention, for *we are Moses' disciples*. What he had said in irony, they pretended to receive as words spoken in earnest. They did this in order to contrast contemptuously Jesus of Nazareth with Moses their great lawgiver. The emphatic words are *thou* and *we*, but the antithesis really lies in the false assumption, that one who was the disciple of Moses could not be Christ's disciple. This is still further expanded in the next verse, where they intimate that Moses and Jesus acted under far different commissions.

29. *We know that God spake*, &c. Their knowledge of the divine legation of Moses, was derived from the very same kind of evidence which they rejected as proof of the divine mission of Jesus (see Ex. 4: 1-9, 29-31). Our Lord performed far more numerous and stupendous miracles, as the credentials of his mission, than did Moses. The pronoun *we*, in this clause is also emphatic, there being an implied contrast between their superior discernment in thus recognizing and adhering to the claims of Moses, and the man's folly and ignorance in becoming a disciple of Jesus. Their continued employment of the emphatic *we*, is also in keeping with their egotistical and conceited arrogance, as the professed spiritual guides of the nation. *As for this fellow*, &c. More literally, *this* (see N.

30 The man answered and said unto them 'Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

q Ch. 8: 14.

r Ch. 3: 10.

on Matt. 26: 61; 27: 21)—*we know not*, &c. If a brief pause is supposed after the pronoun *this*, as though they had no language to express their profound disgust at his claims and character, the contemptuous sense of the word would appear without supplying *fellow*, as is done in our version. *We know not from whence he is*, i. e. from what source he derives his commission. That this is the sense is clearly shown from the antithesis between these words and the preceding declaration, *we know that God spake unto Moses* and commissioned him to be the leader and lawgiver of Israel. It is worthy of remark that in thus giving utterance to their contempt of Jesus, they are betrayed into a confession of the same ignorance which he charged upon them in 8: 14. As in view of the abundant proof which he gave of his divine mission, their ignorance was their sin, they stood convicted and condemned from their own mouth. In the words *we know not*, &c., their eye is on something more than his earthly descent, and they maliciously insinuate that our Lord's commission was from the powers of evil. See Matt. 12: 24.

30. The bold and manly defence which this poor despised man now makes of his benefactor, whom he had yet never seen (see N. on v. 35), is worthy of all admiration. *Why herein*, "in such a case as that before us." Tholuck. The original implies an ellipsis: 'ye speak absurdly, *for herein is a marvellous thing*;' or according to the conjectural reading, '*this one thing is marvellous*, indeed much more so than even my cure, *that ye know not whence he is* (he enlightens them on this point in v. 38), and yet (i. e. although) *he hath opened my eyes*.' The sentiment is that it was strange that persons of their superior opportunities and qualifications for

31 Now we know that * God heareth not sinners: but if any

s Job 27: 9; & 35: 12; Ps. 18: 41; & 34: 15; & 66: 18; Pr. 1: 28; & 15: 29; & 28: 9; Is. 1: 15; Je. 11: 11; & 14: 12; Ez. 8: 18; Mi. 3: 4; Zec. 7: 13.

riving at the truth, should be at loss to know the character and claims of Jesus, when he had wrought such a stupendous miracle. The argument refers to the very kind of evidence offered by Moses in proof of his divine commission. He had performed miracles, and the whole nation down to Christ's time had believed in his divine legation. Our Lord had performed still greater miracles, one of which had its exemplification in the man who was now addressing them, and yet they professed not to know from whence he was. This was wonderful indeed, so much so as to transfer all admiration from the man who was healed, to the folly, stupidity, and unbelief of the council before whom he stood for examination.

31. The speaker proceeds to argue and apply to the case in hand, the principle which he had virtually laid down, that a miracle, such as Jesus had performed, was a sufficiently clear indication of the source of his commission. "The seeing man begins to lead and teach the blind, lays down the universal proposition, the truth well known in Israel for which he asserts the *we know* of all, in order that he may then in vs. 32, 33, through the case in hand, arrive by the soundest logic at a certain and irrefragable conclusion." Stier.

We know. It is a matter of universal knowledge. The pronoun, according to the usual construction where no special emphasis is intended, is omitted in the original, its presence being indicated by the termination of the verb. The modesty of the man's assertion is thus placed in striking contrast with their arrogant *we know* in v. 30. *Hear-eth not sinners.* He holds them in such abhorrence that he never imparts to them the gift of working miracles. On the absence of all evidence that wicked men have ever wrought miracles, see

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.

N. on Matt. 7: 22. To the citations there made, the present text may be added in proof, that none but those whom God loves and approves of, have ever been endowed with miraculous power. Were it otherwise, our Lord could hardly have appealed to his works as incontrovertible proof of his Messiahship. *But if any man, &c.* This is the converse of the preceding proposition. The argument is this: 'A good man is the only one whom God hears and endows with the power to work miracles. As Jesus had beyond all question wrought a great miracle, it was certain evidence that God had heard him, and that he was therefore a good man.' This would presuppose that he was a man of veracity, and to be believed in all which he affirmed in regard to his character and mission.

32. Having thus laid down the well established principle, that God grants special favors to none but those whom he hears, the speaker challenges the Pharisees to bring forward another instance, where a man who was born blind had been restored to perfect vision, as in his case. The greatness and strangeness of the miracle is very properly advanced, as an argument that the divine mission of Jesus admits of no doubt. The reasoning of the man may be reduced to a syllogism: 'None but those whom God approves can work a miracle—Jesus has wrought an unprecedented miracle—therefore Jesus is approved of God.' Thus in the most brief and masterly manner, did this poor man establish and illustrate the point from which he started, that in view of the works of Jesus, it was wonderful that they did not know whence he was. No inference is to be drawn from this passage, or from any other in the Bible, that God hears all good men in such a sense as to endow

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.

t Ver. 16.

u Ver. 2.

them with miraculous powers. The argument is simply that no bad man can furnish this testimony of God's favor and approbation, which is only theirs who are the objects of his love, and to whom he has assigned some special commission. *Since the world began.* See N. on Luke 1:70. *Was it not heard.* The man speaks of this as an unprecedented cure of one born blind. The assertion was not a loose one, for we have no account in the Bible of the previous performance of such a miracle, much less by a man acting without a commission from God. *That was born blind.* Our Lord himself had healed the blind in great numbers, but in no recorded instance were any of them blind from their birth.

33. This verse is the conclusion or inference, the argument ending with the preceding verse. *Were not of God.* This is a triumphant reply to their *we know not from whence he is*, in v. 29. *Nothing*, "not only of those things which he himself does, but of any of the things done by excellent men." Bengel.

34. *Thou wast altogether* (literally, *the whole, the whole of thee*, body and soul) *born in sins.* They are so transported with rage, at his severe and well merited rebuke, that they demean themselves so far as to reproach him with his blindness from birth, that being regarded by them as positive proof that there was a great sin lying somewhere as the cause. See N. on v. 2. Trench remarks that they had forgotten how their charge that he was an impostor, having never been blind as he alleged, disagreed from their present one, in which they bring forward his blindness from birth, as a proof of his great wickedness. *Dost thou teach us?* The pronouns are strongly emphatic

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

z Mat. 14:33; & 16:16; Ma. 1:1; ch. 10:36;
1 Jo. 5:13.

in the original and impart to their question this sense: 'Do *you* a miserable, sinful wretch, blind from your very birth, presume to teach *us*, the most learned and pious of the nation?' The words are imbued with the very spirit of Pharisaism. *They cast him out*, from their council chamber or hall where they held their session. This indignity was also a virtual act of excommunication (see v. 22), which at the proper time they no doubt passed upon him.

35, 36. *Jesus heard, &c.* This shows that the act of casting the man out had principal reference to his exclusion from the congregation (see v. 22); for his mere ejection from the room in which he had been examined, would not have received such particular mention. *When he had found him*; literally, *and having found him.* The idea of previous search for the man is here implied. How long a time intervened between the man's expulsion from the court, and his interview with Jesus, we have no means of knowing. It may have been one day or several. The latter supposition is the more probable, as it was not until the report of the transaction had come to the ear of Jesus, that he sought him as here recorded. *Dost thou believe, &c.* Some commentators suppose the sense to be: 'Hast thou a belief in the coming Messiah?' But the question in this sense would have had no force or meaning, inasmuch as the whole nation believed in a coming Messiah. The inquiry rather assumes that this personage had already made his advent, and challenges the man's belief in him. Hence the answer is *who is he* (equivalent to *where is he*), *that I might* (properly and literally *may*) *believe on him?* The man had from the very outset regarded his benefactor as

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

a prophet. His argument with the Pharisees (vs. 24-34) had enlarged and strengthened his faith in him as one commissioned of God. He had thus been gradually brought into a state of mind favorable to the revelation of his Messiahship, which Jesus was now about to make to him. But instead of proposing the question in the naked form, 'Dost thou believe in me as the Son of God?' our Lord so shaped his inquiry, as to inspire the man with a rising hope that the Messiah had already come, and that peradventure his benefactor himself might be that great personage. With trembling hope he therefore inquires *who is he, Lord*, (tell me) *that I may believe on him?* He thus avows his readiness to acknowledge him, whenever he may be permitted to behold him. The frankness and simplicity of this man's character, together with his courageous defence of Jesus before the Sanhedrim, make him one of the most remarkable characters to be found on the page of sacred history. Olshausen thinks that the Jews were not acquainted with the Messianic signification of *Son of God*, much less this common man, and that therefore his question was virtually "what am I to understand by the Son of God?" But that the Jews understood the meaning of the term, is evident from Matt. 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; Mark 3:11; Luke 4:41; John 20:31, and from the Old Testament predictions, where the future Messiah is referred to, as God's Son. See 2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7. Some expositors have doubted whether the man immediately recognized Jesus, as the one who had effected his cure, since he had never before seen him. But when it is remembered how acute is the hearing of persons deprived of sight, and what other reasons existed in the remarkable words which were spoken to the man, why the tones as well as sentiment should have

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and ^v it is he that talketh with thee.

γ Ch. 4:26.

been impressed deeply in his recollections, we cannot for a moment doubt that he recognized Jesus as soon as he accosted him.

37, 38. *Thou hast both seen him.* The allusion to the man's recovery of sight is too striking to be overlooked. There is also a gradual approach to the full revelation of Jesus' Messiahship, in the words *it is he that talketh with thee*, which comports well with the dignity of the speaker, and serves to gradually develop the man's faith, and concentrate it at last in all the fulness of love and devotion upon Jesus as the true Messiah. Noble and courageous was the testimony which he had borne to his benefactor, whom not yet having seen, he had loved (1 Pet. 1:8). Now he is rewarded with a more explicit declaration of our Lord's Messiahship, than had been made to any one before, save the woman of Samaria (4:26). The revelation in each case was one and the same, although to her he proclaimed himself as the Messiah; to this man, as the Son of God. Webster and Wilkinson remark that the latter revelation involves the former, but comprehends much more. *Lord, I believe.* "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." Tholuck. He had been gradually brought, as has been remarked, 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. *He worshipped him.* This was not here

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

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.

≈ Ch. 5 : 22, 27. See ch. 3 : 17; & 12 : 47.
a Mat. 13 : 13.

merely the homage paid by an inferior to a superior. When the circumstances are all taken into account, I cannot but think that the act partook of the nature of the worship paid to Jesus after his ascension by the apostles and disciples. The revelation was so full and explicit, and doubtless accompanied by the impartation of such gracious influences, that the man was far in advance of many who had been for a long time with Jesus, in the true estimation of his divine character.

39. Doddridge supposes that these words were uttered for the special instruction of those who had gathered around Jesus, while he was conversing with this man. Such also is Webster and Wilkinson's view. Alford, on the other hand, places some interval of time between the interview with the man and the words here spoken, the narrative being taken up at a subsequent time, when the miracle became the subject of general discourse. We can hardly suppose that our Lord revealed himself to the man as the Son of God, in the presence of a surrounding throng of persons, to whom, after the man had performed his act of prostration, he turned and addressed the words here spoken. It is far more natural to suppose a short interval of time at least between the two verses. Tholuck thinks that this language, like that in Matt. 11 : 25, is to be regarded as words uttered aloud in soliloquy by our Lord, and suggested by what had occurred immediately before. But even if spoken in soliloquy, it appears from v. 40, that the words were heard by "some of the Pharisees who were with him," and the question again returns, whether Jesus would have declared himself to the man as the Son of God in the presence and hearing of persons standing by, some of whom were his most bitter enemies, and would have seized upon such an open avowal

of his divine character and mission, as the foundation for a charge of blasphemy against him, as they did when he announced himself to be the Son of God in the palace of the high priest (see Matt. 26 : 63-66; Mark 14 : 61-64; Luke 22 : 67-71). A short interval of time, sufficient at least for the people to assemble themselves together, is the only view which is clear of difficulties. For *judgment*, &c. Our Lord frequently drew the theme of his conversation from some circumstance which had served to arrest the attention of the people. This is seen in the present instance. The word *judgment*, has primary reference here to actual judgment, the form in the original denoting the effect rather than the process of judging. The completeness and perfection of the work are thus rendered prominent. But it comprises also the separating, discriminating process, by which men are divided from one another by a reference, not to outward circumstances or profession, but to their true character. Those who made no pretensions to sight, and who were desirous to receive the gift of vision, like this poor man, would be endowed therewith; but those who professed themselves above all need of spiritual illumination, would be suffered to remain in that state of fatal blindness in which they really were. The same sentiment is referred to in Matt. 9 : 13. The word rendered *that*, does not here denote cause or purpose, but result. See N. on v. 2; also Matt. 1 : 22. Our Lord did not come into the world for such a purpose of condemning judgment, that it could only be subverted by the judicial blindness of some. This would deprive the plan of redemption of its highest glory. But the effect of his advent, in the case of the persons here referred to, would be seen in this result. Although his errand was to seek and to save those who were lost,

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, ^b and said unto him, Are we blind also?

^b Ro. 2:19.

yet so testing and searching were his doctrines and requisitions, and so uncongenial to the proud and carnal nature of man, that the result would be a division like that here spoken of; the means made use of to enlighten and save, becoming productive of the very opposite result in those who chose to walk in the light of their own fire, and the sparks that they have kindled (Isa. 50:11). *They which see not*, i. e. those who are spiritually blind and sensible of their lost condition. *Might see*, i. e. be brought into the light and life of the gospel, and experience its healing, sanctifying power. *They which see*. The antithesis resides in the different views which this class of persons have of their spiritual condition. All are alike spiritually blind, but some are sensible of this, and betake themselves to Christ to be healed; others are insensible to their ruined state, and consequently reject every invitation of the gospel, and make no effort to be saved. *Might be made blind*; literally, *might become blind*, i. e. become more and more confirmed in their blindness and carnal stupidity. The word does not imply that they were not originally blind, but the reference here is to the increasing spiritual blindness and hardness of heart, which result from a life of impenitence and unbelief. The principle is fully exemplified in Matt. 13:11-15, on which see Notes.

40. The Pharisees, ever on hand with their captious and ensnaring questions, inquire whether he includes them also in the number of those whom he pronounces to be blind. Perhaps they hoped he would charge them directly with gross spiritual blindness, which they could make a ground of accusation against him, as one who maligned the rulers of the people (see Acts 23:5). Some expositors maintain that the Pharisees

41 Jesus said unto them, ^c If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

^c Ch. 15:22, 24.

purposely misunderstand Jesus to be here speaking of physical blindness. But this would deprive the question of all force and pertinency. Stier hits the true sense of the question: 'Are we then already become blind in thy sight? Must we then also become thy disciples that we may see?' There can be no doubt that the word *blind*, in this verse, is to be taken in the same sense which it obviously has in v. 39.

41. *If ye were blind*, i. e. if you were really ignorant in spiritual matters, and if your opportunities and powers were so limited, that you had an imperfect understanding of the requisitions of God's law, you would be comparatively sinless (see 15:22, 24). The hypothetical form *if ye were blind*, is equivalent to the direct negative, *ye are not blind*, or *ye should have no sin*, i. e. you would be free from the sin of wilful unbelief. "Ye would have your sins removed by coming to me for sight," Prof. Crosby. *But now ye say*, i. e. whereas now you boastingly say. The present tense refers to this as their habitual language. *We see*, i. e. we are far superior in knowledge to the people, and rightly assume the office of spiritual guides. All their Pharisaic pride, hypocrisy, and rejection of the true light, are concentrated in this boastful claim to spiritual knowledge here charged as being made by them. In awful juxtaposition to their claim of perfect spiritual vision, are our Lord's words, *therefore your sin remaineth*. The sin here especially referred to was the rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Resulting as it did from an obstinate and infatuated determination to continue in unbelief and sin, it remained in all its force, proof against every effort which might be made for its removal. It is implied that the sin of the Pharisees was enhanced by their superior education and privileges,

CHAPTER X.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by

which they possessed over the common people. Had this led them to Christ, it would have been to them one of the highest blessings, but connected as it was with spiritual pride and unbelief, it served only to aggravate their condemnation.

CHAPTER X.

1-21. CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD. *Jerusalem.* The words, *verily, verily*, in John never commence a new discourse, and the thought also is so intimately connected with that which goes before, that critics are generally united in the opinion that this discourse is the continuation of the preceding one. See N. on v. 21. The Pharisees assumed that they were the true spiritual guides of the people. To every conviction of error brought home to them by the searching words of Jesus, they virtually replied in their stupid and deeply seated infatuation and pride, *we see*. Our Lord now, by a sort of parabolic representation, 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.

In regard to the general division and train of thought in this chapter, in vs. 1-5, are given the marks and properties of the true and false shepherd; in 7-9, Christ declares himself to be the door of the fold; in v. 10, he contrasts himself with those whose only object is to devour and destroy the flock; in vs. 11-13, he contrasts his readiness to lay down his life for the flock, with the treacherous and cowardly conduct of those who are mere hirelings, and who flee on the first approach of danger, leaving their flocks to be destroyed by beasts of prey; in vs. 14-18, he shows that the parable spoken in vs. 1-5, has reference to himself, the GOOD SHEPHERD, who as essentially one with the Father (v. 15) lays down his life for the sheep; the Jews being divided in re-

the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

gard to him (vs. 19-23), demand that he shall tell them in plain terms whether he is the Christ (v. 24); he replies that his works sufficiently prove this (v. 25), but not being his true sheep which no one can take from him, they believe not (vs. 26-29); he declares his essential unity with the Father (v. 30), at which the Jews being enraged seek to kill him (vs. 31-39); he escapes from them, and goes again beyond Jordan, where many believe on him (vs. 40-42).

1. *Verily, verily.* The importance of the instruction which our Lord was about to impart, and the attention with which it was to be received, are indicated by this solemn form of asseveration, with which he introduced his most grave and important discourses. *He that entereth not, &c.* A very simple but clear criterion of the character and purpose of those who do not enter the fold by the door, especially when spiritually interpreted in the light of our Lord's declaration in v. 9, that he is the door through which both entrance and egress are to be made to and from the fold. The spiritual application is so clear and easy, that all who listened to this parable must have perceived that Jesus was placing himself in striking contrast with the scribes and Pharisees, whose influence as false religious teachers was so disastrous to the nation. *Sheepfold*; literally, *the fold for the sheep*. The word rendered *fold*, although properly referring to any yard, court, or enclosed space in the open air, is here used of the sheepfold, into which the flocks were driven at the close of each day, for protection from wild beasts, robbers, and other casualties to which they would be exposed in the night. *But climbeth up (over the enclosure) some other way*; literally, *from some other quarter*, the preposition imparting to the expression the pregnant sense, *but climbeth up and entereth from some other quarter than the door of the fold*. *The same is an*

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth ;

emphatic repetition of *he*, in the first member of the sentence. *Thief and robber*. The former of these words signifies one who steals or pilfers in secret ; the latter, one who makes an open attack, and robs and plunders by violence.

2. Placed in striking contrast with the foregoing mark of a false shepherd, is the infallible sign here given, by which the true shepherd may be known. *He that entereth in*, &c. This being his mode of entrance, he never resorts to the other, which would not only be less easy and expeditious, but would be likely to impair the hedge surrounding the fold.

3. *The porter*, i. e. the under shepherd, whose duty it was to watch the gate and open it for the chief shepherd. Notwithstanding the subordinate position of the porter in this parable (v. 6), and the fact that he is only here alluded to, there has been much said by expositors, especially those who are inclined to be somewhat fanciful, in regard to the spiritual reference of this feature of the parable. Some have regarded the porter as representing the Holy Spirit, through whom the door which Christ declares himself to be (v. 7), is opened for all the true sheep of the flock. Others refer the porter to Christ's ministers, those faithful pastors, who like the true sheep recognize the Good Shepherd, and admit and welcome him to the fold. There seems to be no necessity, however, of pressing this circumstance of the parable to any distinct or special reference, its introduction being designed principally to give life and verisimilitude to the narration. The object in view is to show that the true shepherd was recognized as such, both by the porter who stood at the gate and by the sheep themselves. If any further significancy is intended, it would seem that this porter is put by way of contrast with the scribes and

and the sheep hear his voice : and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Pharisees, who although acting in the capacity of religious guides and teachers, showed that they belonged not to the family of the true shepherd, by their refusal to open the door for him and the sheep, which he was bringing back from their wanderings from the true fold. *The sheep hear his voice*. So intimate and tender was the relationship between the shepherd and his flock, that they recognized and paid the strictest obedience to his voice. The word *voice*, does not refer here to spoken words, but to those various inarticulate sounds, by which domestic animals are incited or restrained in their movements. The phrase *hear his voice*, is equivalent to saying, that the sheep understand and acknowledge the shepherd's voice. The word *hear*, has this sense given it so frequently in the Scriptures, that there can be no danger of so mistaking its meaning, as to refer it to the mere external sense of hearing. *He calleth*, &c. In addition to the general indication of the shepherd's will to the flock, by whistling, hallooing, and other inarticulate sounds, he addresses them by name. Such was the practice of the ancient shepherds, the sheep readily understanding the names given to them respectively. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. i. p. 302) says, "Some sheep always keep near the shepherd, and are his special favorites. Each of them has a name, to which it answers joyfully, and the kind shepherd is ever distributing to such, choice portions which he gathers for that purpose." *His own sheep*, i. e. so many of the flock as he had taken under his special charge ; or his own flock, in contradistinction from the flocks of other shepherds. The figure is founded upon the well-known fact, that upon extensive plains and commons, numerous flocks will be driven forth to pasture, each under the guidance and protection of its own shep-

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.

herd. In the application of the parable this feature has no special significance, for in the spiritual pastures of divine grace, there is but *one fold and one Shepherd* (v. 16). *Leadeth them out*, i. e. conducts them forth from the fold. We have here the third characteristic of the true shepherd. He not only enters the fold by the door, and calls the sheep with his well-known and familiar voice, but he is careful to lead them forth to good pasturage, and thus not only protects them from violence, and encourages them with his voice, but sees to it that they have seasonable and nutritious food.

4. A fourth characteristic of the true shepherd is here given, in his preceding the sheep on their way to the pasture, and their alacrity in following him, which would not be the case, were he a strange or false shepherd. *Putteth forth* from the fold. *Turns out*, as Webster and Wilkinson well render it. *He goeth before them* to conduct them to the place of pasturage. So well accustomed and obedient to the voice, did the sheep become by long and intimate acquaintance with the shepherd, that they followed him, as dogs follow their master. The practice however varied, for in Homer (*Iliad*, 18: 525) we find that the flocks or herds preceded the shepherd or herdsman. Dr. Thomson (*Land and Book*, vol. i. p. 301) says that our Lord's assertion here is true to the letter. "The sheep are so tame and so trained that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages, just where he pleases. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice, and follow on; but, if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.

is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is the simple fact." *For they know*, &c. This is introduced to show why the sheep are so ready to follow the true shepherd. As he precedes his flock he gives forth well-known and peculiar sounds, which the sheep hearing follow with confidence because habituated to his voice. *A stranger* (who knows not this peculiar sound, and who cannot therefore imitate it exactly) *will they not follow*. He would frighten them into an opposite direction, instead of inducing them to follow him. The power of animals to distinguish between familiar and strange voices, is within the knowledge of all. This would be more definitely marked in the case of animals so timid as sheep. The expression *stranger*, refers here to the same intruder, denominated in v. 1 as a thief and robber, but under a name corresponding to the idea of one, who should approach the flock while being led forth to pasture, with the design of turning it off into places, devious, dangerous, and barren of pasturage. Such impostors and deceivers have in every age of the church sought to lead God's people astray from the truth. In view of this our Lord uses the plural form *strangers*, although as Stier very properly remarks, the singular term *the voice*, combines them all in unity of purpose and result.

6. So dull of understanding were his hearers, that they did not perceive the point or application of this illustration of our Lord. Their excessive pride and self-esteem would naturally render the Pharisees who were present, insensible to the general drift of the parable and its application to them. The word rendered *parable*, is not the Greek word which the other Evangelists employ to designate this figure of speech. It is one significant of a kind of *parabolic allegory*, as Alford terms it, and corresponds to our word *illustration*. In this

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

sense the other Evangelists often employ the word *parable*. See Matt. 24: 32; Mark 13: 28; Luke 4: 23; 6: 39. Webster and Wilkinson refer to Matt. 24: 43-45; Luke 15: 4; 17: 7-9, as furnishing illustrations much like the one here found in John. *Understood not what things they were*, &c. They were ignorant of the meaning and application of the illustration which he had made use of.

7. *Then or therefore*, i. e. in consequence of this dulness of apprehension. *Again* signifies here not only the second time, but a repetition of the general sense of the parable in vs. 1-5, which they did not understand. *I am the door*. The apparent confusion of imagery employed in this great utterance of our Lord, and the preceding similitude in which he represents himself as the true shepherd, known to be such by his entering in at the door, has caused much perplexity in the minds of some, as to the true mode of interpreting these two divisions of the discourse. Some maintain that the similitude contained in vs. 1-5, in which Christ likens himself to a shepherd, is brought to a full and perfect close at v. 5; and that in vs. 7-10, he introduces himself in the new relation of the door of the sheep. Stier in opposition to this view, says that the assertion, that a new similitude without any connection with the former is now to be expounded, plainly contradicts the *I am*, of vs. 7, 9, 11, 14. This commentator remarks that in vs. 1-5, our Lord speaks preparatorily, concerning human shepherds generally, anticipating and paving the way for what follows. He then in v. 7 speaks clearly of himself in his *I am the door*, and again v. 11, *I am the good Shepherd*; thus showing that he is both the door and the shepherd of all shepherds and sheep alike. But unfortunately for this exposition, vs. 1-5, so far from being preparatory to the subsequent

discourse in vs. 7-16, evidently contain a complete enunciation of truth in the form of an illustration or comparison, which the people (v. 6) might have been expected to understand, but which it is avowed they understood not. There would have been nothing strange in this want of comprehension, and which is so particularly referred to by the Evangelist, if vs. 1-5 were only the introduction to the discourse. But all this difficulty disappears, if we regard the subsequent discourse in vs. 7-16, as an explanation and enlargement of the general idea contained in vs. 1-5, and the point of which the people did not perceive. Then we shall be under no necessity with Stier, of supposing that vs. 1-5 were only spoken "concerning human shepherds generally," and that the application is to be sought in the verses following. Human shepherds or guides of God's people, are not referred to in the opening verses, except as it relates to the false shepherd declared to be a thief and a robber; but Christ, under the similitude of a kind and faithful earthly shepherd, is the principal and only personage intended to be designated. Had the people understood this parabolical representation, perhaps nothing further would have been said. But perceiving their ignorance of the import of his words, in his boundless forbearance and love, he proceeds to explain and expand them, and thus gives utterance to the glorious truth that He is both the Door and the Good Shepherd, to all the sheep which enter and find their home in the true fold of his grace. Here then is a beautiful and well-connected train of thought. It is as when he pronounced the parable of the sower (Matt. 13: 3-8), and appended to it the explanation (vs. 18-23). Verses 1-5 then contain the parable: vs. 7-16, the expanded explanation.

I am the door—I am the good shep-

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

herd (v. 11). There is no difficulty in this twofold relation of Jesus to his people, as the *door*, and the *shepherd* who enters with his sheep through the door. As the Revealer of the ways of God to men, and as the great Prophet and Teacher, who is to guide his people into all truth, and lead them in the paths of righteousness, he is the Good Shepherd. But as one who by his death has opened a new and living way into the holiest (Heb. 10: 19, 20), he is both the *door* and the *way* (see 14: 6). These titles, together with others which he bears, such as the vine (15: 1), bread of life (6: 48), the truth and life (14: 6), the morning star (Rev. 22: 16), express the various relations which he sustains to his people, and indicate that here he is by no means a door, in the very same respect in which he is the bread of life, the vine, or the good shepherd. In the explanation of his similitude in vs. 1-5, he might have declared himself at once to have been the one represented by the true shepherd, and ended his explanation with this simple annunciation. But instead of this, he goes on to make a further revelation of himself as *the door of the sheep*, preparatory to his great declaration in v. 11, that he is *the good shepherd*, and of course the one referred to in the opening verses (2-5). It seemed to him necessary, before he revealed himself to be the Good Shepherd, to show his hearers what was the true door of the fold, through which the true shepherd (vs. 2-5) conducted the flock. This explains therefore what was meant in the similitude by the *door*. The reason for this order in our Lord's explanation of the parable, is seen in v. 8, where we find placed in the strongest contrast with him as the door—a title of the highest import, and involving the most essential dignity of office and person—the vile impostors, *the thieves and robbers* who came before him, but whose voice the sheep did not hear. This is confirmed by the emphatic repetition of the words *I am*

the door, in v. 9, and the striking contrast which again follows immediately (v. 10), in the thief whose only object was to steal, kill, and destroy. This repeated antithesis between our Lord and those who preceded him, shows how important he deemed it, that this dissimilarity should be strongly impressed upon the people who were listening to the discourse. If their mind was fully possessed of this great idea that he was the *door of the sheep*, the declaration that he was *the good shepherd* (v. 11) would be almost anticipated, so natural, logical, and clear was the train of thought. That Stier should have overlooked this beautiful and impressive connection, seems strange in so judicious and clear-sighted an expositor as he.

8. *All that ever came before me.* Here again commentators have been much at loss, as to what persons are referred to. That reference is had to false teachers there can be no doubt. But were all who came before Christ false teachers? In order to avoid a view so unwarrantable, and which nobody can suppose the passage to teach, Olshausen takes the words *came before me*, in the sense of *working without me*. But this is too forced an interpretation. So also are the various translations cited by Alford, *passing by me as the door; instead of me; passing before me; before taking the trouble to find me, the door*. Bengel and Bloomfield refer it to the time immediately preceding the advent of Christ, when the land was thronged with false teachers including the Pharisees themselves. But the tense will not admit of this. Doddridge, I think, has hit the true interpretation: "All that ever came before me assuming the Messiah's character, or setting up for a despotic authority in the church, and teaching other methods of salvation than by me, are *thieves and robbers*." It is evident that by a natural ellipsis, and one easily supplied, the persons here referred to are those who made pretensions either to the Messianic office, or to such a high position as re-

9 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be

a Ch. 14:6; Ep. 2:18.

ligious teachers, that they assumed to be the only depositaries of the way of life to the people. The sentiment would then be: '*all who came before me* [making pretensions to be the door of the sheep] *are thieves and robbers*. The contrast drawn by our Lord in his previous discourses, between his doctrine and that of the Pharisees, between his own origin from above, and their paternity from beneath (8: 42-44), would of itself sufficiently indicate the persons whom he meant to designate by the expression, *all who came before me*. The words themselves also in their connection could not be misunderstood. Christ had just declared himself to be the door of the sheep. The assertion, as has been above stated (see N. on v. 7), is strongly antithetic to this, and points to a far different class of persons, making pretensions of love for the flock, but being in reality thieves and robbers. But what removes all danger of misapprehension is that in v. 1, the false shepherds are designated as thieves and robbers—the very same terms as are here employed to show the false assumptions and rapacious character of those who had come before him. This shows that the same class of persons are referred to, and renders it impossible that any of his hearers would be so stupid as to suppose that he intended to include in the words, "all that ever came before me," such persons as Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and other Old Testament prophets. *Are thieves*. Not *were thieves*; "their essential nature," as Alford remarks, "belonging to and being of the evil one is set forth, and the inclusion of these present Pharisees in their ranks." *But the sheep did not hear them*. They feigned the voice of the true shepherd, but could not thereby deceive the well practised ear of the sheep. A general fact is here stated, the power to deceive, at least temporarily in some instances, not being denied. But the

saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but

true sheep can never be long deceived by these false shepherds, and will in some way soon detect the imposition.

9. *I am the door* is an emphatic repetition, v. 8 being a sort of parenthesis, anticipating the strong contrast which is brought out more fully in v. 10. *By me*; literally, *through me* as a door. "There is no door between the soul and Christ, which must be passed through. Salvation will be the consequence of admission into the fold by Christ himself." Webster and Wilkinson. *If any man enter in* to the spiritual fold. This idea is illustrated and expanded by the declaration which our Lord afterwards made (14: 6), that he was *the way*, the idea there being however, a way of access to the Father; here, a door opening to a fold of salvation from all peril and harm. That this promise includes not only the under shepherds, but the sheep of the flock, is evident from the closing words of the verse, *shall go in and out and find pasture*, where reference is had, as in v. 4, to the provident care with which the true shepherd provides for the wants of the flock committed to his charge, by carefully folding them each night, and leading them out in the morning to pasturage. *He shall be saved* from all the dangers which beset him, while out of the fold of Christ; or, to drop the metaphor and express the sentiment in plain language, he shall be saved from sin and its dreadful consequence which is eternal death. *Find pasture*. Under the conduct of so faithful and provident a shepherd, the flock will never be in want of good pasturage. See Ps. xxiii. 2. Bengel says that this clause is to be taken with both the preceding verbs, the idea being that he shall find pasture, whether he enters or goes forth from the fold. But this destroys the verisimilitude of the passage, as no pasturage is ever furnished within the fold. The blessings here promised are twofold, perfect safety—denoted by the words *shall go in and out*—and abundance of pastur-

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.

age. These embrace every thing essential to the comfort and welfare of the flock.

10. Contrasted with this picture of safety and abundance, is the condition of a flock exposed to the entrance of thieves and robbers. *Cometh not* (to the fold or to the flock while at pasturage), *but* (i. e. except) *for to steal*, &c. Here is a gradation of evil. The primary purpose of the thief is to steal, but in order to gratify his malevolence, by doing as much mischief as possible to the flock into which he has effected an entrance, he kills and destroys the sheep. No difference of meaning is to be sought in these verbs, the latter being added to give emphasis to the wanton destruction of the flock. Stier says that the *destroying* strengthens the killing, as it discloses the wolfish mind of the thief, who finds his sole pleasure in killing. There is no doubt that beneath this expression lies a reference to the wantonness, with which the wolf rends the sheep, even after his appetite is sated. Bengel refers the latter verb to the destruction of the pasturage; but this sense the verb will hardly bear, as it is usually applied to the taking away of life, in the sense of *utterly destroy*. The singular *thief*, is here used generically of all false teachers and impostors. It takes the article to indicate this, and not simply to refer it to the thief spoken of in v. 1. *I am come*, &c. A far different purpose is here denoted, than that for which the thief approached the flock. In its highest sense, *I am come* relates to the advent of Christ into this world; but by the force of the antithesis, it has reference here to his approach to the fold to impart *life*, in contradistinction to the slaughter made by the thief. *Might have life* is here opposed to the destruction of the flock, which was the purpose for which the thief entered the fold. The connective *and*, has an intensive sense,

11 ^b I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

^b Is. 40: 11; Ez. 34: 12, 23; & 37: 24; He. 13: 20; 1 Pe. 2: 25; & 5: 4.

and even that they might have, &c. There is in *more abundantly*, a gradation of good, corresponding to the gradation of evil contained in the words *to kill and to destroy*. The repetition of the verb *might have*, imparts to the clause great emphasis. The life referred to is spiritual, and this all true believers, designated in the language of the parable, *sheep*, were to possess and enjoy in all its fulness and perpetuity.

11. The necessity of guarding the flock from thieves and robbers, implied in the preceding verse, and especially hinted at in the declaration that he had come to impart life, introduces a new relation which our Lord bears to the flock, namely, that of a *Shepherd*. Here commences the full and direct explanation of verses 1-5. It was unnecessary for our Lord to declare in express terms that the Jewish priests and scribes were represented in v. 1, by the thieves and robbers who climbed into the fold by another way than the door. The contrast was so clear and pointed, that the very first annunciation of himself as the Good Shepherd, must have marked them out as the false and wicked shepherds of the parable. Had our Lord expressly designated them in this relation, it would have exposed him to the charge of speaking evil against those in official authority. *The good shepherd giveth his life*, &c. The form of the original is very definite and emphatic: *the shepherd* (viz.) *the good*, i. e. he who alone can claim this appellation. This shows that it is not generically put here for all good shepherds, as Winer affirms, but for Jesus the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. 2: 25), to whom alone in the highest sense this epithet belongs (see Rom. 5: 6-8). In a more subordinate sense, however, under-shepherds who share in his love and imbibe his heavenly spirit, may be and

12 But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf

c Zec. 11: 16, 17.

are willing to lay down their lives for the sheep intrusted to their care. The imagery is taken, of course, from the readiness with which a shepherd will give his life in defence of his flock, when attacked by wild beasts (see 1 Sam. 17: 34-36), or by marauding bands of thieves and robbers. Dr. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. i, p. 302) says, "Many adventures with wild beasts occur, not unlike those recounted by David, for though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceeding fierce, prowl about these wild wadies. They not unfrequently attack the flock in the presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic description of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow, last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedawin robbers, until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, and died among the sheep he was defending."

12. *But he that is a hireling*, and looks only to his private and selfish ends. The word *hireling*, by the force of its antithesis with the *good shepherd*, is here employed of a faithless and mercenary servant, although the word in the original does not necessarily attach to itself this low meaning (see Mark 1: 20). The English word *hireling*, is generally employed in the bad sense which it has in this connection. It will be seen by a comparison of the exposition (vs. 7-13), with the parable itself (vs. 1-5), that our Lord neither explains away nor softens down the

coming, and 'leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

terms by which the false shepherd was designated. What was a *stranger* in v. 5, is here a *hireling*, with no love for the flock, and whose only motive is the wages for which he serves. *Not the shepherd*, i. e. not actuated by the love which characterizes the true shepherd. In ancient times, the owner of the flock was often its shepherd. In such cases, if the flock was so large that it was necessarily subdivided into smaller ones, persons were employed who acted as under shepherds. These very properly received their stipulated pay; but those who were faithful, and with true shepherd feeling watched over the flock intrusted to them, would evince that they were actuated by higher motives than those of mere gain. They, on the contrary, who were faithless to their trust, and ready on the approach of danger to desert the flock, would show that they were possessed of none of the characteristics of a good and faithful shepherd, and were only hirelings, in the most unworthy sense of the term, *whose* (referring to the hireling) *own the sheep were not*, and therefore devoid of all zeal and fidelity in protecting them from harm. The word *own*, refers to ownership, as opposed to the mere charge of the flock as a hireling. The character of a mercenary hireling here held up to view, does not imply that every under shepherd who served for wages was a mere hireling. Equally true is it that in the spiritual application of the passage, no inference can be drawn adverse to the payment of a fixed and definite salary, to those who as Christ's ministers are the spiritual overseers and guides of his flock. *Seeth the wolf*. This animal is selected for illustration, because it is the most destructive foe of the flock. See Matt. 7: 15; Luke 10: 3; Acts 20: 29. In the spiritual application of this term as here used, it must be referred to the great enemy of souls, the devil,

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd,

and not to false teachers and guides, for these are here represented by the hireling. *Leaveth the sheep*, instead of yielding up his life, if necessary, in their defence, like the good shepherd. *And fleeth*. This is an advance on the preceding idea. He does not yield to a momentary terror, and then recovering his courage, return to the rescue of the flock and defend them to the last extremity; but he flees away far from all danger, and leaves the sheep to be torn in pieces by the wolf. *The wolf catcheth them*, &c. Some are torn in pieces, others are scattered in different directions. The whole flock is destroyed or dispersed, as the result of the treacherous and cowardly desertion of them by the false shepherd.

13. The reason is here given why the hireling is so ready to flee from danger. It is *because he is a hireling*, actuated by mercenary motives in the discharge of the duties which he owes to the flock. *And careth not for the sheep* stands in formal connection with the preceding clause, as a second reason why the hireling fleeth. But it is really the explanation of the preceding assertion, as though it had been written: 'he does this because as is natural for such hirelings, he has no care or concern for the flock.'

14, 15. These verses serve to explain vs. 3-5, and thus refer the parable, beyond all doubt, to our Lord as the true shepherd of the flock. Between these verses and v. 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 v. 4. This knowledge mutually subsisting between the good shepherd and his flock, is now explained to be the same in kind as that which subsists between the Father and Son. There

and ^d know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

^d 2 Ti. 2:19.

ought not to have been a period after this verse, but the passage should have read, "I know mine and am known of mine, *even* as the Father knoweth," &c. Alford finds a difference in the knowledge here referred to, his knowledge of the sheep being entire, perfect, and all comprehensive, corresponding to the Father's knowledge of him; their knowledge of him corresponding to his knowledge of the Father, intimate, direct, and personal. Dr. Burton, on the other hand, makes the correspondence to be: 'I know mine as I know my Father, and am known of mine as the Father knows me.' But in reference to both these views, I think the kind of knowledge, and not its exact amount and measurement, is referred to. There is between Christ and the believer a mutual knowledge founded upon love, such in kind as subsists between him and the Father, although, so far as the believer is concerned, infinitely less perfect. As to the difference which Alford finds in the knowledge which the Father has of the Son, compared with that which the Son has of the Father, it seems quite sufficient to remark that such an idea has no basis whatever in v. 15, where the most perfect equality of knowledge is represented as mutually existing in the Father and Son. It should awaken our deepest gratitude, that our fellowship and communion with Christ, is here likened to that which unites him in sympathy with the Father. *And I lay down my life*, &c. This is the consequence and illustration of his great love for the flock. His disciples did not understand the declaration until after the scenes of the crucifixion, much less the people, in whose hearing this great utterance was made. The present tense *I lay*, denotes that Christ had already entered upon his work of suffering and death. The language in its connection implies that the destruction of the flock was threatened, and that the good and faithful shepherd

15 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father :^f and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And^g other sheep I have,

^e Mt. 11 : 27.

sacrificed his own life in their defence. Here is clearly taught the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. Christ died to save us from death our great enemy (1 Cor. 15 : 26). His death was our life, suffering as he did in our stead. In regard to the restriction here made, that he died for his sheep, and by implication for none else, the idea evidently is, that the benefits of his death were actually conferred upon those only, who by faith in him availed themselves of the salvation which was provided for and offered to all. Hence in the actual results of his death, he laid down his life for believers only, all others being excluded from participation in the benefits of his death by their own act of unbelief. "The passage does not gain-say the great fact, that in another and prior sense, he died for all the straying sheep." Stier.

16. *Other sheep* refers to the Gentiles, the words *not of this fold*, relating to the Jews, who had thus far been God's peculiar people and heritage. *I have* is the comprehensive present, showing that all who believe in Christ in all places and time, are embraced in his love, and belong to him as his covenanted inheritance (see 6 : 37). He neither neglects nor overlooks them in the rich promises, with which he encourages his flock to confide in his protecting love. *Of this fold*, i. e. of the church as composed of Jewish believers. *These also I must bring*. They were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, wandering about in ignorance and sin; but in accordance with the purpose and will of his Father (see 6 : 39), whose love embraced the world, he was to bring all these into the fold. Not one was to be overlooked, in whatever portion of the world might have been his humble dwelling-place, or in whatever age he might have

which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ;^h and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

^f Ch. 15 : 13. ^g Is. 56 : 8.
^h Ez. 37 : 22; Ep. 2 : 14; 1 Pe. 2 : 25.

lived from Christ's advent onward to the end of time. All were to be gathered into the fold and made safe in His protecting care. *They shall hear my voice*, as the sheep hear and obey the shepherd's voice. This clause is added to the previous one, to explain how our Lord was to bring these sheep into one common fold. It was not by a compulsory process, but in accordance with their own will and inclination, as sheep follow the shepherd. Stier says that this is the great missionary promise, with which his servants may for ever confirm their confidence and console their hearts, when met by unbelief; even as the Lord himself does, v. 26, in the words, 'they are not his sheep, even as he said.' *And there shall be*, &c. This denotes the result of the preceding collection of the sheep from different quarters; there was to be but *one fold* and *one shepherd*. The word rendered *fold*, is here literally *flock*, reference being had to the union of Jews and Gentiles in the church of Christ. See Eph. 2 : 11-22, which Webster and Wilkinson call a perfect commentary on this passage. But as *one flock* and *one shepherd*, presuppose but *one fold*, there is no doubt that such is its meaning here. Let that interpretation, however, be dismissed, as unworthy of the great and comprehensive meaning of the passage, which would refer this one flock or fold, to any of the Christian sects of our day apart from the others. It 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 communities and brotherhoods. There is in reality but one faith, one baptism, and one Saviour

17 Therefore doth my Father

i Is. 53: 7, 8, 12; He. 2: 9.

Jesus Christ. On earth, owing to the imperfections and diversities of intellectual views, there may be many separate folds, but spiritually there is but one great and common fold, in which all the true sheep are under the superintendence and watchful care of the Good Shepherd. In heaven, where all shall be gathered in, every line of demarcation shall be erased, and believers shall form one great assemblage, realizing the glorious declaration here made, and evincing in their perfect union and love the slight and transitory nature of those distinctions on earth, which, to the shame of Christianity, have so widely sundered the followers of Him who here announces himself the Shepherd of all, and who prayed so earnestly (17: 21-23), that his people might all be one, as he and the Father were one.

17. The preceding verse closes the explanation and expansion of the parable contained in vs. 1-5. Our Lord now proceeds to speak openly and plainly of his official relation to the Father, in the laying down of his life for the sheep, referred to in v. 15, and here more fully disclosed and expanded. *Therefore*, refers forward to the clause *because I lay down my life*, as the reason for that is asserted in the first clause. It was his compassion for men, and his readiness to die in their behalf, which awakened in the bosom of the Father the deepest and most unchanging love for the Son. This refers of course to Jesus in his Messianic office, and not to him as one of the Persons of the Godhead, for in that relation, the most ineffable love has ever existed between the Father and the Son. Alford says that "in this wonderful verse lies the mystery of the love of the Father for the Son; because the Son has condescended to the work of humiliation, and to earn the crown through the cross (see Phil. 2: 8, 9)." *I lay down my life* in voluntary self-sacrifice. The idea is fully and emphatically evolved in this and the fol-

lowing clauses, that our Lord in the work of human redemption did not act from any compulsion, but from his own voluntary choice and purpose. *That I might take it again*. Commentators are divided, as to whether this clause is causal, or merely declarative of an event or result. I prefer the former view. The taking up of his life (i. e. his resurrection from the dead), includes all the future blessedness and glory resulting to him from his death. Were this great fact to be stricken out of the scheme of redemption, Christ's death would be without any meaning or efficacy. This is clearly shown in Rom. 4: 25, where it is expressly declared, that "he was raised again for our justification." See also John 14: 19. His death was a necessary antecedent to his entering upon a higher state of bliss and exaltation (see Heb. 12: 2), and bringing his chosen ones also to a share in his heavenly inheritance. It was not the mere act of laying down his life, which endeared the Son to the Father, but the taking it up again, in a way so eminently conducive to the good of the redeemed, and promotive of the glory of God. As Stier well remarks, without the purpose of taking up his life, his death would neither be lawful or possible. The resurrection of Jesus was deemed the most important of the facts of Christianity, and the proof and demonstration of all the rest (see 1 Cor. 15: 14, 17); and as such, the apostles regarded themselves as special witnesses to its truth and reality. See Acts 1: 21, 22; 4: 2, 33; 17: 18. See also generally Rom. 1: 4; 1 Pet. 1: 3; 3: 21. Hence, to recur to the passage before us, our Lord declared that he laid down his life in order that he might take it again, and thus secure all those glorious results for the church which he had purchased with his own blood (Acts 20: 28).

18. *No man taketh it from me*, against my will and purpose. See 18: 6; Matt. 26: 53. *Of myself*, i. e. voluntarily. The fact that his death was voluntary,

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I ^k have power to take it again. ^l This commandment have I received of my Father.

19 ^m There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

^k Ch. 2:19.
^l Ch. 6:38; & 15:10; Ac. 2:24, 32.

as he here distinctly asserts, shows that it was necessary, or he would never have submitted himself to its infiction. It was this voluntariness of the offering which rendered it so acceptable to the Father; and therefore it stands connected with v. 17, as one of the things which calls forth the Father's love. This voluntary offering of Christ to death, is still further expressed in what follows, in which he claims fully to himself inherent and resident power to lay down his life and resume it again. This makes his condescending love the more eminent, and endears him to the Father, as one who was obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8); even when it was in his power at any stage of his humiliation and suffering, to have resumed the high station from which he voluntarily descended (Phil. 2:6-8). *I have power* (i. e. inherent, underived power) *to lay it down*, &c. Webster and Wilkinson refer in exemplification and proof of this, to the actual fact as recorded in 19:28-30. The repetition of the word *power*, in these clauses imparts great fullness and emphasis to the expression. The voluntary, spontaneous offering of himself to death, could not be expressed in plainer or stronger terms. *This commandment* (or specific charge) *have I received*, &c. The sentiment is: 'this charge to suffer death have I received from my Father; and therefore I lay down my life for the sheep, although in thus doing I act voluntarily.' So Webster and Wilkinson well say, "his death depended on the Father's will, and on his own free choice to do the

20 And many of them said, ⁿ 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. ^o Can a devil ^p open the eyes of the blind?

^m Ch. 7:43; & 9:16.
ⁿ Ch. 7:20; & 8:48, 52.
^o Ex. 4:11; Ps. 94:9; & 146:8.
^p Ch. 9:6, 7, 32, 33.

will of his Father." In these declarations which our Lord makes in regard to his approaching death, two great concurrent facts are revealed, one that he acts under a commission given him from the Father; the other, that in the execution of this commission, his action is to the highest degree voluntary, inasmuch as he has power in himself, did it so please him, to do otherwise.

19, 20. The people are again divided (see 7:43; 9:16) in regard to him, some saying, *he hath a devil* (see N. on 7:20); others taking the opposite view. The words *is mad*, serve to explain the clause *he hath a devil*, and throws light upon the charge of the same kind made in 7:20. *Why hear ye him?* Why listen any longer to a lunatic like him?

21. Others, who took a more enlightened and unprejudiced view of what he had said. *These are not the words*, &c. "No insane man could utter words so rational and full of heavenly import." *Can a devil*, &c. Can one in league with evil spirits, or who is insane, perform so great a miracle as to open the eyes of the blind? The argument is of the same nature as that employed by the blind man, in proof that Jesus was not a bad man, as the Pharisees declared him to be (see 9:30-33). This reference to the miracle shows that the discourse was connected with the healing of the blind man. See N. on v. 1.

22-42. JESUS IN JERUSALEM AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION. HE RETIRES BEYOND JORDAN. *Jerusalem. Bethabara beyond Jordan.* This discourse is so

22 ¶ And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

evidently connected with the preceding, that it must be referred to the same occasion; and hence we are furnished with a clue as to where Jesus passed his time, during the two months which intervened between the feast of Tabernacles and the feast of Dedication. The idea of some expositors, that after the feast of Tabernacles he departed to Galilee, and at the expiration of the time between the two feasts, returned again to Jerusalem—no notice whatever having been taken by John or the other Evangelists of such a departure and sojourn in Galilee—is almost too absurd to be seriously refuted. Stier, Tholuck, Olshausen, and Alford, agree with Bengel in the opinion, that Jesus remained from the feast of Tabernacles to the feast of Dedication in Jerusalem or its near neighborhood. It is strange that such excellent and judicious expositors as Webster and Wilkinson, should dissent from this, and hold it as probable that our Lord returned from the feast of Tabernacles to Galilee, where occurred the history contained from Luke 10:17, on as far as chap. 18. John, who so particularly refers to our Lord's visits to Jerusalem to attend the prescribed feasts, would surely have made at least some allusion to his return from Galilee to this feast of Dedication, had he been absent in that region during the preceding two months. But, instead of this, he introduces our Lord walking in Solomon's porch, as though he had been at Jerusalem for some time, and this visit to the temple was one of his ordinary walks, to seek opportunity to impart instruction to the people. Besides this, had he repaired to Galilee as above stated, we can hardly suppose that he would have returned to Jerusalem, to attend a feast so comparatively insignificant as the feast of Dedication. The true chronological solution is that which supposes that Jesus fled from the premeditated violence of his enemies (8:59), and after a concealment

of several weeks in Jerusalem or its near vicinity—spent no doubt in prosecuting the work of his ministry—he again showed himself publicly in the city, and while passing through some one of the avenues leading to the temple, found the blind man, whom he healed in the manner related in 9:1-7. This incident gave rise to the subsequent discourses, which may have been several days after the performance of the miracle, some considerable interval of time being easily interjected between vs. 34 and 35. Dr. Robinson, by a comparison of v. 26, comes to the same conclusion, that this discourse was pronounced to the same audience, at least in part, as the foregoing discourse; and hence that the healing of the blind man took place near the beginning of the festival of Dedication. Such I think must be the conclusion of every expositor, who gives the subject a considerate attention.

22. *The feast of dedication*; literally, *the festival of consecration* of something new. This sentence would be more properly translated: in those days, or at that time *was the feast of dedication at Jerusalem*. "This festival of dedication was instituted by Judas Maccabeus, to commemorate the purification of the temple, and the *renewal* of the temple worship, after thirteen years' profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was held during eight days, commencing on the 25th day of the month Kislev, which began with the new moon of December. Josephus (Antiq. XII. 7, § 6, 7) calls it the festival of lights or lanterns, and speaks of it as a season of rejoicing. It was celebrated by the Jews, not at Jerusalem alone, like the great festivals of the law; but at home throughout the whole country, by the festive illumination of their dwellings." Dr. Robinson's Harmony. *It was winter*, not *stormy weather*, as some translate it; the clause being added to show when the feast took place; or, as Alford suggests, to show why Jesus walked in

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round

r Ac. 3:11; & 5:12.

Solomon's porch, which furnished protection from the cold. In favor of the former of these reasons, it may be said that John, writing as he did for those who were unacquainted with Jewish customs, often interjects explanations of this sort; and nothing would be more natural than to give the season of the year, in which this feast, which is only here mentioned, occurred.

23. *Walked or was walking* according to his usual custom. This is denoted in the original by the tense employed. He doubtless repaired to the temple each day, in order to impart instruction to those who resorted thither for daily worship. *In Solomon's porch.* This was a lofty and covered colonnade on the east, and rising, according to Josephus, some 400 cubits above the valley of the Kedron. But this was, doubtless, an exaggeration. Dr. Robinson by actual measurement made the height of the pinnacle, or middle portion of this colonnade, less than 310 feet. It is said to have been called *Solomon's porch*, because tradition stated it to have been a relic of the former temple of Solomon. This is not improbable, for Dr. Robinson remarks, that large portions of massive masonry, evidently belonging to the early ages of the temple, are still found on the S. W. of its ancient area, towards Mount Zion.

24. *Then came the Jews round about him*; literally, *gathered around him in a circle*. There was probably a concerted design in this. His enemies seem to have determined on one more effort to entrap him in his conversation, that they might have something wherewith to accuse him. Bengel says: "how grateful would their approach have been to the Saviour, had they done it in faith!" The term *Jews* here, as elsewhere in John, refers to his enemies, although in the throng were doubtless

about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told

many who believed in his mission, or were sincere inquirers after truth. The predominant power and influence on this occasion, however, were wholly with his enemies. *Make us to doubt*; literally, *lift up our soul* (in expectation), i. e. excite our minds and keep us in suspense. They here insinuate that our Lord had not put forth his claims to the Messiahship with ingenuous frankness, and virtually allege this as the reason for their unbelief in him. *Tell us plainly*; literally, *with boldness, frankness*. Their words imply that he had no reason to fear a full and explicit avowal of his claims, in response to their demand. Thus under the guise of sincere and earnest inquirers after truth, they sought to ensnare him; for when he afterwards declared himself to be the Messiah (Matt. 26: 63-66; Mark 14: 61-64; Luke 22: 66-71), they charged him with blasphemy, and adjudged him to be worthy of death. The miracle of the healing of the blind man seems to have stirred them up to the most determined efforts to effect his death, just as the previous miracle of the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda had excited their rage (see 5: 16; 7: 1). The great and stupendous miracle related in the next chapter, so exasperated them, that it was almost immediately followed by a resolution, formed in solemn conclave, to put him to death (11: 47-54). Thus we see that each succeeding miracle, although most benevolent in its nature, served only to excite his enemies to a more violent ebullition of rage. It was doubtless, in part at least, to bring out this odious feature in their persecution of Jesus, that John relates with such particularity these three miracles performed at or near Jerusalem, and passes over so many others wrought in different parts of the land.

25. *I told you, &c.* He had frequently

you, and ye believed not: *the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

s Ver. 38; ch. 3: 2; & 5: 36.

spoken of himself with sufficient plainness, to indicate beyond a doubt what he claimed himself to be. Alford refers to 5: 19; 8: 36, 56, 58, for unmistakable descriptions of himself. To these citations may be added vs. 7, 9, 11, 14, of the preceding chapter. *And ye believed not.* It is admissible in such cases to translate *and*, by the adversative *but*, although there is no positive necessity for it, inasmuch as the antithesis with the preceding clause lies in the negative. *The works, &c.* He appeals to his miracles in proof of his divine character and mission, the argument from which, in the mouth even of a poor illiterate man afflicted with blindness from his birth, we have seen to have been irresistibly conclusive to every candid mind (see 9: 30-32). His oft repeated declarations as to his office and mission, had been rejected by them as the words of one possessed of a devil (see 7: 20; 8: 40, 52; 10: 20). He had therefore no other recourse than to refer to his works, the evidence of which in his favor, could neither be impeached nor regarded as irrelevant or inconclusive. These works he had performed in *his Father's name*, which showed that he was approved of God (see 9: 31-33). Our Lord always brings out the great truth that he was sent into the world by the Father (see N. on 7: 33), and that he came not to do his own will but the will of Him that sent him (John 5: 30). Even the miracles he wrought were not performed in his own, but in his Father's name. It was, however, only as Messiah, God-man, that this subordination was predicated of him. By keeping in view this grand distinction between his official character as Messiah, and his essential nature and attributes as the divine Logos, every such passage as this will be readily understood, as referring to him in the subordinate relation of Redeemer and Mediator,

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

t Ch. 8: 47; 1 Jo. 4: 6.

and not at all conflicting with those Scriptures which assert his supreme divinity.

26. *But ye believe not* this overwhelming testimony. The conjunction is employed here which is most strongly adversative, and arrays their unbelief in striking contrast with the abundant proof furnished by his works as well as his word. The sentiment is, that their rejection of the evidence furnished by his miracles, showed very clearly that they would yield assent to nothing which he might say of himself. So rank and deep-seated was their unbelief, that it was proof against any and all evidence with which it might be sought to be overcome; and hence every effort to convince them of his divine mission and character in the nature of the case would prove fruitless. *Because ye are not of my sheep*, i. e. belong not to the number of believers. They had not entered the fold through the only door, which was Christ himself (see vs. 7, 9); but so far as the external privileges of the Jewish church were concerned, and in which they, as a portion of God's covenanted people, shared, they were thieves and robbers, having entered some other way (see v. 1). They were the natural descendants of Abraham, but they were not really and truly Abraham's children (see 8: 39, 44). *As I said unto you*, when I drew the character of those who were not of my sheep in such plain terms, that you could not mistake your position in relation to the Good Shepherd (see vs. 3, 4, 14). The difficulty which some find in the fact, that our Lord had in no recorded instance expressly told them that they belonged not to his fold, is imaginary; for the reference in the words, *as I said unto you*, like that in *I told you* (v. 25), is to the substance of what he had said, rather than to any plain and open declaration. Some expositors find in 8: 45, 46, the declara-

27 " My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me :

28 And I give unto them eter-

u Ver. 4, 14.

tion to which he refers ; but we need not go beyond the limits of the present chapter, to find, in the contrast which is implied in our Lord's parable (vs. 1-5), and its explanation (vs. 7-18), the declaration, almost as plain as words could have made it, that these Pharisees in their stubborn rejection of him who was the Good Shepherd, belonged not to the number of the true sheep. Some critics connect the words *as I have told you*, with the next verse. But this only transfers the difficulty to another quarter without removing it, for in no place can we find spoken the precise words of v. 27.

27. *My sheep* ; literally, *the sheep* (that are) *mine*, the collocation of the words in the original referring in strong contrast to the preceding words, *ye are not of my sheep* (v. 26). *Hear my voice* (see v. 3). This was the criterion by which the true flock was to be distinguished from that which was false and alien. By their rejection of his words (v. 25), the Jews showed clearly that they were not of his fold. Thus more and more clearly does our Lord draw the line of demarcation between his proud and persecuting enemies, and those who were included in the covenant of redemption (see v. 29), whom he here denominates his sheep. The verb in the original is singular, because the flock in its collective unity is referred to. The words *they follow me*, correspond to *I know them*, the implied sense being *they know me and follow me*. The knowledge is mutual (see v. 14), and hence the one implies the existence of the other. The general sense is : ' I know and acknowledge them, and they yield ready obedience to all my commands.' The pronoun *I*, in *I know* and *I give* (v. 28), is emphatic, and opposes in implied contrast our Lord the Good Shepherd, to those false shepherds referred to in the preceding parable

nal life ; and ^u they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

u Ch. 6: 37 ; & 17: 11, 12 ; & 18: 9.

(vs. 1-5) and its explanation (vs. 7-18), whose oversight of the flock was so faithless and baleful (see Ns. on 12, 13).

28. *And I give* (or *I also give*) *unto them eternal life*. See Ns. on 3: 15 ; 4: 36 ; 6: 54, 68. This promise corresponds to the abundant measure of life and happiness promised in v. 11, and also to the declaration made in vs. 11, 15, where the laying down of the shepherd's life for the sheep implies the protection and preservation of the life of the flock. This is still further indicated in his subsequent declaration (vs. 17, 18), that in the voluntary surrender of his life for the flock, he was to take it again—a circumstance which would be shorn of its chiefest glory, if the sheep for whose safety and welfare he died, were all scattered and lost. These great utterances of Jesus are so interlaced and woven together, that each new announcement confirms and illustrates the truths already declared. Thus the increased blessedness of the promise expressed in the words *eternal life*, is but the interpretation of what was less definitely expressed in the phrase *might have it* (i. e. life) *more abundantly* (v. 10). *They shall never perish*. According to the usage of John, this expresses negatively the sentiment of the preceding clause. *Neither shall any man*, &c. The train of thought is climactic. *Neither—any man* ; literally, *not any one*. The verb *shall pluck*, conforms to the preceding illustration, being the one employed in v. 12, of the wolf seizing and bearing off the sheep kept by the hireling. Not so shall it be with those who are under the watchful and faithful care of the good shepherd. No enemy by craft or open violence, shall be suffered to snatch one away from the fold, but all, even the weakest lambs of the flock, shall be kept in safety. *Out of my hand*, i. e. from under my power and protection.

29 ^y My Father, ^z which gave them me, is greater than all; and

^y Ch. 14: 23.
^z Ch. 17: 2, 6, &c.

The hand as the symbol of power, is often put figuratively for the person himself.

29. This verse furnishes the ground of assurance, that the Good Shepherd will preserve his flock from all peril and harm. They were all secured in the covenant of redemption to the Son, the Father having given them to him, and thereby standing pledged to their deliverance from every foe. *My Father which gave them to me.* The object of the verb is omitted, but there cannot be the least doubt of the correctness of the ellipsis, as supplied in our English version. Webster and Wilkinson remark, that the sentiment is all the more forcibly expressed from the absence of the pronoun, the attention being thereby restricted to the action of the verbs. *Is greater* (in power) *than all* the enemies of the flock; and hence, neither singly or combined, can they wrest one of the sheep from His hand. The argument is exceedingly simple and pertinent. Some have sought to maintain that the Son himself is included in the *all* here spoken of. But the connection evidently limits the comparison to the enemies of the sheep. Even however if the Son were included in the number of those who are inferior in power to the Father, it would be no proof whatever against his supreme divinity, inasmuch as the context refers beyond all question to the Son in his incarnate state. The whole argument is based on the superiority of the Father, which secures to the Son the possession of all who in the compact of redemption had been promised to him by the Father. The doctrine of the saint's perseverance in holiness is here most expressly taught. If one of the elect should finally perish, it would not only falsify the declaration here made by Christ, but would be a violation of the compact between the Father and Son (see 6: 37), and contrary to the expressly declared will of the Father

no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 ^a I and my Father are one.

^a Ch. 17: 11, 22.

(6: 39, 40). Yet this great truth, which so illustrates the sovereign mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and which is the only sure foundation upon which the believer rests his hope of eternal life, must not be abused to justify any laxity of effort on his part to make his calling and election sure, by a life of prayer and holy living, such as becometh the disciples of Christ.

30. Tholuck says that "this verse has been used since the Nicene Council, as the grand proof text for the metaphysical unity of essence between the Father and Son, though it was not so used previously." Some refer this unity to one of purpose merely. But the context refers to *power*, as the attribute of the Father especially referred to. This shows that unity of power, rather than unity of purpose, is here predicated of the Father and Son. But a oneness of power—which with God is omnipotent power—involves the idea of a unity of being or essence, and shows that the Father and Son are essentially one. But even if a unity of will and purpose only is meant in the unity here spoken of, does not an absolute oneness in this respect presuppose essential unity? In either case, whether unity of power or purpose be intended, the passage teaches most clearly an essential unity of the Father and Son. The manifest design of the declaration, is to prevent any misconception which might arise from the fact, that the sheep are spoken of as being in the hand of both the Father and the Son. The question might arise, how, at one and the same time, they could be in the hand of two distinct beings, each so powerful that none could pluck them from their hand. The answer, simple, concise, and unmistakable, is that these Persons are one and the same in essence; and that so united are they in their essential being, that whoever claims the protection and care of one, has an equal demand upon that of the other.

31 Then ^b the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many

^b Ch. 8:59.

Hence there was nothing strange in the assertion, that the sheep were in his hand, and also in that of his Father. That this is the great argument of the passage, seems too plain to be for a moment questioned. To claim that a mere unity of will and purpose, aside from an essential unity of being, meets the requisitions of this declaration, when considered in relation to the context so clear and well-defined, is as absurd as to say that two persons may have distinct and personal possession of a thing at one and the same time, merely because there exists between them a unity of will and purpose. That essential unity is here intended is clear, not only, as we have shown, from the scope of the passage, which requires something more than oneness of purpose, but also from the following context, and especially v. 38, where the mutual indwelling of the Father and Son is expressly declared, in terms which admit of no other interpretation, than as referring to the mysterious and ineffable union taught so clearly in the passage before us. The numeral *one*, is the Greek neuter, the idea of essence and not of personality being predominant. Had the masculine form been employed, it would have been *I and my Father are one person*, which would involve an untruth and an absurdity.

31. The infuriated rage to which they were excited by these words of Jesus, discloses the spirit with which they made the request in v. 24. As soon as he intimated in the slightest degree his claim to the Messianic dignity, they became so exasperated as to attempt to kill him upon the spot. *Again* refers to the previous attempt of the same sort narrated in 8:59. As Jesus did not seek to avoid their rage, as in the previous instance, it is probable that they did not evince such a desperate determination to kill him as at that time. *They took up*; literally, *they bore* in the hand. They held the stones

good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

in readiness to throw at him. Stier thinks that they brought these stones with them, evincing a more deliberate intention to take his life, than when, on a previous occasion, they grasped stones which lay in the way, to cast at him. What it was which restrained them from consummating their act of violence, we know not. Perhaps they paused a moment, when they perceived that he was about to speak, and their attention being arrested by his words, they permitted him to proceed with his discourse, until being again lashed into fury by his closing words in v. 38, they sought to carry into immediate effect their bloody intentions, and that too in so determined a manner, that he found it necessary to quit the city and retire to the east of Jordan.

32. *Answered them.* "The Evangelist beautifully introduces his words with *answered them*, as if the interjection of the stones was but a continuation of the colloquy and met with this gentle response." Stier. *Many good works*, &c. Our Lord keeps constantly before his enemies, as proof of his being the Son of God, his miracles and doctrines. *Good works* refers to all the manifestations by word and deed, which he had made of his Messiahship. He challenges them to point out one of these works, as furnishing any ground of justification for their violent treatment of him. *Have I showed* (i. e. made known as the Revealer) *from my Father*, in whose name I act and whose commission I bear. Although he had declared in v. 30, his coequal power and dignity with the Father, yet now resuming language befitting the depths of humiliation into which he had descended, he speaks of receiving his works from his Father. But in this expression of humble subordination to the Father, we see a striking manifestation of his calm boldness in repeating the words *my Father*, although at the hazard of awakening anew the deadly rage

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.

of his enemies. *Do ye stone me?* i. e. seek ye to stone me?

33. *For a good work, &c.* Olshausen and Stier look upon this as an admission on the part of these Jews, that Jesus had performed many good and benevolent works. But this is not the necessary interpretation of the passage. It was probably spoken as a mere hypothesis: *for a good work* (on the supposition that you have ever performed one) *we stone thee not.* This shows why they employed the singular in their repetition of his many good works. It was in derogation of his claim to the performance of a single benevolent work. It will be recollected that their universal practice was, either to deny that he had really performed a miracle, or to impute it to collusion with the evil spirits. The charge of blasphemy, which they here make against him, is a virtual denial that he was a true miracle-worker. *But for blasphemy.* This shows in what sense the Jews understood his declaration in v. 30. *And because that thou, &c.* This introduces the proof of their charge against him of blasphemy. The Greeks often construed a causal clause, as a coördinate one, to give it the more emphasis. *Being a man.* Had our Saviour been only a man, their charge would have been true. Their mistake lay in not discerning his superhuman character from his stupendous miracles and his own oft repeated and solemn declarations. *Makest thyself God.* Jesus had in various ways declared his essential unity with the Father, and his underived and independent power (see v. 18). The Jews, either looking or pretending to look upon him as a fanatic, bear with him, until he asserts this intimate and essential relation to the Father, which they regard as the most shocking blasphemy. Some who deny the supreme divinity of our Lord, seek to evade the force of the declara-

34 Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

c Ch. 5:13.
d Ps. 82: 6.

tion in v. 30, by averring that the Jews did not really understand him as claiming an essential unity with the Father, but pretended to so understand his words, in order to excuse their premeditated act of violence. But in the first place, it cannot be denied that they affixed to his declaration its natural and obvious sense. Indeed, as we have shown from the preceding context, they could have attached no other meaning to the declaration, than that his power to preserve the flock was equal to that of the Father, on the ground that there was an essential unity of being and attributes existing between him and the Father. In the second place, had they misunderstood the purport of his words, can any one suppose for a moment that our Lord would not have corrected their mistake, instead of proceeding, as he did, to show that it was no blasphemy for him to announce himself the Son of God? His whole reply, even to the very closing declaration—which, if possible, was a still stronger affirmation of his supreme divinity (see N. on v. 38)—is an admission that they rightly understood him as making himself equal with God. Had he not intended this in his declaration *I and my Father are one*, as an honest man, he should at once have disabused them of their mistake, and acknowledged the infinite distance that intervened between him and the great God. This disclaimer was no less imperative on him, from the fact that the Jews put a false interpretation on his words for insidious purposes. He should not have permitted either a real or pretended charge of this nature to have gone forth uncontradicted, if he was any thing less than coequal and coessential with the Father.

34. Without arguing directly the question of his divine nature, our Lord, by a sort of argument *a fortiori*

35 If he called them gods,
 ° unto whom the word of God
 came, and the Scripture cannot
 be broken;

36 Say ye of him, ^fwhom the

^e Ro. 13: 1.
^f Ch. 6: 27.

(see N. on Matt. 5: 15), exonerates himself from all censure in the high claims which he had put forth. The train of thought is this: 'If magistrates and others in authority were called gods in the Scriptures, was he to be charged with blasphemy, who, bringing with him the most ample and satisfactory credentials, that he had been consecrated and sent into the world as Messiah, declared himself to be the Son of God?' *Is it not written in your law?* The quotation is from Ps. 82: 6 (compare also Ex. 22: 8, 9, 28). The word *law*, is employed here in the general sense of Old Testament Scriptures. Such is its use also in 12: 34; 15: 25. *Ye are gods.* This declaration is made of the judges, whom the Psalmist was exhorting to a more active and conscientious discharge of their official duty. The application of this term, with which the judges were addressed, to the point in hand, is made by our Lord in the following verse.

35. *If he* (i. e. the Psalmist) *called them gods*, &c. In order to understand the argument, we must consider the reference here made to the title bestowed by the Psalmist upon the judges, as intended to furnish a justifying plea for the use of the title "Son of God," which he had claimed for himself. But the reference has still deeper soundings, as we shall see in the sequel. *To whom the word of God came.* This refers probably to their commission as judges, which being made 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. Some expositors refer the *word of God*, to the divine illumination of these

Father hath sanctified, and ^g sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; ^h because I said, I am ⁱ the Son of God?

^g Ch. 3: 17; & 5: 36, 37; & 8: 62.
^h Ch. 5: 17, 18; ver. 80.
ⁱ Lu. 1: 35; ch. 9: 35, 37.

judges by the word of revelation. The comparison would then lie between the judges as the recipients of God's word, and Jesus Christ the Revealer, or the Being in whom is the revelation of God Himself to man. Unless we consider the passage as combining both these senses—against which combination no valid reason can be advanced—I greatly prefer the former exposition, referring it to the divinely authorized commission which the judges bore, compared with the peculiar, unique, and infinitely glorious appointment of Jesus Christ to the Messianic office and dignity. *And the Scripture*, &c. The sentiment of this parenthesis is, that the word of God contained in the Scriptures must stand as good authority, not to be gainsaid or disputed. This clause is designed therefore to add force to the argument, with which our Lord supported his claim to the title of Son of God from the Scripture here quoted.

36. *Say ye of him?* 'Can you with any propriety or show of truth say of him?' This constitutes the conclusion from the foregoing premises. *Whom the Father hath sanctified*, and thus honored far above the judges appointed by their fellow-men in accordance with the Mosaic statutes, and styled gods by the Psalmist. *And sent into the world* on his Messianic mission. Here again reference is had to the preëxistent nature of Jesus Christ. He was with the Father, and came forth from him. This constituted a radical difference between these judges who were called gods in the old Testament, and Jesus who claimed to be the Son of God, in the New Testament. They were officially styled gods, as the representatives of God, and the dispensers of law and justice; but He was really God, having been from eternity in a state of most

37 ^k If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, ^l believe the works;

^k Ch. 15:24.

intimate fellowship with the Father, and sanctified and appointed of Him to an office, which embraced the supreme dominion over all created beings (Eph. 1:20, 21), together with the final Judgeship of the quick and the dead—an office, which could be performed only by one who was himself supremely divine. Here the great argument for his divinity comes out again in all its depth and grandeur. The fierce and threatening charge of his enemies, that he had uttered blasphemous words, are made the occasion of an emphatic reiteration of his high claim to supreme divinity, and that too, by so pertinent an allusion to Scripture usage in regard to the title of gods bestowed upon men, that the mouths of his enemies were completely stopped, and they had no recourse left but to effect his death by violent measures.

37. Our Lord again appeals to his miracles in proof of his claims. He had now vindicated himself from the charge of blasphemy, and he calls upon them to examine the character of his works, and if they were such as to indicate that they were performed by divine agency, to yield to the evidence thereby furnished that he came from God. In all this, we see his persistent and repeated efforts to convince his enemies of their unjustifiable conduct in thus rejecting the testimony which he bore of himself, and which was so fully corroborated by his works. *Works of my Father*, i. e. the miracles he had wrought and the doctrines which he had taught; especially the former, which were an appeal in favor of his divine mission addressed to the evidence of the senses. The phrase *of my Father*, denotes the idea of source and approbation.

38. *Though ye believe not me*, i. e. take not my word in regard to my character and mission, and stumble at

that ye may know, and believe, ^m that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

^l Ch. 5:36; & 14:10, 11.

^m Ch. 14:10, 11; & 17:21.

my lowly condition. *Believe the works*, i. e. confide in the testimony which they offer in proof of my Messiahship. The argument assumes, that the testimony of his works was higher and more convincing than that of his simple assertion. Hence he exhorts them to believe the evidence furnished by his works, well knowing that this would be followed by the most implicit faith in all which he said. *That ye may know*, &c. This denotes the consequence of their belief in his works, and is corroborative proof that the Greek particle here employed may have the *eventual* sense, *so that*, as well as that of purpose, *in order that*. See N. on v. 2; Matt. 1:22. The words *the Father is in me*, &c. are in the original highly condensed and emphatic: *in me the Father, and I in him* being the literal translation. This mutual indwelling and interpenetration, denotes the strictest equality and the most intimate and essential union, and clearly shows that in his great declaration in v. 30, of which this is the manifest reiteration, reference is had to an essential unity of being and attribute, and not to one of mere will or purpose. But how was this union and equality shown by his works, to which he directs them in proof of this great truth? Evidently by their being shown to be the very same in nature as those wrought by the Father. Indeed they were the works of the Father wrought in and through the Son. He performed miracles by his own power, and yet not apart from the power of the Father. Hence, every miracle was an attestation of his own underived power, and also that of his Father working in and by him. The mystery of this truth is only solved by a reference to his complex nature of God and man, and his essential union with the Father. Hence, in v. 30, he

39 ⁿ Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand,

40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place ^o where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

ⁿ Ch. 7:30, 44; & 8:59.
^o Ch. 1:28. ^p Ch. 3:30.

seeks to remove the apparent strangeness of his declaration, that the sheep were in his own hand, out of which no one could pluck them, and also in his Father's hand, from which it was equally impossible to take them, by declaring in the simplest and most explicit terms, that he and the Father were one. In like manner, he teaches here that an intelligent perception of the nature and divine power manifested in his works, would lead to the same solution of the mystery, namely, that the works proceeded from both him and the Father, by virtue of this mutual indwelling and essential unity.

39. Although exceedingly infuriated against him, they make no farther attempts to stone him, but adopt the more deliberative determination to bring him to trial and condemnation. The word *seek*, must therefore be taken in the sense of *endeavor*, in the way of judicial process. *He escaped*, &c. It would appear from this that they sought at once to apprehend and drag him to trial; but he found means to escape from their hands, his final hour not being yet come (7:6). Some expositors interpret this of a miraculous escape, but it comports better with the habits of Jesus to refer it to the more ordinary means of self-preservation. We have no well-authenticated case, where our Lord or any of his apostles wrought a miracle to save their own life. For the preservation of that, they were thrown upon the providential care of God, like all the rest of mankind. *Out of their hand*, has the sense of *out of their power*, with the idea of imminent danger.

40. *Went away*, &c. The opposition of the Jews had now become so open

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: ^r but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 ^q And many believed on him there.

^q Ch. 8:30; & 11:45.

and deadly, that it was no longer safe for him to remain in Judea, and he passed over to the east of Jordan. *Into the place*, &c. This was Bethabara. Sec 1:28. Thus our Lord was brought back, after all his labors in Galilee and in Judea, to the place where he was baptized, and pointed out to the multitudes as the Lamb of God which was to take away the sin of the world. This accounts for the particular mention of the place, whither he now retreated from the rage of the Jews. *There he abode*. He did not return again to Jerusalem, until the time of his public and triumphal entry into the city (Matt. 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44), on the second day of the week of his passion. He returned however, to Bethany, at the summons of the sisters of Lazarus (11:3), after which he retired to Ephraim, until six days before his passion, when he again visited Bethany (11:54; 12:1).

41. *Resorted unto him*, to listen to his instructions and to be healed of their infirmities. The presence of this latter class of persons is accounted for in the contrast, between his abundant miraculous deeds and the recorded fact that *John did no miracle*. The comparison made between Jesus and John, was doubtless suggested by the place, which reminded them of the ministry of the Baptist (see 1:28). *But all things*, &c. They recall to mind the testimony which John bore to the character and office of Jesus (1:29-34), and fully acknowledge its truth. Some of these people may have followed him from Jerusalem, but the great portion were, doubtless, from the immediate vicinity of the place where he then was.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS. *Bethany.*

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

It has always been a matter of wonder, that this miracle, the most stupendous one wrought by our Lord during his ministry, and which so thoroughly aroused and alarmed his enemies, that they rested not until they had compassed his death—that such a miracle should have been passed over in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, without receiving the slightest allusion whatever. To say that it was not their design to write each a complete history of our Lord's official acts, is too obvious a fact to be disputed; and yet when we remember that in the Synoptic gospels, miracles of far less apparent moment were recorded with great particularity by all the writers, the question again recurs, why so great a miracle as the raising of Lazarus from the grave was left to be related by John, the others passing it by in silence. We must also look for some reason deeper than that, which refers its omission by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to the impossibility of bringing all his miracles within the limits of their historical record. If all his works could not be related without swelling to undue size the record of our Lord's public ministry, it would seem to have been both natural and proper that the selection should have embraced all his more stupendous miracles, certainly the one which of all others most clearly displayed his divine power, and was most intimately connected with the settled determination of his enemies to effect his death.

The writers of the gospels in making their selection from the acts and words of Jesus, would group together, as was natural, those miracles and discourses which best subserved the purpose for which they respectively wrote. The first three Evangelists seem to have felt, as they were approaching the last scenes of our Lord's ministry, that they had reported miracles sufficient to establish beyond a doubt the great fact that Je-

sus was the Son of God. Hence from the time of our Lord's final departure from Galilee (John 7 : 10 ; Luke 9 : 51), to the time of his crucifixion, they relate no miracle of his, except the healing of the blind man near Jericho (Matt. 20 : 29-34 ; Mark 10 : 46-52 ; Luke 18 : 35-43), the withering away of the fig tree at the words of Jesus (Matt. 21 : 19, 20 ; Mark 11 : 13, 14, 20), and the healing of Malchus' ear (Luke 22 : 50, 51). These miracles so fell in the way of their narrative, that they could not well avoid recording them. But all the other miracles wrought by our Lord in these last days of his ministry, and they were many (see 11 : 47), seem to have been wholly ignored by them. What was the reason of this? The obvious answer is that (1) a limit was necessary to the number of miracles to be recorded, for the reason assigned by John (21 : 25); and (2) that in the judgment of the Evangelists, enough had been related to prove beyond any reasonable doubt, that Jesus of Nazareth was sent of God, and was the true Messiah.

But up to the time of the raising of Lazarus, John had recorded in the way of particular mention, but six miracles, and three of these for apparently no other reason, than to introduce to his readers the great spiritual discourses of our Lord which grew out of them. One of the other three, Christ's walking on the sea of Galilee, seems to have been recorded, rather as a matter of necessity to show how Jesus was on the following morning found by the people on the other side of the lake, than for any reason which grew out of the miracle itself (see Remarks on 6 : 1-14). John then must be conceived to have made the relation of our Lord's miracles a less prominent object than did the other Evangelists, while he related at far greater length his discourses and discussions with the Jews. He appears to have selected just such miracles for special mention, as would serve to bring out the great truths pertaining to our Lord's divinity, and his spiritual relation to the believer, as the bread and water of life, and the great

Vivifier who should raise him up at the last day, to a state of eternal blessedness in the presence of his Father. In accordance with this great feature of his gospel, he now goes on to record at length a miracle which was wrought in the latter period of Christ's ministry, and which served to show his divine power, and illustrate and confirm the declaration made of him in 1: 1, better than any other miracle which he had performed. It was fit also after what had been said of the vivifying power of Jesus in 5: 25-29 (on which see Note), that an example should be given, evincing, as did this miracle, that in him this power resided in full degree and ready activity.

There was then a reason why John entered into so full and particular a relation of this miracle, which had no place in the plan which governed the Synoptic Evangelists in the composition of their gospels. To this may be added its evident connection with our Lord's apprehension and death. The Jews had determined on this, having been excited thereto by the rage and malice engendered by our Lord's spiritual discourses and claim to a divine and pre-existent state. But the hostility received a new impulse from this miracle, which was so stupendous as to astound the nation, and wring from the rulers the despairing remark, that "the world had gone after him." See 12: 17-19. This miracle then found a natural place in John's Gospel, and is by no means to be regarded as an episode for the mere purpose of entertaining his readers, or satisfying their curiosity in regard to the amazing display of power which it evinced. It comported fully with his general plan—which was to prove Christ's divinity, and show the effect which the declaration of this truth had upon the Jews—to record a miracle, which more than any one other illustrated his great theme, and aroused the deadly opposition of the Jews against Jesus.

But after all that may be said, in regard to the selection and arrangement of the materials of their Gospels, the whole subject in its highest and broad-

est relation, must be referred to the Spirit under whose influence the Evangelists wrote, and who for wise reasons withheld the account of this stupendous miracle, until the time when it could be related, so as to best subserve the design which Infinite wisdom would accomplish, in having it so fully recorded as it is in John's Gospel.

There remains but a word to be said in regard to this narrative of the raising of Lazarus, considered in the light of its structure and composition. That it is a story of exceedingly touching beauty and tenderness, no one who has a heart to sympathize with a bereaved family like that of Bethany, will for a moment call in question. The somewhat formal opening, as though an affair of more than ordinary moment was to be related—the hope which the words pronounced in the hearing of the messenger (v. 4) must have inspired in the breast of those loving sisters, but which was followed by the deepest dependency at his seeming insensibility, if not forgetfulness of the whole affair, in tarrying so long in Perea—the devotion of his disciples in their prompt reply (v. 16) to his expressed determination to go again into Judea, that if he would thus expose himself to peril from his enemies, they would go and die with him—his sublime and cheering declaration to the sisters of Lazarus as they came forth successively to meet him—his irrepressible tears of sympathy, as he approached the grave of his friend—the removal of the stone, the prayer of Jesus, and the sublime words, with which he awoke to life the tenant of the grave—are all narrated with the most artless simplicity, but with a gathering power and climax of interest, which no uninspired story has ever approached, and which has scarcely a parallel elsewhere on the page of revelation. Thousands and thousands have read it with suffused eyes, and drawn comfort from the sympathy which Jesus evinced in the bereavement of those who were dear to him—an earnest of his sympathy with the bereaved in every age, who have by their faith and love, entitled them-

CHAPTER XI.

NOW a certain *man* was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of "Mary and her sister Martha.

2 ^b It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with oint-

a Lu. 10: 38, 39.

selves to be numbered among his friends. Many things which might be said of this wonderful narrative, are reserved for the comments upon the particular portions, as they pass before us in detail.

1. *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. *Was sick*. This verb literally signifies *to be weak, feeble, sickly*. But we have classic authority, as well as the usage of the word in Acts 9: 37; Phil. 2: 26, 27, for its employment of persons in the last stage of disease. These sisters would have hardly sent off this message to Jesus, if their brother had not been dangerously ill; and that this was so, is shown from the fact that he died soon after the messenger was despatched to announce his sickness to Jesus (see N. on v. 17). *Of Bethany*, i. e. a resident of Bethany. So we speak in common parlance of one's hailing from a place. *The town of Mary*, &c. It was the town where these sisters resided. Mary is placed first, not that she was the elder sister (see Luke 10: 38), but because she was the one whom Jesus specially loved and honored. The order of their ages is probably observed in v. 5. The general belief is, that Lazarus was the youngest of the three; and Bengel refers to an ecclesiastical tradition, that he lived just so many years after the ascension of Jesus, as he had passed when he fell sick and died as here related.

2. *It was that Mary*, &c. Literally, *it was Mary*, (the one) *who anointed the Lord*. This reference is made by way of anticipation, the incident not

ment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto

b Mt. 26: 7; Ma. 14: 3; ch. 12: 3.

having yet taken place, nor having been recorded by John (see 12: 3). It seems to have been referred to, in order to show why it was that Mary was awarded the honor of being named before her sister (see N. on v. 1). The form of expression *the Lord*, which in the Greek idiom has the force of *our Lord* (see N. on 4: 1), shows that this pious act of Mary had already attained that general notoriety in the church, which our Lord had predicted of it (see Matt. 24: 13; Mark 14: 9). The reference made to it by John is in a way which shows that it was a well-known and familiar incident in the life of Jesus.

3. *Therefore* in consequence of his alarming illness. *He whom thou lovest*, &c. Our Lord had doubtless manifested a strong attachment to Lazarus, as well as to his sisters, and hence they remind Jesus of this circumstance, as an inducement for him to come to their aid. They appeal to his well-known affection for Lazarus, but with a delicate regard to the proprieties of the occasion, make no allusion to his well-known esteem for themselves. What their modesty, however, forbade their uttering, the Evangelist fully records in v. 5. In connection with this point, it may be remarked, that the verb here employed to designate our Lord's love for Lazarus, is different from the one used in v. 5. That denotes *regard* and *esteem*; this, *affection*, *love*. Thus carefully does the sacred writer guard the relations which Jesus sustained to this family, from any misconception or perversion which the enemies of truth might seek to employ to his prejudice.

4. *When Jesus heard that*; more lit-

death, 'but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

c Ch. 9:3; ver. 40.

erally, *Jesus having heard* the report of the messenger. *Is not unto death*, i. e. is not to issue in a death which shall be permanent, or death in the ordinary sense of the term. No inference can be drawn from this that Lazarus did not actually die, for the reality of his death is shown in vs. 14, 21, 32, 39, and indeed in the whole warp and woof of the narration. Stier says that this expression might be used in a certain sense, of the falling asleep of all whom the Lord loves, and who will awake only at the first resurrection. But this was a special utterance concerning the issue of Lazarus' sickness, which is fully explained in the grand event of the sequel. The words which Jesus here spoke, are regarded by many commentators, as the *direct* answer sent from him to Martha and Mary. But it seems more natural to consider the remark, as made by Jesus to the disciples who stood by, when the message from the sisters of Lazarus was received. Whether any direct reply was sent back to them, we have no means of knowing. However this may have been, we cannot doubt that words of such deep and mysterious import, as that the sickness of Lazarus would be conducive to the glory of God, and of God's Son, were faithfully reported by the messenger to those who sent him. Before he returned, however, to Bethany, Lazarus lay in the embrace of death, and hence the words of Jesus rendered by this sad event still more enigmatical, constituted an eminent trial of their faith in Him, whose presence, they afterward declared their assurance, would have prevented their brother from dying. *But for* (i. e. for the sake of) *the glory of God*, &c. See 10:3. 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 v. 45. Also 12:9, 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. It will be noticed, however, that the expression is not the simple form for *the glory of God and his Son*; but the latter clause takes its more usual form, *that the Son of God might be glorified*, which in addition to the glory that should accrue to him from this stupendous miracle, seems to imply an additional reference to his own death, which, as has been remarked (Preliminary Observations) was to be the effect in part at least, of this great miracle. It was through the agony of the cross and the darkness of the grave, that he was to reach that glorified state, which was to be the reward of his humiliation, toil, and suffering. Hence his death is often referred to as the means of his glorification. Compare 7:39; 12:16, 23.

5. This verse is parenthetic, serving to show the depth of love and tenderness, which actuated Jesus in the whole transaction. It connects with the *not unto death* of v. 4, serving as a reason why so gracious a word was used of Lazarus' sickness. It also belongs equally to what follows, in the sense of, 'when he heard of this dangerous sickness of his friend, so afflictive also to the sisters whom he so much esteemed, he nevertheless abode two days still in the place where he was.' Indeed this verse serves as a key to the whole narrative, and shows from what a depth of tender love flowed those tears of grief and sympathy at the grave, which arrested the attention even of the Jews who stood by, and caused them to exclaim, "Behold how he loved him."

6. *When*; literally, *when therefore*, the verse being connected with v. 4. *He abode* (even) *there*, although there seemed the most urgent need of haste,

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, ^dhe abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 His disciples say unto him,

d Ch. 10:40.

e Ch. 10:31.

in order by his presence to relieve, or at least to comfort his sick friend. It is probable (see N. on v. 17) that Lazarus was already deceased when Jesus first received the message, as he had been dead four days when our Lord reached Bethany (v. 39). This delay must not be attributed to his pressing official engagements, but to his purpose to make the miracle which he was about to perform the more stupendous and glorious, in the restoration of one to life, upon whose body the corruption of the grave had already commenced its loathsome work. Stier connects with this, as a leading motive in so long a delay, the great increase of joy which should be furnished thereby to the family in Bethany, at the unexpected restoration of their brother who had been so long dead. "His love wittingly delays, that it may more gloriously console them after their sufferings." This is true, but as above remarked, a higher reason is to be found in the great design of the miracle to display the divine power of the Son of God, which rendered it fitting, that the most satisfactory evidence should be furnished that Lazarus was really dead. There was doubtless a spiritual good also to be imparted to this beloved family, which required that they should be left for several days in the depths of affliction. Our Lord in his human sympathies yearned to revisit them at once, but as Lavater remarks, he purposes to help them in his own way, that is, *as God*.

7, 8. *Then*; literally, *thereupon, afterwards*. This is rendered more definite by the words *after this*, i. e. when two days had elapsed. *Let us go*, &c.

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.

f Ch. 9:4.

This indefiniteness of expression and apparent forgetfulness of the family at Bethany, led the disciples to infer, that his object in returning to Judea was to resume his labors as a public teacher, and knowing that his life had been placed in great peril from the infuriated priests and rulers (see 10:39), they seek to dissuade him from his purpose. This they do by reminding him of his narrow escape from the malice of the Jews, when he was last at Jerusalem. *Of late*; literally, *now, just now*. The danger to which he was exposed, when the Jews took up large stones to throw at him, was so vividly present to their mind, that they speak of it as a thing which had just happened. *Sought to stone thee*. See 8:59; 10:31. *Goest thou thither again?* The question presupposed an infatuation of purpose, utterly at variance with every dictate of prudence and self-preservation. 'Goest thou thither, where thou wilt be exposed to almost certain death?'

9. *Are there not twelve hours*, &c. See Ns. on 10:4, 5. Reference is had to the hours allotted to work. If the Jews reckoned the hours of labor between the rising and setting sun, then the division would comprise twelve hours, longer or shorter according to the season of the year. That such was the division of the day, so far at least as pertained to civil and industrial pursuits, in the light of this passage, we can hardly doubt for a moment. If so, then twelve hours might be denominated a period each day, in which the laborer had no right, unless secured by previous stipulation, to intermit or cease from his labors. So our Lord virtually declares, that a definite time

10 But ⁹ if a man walk in the

g Ch. 12:35.

had been assigned to him by the Father, in which to fulfil his appointed mission. He had his allotted twelve hours' service, his appointed day of labor, during which time, he was not to be deterred by the fear of man from his great work. The additional idea is also implied in the passage, that the night which would bring his labors to a close, would not approach until its regular and appointed time; that he had a work to perform, in the accomplishment of which he could not be hindered by his enemies, until the appointed hour arrived, when they would be permitted to triumph for a season. The same sentiment is expressed by a similar reference to a strictly defined and allotted time, in Luke 13:32, on which see Note. Some find in the reply of our Lord to his disciples this idea: 'My twelve hours are nearly spent, and I must hasten my work in order that it may all be completed while the day lasts.' This view in itself is not erroneous. Nor is it otherwise than pertinent and true, in its reference to the zeal and ardor with which our Lord prosecuted the duties of his mission while on earth. But it is not the precise idea of the present passage, which is simply this: 'I have full twelve hours to work, the allotted time of my earthly ministry, and I need fear no interruption until the full end has been reached.' Thus our Lord's reply meets the very point of the objection, urged by the disciples against his return to Judea, on the ground of the well-known deadly hostility of the Jewish priests and rulers against him. *If a man walk* (literally, *if any one walk about*) *in the day*. As the man who enjoys the light of day, walks fearlessly about, so our Lord, under this figurative language, avers that he may visit Judea or any other place in safety during the prescribed time of his ministry. The implication is that he would experience the protecting care of his Father, while pursuing the path of duty, even though it led directly into the midst of his

night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

most virulent enemies. *Because he seeth, &c.* This stands as the reason why the man could walk in such perfect security. The expression *light of the world*, refers primarily to the sun; but inasmuch as our Lord was the Light of the world in a spiritual sense, and had thus declared himself to be (see 8:12; 9:5), in the very words here employed (see also 12:35), he probably used this expression instead of *the sun*, to encourage his disciples with the promise of safety, while they were walking with Him, who was in the highest sense the *Light of the world*.

10. *In the night* stands opposed here to *in the day*, and refers primarily to the natural night; but like the preceding declaration, has also a deep spiritual significancy, that whoever walks not in the light of the Son of God will stumble and fall. This is not an instance of what is termed the *double sense*, but is an example of the concealment or adumbration of a great spiritual truth, under the veil of language referring primarily to the natural day and night. The disciples were troubled for the safety of their Master, beset as he was by the most virulent foes. But he comforts and encourages them with the assurance, that while the day of his official labor lasts, he can walk in safety. Closely allied to this was another important truth, that while walking with him, *the Light of the world*, they need be under no apprehension of evil, for they would be secure in his protection. Olshausen remarks that "in the former clause, *if any man walk in the day*, Jesus has respect rather to himself; in the latter, *but if a man walk in the night*, the reference is to his disciples. I would rather regard both clauses as constituting a general aphorism, applicable alike as a principle to Christ and his disciples, although the latter clause, in its reference to Jesus, was a supposition never to be realized as an actual fact. *Because there is no light in him*. This clause is shaped to meet the idea, that as in the absence of

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus ^a sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

h So De. 31:16; Da. 12:2; Mt. 9:24; Ac. 7:60; 1 Co. 15:18, 51.

the natural sun, the man has no light to guide his footsteps, so when the Light of the world is obscured from the soul, there is *in it no light*. The words *in him* (see Matt. 6:22), therefore, although referring primarily to the natural light which is objective, are used nevertheless in the higher sense of the interpretation of spiritual light in the soul, by which the whole inner man is illumined with the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. These words of Jesus are designed, therefore, not only to encourage the disciples, as above remarked, but to disclose a great truth, that spiritual light is as necessary for the safety and comfort of the spiritual traveller, as the natural sun is to one who walks here upon the earth.

11, 12. *After that*, i. e. after the preceding remarks. It is evident from the preceding words *these things said he*, that there had intervened some interval of time, before our Lord recurred again to the subject in the way here mentioned. The calm deliberation with which he approached the performance of this miracle, second in greatness only to his own resurrection from the dead, is in perfect consistency with the majesty and godlike character, as well as tenderness, which mark all his acts and sayings in this wondrous transaction. *Our friend Lazarus*; literally, *Lazarus our friend*. Jesus condescendingly refers to Lazarus as their common friend, and thus hints that his disciples should accompany him in his visit to Bethany. *Sleepeth* the sleep of death. This metaphor was not uncommon in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. See Deut. 31:16; 2 Sam. 7:12; 1

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.

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.

Kings 1:21; Ps. 13:3; Dan. 12:2. The verb is here in the perfect tense *has slept*, reference being had to the state or condition as still existing, *has slept* and *is still asleep*. This use of the perfect is common in all cultivated languages, modern as well as ancient. *But I go*, &c. Stier says that the verb here denotes an end or purpose, but contains at the same time the gentle reproach—‘Will not ye fearful ones go with me to our friend, to see his glorious awaking?’ *That I may awake him*. To awake one from the sleep of death, was to recall him to life. The disciples seem to have misinterpreted the words in v. 4, of a promise that Lazarus should recover from his sickness, and hence take the present declaration, as referring to natural and refreshing rest indicating his speedy restoration to health. They would naturally be confirmed in their impression of the purport of v. 4, by the apparent unconcern of Jesus at the sickness of his friend, and his delay to visit him, which seemed to them an assurance on his part, that he had passed the crisis of danger. There is therefore nothing strange or improbable, as Strauss maintains, that the disciples did not here understand him to speak of the death of Lazarus. *Shall do well*; literally, *shall be saved* from death, i. e. shall recover his health.

13. 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 v. 14, where Jesus announces in plain terms the death of

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow

disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Lazarus. This knowledge, which he could have obtained from no human source, was of itself adapted to inspire them with wonder and awe.

15. *And I am glad, &c.* There is an implied antithesis between the joy and hope of the following declaration, and the preceding sad intelligence, *Lazarus is dead. I am glad for your sakes*; or more literally, *on your account*. How kind and considerate in Jesus thus to testify his joy at that which would tend to confirm the faith of his disciples, who at this time were doubtless much depressed at the rejection of their Master by the Jewish priests and rulers. *That I was not there*. Had our Lord been present at the sick bed of Lazarus, the demand of friendship would seem to have required, that he should have arrested the disease and not permitted its fatal result. There would then have been no occasion for the great miracle about to be performed, by which the faith of his disciples was to be so greatly strengthened, and such glory was to accrue to both the Father and Son (v. 4). *To the intent that ye may believe* (or simply that *ye may believe*), in the original precedes the clause *that I was not there*, and is to be constructed with *I am glad for your sakes*, as the reason or explanation of that assertion. Our English translation of the passage is idiomatic and correct, although strictly less logical and emphatic than the order of the Greek. *Let us go to him*. This use of the pronoun, as though they were about to visit a living friend, is so remarkable, that we cannot but regard the exhortation as a varied expression of the previous declaration, *I go that I may awake him out of sleep*; which, as Grotius substantially remarks, is modestly displaced by the *let us go to him*, because our Lord had plainly declared that he was dead.

16. The disciples may have manifested some hesitation in view of the danger, to which such a visit to Judea would expose both their Master and them.

This may account for the words of Thomas—who seems to be here as full of love and devotion to his Lord, as he was of doubt on a subsequent occasion (20: 24–29)—*let us die with him*, which are by no means to be referred to a sympathetic death with Lazarus, but to an actual death with Jesus, should he, by this visit to Judea, fall a victim to the rage and malice of his enemies. Thomas, in accordance with what appears from John, as above cited, to have been his natural temperament, took a dark and discouraging view of this proposed visit to Judea, but with a true and courageous devotion to his Lord, expresses his determination to share his fate. To this he exhorts his fellow-disciples. But when the hour of trial and danger really came, he with all the rest “forsook him and fled” (Matt. 26: 56). Webster and Wilkinson remark, that “this saying should be remembered to the honor of Thomas, who is chiefly known as an example of unbelief.” Some expositors suppose that Thomas misconceived our Lord’s words *go to him*, attaching to them the sense, that Jesus by his visit would expose himself to certain death, and would thus rejoin Lazarus in the regions of the dead. Such is Bengel’s view, and to this Stier also inclines. But Thomas obviously attached to his words—although rendered somewhat strange in the use of *to him*, in reference to one who in the preceding breath had been declared to be dead—the natural sense of a return to Bethany to the family of which Lazarus had been a member, and a visit to his tomb to drop the tear of friendship over his remains. In reference to the pertinacity with which some refer the saying of Thomas to a dying with Lazarus, Stier well remarks: “What kind of faith in Christ, and what kind of devotion to him would it have argued, if Thomas, in the presence of his disciples, could have said that to die with another individual friend, would be a greater satisfaction to him than to live with the

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:

Lord." "*Didymus* is the Greek of the Syro-Chaldaic 'Thomas,' and means a twin." Prof. Crosby.

17. *Then when Jesus came*; literally, *then Jesus having come* (to Bethany), the participial form throwing the emphasis entirely on the following verb. As the Jewish burial places were without the city or town, and as when Mary went to meet Jesus, those persons who were with her in the house, thought that she had gone forth to the grave to weep there (see v. 31), it may be inferred, that the place where Lazarus was buried, was on that side of the town which Jesus here approached. From this we may also infer, that Jesus did not enter the village of Bethany, if at all, at least until after the raising of Lazarus. See v. 30. *He found* (on inquiry) *that he had lain*. The translation *had been*, would have been better, the word *lain*, being unnecessarily supplied by not understanding the idiom of the verb. The literal rendering is, *found him having been now in the tomb four days*. This recorded fact enables us to glance back and adjust the relative time, in which some of the preceding events took place. Two days had been spent by Jesus in the place where he was, when he received the message from Bethany (v. 6). The journey to Bethany, which was about twenty-five miles from the place where Jesus was staying, must have consumed the greater part of one day; and hence to make out the fourth day, we must suppose that Lazarus died soon after the messenger was despatched to Jesus, so that the day consumed in his journey may also be reckoned in. See N. on v. 4. It is evident that the interment took place very soon after his death, a custom which Stier attributes to the desire of the

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,

Jews to avoid as much as possible the Levitical defilement.

18, 19. *Now Bethany was nigh*, &c. This accounts for the fact that numbers came from Jerusalem to mourn with the bereaved sisters. In regard to Bethany, see N. on Matt. 21:17. It shows how highly respected and beloved was this family, that such sympathy was shown them by persons living in the city. See N. on Luke 10:38 (end). *To Martha and Mary*; literally, *to those about Martha and Mary*, which according to the Greek idiom signifies, *Martha and Mary and those with them*. See Acts 13:13, where *Paul and his companions* is literally, *those about Paul*. This shows that Lazarus was not mourned for by his sisters only, but also by their household friends and relatives. Such was their affection for Lazarus, that they also stood in need of the sympathy of those who came from Jerusalem to condole with the sisters of the deceased. *Concerning* (the death of) *their brother*. This was in accordance with the usages of oriental friendship, which was stronger in its outward expression, than that which prevails in our age and country. Lange thinks that the Jews came in such numbers, thinking the opportunity favorable for recalling a family, which was well known to be attached to Jesus, from their error to the safe way of ancient Judaism. But it is better, however, to assign to them no other motive than the one here given. That the greater part however, if not all of them, were opposed to Jesus, when they came on this visit of condolence, and that some returned in a state of hardened unbelief, notwithstanding the great miracle which they witnessed, is evident from v. 46. The presence of these persons, who could not

went and met him; but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Je-

sus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

be charged with collusion or sympathy with Jesus, placed the miracle above denial or impeachment of any sort. See N. on v. 31.

20. *As soon as she had heard.* Some one may have passed Jesus and his disciples on the road, and reported to Martha, as the head of the family, his approach. *Sat still in the house* (more literally, *was sitting in the house*), when the report reached Martha that Jesus was approaching. This is concurrent in time with the reception of the news by Martha, and is introduced to show why Mary did not also at this time go forth to meet her Lord. It is erroneous, therefore, with some interpreters, to attribute her delay to the attention which she felt bound to bestow upon her Jewish friends, or to any other cause whatever than her want of knowledge that Jesus was approaching the town. Such love and tenderness as hers would not have permitted any forms or requirements of mere politeness to her guests, to keep her from pouring her grief into the ear of Him, at whose feet she expressed her unbroken confidence, that had he been present her brother would not have died (v. 32). This is also placed beyond doubt by the haste with which she actually rose up and left her guests, when she received intelligence that Jesus had come and called for her (vs. 28, 29). Olshausen thinks that Martha's active habits by which she may have been occupied out of doors, was the reason why she first heard of Jesus; while Mary sitting within, quiet and retiring, did not know that Christ had arrived. In regard to the posture of grief which Mary had taken, see Ezra 9:3, 4; Job 2:8; Ps. 137:1; Isa. 47:1; Ezek. 8:14.

21. Martha's address to Jesus is one of confiding trust. She avows her conviction, that the presence of her Lord would have prevented the death of her brother. Her faith is, however, too weak, or she thinks it too presuming,

to ask his interposition, now that Lazarus is dead and his body committed to the grave. That a hope of some blessed result from this unexpected visit of Jesus had sprung up in her bosom, is quite evident from the following words, *I know that even now* (when my brother is dead) *whatsoever*, &c. The greatness of the blessing which she had some vague hope of receiving, is such, that she conceives it as coming from God only in answer to the all-prevalent prayer of Jesus. In this she was in part correct, for Jesus as Messiah was endowed by the Father with power to work miracles, and this power, like every other blessing, was bestowed in answer to prayer. See N. on vs. 41, 42. Yet had Martha been enlightened as to the present office work of the Messiah, as she and her fellow believers all were after the ascension, she would have expressed herself, doubtless, with more direct reference to his inherent power to raise her brother from the dead. It should be noticed, in vindication of Martha from any charge of complaining against the tardiness of Jesus in coming to their relief, or of expressing any vain regrets for the past, that she does not say Lord if thou *hadst come* here, but if thou *hadst been* here, &c. Nor does she make the slightest allusion to the fact, that she had despatched a messenger with tidings of her brother's alarming illness. Her language, like that of her sister (v. 32), was the simple expression of what had passed doubtless oftentimes through her mind, that the presence of Jesus would have prevented their sad bereavement. The use of the singular *my*, instead of *our brother*, shows, as Stier remarks, that they had been individually moved by this thought, and that it was not one which had resulted from their communings with each other.

22. In this verse Martha, as has been remarked, gives utterance to a vague

22 But I know, that even now, ¹whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, ¹I

ⁱ Ch. 9:31.

² Lu. 14:14; ch. 5:26.

³ Ch. 5:21; & 6:39, 40, 44.

hope that Jesus will even now interpose in their behalf. She makes no allusion or reference to the specific blessing she would fain receive. Perhaps she hardly dares to hope that her brother can in any manner be restored to her, and looks simply to the consolation which it was his to impart. But she embraces all her desires and hopes in the *whatsoever thou wilt ask of God*, and leaves the matter with her Lord and Master. There is much to elicit our admiration for this woman, in the manner in which she bore herself in the presence of Jesus on this occasion. *Even now* stands opposed to the presence of Jesus during the time of her brother's sickness. *Then* he could have prevented his death, *now* he can have whatsoever he asks of God. Great faith is here, although as we see from her objection to opening the grave (v. 39), not strong enough to anticipate the glorious miracle which was to be performed.

23, 24. *Thy brother shall rise again.* This promise is couched in such general terms, that Martha hardly dares to interpret it as referring to other than the general resurrection. In her reply, *I know that he shall rise again*, &c., she alludes to this grand event, hoping thereby to draw from him some more specific ground of encouragement. But instead of disclosing to her at once his merciful intention, he proceeds to enlighten her in regard to his spiritual, life-giving power, which secures the resurrection and the life of believers, and exempts them forever from the power and dominion of death. This was a far richer and more glorious promise, than any pledge immediate or remote, that he would raise her brother from the grave. That would be but

know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am ¹the resurrection, and the ^mlife: ⁿhe that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

^m Ch. 1:4; & 6:35; & 14:6; Col. 3:4; 1 Jo. 1:1, 2; & 5:11.

ⁿ Ch. 8:36; 1 Jo. 5:10, &c.

the restoration of him to a few years of life on earth; this was a promise to her and all believers of a glorious and blessed immortality beyond the grave.

25. *I am the resurrection.* It is by my power that the resurrection of the dead shall take place. *And the life.* I am the source of all life. This in reference to the good, is inclusive of all the blessedness and peace which are connected with eternal life in heaven; with the wicked, it is life in death, or existence in the midst of misery and despair, so great and overwhelming that it is well denominated *eternal death*. The expression *and the life*, is not the mere repetition of the preceding clause, but an advance on that great declaration. The logical connection of the clause is this: 'the life-giving power of Jesus, which essentially belongs to him as the *Life of the world*, ensures the final resurrection of which it is the great cause.' So Stier well expresses it: 'I am the resurrection, *because* I am the life.' It were to deprive this great utterance of its principal significance, to restrict it to a physical resurrection and life of the body, although that is included, as something which the faith of Martha might easily grasp. But the following context, which is our Lord's own comment upon this declaration, forbids our referring it solely or principally to the resurrection of the body. It is a resurrection to life in its highest and most glorious sense, and as the greater includes the less, the resurrection of the body is embraced also in the meaning of the term. *He that believeth*, &c. The interpretation of this clause of v. 25, and the following verse—which, as has been remarked, is the commentary of our Lord himself

26 And whosoever liveth and

believeth in me shall never die.
Believest thou this?

upon his previous declaration, that he is "the resurrection and the life"—becomes easy and clear, if the life spoken of be regarded, as one purely spiritual, and so transcendently glorious and blessed, that physical death loses all its power and importance (1 Cor. 15 : 55), when brought into comparison with it. It seems to have been the design of our Lord to divert the thoughts of Martha from the resurrection of her brother to mere physical life, to that greater and more glorious rising into spiritual life, resulting from faith in the Son of God, and embracing, as above stated, as a necessary result the resurrection of the body. This spiritual awakening to life, was that which rendered death itself powerless to retain its victims, over whom it had possessed a temporary sway. This was the victory in which death was to be swallowed up (1 Cor. 15 : 54), and disappear forever from the regions of bliss to which God's people were to be raised. This general idea will be seen more clearly in the comments which follow. *He that believeth in me.* This establishes the fact, that the exemption from death in its highest sense, which is promised in this passage, is pledged to the believer only, the resurrection of the wicked from the grave not being at all included in this promise. *Though he were dead* (literally, *even if he have died* physically), *yet shall he live.* The death of the body shall not prevent his resurrection to life eternal, or interrupt for a moment his blessedness in the love and favor of God. Hence physical death is not to be invested with gloom, nor regarded as the least bar to happiness beyond the grave.

26. *And whosoever* (literally *all, every one who*) *liveth.* Here physical life is referred to, for there is a manifest antithesis between this clause, and *though he were dead*, in v. 25, which, as we have seen (N. on v. 25), must be referred to physical death. The following clause, *and believeth in me*, shows beyond all question that reference is had to a liv-

ing believer, one who has not yet been subject to physical death. Thus our Lord brings in juxtaposition, a believer yet alive on earth, and one who has departed this life. Of the latter it is affirmed *he shall live*; of the former, *he shall never die.* What is the meaning of this twofold and somewhat paradoxical assertion? Simply that the believer in Christ—who has just declared himself to be "the resurrection and the life"—whether living or dead, is the subject of eternal life, or a state of endless felicity beyond the grave. The obvious inference, which our Lord intended Martha to draw, and which he designed as a corrective of her deep despondency in view of the death of her brother, was, that physical death is a thing of minor consideration, affecting not in the least the future blessedness of such as believed in him. The two great senses in which life and death are here employed, are easily distinguished; and it is a marvel that learned and pious commentators should find in the passage such obscurity as some of them do. The resurrection of the body, though not distinctly affirmed in this passage, is nevertheless implied in it. Thus Stier, to the great confusion of the clauses which have so plain and direct a correspondency one with another, denies that *whosoever liveth* has any reference to physical existence, but signifies, *he that liveth in Jesus by faith.* Of such a one the next clause affirms that he has in himself the principle of the resurrection, and of the final victory over death. But stripped as the passage is of its antithetic character by such an exposition, we may well ask this distinguished expositor, what new idea over and above what has just been asserted, is contained in these words. The preceding assertion: 'he that believeth on me shall live even though he die (naturally),' is followed on Stier's interpretation, by the meaningless repetition, 'every one who liveth in faith shall never die.' *Believest thou this?* Our Lord would have Martha's assent to

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: ° I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

o Mt. 16:16; ch. 4:42; & 6:14, 69.

this great and cheering truth. It was designed not only to instruct her in regard to the higher life, in which all minor ills were to be swallowed up; but to comfort her in her deep affliction, as thousands, in similar circumstances of bereavement since her time, have drawn consolation from the passage. With what sweet and controlling power have the words of Jesus, *I am the resurrection and the life*, been apprehended by the mourner, when taking a last look at the remains of some dear departed one, or bending over the grave where the loved form lies buried from sight.

27. Alford thinks that Martha did not fully enter into the great central point of the truth which Jesus had just uttered. But when we remember with what diversity of views expositors even of our day rise up from the contemplation of the passage, we cannot but think she was as likely to hit the true meaning as any of us, assisted as she must have been in the comprehension of his words by the emphasis, tone, and manner, in which they were spoken by our Lord. *Yea, Lord.* Martha promptly replies in the affirmative. But fearing that she may have professed assent to truths beyond the depth of her own understanding, with straightforward simplicity and frankness she refers her confidence in his utterances to the fact of her firm belief in his Messiahship, in which office he was to be the revealer of just such heavenly truths as this. This confession of her faith in the Messiahship of Jesus may be well compared with that of Peter (6:69), made on an occasion, in which Jesus had been giving utterance to truths, so spiritual and beyond the comprehension of the unenlightened natural intellect, that many even of his disciples left him and walked no more with him. In both instances,

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.

the confession of his Messiahship is intended as an attestation to the truth of what he had spoken, not so much because it was understood by Peter and Martha, as on the ground of their undiminished confidence in him as the Great Teacher sent from God. *I believe that thou, &c.* This was the usual formula of profession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. See Matt. 16:16; Acts 8:37. The tense of the verb refers the belief of Martha to that which is permanent and well fixed. *I have believed*, i. e. 'I have before this arrived at the full belief, and such also is my present conviction, that thou art the Christ, who was to come into the world.' Peter's form of confession (6:69) was a little more full, *we believe and are sure*; and instead of Martha's *Son of God*, he employs the words *Son of the living God*. Martha, however, adds as a sort of supplemental clause, a third mark of his Messiahship, *which was to come into the world*; literally, *he that cometh, the Coming One*. This was one of the designations of the Messiah. See N. on Matt. 11:3. See also Luke 17:20; John 6:14; Rev. 1:4-8.

28. *She went her way, &c.* Commentators are fond of discerning in this hasty movement of Martha to call her sister, evidence of that prompt and energetic action which marked her character in Luke 10:38-42. But are we not virtually told in the words *calleth for thee*, that she went for Mary at the command of Jesus, or, at least, at some intimation from him that her sister was to be called? Stier denies that Jesus actually inquired for Mary, for, in that case, John would have related it. He attributes Martha's summons of her sister to the sense of her own comparative inability to attain to the full understanding of those great truths to which Jesus had given utter-

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.

ance, and her conviction that Mary must hear this great declaration, which was for her above all others. But if such liberty is to be taken with the message *the Master calleth for thee*, which Martha bore to her sister, as to consider it her own language—no intimation of his desire to see Mary having been made by Jesus—it would be far more natural to refer it to a sisterly wish that Mary should enjoy also the comforting words of our Lord, than to a sense on Martha's part, that the truth to which she had just listened, was adapted to the spiritual and contemplative character of her sister rather than to herself. Her self-reliant character would not render such a view very probable. But aside from all these considerations, the words of the message are too definite and direct to admit of its being regarded in any other light, than an actual summons of Jesus for Mary to come to him. *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.

29. *As soon as she heard that* (literally, *when she heard* the words of her sister), *she arose* from her posture of grief. See v. 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.

30. This verse serves to explain the position of the parties, and to show why the Jews supposed that Mary was going to the grave of Lazarus, which, as has been remarked (N. on v. 17), was without the town, on the side which Jesus approached. For the burial of bodies without the limits of cities and

31 ^r 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.

p Ver. 19.

villages, see N. on Luke 7:12. *Was in that place*, &c. He remained there waiting for Mary. The faith of both the sisters was to be confirmed, before he wrought the miracle which he contemplated. There was no undue haste in his movements, which throughout the whole transaction were those of conscious dignity and power.

31. *Which were with her*, &c. After the burial of the dead, the friends of the mourners remained a short season with them, and "prepared food in order to refresh them after such a season of suffering and grief." Dr. Jahn. *Hastily*. This sudden movement on the part of Mary seemed to indicate an outburst of grief, which would lead her to repair to the tomb of her brother, there to weep his loss. *Went out* (of the house) *and followed her*. Thus, without any notice on the part of Jesus of what he was about to do, the Jews of their own accord repaired to the tomb, and became witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus. It rendered their testimony in regard to this stupendous miracle all the more valuable, that their presence was wholly voluntary. *She goeth unto the grave to weep there*. The pathos and tenderness of this reference to Mary's grief, together with their tears of sympathy at her distress (see v. 33), show that Stier misjudges these Jews when he says, "they will not allow the poor bent mourner, as heretofore, to weep alone at the grave; they persecute her, as it were, with their unfeeling presence and sympathy." It cannot be denied that through want of judgment, and in the very excess of sympathy, the sanctity of private grief is often invaded by friends, in their honest, but misplaced efforts to divert the mind of mourners from their sor-

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.

rows; but there is nothing to warrant the belief, that these Jews were not actuated in what they did, by the purest motives of friendship. They followed Mary to the grave, not rudely or unfeelingly, but through fear of the effect of excessive grief upon her, to impart consolation, and induce her speedy return to the house. It is evident from v. 39, that Martha also returned to Jesus and accompanied him to the grave. Thus, naturally, and without any aim at publicity on the part of our Lord, this most wonderful of all his miracles is witnessed by the whole company.

32. *She fell down, &c.* "The words of Mary are fewer, and her action more impassioned than those of her sister." Alford. Her prostration at Jesus' feet evinces her deep and overwhelming sorrow and her great veneration for him. *Lord, if thou, &c.* She utters precisely the same words as had been spoken by Martha (v. 21). This is not strange, when we reflect that they had probably expressed this sentiment many times, as they were giving utterance to their regret at the absence of Jesus from the sick-bed of Lazarus.

33. At sight of Mary overwhelmed with grief, and the Jews weeping around her, Jesus could no longer repress his sympathy, *but groaned in the* (i. e. his *spirit* *and was troubled*. The latter verb explains the former, which literally signifies, *to murmur against, to be moved with indignation against one*, and hence has the secondary signification *to be excited, troubled*. The words *in the spirit*, are to be taken in the sense of internal grief, as opposed to the more outward manifestation of it, which he made at the grave (v. 35). Alford, denying this secondary meaning of the verb, refers it to his checking the tears of sympathy, which were ready to start forth

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled,

g Ver. 21.

and overcome his power of speech. By this mastery of his feelings, he was enabled to ask the question which follows. This view, which is that also of Webster and Wilkinson, makes good sense, but is too forced to admit of our adopting it as the true exposition. Nor does it agree well with the following verb *was troubled*, which is evidently added to impart emphasis, by a repetition of the general idea. Olshausen, Stier, and Trench, refer it to our Lord's indignation against sin and death, which was the cause of such distress as then met his eyes. But this departs also from the simple and well-defined context, which points evidently to his sympathy with the distress of those around him, rather than to his indignation at the ruin and misery entailed by sin upon the race. Dr. Robinson compares its use with the Hebrew verb rendered *sad*, in Gen. 40:6, and by the LXX. *disturbed*; also with the one rendered *worse liking* (LXX. *having a gloomy countenance*) in Dan. 1:10. The preceding clause, *when Jesus therefore saw her weeping*, and the following verb *was troubled*, refer the verb translated *groaned in spirit*, most unquestionably to a deep feeling of grief, and not to the rebuking of such a feeling. *Was troubled*; literally, *disturbed himself*, which Bengel makes reciprocal to the preceding verb, that referring to his rebuking or curbing in his feelings; this, to his excitation of them, thus manifesting his power over his emotions, to repress or excite them at his pleasure. But this is too refined and coldly philosophical for such an occasion. There is but one meaning which suits the passage, and that is the one substantially expressed in our English version.

34. *Where have ye laid him?* The most natural interpretation of this ques-

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

tion, is that which lies upon its face, that Jesus by inquiring for the place of his burial, virtually asks to be conducted to it. This comports with their reply, *come and see*; in which they evidently betray an impression, that some wonderful manifestation of his power is about to be made, and are therefore eager to conduct him to the tomb. But Stier, with a most amazing oversight of the simple and natural train of thought, refers this question to a design on his part to announce beforehand what he had determined to do. The fact that he was misunderstood by the Jews to inquire the place of the sepulchre, excites anew his indignation at their want of faith, which indignation against the faithless generation and the power of death over the race which would seize even his own spirit, resolves itself into gentler sorrow, as indicated in the following verse. Thus the tears of love and sympathy which Jesus shed on this occasion, are explained by this commentator, as the resolving of indignation into sorrow, at the power of death over the race and its approach to seize even his own spirit. We cannot for a moment adopt so frigid an interpretation of the passage, which is the more wonderful as that of one, whose comments are usually instinct with all the warmth of love and tender emotion.

35. This is the shortest verse in the Bible, but one which speaks volumes in regard to the human sympathies of Jesus. Here is abundant proof of his participation in our nature and his share in our sorrows. See Heb. 2:17; 4:15. See N. on 5:27. It was when he was on his way to the tomb (see v. 38), that he gave vent to his emotions of grief. The question sometimes asked why our Lord wept thus, when he was about to raise at a word his friend from the grave, evinces so little sympathy with this scene of suf-

35 * Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

r Lu. 19:41.

fering, that it is scarcely deserving of an answer. We must always recognize in Jesus the possession of a divine and human nature, each complete in all its appropriate properties and functions. In his mysterious and complex character as God-man, some things are to be predicated of his human, and others, of his divine nature. As one possessed of a sympathizing human nature (Heb. 4:15), he comforts Martha, sends for Mary, weeps with them on his way to the grave. But as the Son of God, the resurrection and the life, he displays at the proper time his divine power, and by recalling Lazarus from the tomb, gives an earnest of the final victory which he will achieve over death, and of his power to bestow life everlasting on all his people. The raising of Lazarus is to be classed, therefore, in a manner with the raising of the dead at the last day, of which it was the earnest and pledge, and equally illustrative of our Lord's divine nature and power. Olshausen's objection to this view, that it leads to a Nestorian separation between the Divine and human in Christ, is based on a mistaken supposition, that it implies two distinct sets of mental operations and emotions in the mind of Christ. Such a view would be both erroneous and untenable. But that some acts and qualities of Jesus are to be predicated of his human rather than his divine nature, no one can well doubt. See a more full and complete discussion of this in N. on Matt. 24:36.

36. This remark of the Jews is recorded to show the depth of grief which overpowered Jesus at this time. The greatness of his love was argued from the greatness of his grief. It shows also that he must have wept some minutes, to give occasion for the remarks here made by the wondering Jews.

37. *And* (literally, *but*) *some of them said*. These were of the number who

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?

came from Jerusalem (v. 19), and were hostile to Jesus. These persons are those referred to in v. 46, although some of them may have yielded afterwards to the evidence furnished by the miracle, so as to be included in those mentioned in v. 45. Their presence added to the credibility of the miracle, and protected it from the charge of having been trumped up for the occasion. Olshausen does not rank these persons with the enemies of Jesus. The conjunction *but*, with which the verse begins, seems, however, to refer them to a different class of persons, than those who spoke so warmly of the love which Jesus bore to Lazarus. The scornful terms in which they refer to him, in the question proposed to one another, *could not this man*, &c., not acknowledging him as a prophet or even a religious teacher, are a clear index of their unbelief in him. *Which opened*, &c. The miracle of the blind man is referred to, because it was an affair of recent occurrence, and well-known from the discussion in the temple which grew out of it, and its exasperating influence upon the priests and rulers. The great miracle at Nain, and the restoration to life of Jairus' daughter, happening in Galilee, had been brought less to the notice of the Jews at Jerusalem, or were regarded as the fabrications of his disciples; and hence they ignore these miracles which might have been more pertinently referred to on this occasion. In the words *which opened the eyes of the blind*, they did not necessarily admit the reality of the miracle. It was rather a supposition of its truth, in order to draw a damaging inference in regard to the power of Jesus to work miracles. This will appear if we paraphrase their words: 'If this man restored the blind to sight, as he claimed to do, could he not have caused that even this man should not have

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

s Ch. 9: 6.

died? The fact that he did not prevent his friend's death, throws great discredit on the previous miracles which he claims to have performed.' It is worthy of remark, that neither the sisters Martha and Mary, nor the Jews, seem to have referred the power of Jesus to anything beyond the prevention of Lazarus' death. In Martha, we have seen, however, that his presence inspired some hope of a gracious interposition, although she had very little conception of the sublime manifestation of his power which was soon to take place. There was reason then, that he should precede this grand illustration of his divine power, by proclaiming himself to her, and through her to all, as the Resurrection and the Life (v. 25). *Even* (i. e. also) refers to the community of suffering between Lazarus and the blind man, although under different forms of infliction. 'Could not a cure have been effected in the case of Lazarus, as well as in that of the blind man? Did not his friend *also* have claims upon his healing power, as well as a poor blind beggar?'

38. *Again* as before (v. 33). *Groaning in himself*. This repetition of the words in this connection, confirms me in the belief, that the usual interpretation affixed to them is the true one (see N. on v. 33). After the indulgence of tears of grief, nothing is more natural than the signs of inward perturbation, expressed in groans, sobs, and long-drawn sighs. *It was a cave*, &c. See N. on Matt. 27: 52. This cave was in part at least a natural excavation, or else the words *hewn out of a rock*, would doubtless have been added (see Matt. 27: 60). *A stone lay upon it*. We must not suppose from this, that the sepulchre was like our graves extending downward, so that a stone or cover could be placed upon or over its mouth. The recess was nearly or quite horizon-

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.

tal with the bystander, so that when Lazarus was commanded to come forth, there was nothing in the position of the tomb which rendered this impossible. The words *lay upon it*, must therefore be interpreted, *lay at or against*, i. e. leaning over, so as to partially incline upon the mouth of the tomb. See N. on Matt. 27 : 60. Webster and Wilkinson very well remark, that a burying-place of this kind seems to indicate that Lazarus' family was one of wealth and importance. See Ns. on v. 18 ; Luke 10 : 38 (end). Of the tomb of Lazarus, which like other sacred places is shown to travellers, Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 599), who descended it by twenty-five slippery steps, says that he has no description to give, it being "a wretched cavern, every way unsatisfactory, and almost disgusting."

39. The command of Jesus to take away the stone, was doubtless given immediately upon his arrival at the sepulchre. There was now to be no delay in the performance of the great miracle, which has never been transcended, save in the miracle of his own resurrection from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. "Step by step he approaches gradually the great act, in order to qualify the amazement of poor mortal eyes on beholding the glory of God. He might indeed have himself commanded the stone to roll itself away, as a mountain or a fig-tree ; he might even have commanded Lazarus to come forth through the impediment of the stone. But the miracles of God avoid with the supremest propriety all that is superfluous." Stier. *The sister of him that was dead.* These words seem to be added to show that Martha, by her intimate relationship with the deceased, felt that she had a right to interpose the objection which she did to the opening of the grave. *Lord, by this time he stinketh.* The original is much more brief : *now (he) smelleth*, i. e. has

the smell of a body in a state of corruption and decay. This objection of Martha to the removal of the stone, is regarded by some as proof that she had no idea of what was coming, although the apostles must have had some presentiment, and Mary assuredly so, of the purpose for which the stone, was directed to be removed. This may have been so ; but it can hardly be inferred from these words of hers, which are rather to be attributed to a natural revulsion of feeling at opening the tomb and exposing the loathsome remains of her brother. As to the words *he stinketh*, which Olshausen regards not as a fact, but an impression of Martha's in view of the length of time in which Lazarus had been dead, I cannot but think that they are expressive of a reality, forced upon them all by the unpleasant smell which may have come from the tomb even while yet unclosed, and showing beyond a doubt that corruption had fully commenced. It was necessary that the body of Lazarus should be subject to all the conditions of bodies in the embrace of death, in order to protect the miracle from the objection which might have been advanced against its validity, that he had only fallen into a swoon, from which the entrance of fresh air into the tomb, and the loud and startling utterance of his name by our Lord, had aroused him. The veracity of Jesus and John, Prof. Kendrick (Note on Olshausen) remarks, would render the miracle above suspicion. But what if the veracity of Jesus and John were questioned, as in the early ages of Christianity it was, and has been in like manner by skepticism and infidelity ever since ; would there not be in this evidence of the senses, an irrefragable proof that Lazarus was actually dead, and that therefore his restoration to life was a true and stupendous miracle ? It is averred that this unpleasant smell of the dead

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the

t V. 4: 23.

body is not spoken of as an actual fact, but only as the impression of Martha, for which she gives her reason in the following clause, *for he hath been dead four days*. But if it be not actually affirmed, it is equally true that it is not denied; and in this equilibrium between the two views, Martha's impression must be certainly entitled to great weight. The fact that this burial took place in the winter (see 10 : 22, 40-42), is adduced by some in proof that decomposition had not yet begun to take place. But winter and summer would produce very little difference of temperature, in a cave closely shut up. The idea suggested by Olshausen, that if decomposition had already begun, as Martha's words indicated, it would give a monstrous character to the miracle, is of no weight, when it is borne in mind at whose potent voice Lazarus came forth, and how suddenly his body may have been transformed from decay and corruption to the vigor and bloom of health. *For he hath been dead four days*; literally, *for he is in the fourth day* (of death), the state or condition of the subject during the time being mentally supplied. So we say of one, *he is in his tenth year*, meaning thereby, the age at which he has arrived.

40. *Said I not, &c.* Reference is had to what was implied in vs. 25, 26, or perhaps to some conversation not recorded. Expositors are mostly agreed, that these words of our Lord are intended as a gentle rebuke to Martha, for the weakness and dulness of her faith, in not perceiving that his direction in regard to the removal of the stone, was for a far different purpose, than simply to behold the body of Lazarus. *If thou wouldest believe*. Faith is the condition on which the rich promises of the gospel are fulfilled. Even so great a miracle as that which Jesus

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.

was about to perform, and upon which such momentous consequences depended, was in danger of being retarded, if not absolutely hindered, by the unbelief of Martha. 'Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe (but on no other condition), *thou shouldst see the glory of God?*' There is an evident antithesis between *the glory of God*, as displayed in the restoration of Lazarus to life and health, and the revolting spectacle of decay and death, which Martha brought forward as an objection to the removal of the stone from the mouth of the cave. Our Lord assures her, that by belief in him she should see, instead of the ghastly remains of her brother, *the glory of God*. But this expression is not to be limited to the manifestation of divine glory in the raising of Lazarus, but embraces in its comprehensive sweep, that also which results from the resurrection to life of all believers, of which this event was the symbol.

41. Martha making no further objection to the removal of the stone, the mortal remains of Lazarus are now exposed to view, and every ground of cavil that he was not really dead, is removed by the actual sight of him reposing in death. *And Jesus said, Father, &c.* We have no other recorded instance of a prayer, offered by Jesus previous to his performance of a miracle. The design would seem to be 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 subordination to the will and purpose of Him who sent him. "The man Jesus does not accomplish his works in the immediate possession of almightiness, but performs them like man, through prayer and

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.

faith." Stier. But this prayer not only shows our Lord's official subordination to the Father, and the intimate communion which subsists between them; it proves also that his prayers had reference to special and particular blessings and gifts. We are not told here in so many words, that Jesus had prayed for power to raise Lazarus; but in this expression of thanks thus openly and publicly made, that he has been heard by the Father, it is fully implied. But when was this prayer offered? Probably at the time when by the exercise of his omniscience, he first knew of the death of Lazarus, or previous to what is recorded in v. 4. *Lifted up his eyes*, as was his custom when addressing his Father. *That thou hast heard me*. "He thanks Him for the result before it was obtained." Webster and Wilkinson.

42. *And I knew*, &c. In this respect, as in every other, our Lord's prayers were in great advance of those of his followers. His prayers were always heard (Heb. 5:7), being offered by a sinless being, not to speak of his essential unity with the Father, which made his will or desire that also of his Father. Our prayers are oftentimes the outpourings of sin and unbelief (see James 4:3); but his petitions were the expression of a holy mind, actuated by the most disinterested love for those whom he came to redeem, and also by a supreme desire to promote the glory of God his Father. This expression of confidence that the Father had heard his prayer, was designed to show the people who stood by, that his thanksgiving (v. 41) did not imply any doubt on his part that he would be thus heard. The pronoun *it*, in *I said it*, is wanting in the original, but is very properly supplied in our version, and refers evidently to the expression of thankfulness with which his prayer

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

u Ch. 12:30.

commenced (v. 41). *Because of the people*, &c. The recognition in his prayer, that the great miracle which he was about to perform, was done with the concurrent will of his Father, and by the communication of prayer and grace bestowed upon him in answer to prayer, established beyond a doubt the truth of his oft-repeated declaration, that he had been sent of God; and that between him and the Father there subsisted such intimate and essential union, that his declaration was true that he and his Father were one. This prayer at the grave of Lazarus illustrates and enforces such passages as 5:19-21, 36, 37; 8:16, 18, 29, 42; 10:25, 30, 38; 14:11. *That they may believe that thou hast sent me*, i. e. that evidence of my divine mission may be furnished in the answer to my prayer, such as will challenge the belief of all who see or hear of the miracle.

43. We now reach the point towards which the narrative has been culminating, where our Lord performs one of the most stupendous miracles ever wrought on earth, and which connects the great procession of miracles recorded by the Evangelists, with the last and crowning one—his own resurrection. It is noticeable with what a dignity the transaction is invested, from the time when at Perea our Lord first received the message of his friend's sickness, to the present moment, when he is about to command the grave to yield up one of its victims, as a pledge of the future deliverance from its thralldom of all who believe in him. *He cried with a loud voice*, that all the people might hear and know that the bands of death were loosed at his command. The full, clear tones in which the words of Jesus were spoken, form a striking contrast with the low and mumbling incantations of magicians and necromancers, in their unholy efforts to evoke the dead from

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and ^z his face was let him go.

æ Ch. 20: 7.

their graves, in order to receive through them some communication from the unseen world. Stier has some valuable remarks on the impotency of these magical whisperings, and mutterings, and evocations of the dead. The sublimity of the words *Lazarus, come forth*, is hardly inferior to that of *God said let there be light*, &c. The sequel of each fiat is strikingly similar: *and he that was dead* (more literally *the dead*) *came forth*. So in the great command in Gen. 1: 3, the effect is simply given, *and there was light*, or more literally, *and light was*. Indeed there is a closer and more profound resemblance in these two great acts of Omnipotence, than appears even in the language. The one was the creation and introduction of light to the physical world; the other, the dispelling of the darkness which had hitherto hung in unbroken gloom over the grave. A question is sometimes raised as to the precise time when the vivification took place. Chrysostom, Lampe, and Tholuck, say that it was before the *I thank thee* (v. 41); and that the command *Lazarus come forth*, was the mere summons for him to make his appearance to his friends as a living man. But for reasons given in N. on v. 39, I think that the body lay full in sight as a veritable corpse, until the command of Jesus restored it with the suddenness of an electric spark, to life, health, and physical comeliness.

44. *Came forth*. Some refer the tense here to an attempted act, and translate, *endeavored to come forth*, but was hindered by the grave-clothes in which he had been bound. But this is contrary to the very nature of the Greek aorist, which is never employed in this sense. *Bound hand and foot*, &c. This swathing in grave-clothes was not so compressed around the limbs, as to impede all motion. Hence there is no necessity of supposing that

Jesus miraculously imparted to him the power to move, when natural motion would have been impossible. The words *loose him and let him go*, indicate, however, that his movements were to some considerable extent impeded by the bandages around the limbs. Doddridge thinks that the folds around were partially loosened by the power of Christ, so as to permit him to move. But this again would imply a new exercise of his miraculous power, as much so as the view of Stier and others, who think, as above remarked, that the power of motion was also bestowed upon Lazarus, inasmuch as he was so tightly swathed as to render any movement on his part well nigh impossible. The word rendered *grave-clothes*, is only found here in the New Testament, another word of kindred signification being used in 19: 40; Luke 24: 12. On this mode of preparing the body for burial, see N. on Matt. 27: 59. *A napkin or handkerchief* more probably. The use of this to keep the jaw of the dead person from falling, is well known. From the employment of the words *his face was bound about*, it may be presumed that this napkin or kerchief was so bound upon the head, as to conceal in whole or part the features of the deceased. If so, in addition to the impediment to free motion caused by the bandages around his body, he was prevented by this handkerchief from seeing distinctly. *Loose him* (from the grave-clothes in which he is swathed), *and let him go*. This last clause stands opposed to the confinement of the tomb, and the impediment to free motion resulting from the folds in which his limbs were enveloped. The habiliments of the grave were to be all removed from him as from a living man, and he was to go in unrestrained freedom. This command of Jesus brings the miracle to a complete and emphatic close, Lazarus being

45 ¶ Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, ^vand had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and
^y Ch. 2: 23; & 10: 42; & 12: 11, 13.

thus shown to have been fully restored to his usual vigor and strength.

45. This miracle was so stupendous and palpable to the senses, that many of the Jews who came to Mary, believed in Jesus as the true Messiah. In the absence of any intimation to the contrary, we have every reason to suppose that their faith in him was genuine and permanent. *Came to Mary.* Why is not Martha's name here given with that of her sister? Quite unsatisfactory is the answer that Mary was the more gentle, amiable, and popular of the two sisters. It is more natural to refer this mention of Mary back to v. 32, where it appears that being overwhelmed with grief, she drew around her as comforters, the entire company of Jews who had come to condole with her and her sister Martha (see v. 19); and that when she went forth (v. 31), so solicitous were they in regard to the effect of her excessive grief, that they rose up and followed her. Hence they are quite naturally introduced to us, as those who were in sympathizing attendance principally upon Mary. These Jews were mostly from Jerusalem, and hostile to Jesus, and this renders their unexpected meeting with him, and the conversion of some of them to a belief in him, the more remarkable and striking. See Ns. on vs. 19, 31.

46. *But some of them*, i. e. the Jews who had not believed. The pronoun *them*, refers back to the word *Jews*, and not to *many*. The construction is *many of the Jews—some of the Jews*. Olshausen loses sight of this grammatical arrangement of the clauses, and strangely refers the pronoun *them*, to those who are spoken of in the preceding verse as believing on Jesus. This would

told them what things Jesus had done.

47 *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, ^a What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

^z Ps. 2: 2; Mt. 26: 3; Ma. 14: 1; Lu. 22: 2.
^a Ch. 12: 19; Ac. 4: 16.

represent them as even more hostile than the portion which remained in unbelief, for no one can suppose that this report was conveyed to the Pharisees with good and friendly intent to Jesus. Indeed Olshausen brings this forward as an argument, that the miracle had not taken a very deep hold upon their mind. *Went their ways*; literally, *went away* from Jesus. The antithesis between the words *believed on him* and *went their way*, clearly imparts to the latter act hostility to Jesus. They repaired to the Pharisees with all haste, not for the purpose of reporting a very strange and remarkable occurrence, but to apprise them of what was done, in order that they might take speedy and vigorous measures to check the popularity as a religious teacher, which this miracle would give Jesus. They probably returned to Jerusalem that same day, although the time which it must have taken Jesus and his disciples to come from Bethabara (10: 40) to Bethany, shows that the miracle must have been performed at or near its close. By the term *Pharisees*, is meant here the Sanhedrim, which was composed mostly of that sect. *What things*, &c. Reference is had to the miracle and all its attending circumstances.

47—54. THE COUNSEL OF CAIAPHAS AGAINST JESUS. HE RETIRES FROM JUDEA. *Bethany.* The Evangelist now relates the consequences of this great miracle. The Sanhedrim are forthwith convened, and after much consultation, acting upon the advice of Caiaphas, they resolve to take immediate measures to put him to death. Thus, as has been remarked, the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, so grand and benevolent, is made by these wicked rulers the occasion of more rancorous hatred

48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him; and

to Jesus, and more determined efforts to rid themselves of his presence.

47. *Then* (at the report of these Jews who had returned from Bethany) *gathered the chief priests, &c.* They met in solemn council as the Sanhedrim. *What do we?* may be taken as self-censure. 'What are we doing, at a time when we ought to be on the alert? Nothing at all.' Some may prefer, however, to regard the inquiry as relating to what was proper to be done in this new and alarming emergency. *For this man, &c.* An ellipsis is here implied: (we ought to bestir ourselves) *for this man doeth many miracles.* They do not seem in the present instance, to doubt the miraculous power of Jesus. But this seems not in the least to have convinced them of his Messiahship, which Webster and Wilkinson, attribute to two reasons: (1) their erroneous and carnal views of the Messiah; (2) their belief in the agency of demons. The former prompted them to unbelief; the latter furnished them with just such an excuse as they wanted.

48. *If we let him thus* (as we have been doing) *alone, &c.* They had already had recourse to every species of opposition, save actual violence, and this they had several times attempted. Compare 8: 59; 10: 31. *All men will believe on him.* The hyperbole is well suited to the excited state of their mind, in view of the wonderful report which had been made to them (v. 46). The fact that some whom they had numbered among the staunch enemies of Jesus, had changed their views (v. 45), in consequence of the recent miracle, was to them a precursor of what would be true of thousands, when it should be reported through the land. Unless speedy measures were adopted to rid themselves of Jesus, his increasing popularity would put it wholly out of their power to do him any harm. In the words *all men* (i. e. of Judea), they of course exclude themselves, for they had already made up their minds,

the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

that no amount of evidence should induce them to acknowledge the divine mission of Jesus. *The Romans shall come, &c.* Expositors are divided as to whether this should be regarded as a real or hypocritical apprehension of increased political calamities, resulting from the public acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah. I am inclined to view it in the light of an honestly expressed fear, that Jesus would directly or indirectly foment a rebellion against the Romans, which would result in the downfall of the nation. All the false Christs who arose in those days, held out the promise of disenthralment from the Roman yoke, and drew men after them in hope of political liberty. These rebellions had served no other purpose, than to make the Romans more vigilant and exacting. But while this fear of Roman oppression would have been well-grounded, had Jesus been of the number of these false Christs; yet standing aloof as he had ever done from every thing political, and scrupulously careful to avoid awakening the jealousy of the civil rulers, they should have learned before this, that he was a far different person from those vain and braggart impostors, who had raised the standard of rebellion under the falsely assumed title of Messiah. If to this proof, drawn from the character and bearing of Jesus as he moved among the people, there be added the wondrous miracles which he had so publicly and in such numbers performed, every excuse is taken away for these foolish, and in this sense hypocritical fears, that Jesus would aim at a political revolution, and thus bring increased woes upon his country, if not wholly effect its downfall. But the very thing which they feared, or pretended to fear, from the acknowledgment of Jesus as their Messiah, happened to them for the sole reason that they rejected him. Jerusalem after a siege of unparalleled horrors was taken and utterly destroyed by the Romans; and the nation ever since has been scattered upon the

49 And one of them, *named*
 Caiaphas, being the high priest
 that same year, said unto them,
 Ye know nothing at all,

b Lu. 3: 2; ch. 18: 14; Ac. 4: 6.

face of the earth—a standing monument of God's righteous displeasure at their rejection and crucifixion of Him who came to them as to his own (1: 11) with the proffer of salvation by belief in His name. *Our place* is referred by some expositors to the country at large; by others, to Jerusalem. Alford takes it in the sense of, *our local habitation, our national existence*. But is not this implied in the following word *nation*? It seems to me that reference is had in this expression, to the holy temple, the chief seat of Pharisaic power; as St. Peter's Church at Rome is now the great seat, centre, and support of the Romish hierarchy. In this sense of *vantage ground* or *strong hold*, is the word *place*, frequently employed by the Roman writers. See Cic. Orat. Cat. II. It is no valid argument against this interpretation, that the epithet *holy*, is not attached to the word *place*. The form of expression would undoubtedly have been *our holy place* or *house*, had it been used with primary reference to the temple; but not so, when as here it is employed in the sense of *a place of security, a seat of strength*, the reference to the temple being purposely made indirect.

49, 50. *And one of them, &c.* The terms in which Caiaphas is referred to, would seem to indicate that he sat as one of the ordinary members, and not as president of the council. Webster and Wilkinson cite Acts 23: 2-5, in proof that the high priest did not, as a matter of course, take his seat as president of the Sanhedrim. Stier interprets the passage of the spirit of Caiaphas, which was that of one of them in his bitter hostility to Jesus. The expression may be intended to indicate that Caiaphas, instead of taking no part in the discussion as the presiding officer, entered freely into the debate, and gave the advice here recorded. *Ye*

50 *ⁱ* Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

c Ch. 18: 14.

know nothing at all. Caiaphas in language of great severity charges the council with ignorance and stupidity, in not hitting upon the true course to pursue in this exigency. It was a virtual repetition of the question, *what do we?* in v. 47; but it prepared the way for the bold plan which he was about to propose, namely, to decree the death of Jesus. *Nor consider.* The verb implies deep reflection, and imparts to the passage this sense, *nor consider* (as the result of the wisest and best formed plan) *that it is expedient for us*, i. e. is conducive to our best interests. *That one man, &c.* This one man was Jesus, whose life was artfully put in the balance against the political welfare and existence of the whole nation, supposed to be jeopardized (v. 48) by his increasing popularity with the people. Thus against every principle of justice, did the high priest of the Jewish nation counsel the death of Jesus. *Should die* as a malefactor. A violent and not a natural death is here obviously referred to. *For the people.* It is remarkable that Caiaphas should have unwittingly employed the very language, in which the writers of the New Testament speak of our Lord's dying for men. Compare Rom. 5: 6-8; 14: 15; 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15; 1 Thess. 5: 10. He meant nothing more than that Jesus should be put to death, to avoid the catastrophe which would befall the people (see v. 48) if he was suffered to live. The word *whole*, is employed to render more emphatic the universality of ruin, which would come upon the nation if Jesus was not put to death, and thus to make the contrast stronger and more effective, between a *whole people* and the *one man* to whom Caiaphas had just before referred.

51. *Not of himself*, i. e. independent of the divine purpose of God, who employed this wicked priest to utter a

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 ^dnot for that nation

great truth, in words which embodied the most malignant hatred to Jesus, and of the true import of which he had no conception. "We have in Balaam another instance of a wicked man inspired to utter oracles. Caiaphas delivered his prophecy unconsciously; Balaam his against his will." Webster and Wilkinson. But although Caiaphas thus expressed unwittingly a great and glorious truth, yet the malicious intent with which he gave utterance to the sentiment, and the wickedness of its conception in his mind, are not rendered thereby any the less enormous; and it must ever stand, as one of the most cold-blooded and infernal proposals which was ever recorded upon the page of history. *But being high priest that year.* There is some doubt whether this participial clause 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. Alford also falls in with this general view, adding, however, that the expression here employed merely asserts the fact that the Spirit made use of him, as High Priest, for this purpose. The best solution, is that which refers it to a popular and universal impression derived from the use of the Urim and Thummim, that the high priest was endowed with the gift of prophecy; and this utterance of the purpose of God in the death of Jesus, was an instance of the real possession of that prophetic gift by Caiaphas, although he was utterly unconscious of it. In other words, what was attributed to each high priest in accordance with a popular delusion, was on this remarkable occasion really possessed by Caiaphas, so that his prediction had all the priestly authority,

only, 'but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

^d Is. 49:6; 1 Jo. 2:2.

^e Ch. 10:16; Ep. 2:14, 15, 16, 17.

which belonged to those high priests who in ancient times were consulted by the Urim and Thummim. There was a propriety in this. Although a bad man, yet as the head of the Jewish hierarchy, he was the most suitable person to utter this great truth, that it was for the good of the people, that one man should die for them, it being true that otherwise they would all perish. There was a fitness that he who entered the holy of holies bearing the sins of the people, should virtually confess that after all the sacrifices and ceremonial observances of the Mosaic ritual, the whole nation would perish, unless the blood of ONE MAN was shed in their behalf. *He prophesied* is opposed to, *of himself* in the preceding member, and indicates that he spake under the impulse of the Spirit, and like Balaam, was employed as a prophet, even though, so far as his own consciousness was concerned, and in the most unrestricted exercise of his own free agency, he was machinating evil against our blessed Lord. *That nation*; literally, *the nation*.

52. The prediction of Caiaphas, so unwittingly made, but yet divinely ordered of the Spirit, is here declared to extend far beyond the Jewish nation, even to the whole of God's spiritual Israel, for whom it was expedient that this one man should die. *Not for that nation* (i. e. the Jews) *only*. The disciples themselves were long in apprehending and acknowledging this great truth. They remained in Jerusalem preaching Jesus and the resurrection to the Jews only, until scattered abroad by persecution (Acts 8:1, 4), and taught, as was Peter, by the Spirit (Acts 10:15, 34, 45), they began to carry the gospel abroad and offer salvation to the Gentiles. *But that* here denotes purpose, *in order that*. The construction is somewhat changed, as, from the preceding clause, we might have expected

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 Jesus^f therefore walked no more openly among the Jews ;

but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called ^g Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

^f Ch. 4 : 1, 3; & 7 : 1. ^g See 2 Ch. 13 : 19.

but for the children of God, &c. The reason for this departure from the natural construction, was to give prominence to the merciful design of this one man, which was to gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. The verb *should gather together*, is the one from which *synagogue* (i. e. a collecting, a gathering) is derived, and indicates the spiritual convocations, which should supersede the synagogue worship as confined to the observance of the Jewish ritual. *In one* ; literally, *into one* spiritual nation or people. See Tit. 2 : 14. This gathering together into one, has no reference to any locality. See 4 : 21-24. *That were scattered abroad* as sheep (see Matt. 26 : 31 ; Mark 14 : 27), throughout the Gentile world. This is John's interpretation of the true and extended meaning of the prediction of the high priest in v. 50.

53. The wicked counsel of Caiaphas was adopted. The members of the Sanhedrim at first may have been somewhat startled at its boldness and cold-blooded cruelty ; strong expostulations were doubtless made by Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel, if these members of the council were present ; but neither compunctions of conscience nor the opposition of good men were of any avail, for *then* (i. e. in consequence of this advice of Caiaphas) *they took counsel* (literally, *consulted together*) *to put him to death*. But, as we shall see in the sequel, although they were so united, determined, and crafty, they were unable to accomplish their purpose, without resorting to false charges ; and when these were found by the Roman governor to be wholly destitute of proof, they threw aside all disguise of their bloody intentions, and shouted with the infuriated rabble who did their bidding, *crucify him, crucify him*.

54. *Therefore*, in consequence of their deliberate purpose to put him to death. This our Lord perceived by some new attempt of theirs upon his life ; or, as is more probable, from his omniscience (see 2 : 34 ; Matt. 12 : 25 ; Luke 6 : 8). *Walked*, i. e. went about, remained. See 7 : 1 ; 11 : 54 ; Mark 12 : 38. *No more*. No longer. *Openly* ; literally, *with free spokenness, boldness* ; and hence *with open freedom*, in reference not only to the exercise of speech, but to one's personal presence. *Thence* refers to Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity. It is not probable that our Lord visited Jerusalem on the occasion referred to in this chapter, but withdrew from Bethany, to a country (or region) near the wilderness of Judah (see N. on Matt. 3 : 1). *Called Ephraim*. Dr. Robinson identifies this with the Ephraim or Ephron of 2 Chron. 13 : 19, and also of Eusebius and Jerome, nearly twenty Roman miles north of Jerusalem. This same Biblical geographer conjectures that it may be identical with Ophrah of Benjamin (Josh. 18 : 23). By withdrawing to this retired place, instead of returning to Bethabara, our Lord seems to have baffled the immediate efforts of his enemies to get him into their immediate possession. *And there continued, &c.* From this town our Lord subsequently passed over the Jordan again into Perea, whence he returned to Jerusalem by the way of Jericho.

55-57. THE JEWS LAY WAIT FOR JESUS ON THE APPROACH OF THE PASSOVER. *Jerusalem*. Between this and the preceding verse, that is during our Lord's sojourn in Ephraim, and subsequently in Perea, we are to place the events recorded in Luke, chaps. xiii-xix., and also Matt. chaps. xix., xx ; Mark 10 : 1-52.

55. *The Jews' passover*. This was the fourth and last passover in our

55 ^a And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand; and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.

56 ⁱ Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What

h Ch. 2:13; & 5:1; & 6:4.

Lord's ministry. *Out of the country*, i. e. the whole land, as opposed to Jerusalem, and perhaps to the larger towns and villages. So we speak of the rural districts, in contradistinction to the chief cities and towns. *To purify themselves* from the various kinds of ceremonial defilement, which forbade their approach to the paschal feast. This purification was not limited in the Mosaic ritual to the passover, but was a preparatory rite to be observed at every one of the solemn festivals.

56. *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. *Sought they*; more literally, *were seeking*. *Spake among* (literally *were speaking among themselves*). It was a matter of general conversation, as they met one another in the streets of Jerusalem, or the precincts of the temple. Their seeking for Jesus showed that they either supposed he was in Jerusalem, or that he would come up at an early day to the feast, in order to address the people as they came together in the temple. *What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?* Here are two questions, the first of which is preliminary or subordinate to the second. 'What think ye? What is your opinion? Do you think that he will not come to the feast?' The negation is intensive, *that he will by no means come*. The form of the question presupposes an answer in accordance with the speaker's own impression, that our Lord would certainly come to the feast. Some erroneously blend the two questions thus: *what think ye of*

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 shew *it*, that they might take him.

i Ch. 11:7.

his not having come to the feast? But aside from the fact, that he could hardly be expected to come up to the festival before those persons ceremonially unclean, the form of the interrogation imparts to this verb a future instead of a past signification. A different mood and tense in the original, as Webster and Wilkinson well remark, would have been required to give the verb the sense, *that he cometh not*, or *that he has not come*.

57. In this verse, the reason why the people had some doubt whether Jesus would come up to the feast, is given in the command of the Sanhedrim, that no one should conceal from them his lodging place. They evidently thought that this might possibly deter him from being present at the approaching feast. The word translated *now*, in our common version, is the slightly adversative *but*, having nearly the signification of *for*. In some MSS. there is found in connection with this the conjunction *and*, which would make this verb apparently coördinate with the preceding one. But even with such a reading in the original, it would be logically connected with v. 56, as the reason why the people expressed their doubts as to whether he would be present at the feast. *Had given a commandment*. This was doubtless circulated among those only who were attached to their interests and hostile to Jesus. So Webster and Wilkinson. See 7:25, 26. If, however, the command was openly promulgated, we find that it was disregarded; for, during the passion week, Jesus came and went, and no one was found so base as to make known his resting place, until on the

CHAPTER XII.

THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany,

night previous to the sixth day, Judas Iscariot, his own traitorous follower, betrayed him to his enemies. *That they might take him*, by night most probably, as they really did, when his place of nightly resort had been reported to them by Judas.

CHAPTER XII.

1—11. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.

MARY ANOINTETH THE FEET OF JESUS. *Bethany.* See Ns. on Matt. 26 : 6-13 ; Mark 14 : 3-9. Luke has omitted all mention of this supper.

1. *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. Hence this verse follows in close logical connection with that which is recorded in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. *Six days before the passover.* On the evening of Friday, according to the Jewish division of the day (i. e. on Thursday evening as we reckon), our Lord ate the passover. Six days previous to this, reckoning Friday as one day, according to the Jewish method of computation, would bring us to the first day of the week, or our Sunday, which clearly shows that Jesus spent the preceding day (i. e. the Jewish sabbath) at Jericho, probably in the house of Zaccheus the publican. See N. on Luke 19 : 5. Alford makes the day of our Lord's arrival in Bethany to have been the Jewish sabbath. But apart from the almost absolute certainty to which we are conducted by the above reckoning, that *six days before the passover* would fall upon the first day of the week, it might be argued against Alford's view, that the great multitudes who attended Jesus, would hardly have been willing to travel so long a distance as from Jericho to Bethany on the sabbath. Alford, to avoid this, remarks that we

"where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

α Ch. 11 : 1, 43.

know not from what point our Lord came, or whether he arrived from Jericho at the commencement of the sabbath, that is, at sunset, or a little after, on Friday evening. But Luke (19 : 28) forbids the supposition that Jesus came to Bethany from any other place or quarter than Jericho ; the spirit and import of which passage is equally opposed to the idea that he tarried two nights and a day at Bethany. Stier, Webster and Wilkinson, and Tholuck, make our Lord's arrival at Bethany to have been on the Jewish sabbath preceding the passover. But their error consists in not reckoning in the Friday on which the passover was celebrated, as one day. This Jewish mode of including the extremes, in reckoning the days before or after any given event, is the only way of reconciling the prediction, "after three days, the Son of man shall rise again" (Mark 8 : 31, on which see Note), with the actual fact that the body of our Lord was in the tomb a part only of three full days. By the same method of computation, we are justified in counting Friday as one of these six days, which, as above stated, would fix the time of this feast at Bethany on our Sunday or the Jewish first day of the week. *Where Lazarus was, &c.* The great miracle recorded in the preceding chapter, renders it obvious why Lazarus is here particularly mentioned (see N. on v. 2). It was his wondrous restoration to life, more than any other act of Jesus, which led the Jewish priests and rulers to bend their whole efforts to effect his death. It is noticeable that in four instances the name of Lazarus is mentioned, and, as Alford remarks, in a climacteric way, "from a mere connecting mention in this verse, then nearer connection in v. 2, to his being the cause of the Jews flocking to Bethany in v. 9, and the joint object with Jesus of the enmity of the chief priests, in v. 10." *Which had been dead ; more literally, he who*

2 ^b There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 Then took ^c Mary a pound of

^b Mt. 26: 6; Ma. 14: 3.

had been dead, the words being in explanatory apposition with Lazarus. Two facts are here asserted: one, that Lazarus had actually died; and a second, that he had afterwards been raised from the dead. This shows of how great importance, viewed in its relation to the subsequent events, this miracle was regarded by the Evangelist.

2. That the supper with which Jesus was here entertained, is the same as that recorded by Matthew (26: 6) and Mark (14: 3), there can be little doubt. The reasons for this are fully given in my Note on Matthew, and to that the reader is respectfully referred. The array of names against this view is quite formidable, but a re-examination of the subject at the present time, has served only to confirm me in the view which I have given in the place above cited. No violence is done to the text or general train of thought, in supposing the supper to have taken place in the chronological order of events, as narrated by Matthew and Mark, that is, on the fifth day of the week of our Lord's passion. Nothing is more natural than that John should anticipate the time of the supper, through a desire to finish all that he had to say of what took place at Bethany, so that the narrative of the events of the passion week might not be interrupted, by a subsequent account of this supper and the incidents connected with it. His words therefore may be thus paraphrased: 'Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem from Jericho (Luke 19: 28) came to Bethany, where was Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. A supper was given him in that same place several days afterward, which it may be proper here to relate, in order that the train of events, and great discourses of Jesus which are about to be recorded, may not suffer

interruption from a recital of the incidents of this supper in their proper chronological place.' *There they made him a supper.* According to Matthew and Mark, the entertainment was given by Simon the leper. Martha it seems, always busy and active, *served* or assisted on this occasion, but not as hostess, or one who supplied the banquet, as Webster and Wilkinson think probable. The families were doubtless on intimate terms, if for no other reason than their community of obligation to Jesus, for his miraculous interposition in their behalf. How natural that one of these families should entertain their benefactor, on the occasion of his visit to Bethany; and that the members of the other household should assist on the occasion, in order to evince their love and gratitude to Jesus. *But Lazarus, &c.* There was a propriety in thus numbering Lazarus with the guests, for it would have ill comported with the solemn scenes through which he had passed, for him to have been engaged in the labor and bustle of preparing and serving up the feast. "Silent, and solemn, and self-involved, we may suppose this dead man restored to life for a long time afterward; certainly so now in the presence of Him who raised him; between the raised Lazarus and the healed leper, the Lord probably sits as between two trophies of his glory." Stier. *That sat*, i. e. reclined. See N. on Matt. 23: 6.

^c Lu. 10: 38, 39; ch. 11: 2.

3. *Then took Mary, &c.* The particle rendered *then*, connects this incident with the preceding context, as what happened on the occasion of the supper. Mary's name, which was omitted by Matthew and Mark, is here given by John, for the twofold reason that the family at Bethany had been so specially referred to in his account of the miracle, and also to preserve a consistency

4 Then saith one of his disci-

and balance in the parts of the narration, Martha and Lazarus having been already mentioned. It is worthy of notice that Martha and Mary are here introduced, in perfect keeping with the character in which they have hitherto been presented to the reader. Martha, active, busy, careful; Mary, thoughtful, contemplative, loving; the former, leaving nothing undone to entertain Jesus in a manner befitting his worth and dignity; the latter, pouring out, as valueless for any other purpose, the precious and costly nard upon her Saviour's feet, and in the excess of her love wiping them with her flowing tresses, and we doubt not bedewing them also with her tears of love and gratitude. *Then took*; literally, *having taken*, the main emphasis being thrown upon the verbs *anointed* and *wiped*, in regard to which the previous act was simply preparatory. *A pound*. The Roman pound was about 12 ounces avoirdupois. The pound, however, varied in different countries. The three Evangelists make particular mention of the preciousness of this ointment, and John gives the additional circumstance of its weight, thus showing the profuseness of the rich offering. *Anointed the feet of Jesus*. In the other Evangelists, it was *poured it on his head*. Both head and feet were anointed, and John, whose ardent love for his Master found a counterpart in that of Mary, records that feature of her pious service, which exhibited most strongly her deep and superabounding devotion to Jesus. He also supplements the effect of this effusion of the ointment upon his head and feet; *the house* (not the room only in which they reclined at table) *was filled with the odor of the ointment*. The preposition rendered *with*, is literally *from*, and the idea is therefore, that the house was filled with fragrance *from* the odor of the ointment. Stier thinks that John mentions this, with allusion to the Song of Solomon, 1:12.

4. This verse shows that the displeasure manifested by the disciples at

ples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

this apparent waste of precious ointment (see Matt. 26:8; Mark 14:4), was incited by the indignant remarks of Judas, whose false character was not yet suspected by them, and whose opinion had weight from the fact here stated (v. 6), that he had charge of the funds of the company, and felt himself in a manner officially entitled to inveigh against the waste or misuse of money or any precious commodity. It is less wonderful, therefore, than at first it would seem to be, that the disciples united with him in expressions of indignation at this apparent waste of precious ointment. We see from this circumstance, how pernicious, even upon good men, may be the example and influence of one, who with apparent charitable motive decries the benevolence which would freely surrender all for Christ. It need hardly be said, however, that the opposition of Judas to this act of Mary was one of hypocrisy and covetousness; that of the other disciples, one of mistaken views as to the use to which Mary had put this precious nard, compared with its appropriation to the purposes of benevolence. *One of his disciples*, &c. John is very particular to number Judas as one of the disciples, although he was on the eve of betraying Jesus. He does not seek to cover up the disgrace brought upon the family of Christ, by having cherished so long in its number, this bad man, who all the while had been a thief, purloining money for his own use from the funds committed to his charge (see v. 6). It is thus that the sacred writers manifest the truthfulness of their statements, by the honesty with which they relate things, which other writers, through motives of family interest or national pride, would have sought to conceal. This is exemplified in the history of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and other Old Testament saints, whose failings as well as virtues are faithfully and fully narrated. *Iscariot*. See N. on Matt. 10:4. *Simon's son*. This parentage of Judas is repeated in 13:2,

5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, not that he

but is not found elsewhere in the gospels. As the word *son* is supplied, the original being simply *of Simon*, some would supply the word *brother*, as in Luke 6:16, *Judas of James*, i. e. the brother of James. It is probable that the other Judas had a brother named Simon, and I therefore prefer the usual method of supplying the ellipsis by the word *son*. The mention of Judas' father by John, is to be attributed to the marked particularity, with which he refers to this traitor, as he holds him up to the scorn of mankind. *Which should* (or more literally *was about to*) *betray him*. At the very time when he so hypocritically and indignantly alluded to the waste of ointment, he was about to perform one of the blackest deeds of treachery to be found in the history of mankind. Webster and Wilkinson refer the introduction of this remark by John, to its coincidence with the circumstance, that the fact next related by Matthew and Mark is the visit of Judas to the chief priests, for the purpose of betraying his Master. But I should rather refer it to the revelation of character, so strongly marked by the antithesis between his saintly regard for the wants of the poor, and his dark and treacherous purpose to betray his Lord, which was even then taking shape and strength in his mind.

5. *For three hundred pence*. The disciples, according to Mark, enlarge upon this valuation of the nard, estimating its worth at *more than three hundred pence*. In Matthew, no definite value is affixed to the ointment, the expression being, *might have been sold for much*. The high value of the article, as its rich odor filled the room, was, doubtless, referred to in all these forms of expression. It will be seen by a comparison of John with Matthew and Mark, that the twofold form of the question proposed by the disciples, is only one question in the mouth of

cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and ^d had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

α Ch. 13:29.

Judas, its condensed form being well suited to the indignation which filled his breast at this pious act of Mary.

6. John, according to his custom, interjects this verse, by way of comment and explanation of this hypocritical concern of Judas for the poor. It was not that he cared for this class (literally, *not that there was any care to him for the poor*, i. e. that he felt any concern for the poor), *but because he was a thief*, i. e. was in the habit of pilfering from the bag or money-box, and appropriating the common funds to his own private use. It is a useless and insoluble question, whether John or any of the apostles had a suspicion at that time of the dishonesty of Judas; or whether this came to light after his betrayal of Jesus. The probability is in favor of the latter supposition, for we can hardly suppose that if his integrity had been questioned, the disciples would have listened to his denunciation of what he termed the extravagant waste of ointment, and adopted it as their own view. *Had* (in charge) *the bag*; literally, *a tongue-box, reed-case*, for keeping the reeds or mouth-pieces of wind instruments; but here *a box, sack, or bag*, for money. *And bare*; literally, *used to bear*. Some of the ancient expositors, as Origen and Theophylact, and a few moderns, interpret this verb of taking away, in the sense of *to steal*. But this is against the common usage of the verb, and was evidently adopted as giving a stronger sense to the passage, and one not so tautological as the ordinary signification of the verb seemed to be. But there is hardly an approximation to any tautology in the two verbs. The former has reference to the general charge and oversight of the funds submitted to his keeping; the latter, to his transportation of the box from place to place, which furnished him with favorable opportunities for his thievish

7 Then said Jesus, Let her

propensities. *What was put therein* from the private funds of the disciples contributed for the support of the company; and also from the bounties of those who, like the women of Galilee (see Luke 8:3), ministered to Jesus of their substance. The word translated *was put*, is used of almsgiving (see Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4); and also of the depositing of money with brokers or exchangers (see Matt. 25:27). Hence, nothing definite can be drawn from this passage in favor of the opinion of some, that our Lord and his disciples subsisted solely on eleemosynary contributions. Apart also from the meaning of this word, it is not likely that a band of men composed of such persons as Peter, Andrew (see Luke 5:3-10), James, John (see Matt. 4:21-22; Mark 1:19, 20), and Levi (see Luke 5:29), would be under the necessity of depending solely for support upon the charities of the friends of their Master, at least in the earlier days of his ministry and while he was in Galilee.

7. *Then said Jesus* to Judas. He was particularly addressed as the one, in whose heart was a deep-seated covetousness and selfish disregard for the honor of his Lord, to which the other disciples, although participants in his complaints, were utter strangers. In v. 8, the whole company of disciples are addressed, Judas being, as it were, separated from the rest in this remembrance of the poor, inasmuch as he would shortly put an end to his own wretched existence, and go to his own place; while the other disciples would have full scope and opportunity to give indulgence to their benevolent wishes, in the life of active usefulness which was before them. *Let her alone.* The verb is in the singular, and shows clearly that Judas was the person addressed. It is quite likely that, in his zeal to secure some of this precious ointment, which in his estimation was thus wasted, he attempted to arrest the action of Mary, or interrupted in some

alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

way her service of love. Our Lord, with an emphatic command, which in the original is expressed in two dissyllabic words, bids him cease to interrupt or trouble her, and then—for here must come in the plural form of the verb *let her alone*, as recorded in Mark, which shows that some of the disciples, at least, shared in the rebuke—he proceeds graciously and most affectingly to signify the use of this anointing, in preparing beforehand his body for its burial. On the general sense of this passage, see Ns. on Matt. 26:12; Mark 14:8. The order of the verses is changed in John, the reference to the poor occupying the second place, while in Matthew and Mark it precedes the purpose assigned for Mary's act. The phraseology of the passage is also somewhat changed in John, the words *against the day of my burying hath she kept this*, taking the place of Matthew's *she did it for my burial*. In regard to the tense *hath kept*, Haab and some others take it in the sense of the pluperfect *had kept*. But not to say that there is no grammatical license for such a change of tense, it would impair the meaning of the passage; for it would imply that she had kept the nard for her Lord's burial, but had now used it for another purpose; whereas, Jesus means to say, '*she has kept it*, and has thus used it now in anticipation of my burial which is so near at hand.' The difficulty which some find in reconciling this keeping of the nard for the time of our Lord's burial, when she had already poured it out upon his head and feet, is only an imaginary one; for of such an act, no one could well mistake that it was an anointing of the body of Jesus by way of anticipation. Mary had virtually kept this for the time of his burial, not in the way of purpose or intention, for she had no presentiment that the death of her Lord was so near; but when, in after time, she reflected upon her Lord's gracious interpretation of her act, she must have felt that no words

8 For 'the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

9 ¶ Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there :

could better have expressed what she would have done, had she imagined his death would so soon follow the feast at which he was then reclining. This much was literally true, that she had kept the nard for the purpose of anointing him; he declares that the event would show, that it had been kept for the higher and more solemn anointing of his body for the tomb which was soon to receive it. In this view, the passage is plain and easy of interpretation, and harmonizes with the parallel passage in Matthew and Mark.

8. *The poor ye have always with you*, &c. The inference is very clear, not only from the connection in which these words stand, but also from the antithesis in which the poor—always with us and in need of our aid and sympathy—are here placed with Jesus, whose personal presence on earth was of short duration, that it is a duty of the most sacred obligation to relieve their wants, and administer to their necessities, under the promptings and guidance of true and enlightened Christian principle. On the general duty of almsgiving, see N. on Matt. 5:42.

9. This verse resumes the narrative from v. 1, the account of the supper and anointing of our Lord by Mary being related, as has been remarked, by way of anticipation, it being John's apparent object to finish here all which he might have occasion to say of the family at Bethany, between whom and our Lord so intimate a friendship existed. *Much people of the Jews*, refers to those who resided at Jerusalem; as Webster and Wilkinson express it, *Jerusalem Jews*. Alford refers it to the rulers and persons of repute, the usual sense in which the term is employed by John. But we can hardly suppose, that the pride of the chief Jews would permit them to go forth to Bethany from motives of mere curios-

ity; and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, 'whom he had raised from the dead.

e Mat. 26:11; Ma. 14:7. f Ch. 11:43, 44.

ity; and the antithesis between this and v. 10, seems clearly to indicate that those who are here spoken of did not belong to the number of chief priests and rulers. *Knew that he was there at Bethany*. This they had learned from persons passing to and fro between Bethany and the city, who had noticed the great multitude which had entered Bethany from Jericho (see Matt. 20:29; Mark 10:46; Luke 18:36), and would not be slow to learn that they were in attendance upon Jesus. Some of those who accompanied Jesus from Jericho, doubtless proceeded to the city without stopping at Bethany. These would report his approach to Jerusalem, and give all the publicity to his movements which the present verse assumes. *They came not*, &c. This twofold object which they had in visiting Bethany, is not to be attributed to a vain curiosity. They had been thrown into a high excitement by the report of this stupendous miracle. They desired to see the wonderful person, at whose word the grave had been compelled to yield up its dead. They wished also to see Lazarus, who had been so marvellously recalled to life. It was one design of the miracle, to turn the minds of men, in this closing stage of our Lord's ministry, to him as their Messiah; and, in perfect accordance with this purpose, the people flocked forth to see and hear more of the wonderful transaction. That this visit to Bethany was not done with evil intent, but—at least in many instances—in the spirit of earnest inquiry after truth, is quite evident from v. 11, where the numbers who went away to Jesus and believed on him by reason of Lazarus, is given as a reason for a fresh consultation of the chief priests as to the best means of effecting his death.

10. *The chief priests*. These may have

10 ⁹ But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

11 ¹⁰ Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

been of the sect of the Sadducees, whose tenets forbid their believing in the fact of the resurrection of Lazarus. It will readily appear, therefore, that a miracle which went so decidedly against the principal article of their belief, would of itself exasperate them anew against Jesus. This, in connection with the evidence which met them from every quarter, of the rapidly increasing popularity of Jesus, even with the citizens of Jerusalem, strengthened their determination to put him to death. But in addition to this, they now seek, with cold-blooded cruelty, to put Lazarus also to death, as being the occasion of this new and increased accession to the numbers of those who believed in Jesus. The verb rendered *consulted*, is not to be taken here of a resolution adopted in solemn conclave, but of a wish, intention, purpose, which was formed by the circumstances here alluded to.

11. This verse contains the reason why they wished to put Lazarus also to death. He was a living witness of the mighty power of Jesus, and unless he were put out of the way, every effort of theirs to disprove the truth of the great miracle of which he was the subject, would be futile. Those who place the supper and the anointing of Jesus before our Lord's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem (see N. on v. 2), attribute this counsel against Lazarus to his public appearance on that occasion. But it would be an unwarrantable inference from the narrative, to suppose that Lazarus secluded himself from public observation, except on the occasion of this feast. We would rather infer, from the important position which this miracle occupied in the chain of events here recorded by John, that he was seen and conversed with by many, who were thus able to satisfy

12 ¹¹ On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

⁹ Lu. 16: 31. ¹⁰ Ch. 11: 45; v. 18.
¹¹ Mat. 21: 8; Ma. 11: 8; Lu. 19: 35, 36, &c.

themselves by personal investigation, of the truth of the wonderful report respecting him. *The Jews went away* to Bethany to see Lazarus, and learn the particulars of his resurrection. The verb is erroneously interpreted by some *fell away*, i. e. from the party opposed to Jesus. Its simple meaning is *to go away, withdraw*, with the idea of secrecy. This is well suited to express their fear of going openly to Bethany, lest they should incur thereby the hostility of the priests and rulers. *And believed on Jesus*. This was the result of their visit to Bethany. They could not resist the evidence that a miracle had been wrought, far beyond the power of man to perform. They went forth as inquirers after truth; they returned, believers in the Messiahship of Jesus. Hence the priests and rulers had no means of arresting this defection from their ranks, except in the death of both Jesus and Lazarus.

12-19. CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. *Bethany, Jerusalem*. Second day of the Week. See Ns. on Matthew 21: 1-11, 14-17; Mark 11: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-44. The other Evangelists are much fuller and more circumstantial, in regard to this public entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem than is John. The reference to Zech. 9: 9, found in Matthew, but omitted by Mark and Luke, is given by John, but in terms of great brevity, showing that he was no copyist.

12. *On the next day* after our Lord's arrival at Bethany (see v. 1). This fact noticed by John, but omitted by the other Evangelists, shows that Jesus had spent the preceding night in Bethany. *Much people*. This great multitude were those referred to in 11: 55, who had come up to Jerusalem from various parts of the country, to make preparation for the celebration of the pass-

13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, ^k Hosanna : Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

over. They are not to be confounded with those mentioned in v. 9, who, as has been remarked, were citizens of Jerusalem. *That were come to the feast* a little before the time of its celebration, for the purpose of purification from ceremonial uncleanness (see 11 : 55). *When they heard*, etc. The great excitement into which the city was thrown by the report of the miracle wrought at Bethany, pervaded also the minds of these multitudes from the country ; and fully possessed of the belief that the Messiah had come, they made preparations to go forth with branches of palm trees, to meet him and accompany him in triumphal procession into the city. That some of these were actuated by mere impulse, which soon spent itself, and left them in unbelief and opposition to Jesus, there can be no reasonable doubt. But equally certain is it that many were true believers in the Messiahship of Jesus, and were of those who rallied around him afterward in the temple as his stanch and reliable friends, when the rage and malice of the priests and rulers were exerted to the utmost to effect his death.

13. *Took branches* ; literally, *took the branches*. They carried them in the hand, as a symbol of the joyous purpose for which they went forth from the city. See Rev. 7 : 9, where the martyrs are represented as carrying palm-branches in their hand (as did the victors in the athletic contests of Greece and Rome), emblematic of their having overcome the world. The presence of the article shows that these branches, were those from trees which grew on the spot ; or perhaps reference is had to the custom of bearing these branches on occasions of public joy and triumph. By the word *branches*, is here meant the small and flexible twigs of the tree, which, as they hung down,

14 ^l And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon ; as it is written,

^k Ps. 118 : 25, 26.

^l Mat. 21 : 7.

could easily be broken off. These twigs consisted of one straight and tapering stem, from which on either side spring forth long tapering leaves, much like our fern. The shape would therefore fit them well for the purpose of being waved in triumph, or thrown upon the ground. See Matt. 21 : 8 ; Mark 11 : 8. *Palm trees*. John alone mentions the kind of branches, thus showing that he was not dependent upon the other Evangelists for his account of this transaction. *Went forth* from the city. *Hosanna*, etc. See Ns. on Matt. 21 : 9 ; Mark 11 : 9. *Blessed is the King of Israel*. Luke has it *blessed be the King*. In the utterance of these jubilant acclamations, various forms of expression were doubtless used, suited to the emotional nature of the persons by whom they were uttered. Some would be wrought up to such a state of excitement, as to repeat in loud acclamations all the titles which prophecy had given to the Messiah ; others of less ardent temperaments would content themselves with less fullness of expression. It is a foolish attempt, therefore, to seek to throw discredit upon these statements of the Evangelists, because they do not agree in the exact form of words made use of on this occasion.

14. John is very compendious in his account of this feature of Christ's public entry, which is given in full detail by the other Evangelists. See Matt. 21 : 1-7 ; Mark 11 : 1-7 ; Luke 19 : 29-35. *When he had found* in the manner described by the other Evangelists. John evidently presupposes that his readers had been made acquainted with the particulars of this transaction, and hence employs the word *found*, in a very general and compendious sense.

15. *Fear not, daughter of Zion*. See N. on Matt. 21 : 5. The quotation is from Zech. 9 : 9, the sense of the origi-

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

m Zee. 9: 9. *n* Lu. 13: 34.

nal *rejoice greatly*, *O daughter of Zion*, being quoted, rather than the exact language. Her rejoicing is supposed to result from the absence of all fear of danger from her enemies, in consequence of the approach of her victorious King. Hence *fear not* conveys well the sense of the original, which refers to the exultant joy which should possess the daughter of Zion, from her state of peace and safety under her Messianic King. The original denotes the effect, *rejoice greatly*; the words as quoted, the cause of this joy, *fear not*. By perversely overlooking this harmony of sense, and dwelling upon slight verbal differences, the enemies of truth have sought to cast discredit upon the accuracy of this and other similar citations in the New from the Old Testament.

16. *These things*, i. e. these demonstrations of joy at the approach of Jesus to the city, including all the circumstances of the triumphal procession, such as the strewing the way with palm-branches, his riding on an ass, and the Hosannas which were shouted by the multitude. *Understood not his disciples*, &c. They looked upon this triumphal procession as an extraordinary honor conferred upon their Master, who had hitherto been so opposed and vilified, but did not see in it the fulfilment of the great Messianic prophecy here cited. *At the first*, i. e. at the time of their occurrence. Although this remark of the Evangelist has special reference to the triumphal approach of Jesus to the city, yet it is of general application to many events and incidents in his life, the full significancy of which was not at the time discerned by his disciples. See 2: 22. *When Jesus was glorified*,

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.

o Ch. 7: 39.

p Ch. 14: 26.

See N. on 7: 39. *Then remembered they*, &c. In this they were assisted by the Spirit of promise, who was to bring to their remembrance the instructions of Jesus, and teach them all things necessary to the functions of their apostolic office, and the right understanding of the word of truth. See 14: 26. *That these things were written of him*, i. e. predicted of him in the Old Testament Scriptures. *That they had done these things unto him*, i. e. had conducted him in triumphal procession and with shouts of joy into the city, as it had been predicted of him.

17. This verse exhibits the strength of the testimony, on which rested his performance of the great miracle to which reference is made. *That were with him*, when he raised Lazarus from the dead. The reading for *when*, in many MSS. and adopted by Alford and Bloomfield, is the conjunction *that* or *because*, as Alford would render it. If this be the true reading, the sentence must be constructed so as to read, *bare record that he called Lazarus*, &c. Or if Alford's interpretation be the true one, *because he called Lazarus—bare record*. It will be observed that the general sense is not at all affected by these various readings. 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 words *raised him from the dead*, are neither tautological nor superfluous, but designed to give full and emphatic emphasis to the fact of his actual resurrection, in the manner related in 11: 43, 44.

18. Alford refers *the people* in this

18 ^aFor this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

q Ver. 11.

r Ch. 11 : 47, 48.

verse, to the same persons mentioned in the preceding. But I can hardly adopt this view. The persons referred to in v. 17, are evidently those who were witnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus from the grave, and whose testimony to the reality of that miracle, had much to do with the great excitement which was now pervading all classes of the community. It was in consequence of their report of this stupendous miracle, that the people went forth from the city to meet Jesus. In the preceding verse the word *people*, is limited by the relative clause *that were with him*, &c. Here the term is indefinitely used of the great multitudes who came forth from the city, to meet the extraordinary man whose potent voice could thus call the dead from the grave. Although the words therefore are the same, the sense as well as construction requires that they be referred to different persons. That many of those believing Jews who witnessed the miracle, were of the number who went forth to meet Jesus, is almost certain; but the great mass of persons were they who were prompted to this act, by the testimony which those persons bore to the great miracle. This verse then gives the reason, why the people went forth from the city in the manner related in v. 13. The previous verse has reference to the testimony which produced this great excitement. Verses 17, 18 are therefore supplementary to vs. 12-15, serving to explain the cause of this outburst of popular enthusiasm, and acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah.

19. In striking contrast with our Lord's increasing reputation with the people, is placed the deep concern of the Pharisees, at the failure of all their plans to take him, or check his growing popularity. *Therefore* introduces what is here said, as the result of the great excitement spoken of in the pre-

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

ceding context. *Among themselves*, i. e. in their secret conclaves. *Perceive ye not*, &c. In the employment of the second, instead of the first person *do we not perceive*, reference is doubtless had to the blame which they cast one upon another for the unsuccessful issue of their plans against Jesus. *Ye prevail nothing* by the orders which you have given to the people. See 11 : 57. The verb rendered *prevail*, literally signifies to *help, aid, be of use*; and the idea is that their plans and efforts had thus far been of no avail, to arrest the popularity of Jesus, or place him in their power. *Behold* introduces as if passing before their eye, the crowds which were in attendance upon Jesus. *The world*, or as we say, *everybody*, a form of hyperbole common in almost all languages. This exaggerated language is highly characteristic of the great excitement into which the enemies of Jesus were thrown, by their abortive efforts to effect his death, or even diminish his influence with the common people.

20—36. CERTAIN GREEKS DESIRE TO SEE JESUS. *Jerusalem*. Fourth day of the Week. Between v. 19 and this portion of John's Gospel, must be placed those events related in Matt. XXI. 12—XXXIII.; Mark XI. 12—XII. 44; Luke XIX. 45—XXI. 4. Dr. Robinson (*Harm. of the Gospels*) places this incident of the Greeks on the fourth day of the Passion week, because of what is said in v. 36, which implies that Jesus appeared no more in public as a teacher. In common with almost all modern interpreters and harmonists, he reconciles this with vs. 44-50, by regarding that as a recapitulation by John of the sum and substance of the teaching of Jesus which the Jews had rejected, and not a separate and additional discourse of our Lord.

20. The Greeks here spoken of were not, as some have supposed, Hellenistic

20 ¶ And there 'were certain Greeks among them 'that came up to worship at the feast :

^s Ac. 17:4.

^t 1 Ki. 8:41, 42; Ac. 8:27.

Jews, but Gentile proselytes. That they were proselytes of *righteousness* (see N. on Matt. 23:15), is quite evident from the fact, that they were in the habit of coming up to the feast, which would less appropriately be said of the proselytes of the *gate*, who were uncircumcised, and had not taken upon themselves the obligations of the Mosaic ritual. Alford thinks they were proselytes of the *gate*, but for what reason he does not inform us. Such is also Bloomfield's opinion, although he goes still further, and regards them as Gentiles, some of whom at least may have been drawn hither by motives of curiosity, or through a desire to worship not only the gods of their own country, but those of any foreign nation into which they might come; while others of them came to seek and inquire after the true religion, and therefore frequented the Jewish synagogues, although they made no external profession of religion, nor were circumcised. *Among them that came up*; literally, *of those coming up*, i. e. who were in the habit of coming up. This seems to me to be conclusive evidence that the righteous proselytes are here referred to, and not the proselytes of the *gate*, much less Gentile idolaters drawn to Jerusalem by the motives attributed to them by Bloomfield.

21. It has been a matter of much conjecture, why those Greeks made application to Philip for an introduction to Jesus. As Philip and Andrew were from the same city Bethsaida (1:44), and were the only apostles having Grecian names, some have supposed that, having been brought up in some one of the Hellenistic cities of Syria, Asia Minor, or Egypt, they had received these Grecian names, and acquired some knowledge of the Greek language. If this were so, it would satisfactorily account for their asking

21 The same came therefore to Philip, "which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

^u Ch. 1:44.

this favor of Philip, and his communication of it to Andrew, before he reported it to Jesus. Alford suggests that these Greeks may have had friends and acquaintances among the Hellenistic Jews; and if they were from the neighborhood of Bethsaida, they may have been familiar with the person of Jesus, and thus have sought for this private interview. But after all, the fact that they preferred their request through Philip, a matter in itself of no importance, may have been the result of some chance circumstance, such as his position in the circle of disciples, which made it more easy at that time to accost him than any of the rest. That Philip should tell Andrew, is undoubtedly to be referred to their intimacy of acquaintance, being, as has been stated (1:44), from the same town in Galilee. *The same*; literally, *these*. The word *therefore*, very probably refers to their pious observance of the feasts at Jerusalem, as a reason why those Greeks should wish to have an interview with Jesus, concerning whom, as an eminent religious teacher and miracle-worker, they had doubtless heard much on the occasion of their present visit to Jerusalem. If however they sought Philip, because of his supposed acquaintance with the Greek language and customs, the word *therefore*, may indicate that as they were Greeks, on this account they chose Philip as the medium of their request to see Jesus. *Which was of Bethsaida*, or more literally and briefly, *Philip from Bethsaida*, &c. *Desired*. The tense of the verb *desired*, in the original, seems to indicate some opportunity on their part. Perhaps Philip manifested at first a reluctance to accede to their request (see N. on v. 22), which was overcome only by their urgent solicitation to be introduced to Jesus. *Saying*, i. e. making their re-

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them,

quest in these terms. *We would see*; literally, *wish to see*. This verb does not here refer to mere external vision, but to an interview with Jesus, a use which the word has in common parlance with us.

22. The request of these Greeks was so unusual, that before reporting it to Jesus, Philip, as was very natural, communicates it to his fellow townsman, Andrew. The verb *cometh*, would seem to imply that Andrew stood some distance in the company from Philip, and that he took some pains therefore to share with him the responsibility, or as some might think, the pleasure of bearing this request to Jesus. *And again*, in reference to its being first reported to Andrew. *Tell Jesus*. The circumstance that such a request was made, and the remark of Jesus to which it gave occasion, are the only things of which we are here informed. We are left therefore in uncertainty whether the wish of these strangers was gratified; but when we take into consideration how accessible our Lord was to all who approached him with sincere and worthy motives, we cannot doubt that they obtained the desired interview, and that they went away from him, firm believers in his divine mission—the first fruits of that abundant harvest of souls which in subsequent times was to be gathered from the Gentiles, by the labors of his apostles and those who should come after them as ministers of his word.

23. These words were probably spoken in the hearing of the Greeks, and however sealed up from them at this time may have been their deep spiritual signification, yet after his death and resurrection, we cannot doubt that to them also as to the disciples, divine illumination was vouchsafed, so that they comprehended the full meaning of this great utterance. *The hour* (i. e. the time appointed for

saying, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

æ Ch. 13: 32; & 17: 1.

this purpose) is *come*, that the Son of man, &c. The request of these Gentiles was so manifest a precursor of the great numbers, who should come to him as the Saviour of men, from the Gentile world, that our Lord breaks forth in triumphal exclamation, as though his future glorification in the universal spread of the gospel were already come. This does not in the least exclude his death, resurrection, and ascension, which were so near at hand, and which were so intimately related to the promulgation of the gospel throughout the world. Indeed the glorification of our Lord, so often referred to by John, is a very compendious term, embracing the whole economy of redemption, in which Christ is revealed as Saviour, Intercessor, and final Judge of all mankind. His glorification began with his crucifixion, and runs on through the future ages, until the time when he shall have finished the work assigned him, and shall give up the Mediatorial kingdom to God even the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24-28). The readjustment of things which sin has so fatally disturbed having then fully taken place, and order and harmony restored to the moral universe, the governmental economy of God will be resumed in its primeval form and mode of dispensation, and "God will be all in all." The presence of these Greeks was a sign that this great renovation and restitution of things (Acts 3: 21) was about to commence. "These men from the West at the end of the Life of Jesus, set forth the same as the Magi from the East at its beginning;—but they came to the *Cross* of the King, as those to his *cradle*." Stier.

24. The general sentiment of this verse is, that as a grain of corn must be deposited in the earth, and dissolve and perish in the process of germination, or else remain alone and unproductive, so it would be with Jesus.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^y Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

^y 1 Co. 15: 36.

He would be obliged to undergo physical death and burial in the grave, before the glorious consummation referred to in v. 23, could be reached. The words *verily, verily*, so connect this verse with the preceding one, as to show clearly that in this similitude Jesus had reference to himself. *A corn*, (i. e. grain) of *wheat*. See 1 Cor. 15: 37. Stier remarks that our Lord, not without meaning specifies *wheat*, the noblest grain of Palestine. It has been remarked that the corn of wheat more than other kinds of seed, comes to utter putrefaction in its pushing forth of the germ. The words *fall into the ground*, have the participial form in the original, *falling* (i. e. being cast) *into the earth*. This imparts emphasis to the verb *die*, and indicates that the death of Jesus is absolutely essential to his glorification in the spiritual increase and ingathering of Gentile converts. *It abideth alone*, i. e. it remains a single seed without increase. *But if it die*, in accordance with the law of germination when seed is sown in the ground. *It bringeth, &c.* The seed in one sense is dead, and yet it is virtually in the new plant, reproducing by its secret and potent influence other grains of the same identical nature with itself. *Much fruit*. See in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13: 8), where some seeds are said to bring forth a *hundred fold*. The increase of wheat has sometimes been known to reach two hundred grains from a single one.

25. Our Lord here teaches that all his followers, who would share in the glory and blessedness which the Son of man was soon to reach through death, must also be participants in his self-renunciation, sufferings, and death. See Rom. 6: 4; 8: 17; 2 Cor. 4: 10; 2 Tim. 2: 12. *He that loveth his life*, so as to prefer his own ease and grati-

25 *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

≈ Mat. 10: 29; & 16: 25; Ma. 8: 25; Lu. 9: 24; & 17: 33.

fication, to the self-denial and suffering which he may be called upon to endure in the service of Christ. The sentiment is not unlike that expressed in Matt. 10: 39; 16: 25; Mark 8: 25; Luke 9: 24, on which passages see Notes. *Shall lose it*, in the highest sense of happiness and eternal well-being. The converse of this is expressed in the following words, *he that hateth his life*. The reader needs hardly to be informed, that this is to be taken not of absolute hatred, but an undervaluing of life, when it is placed in a balance with the interests of the immortal soul. The import of this mark of true discipleship was well understood by the early Christians, when a profession of Christ was attended with such fearful persecution. To a certain extent it is a criterion which may be applied in every age. Self-denial and a readiness to sacrifice all things to the cause and service of Christ, are demanded now of every believer, the same as when these words were pronounced by our Lord. *In this world*, belongs in sense to *hateth*, the difficulty of such self-abnegation and hatred as are here required, being enhanced by the fact, that they are to be practised in a world, the interests of which so powerfully attract the affections of the soul. These same words are to be mentally supplied with the verb *loveth*, in the preceding clause. *Shall keep* is a varied expression for *shall save*, which the strict verbal antithesis would require. The additional words *unto life eternal*, are expressive of the life or happiness of the soul in the world to come, and show clearly that the words *shall lose* and *shall keep* in both members, are to be taken in a spiritual, and not a temporal or physical sense. The word *life*, in the clauses *loveth his life* and *hateth his life*, refers

25 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and ^a where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

^a Ch. 14:3; & 17:24; 1 Th. 4:17.

to physical existence, and not as some think to the *soul*; for such a sense would destroy the force of the antithesis between the life of the body and that of the soul, which is evidently found in the passage.

26. *If any man serve me*, i. e. would enter into my service. *Let him follow me*, that is, imitate my example, and endure suffering and even death itself, to promote that cause for which I am about to lay down my life. If these words were spoken in the hearing of the Greeks (sec N. on v. 23), they were fully apprised thereby of the terms on which they might be enrolled among his followers, although not called, as were the apostles, to be his immediate and personal attendants. *Where I am*, &c. The official labors with which the short period that remained of his earthly ministry was now crowded, would permit him to indulge these Greeks with only a brief interview; but the time would come when, if they believed on him, they would be granted the privilege of being with him, even as the servant is present with his master. This gracious promise, which seems to have been made in reference to the Greeks, is however applicable to all who have entered the service of Christ. They shall all be admitted in due time to his presence, and dwell with him forever. See 14:2. There is a beautiful correspondence between the words *follow me*, in the preceding member, and this promise of attainment to the blissful presence of our Lord in his glorified state. But this relationship between Him who is the Forerunner (Heb. 6:20), and the disciple who follows in His footsteps, takes a wide and comprehensive sweep. It implies a fellowship in the sufferings (Phil. 3:10) through which lay the path of Jesus to his glorified state, in his humility,

27 ^b Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: ^c but for this cause came I unto this hour.

^b Mat. 26:38, 39; Lu. 12:50; ch. 13:21.

^c Lu. 22:53; ch. 18:37.

and self-renunciation, in his earnest and unremitted zeal to do his Father's work; in short, it comprehends the possession of all those virtues and graces which shone forth in such unsullied beauty in the life of Him who is our great Exemplar (1 Pct. 2:21), as well as Redeemer and Advocate. *I am*, "the *essential* present—in my true place, i. e. (17:24) in the glory of my Father." Alford. *If any man serve me*, &c. These words are repeated with increased emphasis, the essential unity between the Son and the Father being a guarantee that the true followers of Jesus shall attain to the glory and happiness here promised. *Will my Father honor* in the way just mentioned, that is, by admitting them to the place of his presence and love. Thus our Lord pledges to his children not only his own unchanging love, but also that of the Father, with whom he dwells in such intimate and essential union.

27. The prospect of his sufferings and death, thus opened before him, filled his soul with distress—a foreshadowing of the more dreadful agony of the garden, and of the cross (sec Ns. on Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), which awaited him. *Now* (as the hour of my passion draws nigh) *is my soul troubled*. The verb here employed is one strongly expressive of trouble, alarm, and apprehension, in view of impending danger. Our Lord's soul was thrown into a state of perturbation and distress, as his dreadful sufferings rose up before him; and in his dismay, he knows not what to say, or how he shall pray for help and deliverance. *What shall I say?* or more literally, *what am I to say?* 'With what words shall I give utterance to the anguish of my soul?' *Father save me*, &c. Two modes of interpretation are adopted in regard to

28 Father, glorify thy name.

^a Then came there a voice from

a Mt. 3: 17.

this clause. The one reads it as an interrogation: 'Shall I say *Father save me from this hour?* But for this cause,' &c. But this is so harsh a construction and ill suited to the original, that almost all the more recent commentators of any note, regard it as a veritable petition, wrung from him in the agony of the moment, but immediately revoked and followed by the sublime petition, that the Father should glorify his name, at whatever expense of suffering on the part of His Son, it might be achieved. There is no serious objection to this view, any more than to his repeated prayer in the garden, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him. It was the cry of humanity weighed down and overwhelmed with sorrows too great for endurance, and yet repressed in its very first utterance, and succeeded by a petition implying the most entire resignation to his Father's will. Indeed the prayer in the garden, was but the more expanded and earnest expression of this shrinking back of his humanity from the dreadful scene he was to pass through, and at the same time his supreme desire to glorify his Father, at whatever cost, in achieving the work of human redemption. *Save me from this hour*, i. e. spare me the infliction which awaits me, as the substitute of the sinner. The word *hour*, both here and elsewhere (see Matt. 26: 45; Mark 14: 35; John 7: 30; 8: 20; 12: 33; 17: 1), is put for the time when he was to suffer. *But for this cause*; literally, *on account of this*, i. e. that I might endure this very death for the sins of men, from which I now shrink in anguish and dismay. Alford after Stier gives the words this sense: "*On account of this* that I might be saved from this hour, i. e. the going into and exhausting this hour, this cup, is the very appointed way of my glorification." According to this interpretation, our Lord here rectifies his mistake, as it were, in supposing that there was any other way

heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

of being saved from the hour, than entering upon the full measure of sufferings which awaited him. But this seems to me to be somewhat obscure and far-fetched. *Came I unto this hour*, i. e. undertook the work of man's redemption.

28. *Father, glorify thy name.* So in the garden, his prayer each time was closed with, *not my will but thine be done*. The Father could be glorified only by the glorification of the Son, and this was to be accomplished by the sufferings and death, from which in the anguish of his mind he had just before prayed to be delivered. *Thy name*, is a periphrasis for *thyself*. See Ns. on Matt. 6: 10; 28: 19. *A voice*. There can be no reasonable doubt that this voice from heaven, like that of the two preceding attestations to the divine mission and character of Jesus (Matt. 3: 17; 17: 5), was a distinctly articulated utterance, and not thunder, as some recent commentators would have us suppose. It is no argument against this view, that some of the people said it thundered. There were all classes of persons present, from those who believed in his Messiahship, to his most bitter and deadly foes. That some of this mixed multitude should perversely maintain that the voice was only a peal of thunder, is not at all strange, when we consider how slow these opposers were to acknowledge any genuine miracle to have been wrought by Jesus. That it was something more than thunder, is attested by the manner in which it appeared to others, as the voice of an angel or some supernatural being conversing with him. But Jesus himself puts the matter beyond question, by referring to it as a voice graciously sent by the Father, to confirm his disciples and followers in the belief of his Messiahship, which was about to be so severely tested in the dark and trying hour which was at hand. From the fact that no reference is made to the opinion of the

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said,

e Ch. 11:42.

disciples as to the nature of this voice, it is fairly to be inferred that they were able to distinguish the words which were uttered. *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. Stier well expresses the sense of these sublime words, as "embracing and expressing the whole eternal relation of the Father to the Son, entering into time and passing beyond it, and every immediate reference to this crisis itself (i. e. to the glorification of Jesus only in the present victory of his wrestling spirit) must be too narrow, for the *I have glorified and will glorify it*, has a tone which comprehends *all* the Past and the Future."

29. *The people* (or *the multitude*) *that stood by, &c.* Reference is evidently had to a part only of the multitude; as some we are told attributed the strange sound to an angelic voice. Yet it is quite evident from the construction of the verse, that the greater portion of those present were of the opinion that it was thunder. *Spake*; more literally, *has been speaking, or is speaking.* Webster and Wilkinson think that these words were spoken while Jesus was silent, as still receiving the answer. The reception of this reply to his prayer that the Father would glorify his name, was doubtless followed by a solemn pause; the intercommunion between Him and the Father not admit-

* This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall *f* the prince of this world be cast out.

f Mat. 12:29; Lu. 10:18; ch. 14:30; & 16:11; Ac. 26:18; 2 Co. 4:4; Ep. 2:2; & 6:12.

ting of an immediate continuation of his discourse to the people. This would give time and opportunity for the expression of the opinions of the people, in regard to the nature of this supernatural voice.

30. Jesus puts an end to their doubt by plainly declaring it to be a voice; and as it was designed to promote their faith and confidence in him as God's Son, it may fairly be inferred to have been a distinct utterance, understood, at least by some who were present.

Came not because of me, i. e. not simply or principally for my sake. Our Lord does not here deny that the communication from heaven was intended to strengthen and encourage him, for the great and terrible agony which awaited him, and of which he had just experienced (v. 27) a bitter foretaste. The negation is a relative one, and equivalent to, *not alone, or not so much because of me.* The next clause *for your sakes* (or literally *because of you*), contains the principal reason why the voice was proclaimed in the hearing of all the people. It was intended as a testimony from the Father in behalf of the Son, which would dispel every lingering doubt in the mind of those who believed in him that he was the Messiah. This was the more necessary, as he was soon to enter upon that scene of ignominy, suffering, and death, which would test to the last degree the faith of his disciples and followers in his divine character and mission.

31. The effect on the world of this glorification of the Father through the obedience, sufferings, and death of his Son Jesus Christ, passes now in vivid reality before our Lord's vision. *Now is* (at hand) *the judgment of this world*, i. e. a severing and discriminating process is to be commenced by the agency

32 And I, ^gif I be lifted up

g Ch. 3: 14, & 8: 28.

h Ro. 5: 18; He. 2: 9.

of the Spirit (see 16: 11), which, while it convicts the world of sin and exposure to God's wrath, prepares it for the remedial agency of the gospel of Christ. To one portion of mankind, the judgment will be to condemnation and death, through their unbelief in Christ; to the other, it will be salvation from sin and its effects, by its revelation of the lost condition of the soul, and the adaptation of the atonement of Christ to restore it to the knowledge and favor of God. The word rendered *judgment*, literally signifies, *a crisis, a separating, a dividing*, and denotes here that decisive moment in the history of mankind when, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, the subjugation of the world to Jesus Christ was to commence, and the elements and agencies of evil were to be separated from the kingdom of truth, and cast out forever. Some make this a wholly condemnatory judgment, the *world* referred to being that portion of mankind who are incorrigibly impenitent and unbelieving, and who with their prince are now to be sentenced and cast forth. Others, on the contrary, without any qualification, make the judgment to be one of salvation and justification. This latter view is that of Augustine, Cyril, Chrysostom, and Grotius. But neither of these extremes meets the wants of the passage. Bengel refers it to a process of decision, as to who shall possess this world. This is undoubtedly comprised in the work of the Spirit, by which a judicial separation of mankind was to take place, some being made partakers of the grace of God through Jesus Christ, others being left to perish in their sins. But this line of demarcation between the good and the bad, is to be regarded as an effect of the judgment here spoken of, and not the judgment itself, which, in the light of 16: 11, we are to regard as the work of the Spirit, in quickening some to life, and leaving others through their rejection of His strivings with them, in a more confirmed state of impenitence

from the earth, will draw ^aall *men* unto me.

and unbelief. *The prince of this world*, i. e. Satan. See 14: 30; 16: 11; Eph. 2: 2. Some are disposed erroneously to regard this as a personification of evil, which, by the agency of truth, was to be extirpated from the world. *Cast out*, i. e. his influence and authority over mankind are to be destroyed; he is to be dispossessed of his kingdom, and effectually prevented from making any further inroad upon the order and happiness of the moral creation of God. This is not to be regarded as a single act in some definite period of the world's history, but a process which shall be in operation, until the final victory and expulsion of evil referred to in Rev. 20: 10, 14, shall have been achieved.

32. Our Lord here makes a natural transition to the means, by which the glorious consummation referred to in the preceding verse is to be accomplished. All men are to be drawn to the Redeemer. Satan is to be cast out of the realm, where he has so long reigned almost without a rival. But these results are to be effected by the lifting up of Jesus on the cross. A cruel and ignominious death was to be endured by him, before this glorious emancipation of mankind from the power and dominion of evil could be realized. *And I*. The position of the pronoun in the original is very emphatic. It was that very Jesus of Nazareth who stood before them, without earthly power and influence, surrounded by the most bitter and malignant enemies, who was to draw all men to himself, and expel from the world the mighty agencies of evil. *If I be lifted up*. As has been above intimated, this most unquestionably refers to the elevation of our Lord upon the cross. This is placed beyond a doubt, by the interpretation of the words given in v. 33, by the Evangelist himself. It may not be denied, however, that there is a fulness of meaning in this great utterance, which gives to it the additional idea of an elevation to such a

33 'This he said, signifying what death he should die.

† Ch. 18: 32.

glorified state, that all will be drawn with admiration to the personage who thus voluntarily placed himself upon a cross of shame, suffering, and death, for the salvation of men from the power and dominion of sin. So Stier: "the falling into the earth of the grain of wheat (v. 24), is now marvellously at the same time an exaltation above the earth, and this is symbolically represented by the *cross*. The tree of the curse and of death planted in the earth remains not withered and dry, but grows up towards heaven as the tree of life and blessing." With a like fulness of sense, Bloomfield interprets the passage not only of Christ's crucifixion, but his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation to glory. It is however around the cross as the great central fact in the economy of redemption, that all the offices of Christ are to be ranged. His obedience to death, even that of the cross, lays the foundation for all the remedial agencies, by which men are drawn to him as the Saviour of the world. *Will draw*, by the attractions of the cross through the agency of the Spirit. In 6: 44, the Father is said to draw men to Christ, the impossibility of coming to him in any other way being absolutely asserted. Here this drawing is predicated of the Son himself. How are the two statements to be reconciled? Alford says that before the glorification of the Son, this was the work of the Father, but after that the Son draws to himself. But is there not always a co-working of both Father and Son in the salvation of men? For special reasons, a prominence may be given sometimes to the act of the one, and sometimes to that of the other, but not in such a sense, as to conflict with the most harmonious co-agency. In 6: 44, there existed reasons why our Lord should declare that no man could come unto him except the Father drew him (see Note). But here the main subject of discourse is

34 The people answered him, * We have heard out of the law

‡ Ps. 89: 36, 37; & 110: 4; Is. 9: 7; & 53: 8; Ez. 37: 25; Da. 2: 44; & 7: 14, 27; Mi. 4: 7.

our Lord's passion, and its influence in rescuing a world from sin and death. *All men*; literally, *all* of every nation, both Jews and Gentiles. This declaration is sometimes wrested to teach the doctrine of universal salvation. The reference, however, is simply and solely to the universality of the provisions of grace through the death of Christ, leaving entirely out of view to what extent the overtures of the gospel will be accepted by men. There is an evident reference to the Greeks, who, in a sort of anticipatory way, had already been drawn to Jesus as recorded in v. 21. They were the first fruits of the trophies of his victorious grace, which should be gathered in from all nations where the gospel was preached. *Unto me*. A rigid construction would refer this to Christ on the cross. But as we have seen, this *being lifted up*, which is a euphemism for being elevated upon the cross, comprises the state of glorification which shall follow the crucifixion of Jesus. Hence *unto me*, refers not to Christ while actually suspended on the cross, but to the state of dominion and glory, to which he was to be raised through suffering and death (see v. 26; 14: 2, 3; Phil. 1: 23).

33. John here explains the language of our Lord, as having special reference to the mode of his death. The pronoun *this*, refers to the words, *if I be lifted up from the earth*. The word translated *signifying*, does not mean an open expression, but an obscure intimation, such as is made in oracles, dark sayings, proverbs, and the like. That our Lord's words were rightly understood by the people as referring to physical death, is evident from v. 34. *What death*, i. e. what kind of death. This does not forbid the more comprehensive meaning which commentators are agreed in attaching to the expression, *if I be lifted up from the earth*. The primary reference is to the death

that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up ? who is this Son of man ?

of the cross, but that event is not here considered apart from the glorious exaltation of Jesus which was to follow. *He shou'd die*; literally, *was about to die*.

34. The people now well understood that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and hence they find some difficulty in reconciling this declaration which manifestly referred to his death, with what the Scriptures said of the eternal continuance of Christ. They erroneously interpreted the predictions of the perpetuity of his kingdom, to the prolongation of his days on earth, thus losing sight of their spiritual significance, and affixing to them a merely temporal sense.

We have heard, &c. Copies of the Old Testament Scriptures were not usually in the possession of private persons. Hence the only knowledge which the people had of the Scriptures, was derived from hearing them read in the synagogue worship. *Out of the law*. The word *law*, is here used for the Scriptures generally. See 10 : 34. *Abideth forever*, i. e. remaineth on earth forever, not being subject to death. Their mistake, as above remarked, grew out of their misinterpretation of the predictions relating to the Kingship of the Messiah. If his kingdom was to endure forever, and if it was an earthly kingdom, it followed as an inevitable consequence, that he would never be subject to death. *'How sayest thou ?* How can you reconcile with this Scripture declaration of the perpetuity of the Messiah, what you have just said about being raised up from the earth, which we know to be symbolical of the death of the cross ? *Who is this Son of man ?* If he is to be lifted up in the way stated, he cannot be the Messiah, whom the Scriptures declare to be exempt from death. Tell us then whether two personages are intended, one of whom is to abide forever, and the other to die an ignominious death ;

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while 'is the light with you. ^m Walk while ye have

^l Ch. 1 : 9 ; & 8 : 12 ; & 9 : 5 ; ver. 46.
^m Je. 13 : 16 ; Ep. 5 : 8.

or, at least, remove this apparent contradiction between your words and the Scripture representation of the continuance of Christ.' Our Lord did not say in express terms, that the *Son of man* was to be lifted up. It was a term, however, which he had so frequently applied to himself, that the people resorted to it as his peculiar title ; and in their bewilderment in regard to the apparent conflict between the Scripture representation of the Messiah and the words which he had just spoken, they are disposed to think that the Son of man may designate a different person from the Messiah, concerning whose discontinuance on earth the Scriptures made no mention. They propose therefore the direct inquiry, who this Son of man was, who was thus to be lifted up. Webster and Wilkinson suggest that our Lord may have repeated, on this occasion, what he had before said to Nicodemus, which, however, the Evangelist did not feel it necessary here to record. Some expositors think that this question was proposed in a scoffing spirit, but we think the passage furnishes no evidence of the truth of this. The inquiry seems to have been seriously and honestly proposed, to remove a difficulty which had sprung up in their mind, when he referred as he did, to his own approaching death. That there were scoffers present we cannot doubt ; but that they gave open expression to their jeers and insults, especially while the awful voice from the skies (v. 28) was yet sounding in their ears, is quite incredible.

35. Our Lord could not reply in categorical terms to their question, without revealing what was to be disclosed in the sequel by the events themselves to which reference had been made (v. 32). He exhorts them to improve the light which they already enjoy, and thus make sure of an interest

the light, lest darkness come upon you: for ⁿhe that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, be-

n Ch. 11: 10; 1 Jo. 2: 11.

in the Messianic blessings, without stumbling at points, which, for the present at least, were beyond their comprehension. *Yet a little while*, &c. He refers again to his departure from earth, the very stumbling-block which their question showed to stand in the way of their acknowledgment of him as Messiah. He not only takes no pains to remove it, but even repeats in more positive and unambiguous language, the fact that he is soon to leave this world. *The light*. Our Lord had so often claimed to be the Light of the world (see 1: 4; 3: 19; 8: 12; 9: 5), that this reference to himself could not have been misunderstood. *Walk while ye have the light*, i. e. employ the opportunity you enjoy from my presence and instructions, for soon I shall leave you, and then if you remain in unbelief, *darkness will come upon you*; literally, *will overtake or take hold of you*. Bloomfield says that this verb is often used of the *coming on* of night. The word rendered *lest*, would be better translated *in order that*, the idea being made prominent, that the only way to avoid a dark and disastrous doom, was to employ with zeal, energy, and a humble, teachable spirit, the means of grace which they enjoyed to so eminent a degree from his presence. This was designed to be an incitement and encouragement to their faith, and a word of warning against their troubling themselves with vain attempts to reconcile his declaration concerning his death, with the preconceived and erroneous views of the eternal continuance of Christ on earth. *For he that walketh*, &c. The same result of remaining in impenitence and unbelief is here given. As the man who undertakes to walk about in the darkness of night, gropes his way with insecure and uncer-

lieve in the light, that ye may be ^othe children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and ^pdid hide himself from them.

o Lu. 16: 8; Ep. 5: 8; 1 Th. 5: 5; 1 Jo. 2: 9,
10, 11.
p Ch. 8: 59; & 11: 54.

tain footsteps; so when the moral light which they now enjoyed should be withdrawn from them, they would be left to the guidance of their own dark and benighted understandings, and remain forever in error and unbelief. This was emphatically true of the Jewish nation, who after the crucifixion of Jesus, became more and more confirmed in sin and unbelief, until God's judgments were poured out upon them, and their city and temple were destroyed by the Romans.

36. *While ye have light*, &c. Our Lord here passes from the metaphorical to plain language. This verse is therefore not so much the repetition of the preceding sentiment, as its explanation. What was *walking in the light*, is here *believing in the light*, which shows that spiritual light is referred to, and not that which is material. The clause *while ye have the light*, is but the varied idea contained in the words, *yet a little while is the light with you*, of v. 35. In both instances the near and final departure of Jesus from the world is the prominent idea. *While ye have the light* (which will be for a very short season), *believe in the light*, i. e. acknowledge me as your Messiah, and obey my words and instructions. *That ye may be*, &c. This denotes the result of believing in the Light. The soul is opened thereby to the rays of heavenly truth. The whole spiritual man is enlightened. The believer thus becomes a *child of light*, that is, one who is morally illuminated, by faith in Jesus, the Light and Teacher of men.

These things spake Jesus. Reference is had to the conversation which grew out of the request of the Greeks to see Jesus (v. 21). *Departed* from the temple and city. *Did hide himself from them*. There is no evidence that any

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, ⁹ Lord, who hath believed our report ? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ?

g Isa. 53:1; Ro. 10:16.

violence was offered him on this occasion in the temple. This refers therefore to the ordinary precaution, which, at the close of each of these eventful days, he took against being surprised and apprehended by his enemies. Instead of spending the night in the city, he repaired to Bethany or the Mount of Olives. John seems to have recorded this act of our Lord's withdrawal, because his public teaching had now come to a close, and emphasis was given thereby to his solemn injunction in vs. 35, 36, founded upon the fact that he was soon to leave them.

37-50. REFLECTIONS UPON THE UNBELIEF OF THE JEWS. *Jerusalem.* Fourth day of the Week. This section has a twofold division. Vs. 37-43 are the reflections of John upon the unbelief of the people. It was so strange and astounding, when considered in relation to the abundant evidence which he gave of his Messiahship, that it could be referred only to the blinding and hardening process of sin, in times of peculiar manifestations of the divine truth. Strange however as was this unbelief and hardness of heart, it was no more than what had been predicted in the clearest terms by the prophet Esaias (vs. 38-41). But yet this rejection of Jesus as the Messiah was by no means universal, for many even of the chief rulers (v. 42) believed on him, although in fear of the deadly opposition made against him, they were afraid to openly confess his name, lest they should suffer excommunication from the synagogue. Vs. 44-50 are a kind of recapitulation or summary of his previous instructions, apparently suggested to the Evangelist, by what he had just recorded of the inveterate unbelief of the Jews. It is revealed to us in the clearest terms, that the destinies of men are to be determined by the simple fact of their acceptance or rejection of

Jesus, as the true and only Saviour of the world; or in other words, that faith in him will ensure eternal life to the believer (v. 46), but that unbelief will be followed by the judgment and condemnation of the word of truth at the last day (vs. 47, 48.)

37. In this verse is recorded the melancholy result of the miracles and teaching of Jesus. He spake as never man spake (7:46); his miracles were of the most stupendous and benevolent character; his life was blameless so as to challenge the closest inspection without the detection of the least sin, and yet the people as a body did not believe on him. This passage furnishes conclusive evidence that our Lord performed many miracles at Jerusalem as well as in Galilee, and thus also in the metropolis gave full and indubitable evidence of his Messiahship. Unlike the custom of impostors to avoid the danger of exposure by concealment of their pretended miracles, our Lord performed his in the presence of great multitudes, and in all parts of the land, from the most northern regions of Galilee to Jerusalem and its vicinity. No concealment whatever was practised. All was open and public as the sun at noon-day. Yet the people rejected him, and verified in themselves the awful condition of sin and unbelief into which the nation had lapsed, when Esaias was sent at a former period to declare to them the message of Jehovah. *Before them.* Reference is had in general to the miracles, which in the course of his ministry he had performed in proof of his divine mission both in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The connection, however, refers the declaration especially to those wrought at Jerusalem.

38. *That the saying, &c.* The citation is from Isa. 53:1, the words corresponding exactly with the LXX, and differing but very slightly from the

original. The words *that the saying—might be fulfilled*, do not mark the purpose or object, but the result of the prophetic message. 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. Hence nothing more is here meant than that there was a fulfilment of this prophecy, in the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. This is the only view which is scriptural. Men do not reject the message of salvation brought to them by Jesus or his ministers, because they are compelled thereto, in order to fulfil certain predictions or declarations of God's word. They reject the truth because they hate it, and in the exercise of this hatred they act as free agents. God has vindicated himself from this charge of necessitating the human mind to sin (see Jer. 7 : 8-16). But this view is far from impugning the equally glorious truth, that this very hardening of the heart against the claims of the gospel, is embraced like every thing else, in the divine purpose and plan; so that the economical arrangement of God's government is not in the least disturbed thereby, nor the chain of cause and effect, by which his great designs are to be fulfilled in the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, broken or even impaired by the persistence with which his enemies remain in a state of rebellion against his law and government. He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will (Eph. 1 : 11), and not an act or event happens which was not embraced in his eternal plan and purpose. As to what Alford says that the Greek particle here translated *that*, has never the *eventual* sense, one has only to turn to such passages as 9 : 2 (on which see Note), to disprove his affirmation.

A question here arises, whether the words in Isaiah are to be considered as directly prophetic of the state of things here referred to; or whether, the unbelief which followed the procla-

mation of the divine message by him, was so similar to that which attended the preaching of Jesus, that in a certain sense, it was a prediction of what should receive a more emphatic and remarkable fulfilment in the Messianic times. The latter I conceive to be the true sense in which the prediction is to be taken. The same result took place which characterized the preaching of Esaias, and hence that event was predictive of the one here referred to in the ministry of Jesus. See N. on Matt. 1 : 22. From the confirmed unbelief of the nation under the ministry of Esaias, there was a kind of moral necessity that just such a result would follow the preaching of Jesus. I am the more confirmed in this view, from the fact that the passage was quoted twice by Paul; once, in view of the unbelief manifested by the Jews at Rome, to whom for one whole day he had been expounding and testifying the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus out of the law and the prophets (Acts 28 : 23-27); and once, in his epistle to the Romans (11 : 8), in proof of the judicial blinding of a part of Israel not included in the election of grace. The question *who hath believed our report?* is put rhetorically for an emphatic declaration, that very few persons had accredited the message. The word rendered *report*, is literally a *hearing*, and refers here to the message respecting the Messiah which had been orally communicated to the nation. The message of Isaiah, in the chapter from which this citation is made, had sole reference to the Messiah as suffering and dying for the sins of men; and hence its application to the unbelief, with which the declaration of Jesus in regard to his own Messiahship was received, founded as it mainly was upon his low condition of life and self-denying doctrines, was the more pertinent and impressive. *Hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* i. e. who hath discerned the power of God, as displayed in and through the Messiah? *Arm* is here put metaphorically for, *power* in a state of activity.

39. *Therefore*; literally, *on account*

39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

40 "He hath blinded their eyes,

r Is. 6: 9, 10; Mt. 13: 14.

of this which had just been said. In the preceding quotation, it is implied that the nation had become so hardened in sin and unbelief, that in view of the few who believed in the message of Jesus, he might well say as did Esaias, "Lord who hath believed our report." It was on account of this confirmed unbelief, that in the strong language of the passage before us, the Jews were pronounced to be unable to believe. This must not be considered a physical inability, which would take away from the act of unbelief all blameworthiness, but one which was moral and to the highest degree criminal. This shows that the judicial blinding and hardening, spoken of in the following quotation, is not such as contravenes in the least degree with free moral agency, but of a kind which makes the sinner's guilt, in resisting the offers and means of grace by which this hardening process is indirectly effected, much greater and more appalling. *Because that, &c.* An additional reason is given for their spiritual blindness and insensibility, in another citation from Isaiah. *Said again*, i. e. in another portion of his prophecy. The quotation which follows is from Isa. 6: 10, and conforms in sense, rather than verbally, with the original.

40. In regard to the general exposition of the words here cited, see N. on Matt. 13: 15. *He hath blinded their eyes*, is the historical result of what in the original prophecy is expressed by the imperative, *shut their eyes*. In like manner, the clause *and hardened their heart*, is in the Hebrew, *make the heart of this people fat*, the result being rendered prominent in the citation of the Evangelist. It will be seen also, that what Isaiah was commissioned to do, is here declared as done by God himself. This is in accordance with the common maxim, that what one does by

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.

another's agency, he does himself. *That*; literally, *so that*, not *in order that*, as Alford contends that the Greek particle here employed is always to be translated. This would make the direct and primary object in sending Isaiah to the people of Judah, to have been the hardening of their heart, and rendering them more fatally insensible to the divine demand upon their obedience and love. How could such an intention of judicial hardening be prophetic of the ministry of Jesus, the whole aim and object of which was to bring the incorrigible Jews to repentance and faith in him as their Messiah? His tears and lamentation over Jerusalem (see Matt. 23: 37; Luke 13: 34; 19: 41, 42), sufficiently attest his strong and irrepressible desire that these very persons, who in the application of the prophecy by the Evangelist, are declared to have been divinely hardened, should all have been brought to repentance and faith in him. How then were they hardened and confirmed in unbelief as here stated? Simply and naturally by their resistance to the truth, so plainly and affectionately proffered to them for their acceptance. This was what rendered them so guilty in the sight of God. They said of his Son, whom he sent with a message of pardon for all their past rebellion and impiety, "we *will not* have this man to reign over us." But is not God here said to have blinded their eyes and hardened their heart? Yes. But this He did mediately or by the instrumentality of the truth, and not by a blinding and hardening process directly exerted on their heart. This indirect agency of truth when resisted, to render the soul insensible to divine love, is equally certain and dreadful in its results, as though the effect were produced by a direct agency upon the heart. Nor is the awful condition of

41 * These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

s Is. 6:1.

one to whom the gospel becomes a savor of death unto death (2 Cor. 2:15), less the effect of a judicial hardening and blinding of the soul, than through the hardening, darkening process had been an immediate infliction by God upon the soul itself. Indeed it is a more awful descent into the depths of depravity, to go down beneath the weight of God's superincumbent love, resisted in all its heavenly drawings to the very last, than though it were effected by a direct judgment of the Almighty.

This view of the subject, which is the only scriptural one, does not in the least interfere with or overlook God's eternal plan and purpose. The induration of the heart, the blindness of the spiritual vision, the deafness to all God's calls to repentance, are just as much a part of the divine plan, when produced by the resistance of the natural man to the truth presented for his acceptance, as though they were the direct infliction of the divine judgment. But it does not so resolve itself into this great truth, as to conflict with man's free agency, or run counter to those great passages of Scripture, where the Infinite God is represented as earnestly desiring, that all shall turn unto Him and enjoy His favor and protecting presence. See Ezek. 33:11. In view of these considerations, I cannot hesitate to take *that*, in its *eventual* sense, that is, as denoting the result or effect of the previous act of blinding and hardening which, as has been remarked, was effected by the instrumentality of truth upon hearts which would not yield to its influence, converting thereby an agency of love and mercy to one of evil. Olshausen well expresses this increased criminality by resistance to the truth: "it is the very curse appointed by God to rest upon the wicked, that wickedness increases until at length all susceptibility to that which is good is at an end, so that the most glorious manifestation of good, according to the invariable law of jus-

tice, instead of conferring blessings, brings only condemnation upon those who are confirmed in evil." *That they should not see*, &c. This portion of the citation is explained in my Note on Matt. 13:15, to which the reader is referred. The clause *hear with their ears*, found in the Hebrew, and also in the citation by Matthew (13:15), and by Paul (Acts 28:26; Rom. 11:8), is here omitted. In the last clause, *and I should heal them*, the first person refers to the prophet, who was the agent or instrument by whom God would heal his people of their transgressions. In the preceding clauses, the third person refers the act of hardening and blinding to God.

41. This verse explains the time and circumstances when the prophecy was spoken. *When he saw his glory*. Alford after Meyer would translate, *because he saw*, making the vision the occasion of that prophecy. This he obtains, however, from a different particle from that which is rightly translated *when*, in our common version, and is the reading adopted by the best commentators. The pronouns *his* and *him*, refer most unquestionably to Jesus Christ, whose glory Isaiah was permitted to see, and to whom his prophecy mostly had reference. This places beyond all question that Jesus Christ, the Logos of the New Testament, was the Jehovah of Hosts of the Old Testament, and therefore the infinite and eternal God. Thus does John in this citation from Isaiah, produce additional proof that the Logos was what he had declared Him to be in 1:1, the only and true God. The clause *and spake of him*, on the reading of Alford, is to be connected with the first clause: *these things said Esaias—because he saw his glory—and spake of him*. But this seems less natural than the common reading and construction. *Of him* refers to the Messiah and his times, which constituted the burden of Isaiah's prophecy, especially from Chap. XLIX. onward to the end.

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 :

*† Ch. 7:13; & 9:22.
‡ Ch. 5:54.*

42. The Evangelist now resumes the train of thought from v. 37, which had been interrupted by his citation from Esaias. The unbelief with which the preaching and miracles of Jesus had been received, was general and universal. But notwithstanding this, there were *many* (even) *among the chief rulers who believed on him*. These were Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and others of that class. The word *many*, is to be taken in a comparative sense, of a considerable number, yet very far from embracing the whole mass, or even a majority of the rulers and chief men. *Because of the Pharisees*, i. e. the leading men who were Pharisees. *They did not confess him*, i. e. openly acknowledge their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. *Lest they should be put out*, &c. This refers to excommunication from the synagogue, and other privileges pertaining to Jewish worship. See N. on 9:22.

43. *For they loved*, &c. They were influenced by a worldly desire to retain the esteem of their fellow men, and hence made no public profession of their faith in Jesus. We can hardly doubt, however, that such of them as were possessed of genuine faith, waxed bold as the crisis of our Lord's passion approached, and lifted up their voice in opposition to the injustice and illegality of his condemnation by the Sanhedrim. An example of increasing boldness in face of obloquy and peril, was furnished in the conduct of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who in the most public manner took down the body of Jesus from the cross, and performed for it the rites of burial. The reason, however, which is here given by John, why these chief rulers did not confess Jesus, furnishes melan-

43 " For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 ¶ Jesus cried and said, " He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

α Ma. 9:37; 1 Pe. 1:21.

choly proof, that some at least were destitute of true living faith, and never made open expression of attachment to his cause. In reference to this remark of the Evangelist, compare our Lord's words in 5:44.

44-50. As has been remarked, this portion of the reflections of the Evangelist upon the unbelief of the Jews, in face of such abundant evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus, contains an epitome of the instructions given by him, previously to his taking a final leave of them as recorded in v. 36. The emphatic reference to the unbelief of the people, and the citation of the prophecy of Esaias as being fulfilled in their blindness and hardness of heart, seemed to render it necessary in John's view to recapitulate and expand the warning of Jesus against their unbelief, and the awful consequences of rejecting him as the Messiah. This portion of the sacred record seems, therefore, to have been added to show that the Jews not only had the most indubitable and convincing evidence of his Messiahship from his miracles, but that he had in the strongest and most solemn manner asserted his divine mission, and warned them against their unbelief. With this view of its position and design, we shall have no difficulty in reconciling this public teaching of Jesus, with what is said in v. 36, that he withdrew and hid himself from the Jews.

44. *Jesus cried and said*. He spoke these words in a loud voice, that all might hear the solemn warning which he was about to utter. *He that believeth*, &c. This declaration is one which our Lord frequently made. The essential unity of the Father and Son was such, that belief in the one was belief also in the other. *Believeth not on me*

45 And ^z he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

46 ^a I am come a light into the

y Ch. 14 : 9.

alone or apart from the Father. *But on him that sent me.* Our Lord never loses sight of the great fact in which his humiliation consisted, that he had stooped to the position of a servant, and that in his mission to men, he was not doing his own will, but that of the Father who had sent him. At the same time, he proclaims his unity with the Father, by averring that whosoever believed in him believed also in the Father. This, as Alford well remarks, stands in close connection with v. 41, in which the Evangelist has said, that the glory of Jehovah (Isa. 6 : 1-4) and his glory, were the same.

45. *He that seeth me, &c.* 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 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. To refer this, with Hess and other rationalistic interpreters, to such a mental contemplation of Jesus as will lead men to acknowledge the Father, is depriving it of all its pertinency and force, as well as reducing it to a far less explicit and exalted testimony of himself, than he had frequently made elsewhere. There is no abatement in this passage of his claims to supreme divinity, but on the contrary a reiteration of that great truth in the plainest and most emphatic terms.

46. Our Lord here professes himself to be that light, which in v. 35 he announced to be of short continuance on earth. *I am come a light into the world;* literally, *I, a light, am come, &c.* This forbids the comparatively weak sense, *I am come into the world* (in order to give) *light.* His prerogative to bestow light is based upon the fact that He was Light itself. He was the moral Sun of

world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

^z Ver. 35, 36; ch. 3 : 19; & 8 : 12; & 9 : 5, 39.

the universe, from the very time when he first called it into existence (see Col. 1 : 16; Heb. 1 : 2). In 1 : 7-10, the advent of this Light into the world is asserted, and in v. 35, of this chapter, its presence among the Jews is declared to be of very short continuance. In the verse now under consideration, its introduction into the world betokening its heavenly origin, is referred to. See also 8 : 12; 9 : 5. Who in face of such great declarations in regard to Jesus Christ as the Light of the world, can maintain with any semblance of truth, that our Lord is simply a revealer of light, like the prophets of the Old Testament? *That whosoever, &c.* This denotes the purpose for which Christ came into this world. *Should not abide* is a litotes or negative form of assertion for, *should come out of.* The word *abide*, presupposes that all men are naturally in darkness, until brought into the glorious light and liberty of the gospel of Christ. See Col. 1 : 13; also N. on 3 : 36.

47. In regard to the general sentiment of this verse, see Ns. on 3 : 17; 5 : 45; 8 : 15. The *hearing* and *believing not*, correspond to *hearing they shall not hear*, Matt. 13 : 13, on which see Note. The belief here spoken of has primary reference to the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah. It however manifestly includes all the doctrines and requisitions of the gospel. *I judge him not.* "I do not assume the office of judge, do not pass sentence or condemn." Webster and Wilkinson. See N. on 8 : 15, 16. The pronoun *I*, is emphatically opposed in the original to the *word*, referred to in the next verse, as that which will pronounce a condemning judgment upon the unbeliever. *For I came, &c.* The peculiar office work of Jesus was to save men, not to condemn them. See N. on 3 : 17. This declaration does not militate against his assumption of the office of

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, ^a I judge him not : for ^b I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

^a Ch. 5: 45; & 8: 15, 26.
^b Ch. 8: 17. ^c Lu. 10: 16.

final Judge, at the consummation of time. The simple idea is, that his office work at present is to save men from sin and death. Hereafter, as all judgment has been committed to him, he will pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon those who are incorrigibly impenitent. But this was not the primary or special object of his advent. "He came not to judge the world but to save the world." Some have fancied that this passage furnishes an incontrovertible argument that all men will finally be saved. But such a sense could not be affixed to it, without destroying all the force and pertinency of the following declaration, that he who rejects Jesus and his words shall be judged, even by the very gospel of salvation which he has rejected, and which to those who receive it is full of peace, pardon, and love. In regard to the emphatic repetition of *the world*, in the second member, see N. on 9: 6.

48. *He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words*, is a full and emphatic repetition of what is expressed in the preceding verse by, *and believe not*. The language is exceedingly strong and emphatic. The word translated *rejecteth*, literally signifies *to displace, put aside*, in scorn as a thing of no worth. It has primary reference here to the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, but includes the rejection of the gracious overtures of the gospel, as expressed in the next clause, *and receiveth not my words*. These acts of rejection and unbelief, although referred to in this place as separate and distinct, are yet one in essence, and are never found except in close and indissoluble companionship. No one can believe in the gospel of Christ, without giving full credence to what he has declared of his divine mission and personal dignity; nor can any one believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, without attaching

48 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: ^a the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

^d De. 18: 19; Ma. 16: 16.

to all the requisitions of his gospel a supreme and binding obligation. In like manner also, a rejection of Jesus as the Son of God, is a rejection of all the words which proceeded from his mouth; and a rejection of his words and doctrines, is a rejection of him as the Redeemer and Saviour of men. This verse therefore establishes in unmistakable language, the indissoluble connection between an acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God, and obedience to all his commands. See N. on Matt. 7: 21, 22. *Hath one that judgeth him*. A judge will not be wanting to pronounce sentence of condemnation upon him, even though I, as Saviour of men, do not thus condemn him. *The word that I have spoken*, i. e. the gospel, the great summary of Christ's words and instructions. *The same shall judge*, &c. The personal pronoun in the masculine gender is here employed, as if *the word* was a personal and living *he*, who should sit on the throne of judgment at the last day. "That the spoken word itself will be the Judge, is a bold and true expression, since it is not an empty word, and can never be spoken in vain. On the one hand, it abides as a judge (Heb. 4: 12) in the memory and conscience till the last day (*hath one*, &c.); and on the other, it will on that day, though only for condemnation, be reproduced in the mouth of the rejected Saviour, then the Judge." Stier. The idea is that the gospel rejected and scorned, will rise up as a condemning judge at the last day, and thunder forth the sentence of condemnation, so that there will be, as it were, nothing left for the Judge, but to confirm that condemning sentence. It is thus that Jesus illustrates and confirms his declaration in v. 47, that his office is not to judge but to save the world. Judgment of the most terrific nature will come

49 For 'I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a command-

upon the impenitent sinner, but it will be the condemning sentence of a rejected gospel.

49. This verse also contains the summary of what he had repeated very frequently in his public instructions. Stier cites 5:30; 7:16, 17, 28, 29; 8:26, 28, 38, 55, and what he afterwards said to his disciples 14:10. *For* introduces this verse, as confirmatory of the high authority given in the preceding verse to *the word* which Jesus had spoken, in that it was to be the virtual judge of unbelievers at the last day. This word had not been spoken by Jesus *of himself* (literally *from himself*), that is, of his own origination and apart from the will and purpose of the Father; but it constituted the very commandment which he had received from the Father, when he was sent on his mission of love into the world. Hence his word was the word of God, and it was not strange, that the rejection of it should be followed by such a fearful result. The pronoun *I*, is emphatic in the original, and in connection with *of myself*, is put in strong contrast with *the Father*, in the next clause, to whom the words which Jesus spoke are declared to be referable. Commentators have written much and learnedly on the distinction between *should say*, and *should speak*. In the original, the former of these verbs is in the present tense; the latter, in the future. Some have therefore made them representative of the words already spoken by Christ on earth, and those which should hereafter be spoken by him at the last day. But against this view it may be objected, that both verbs apply alike in their connection to the summary of rejected words which are to be the ground of final condemnation; and, as Stier remarks, the *commandment* given to Jesus, which covers the ground occupied by both verbs, is suitable only to his state of humiliation. Some refer the distinction expressed by the two

ment, ^f what I should say, and what I should speak.

e Ch. 8:33; & 14:10. *f* De. 18:18.

verbs to his private speaking and public teaching. Thus Bloomfield (with whom also Webster and Wilkinson concur) refers *should say*, to commands, and *should speak*, to oral instructions. But this is altogether conjectural, and makes no reference to the distinction of tense, which is too important a feature to be ignored. Commentators are to be found who interpret *should say*, of general, and *should speak*, of particular instructions. But the same objection lies against this as the preceding interpretation. Is there after all any essential difference to be sought in the two verbs as used here? Are they not intended to emphatically and fully embrace every thing which our Lord had taught, the two tenses being employed to cover the whole time of his ministry, as the different verbs were employed to denote all kinds and forms of instruction? Such seems to me to be the true solution. As these words of the Evangelist were intended to be a summary or recapitulation of what Jesus had spoken at different times and occasions in his public ministry, the stand-point assigned to him was in the very midst of his work, when he had already spoken many words, and had much yet to utter. This mode of solution, which I have seen nowhere else, seems to me to account satisfactorily for the use of the future in the verb *should speak*, which was intended to cover all his future utterances, as well as those which he had already made. The sentiment then is, that the commandment which Jesus had received from the Father, embraced *all* his words, so that not one of his utterances could be rejected without incurring condemnation thereby.

50. The design of this verse is to show that the commandment which Jesus had received from God, and which comprised all his precepts and instructions, or in other words, constituted the gospel which was to be preached to all men down to the end of time, had no other end than the sal-

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever. I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

a Mt. 26:2.

vation of men. Hence he had not deviated in the least from the words which he had been commissioned to speak. The inference is left to be drawn by his hearers, that if he so closely adhered to the instructions of the Father, his words were entitled to their fullest confidence. *I know*. See 3:11; 5:32; 7:29; 8:14, 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. *Is life everlasting*. See 6:63. Compare also 3:15; 5:24; 6:40. It is depriving this passage of its principal force, to make the commandment here spoken of—which, as we have seen, is but a compendious term for the gospel itself—a means merely of eternal salvation. It contains in itself the germ and principle of eternal life, and when received into the soul of the believer, results in his everlasting salvation. The pronoun in *whatsoever I speak*, is emphatic. The contrast is being kept up between him as one sent of God, and the Father who sent him to declare his message. *Therefore*. The important bearing of this commandment upon the salvation of men, was a reason why Jesus had proclaimed it in exact conformity with the terms in which it had been communicated to him. *As the Father said unto me*; ‘expressed to me,’ implying precise instructions. Webster and Wilkinson. *So I speak*. The repetition of the verb *speak*, is intended to give emphasis to the undeviating accuracy, with which our Lord had delivered the message which had been given him by the Father. The heavenly origin of the gospel message, and its exact accordance with the expressed will of the Father, leave no excuse for unbelief,

CHAPTER XIII.

NOW ^abefore the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that ^bhis hour was come that he should depart out of this world

b Ch. 12:23; & 17:1, 11.

and render certain beyond the shadow of doubt, that he who rejects it, deprives himself of all hope of eternal life. Thus the sum total of this compendium of our Lord's doctrines and instructions, is that the words which he had spoken, were life eternal to those who received them in faith and love, but condemnatory to such as despised and rejected them. This declaration impresses the seal of divinity upon all he had uttered, and constitutes a sublime and dignified close of his public ministry.

CHAPTER XIII.

1-20. JESUS WASHES THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES. *Jerusalem*. Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. John here records an incident, in which our Lord impressively taught his disciples the lesson of humility and mutual love. It is properly supplementary to Luke 22:24-30, where is related the contention that arose among the Twelve, which of them should be accounted the greatest. John does not speak of the contention, because Luke had already described it, but his narrative is evidently intended to supplement that of the other Evangelist. There can be no reasonable doubt, that the incident here related occurred at the Passover meal, just after they had taken their reclining places at the table, which gave rise to the strife which our Lord's symbolical act was designed to rebuke (see N. on Luke 22:24).

1. *Before the feast*, &c. The solution of the chronological difficulty to which this passage gives rise, has been attempted in various ways. The chief difficulty consists in the limitation of the preposition *before*. Some refer it to all which follows; others, simply to the first verse. The former class of interpreters are disposed to regard this

unto the Father, having loved

his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

meal in which Jesus washed the disciples' feet, as one which took place before the feast of the passover, and therefore could not have been the passover itself. The latter class of expositors, who limit the expression *before*, to the first verse, refer it to the unwonted strength of love for his disciples which as the passover drew nigh, and before its celebration, took possession of Jesus' bosom, so that he was led to show them the highest marks of his love, even to the washing of their feet. But neither of these modes of solution seems to fully meet the demands of the passage. The words *before the passover*, cannot, without doing great violence to the whole narrative, which thenceforth flows on in a very connected manner until our Lord and his disciples went forth to Gethsemane (18: 1), be referred to a meal which took place before the passover. Nor can such a view be reconciled with the synoptic Evangelists, especially with Luke, who speaks of the contention among the disciples, as taking place at the passover meal (22: 15-18, 24-30). Unless we adopt the audacious conclusion, that one or the other of these Evangelists was mistaken as to the particular meal at which took place this contention who should occupy the chief reclining places at the table, and the reproof and correction which Jesus administered by the act of washing their feet—incidents which beyond all question occurred at the same meal—we must find some other mode of solving the difficulty, than by supposing that John refers to another feast than the passover. Not more satisfactory also is the other mode of removing the difficulty, by supposing that as the passover drew nigh, and before its celebration, our Lord's heart was overflowing with unwonted love, and that he was thus prepared to endure the dreadful sufferings that awaited him. The interjection of such a sentiment at the very beginning of the chapter, followed by such continuity of narration as that of v. 2,

is not only in a verbal or syntactical view, very harsh and unusual; but is a tame assertion of what is evident in every successive stage of our Lord's ministry, that he was filled and inspired with a holy fervor and zeal, which manifested itself in the most ardent love for his disciples, and an almost impatient spirit to achieve the work of their redemption, for which he had come into this world. See Luke 12: 50; Mark 10: 32. To repeat this sentiment here would seem out of place, as well as disconnected with what immediately follows. I prefer, therefore, that solution which regards the *feast of the passover* here spoken of, as the feast of unleavened bread, and not a single meal. So Dr. Robinson, with his usual good judgment and critical acumen, regards it as equivalent to the English *festive eve*, and marking the evening before the *festival* proper of seven days' continuance. See Numb. 28: 16, 17, "where the paschal supper prepared on the fourteenth of Nisan and eaten at evening, is distinguished from the *festival*, which began on the fifteenth and continued for seven days." It was at the paschal supper, but before the festival which properly began the next day, that our Lord manifested his love for the disciples by washing their feet as here related. *When Jesus knew*; literally, *Jesus knowing*. The future was all open to his view. He knew the dreadful sufferings which awaited him, but this did not abate his love to his disciples. *His hour*. This expression which occurs so often, is here explained of his departure from this world to the Father. It is therefore to be regarded in all the other instances of its use in such a connection, as an euphemism for his *death*. See 7: 30; 8: 20; 12: 27; 17: 1. The verb *should depart*, is well suited to denote a return to the bosom of the Father, its literal signification being to *remove* or *pass* from one place to another, as from a house to a house, or from one section of country to another. Our Lord was not about to de-

2 And supper being ended,
‘the devil having now put into

c Lu. 22:3; ver. 27.

part to heaven, as a place in which he had never before been. But his departure was a removal from one place to another of that universe, which his own omnific word had called into being, and which he as the Omnipresent One, was even then essentially filling with his presence. As Messiah, God-man, he might with perfect accuracy of language be spoken of, as departing from earth to his original seat of glory and bliss in heaven. *Having loved* from the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 5, 11). This past love is here placed as a reason or ground for that perseverance of love, which the untold agony of the garden and the cross could not impair or diminish in the least degree. It was not a new or sudden impulse of love under which he now acted, but one which from eternity had possessed his soul, and the unchanging character of which was the surest pledge that it would continue to the end. *His own*, is not to be restricted to his immediate disciples, but embraces all in every age, who should believe on him. Compare 17:24. *Which were in the world*, i. e. which belonged to the human race. This gives to the words *his own*, a more extended reference than to his disciples who were then present with him. *He loved them*. This refers not only to the possession of love—but to its manifestation. Jesus gave indications or tokens of his love to the very end, among which was to be included the incident about to be related. The words *having loved his own*, &c., refer to the previous manifestations of his love, such as his advent into the world to redeem with his blood those whom he here designates as *his own*, and the numberless tokens of his love in calling them into the kingdom of his grace, and in guarding, upholding, and guiding them in the way of truth and holiness. Indeed the whole economy of redemption is made up of the most signal and affecting developments of Christ's love for those

the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

whom he has chosen, and who have come to him by the drawings of the Father (see 6:44). *Unto the end*, i. e. to the end of his life. “The expression is similar to one of not uncommon occurrence, *he loved them to the death*.” Webster and Wilkinson.

2. *Supper being ended*. This is a mistranslation, the literal rendering being, *supper (time) having come*; i. e. supper having been prepared and served. Dr. Robinson considers the phrase as equivalent to *during supper*. We find in Luke 22:17, that the cup had already been passed at least once. From this we may infer, that the incident here related took place between the first and second cups of wine (see N. on Matt. 26:2), and before they had partaken of the proper meal. *The devil having now put*, &c. “This observation is introduced to keep before the mind the idea, that not only was the time come (v. 1) for our Lord's departure, but that the agency by which it was to be effected had been put in operation.” Webster and Wilkinson. There seems here to be a sort of intended contrast between the work of our Lord and that of Satan. He was about to enter upon his great work of dying love. All his words and actions were indicative of the strong and unquenchable love, which animated him to the endurance of the dreadful sufferings he was about to undergo for the redemption of man. The devil also in this crisis of man's destiny was not idle. His plans were all laid, not for good, however, but for evil. His agent had been selected, and induced by satanic temptation to take the first step in his traitorous career (see Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10, 11; Luke 22:3-6). The sentiment therefore is, that although Judas had thus fully determined to betray him, yet his affection was not thereby abated for his disciples, whose feet in his condescending love he stooped to wash. This reference to the intention of the betrayer serves to en-

3 Jesus knowing ^a that the Father had given all things into his hands, and ^e that he was come from God, and went to God;

^d Mat. 11:27; & 28:18; ch. 3:35; & 17:2; Ac. 2:86; 1 Co. 15:27; He. 2:8.

hance the love of Jesus, as manifested in the act here related. *Having now put into the heart*, i. e. having now suggested to Judas the act of betrayal. The phrase has here the additional idea of incitement to the performance of the act spoken of. *Simon's son*. See 6:71; 12:4, also v. 26. *To betray him* into the hand of his enemies.

3. The design of this verse seems to be an averment, on the very threshold of our Lord's great passion, that he was fully and calmly conscious of his dignity, as one who had come from God, and was about to return to his primeval abode of glory, and to whom by virtue of the covenant of redemption, all things in heaven and on earth had been committed. He entered upon the scene of humiliation, suffering, and death, not as one who in his weakness could find no way of averting impending calamities, but as one "glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save." So Alford: "he did what follows with the full sense of the glory and dignity of his own person." *Had given*, &c. See Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9. The tense of the verb is the perfect *has given*, and not the pluperfect, as our English version has it. The act is conceived of as one of present completion. The decree of investiture had been passed in the councils of eternity, but the actual bestowment of universal dominion took place, not until the Redeemer had evinced his worthiness of the trust by his obedience unto death. In like manner the verb rendered *went*, in the clause *went to God*, is the present, and should have been translated *goes away* or *returns*. The whole connection points to one great present manifestation, which was to embrace in its mighty sweep the whole economy of redemption—the eternal plan on which it was based—the achievement of the

4 ^f He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

^e Ch. 8:42; & 16:28.
^f Lu. 22:27; Phil. 2:7, 8.

work on the cross—and its consummation in the glorious exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God. *That he was come* (more literally *came forth*) *from God*. He was as fully conscious in this hour of his deep humiliation, of his pre-existent nature and dignity, as at any previous time of his public ministry. See 3:13; 6:38, 46, 62; 8:14. *Went to God*; literally, *is withdrawing to God*, i. e. has now entered upon that scene of suffering and death, which will bring his earthly labors to a close, and enable him to resume the dignity with the Father, which he had temporarily laid aside. See Phil. 2:6-8.

4. The formal and carefully worded preface to this act of humility and love now to be related—which comprises the first three verses, and refers to the sublime truths of Christ's unchanging love for his people, and his full consciousness of his essential union with the Father, although the act of betrayal had been fully determined upon by Judas, at the suggestion of Satan—shows the importance which John attached to our Lord's wondrous act of condescension, in the washing of the disciples' feet. *He riseth from supper*. This does not necessarily imply, as Olshausen supposes, that the meal properly considered had commenced. They had all taken their reclining places, and the first cup of wine had probably been passed. Our Lord then, in view of the strife for precedence (Luke 22:24) which he had observed among his disciples, arose from his recumbent position, and performed the ablution here referred to. The time of the performance of this act had nothing in itself strange, as the feet were usually washed before supper. The wonder and astonishment with which the disciples were struck, arose from the fact, that their Lord and Master should condescend to so menial a service. It is to this that Jesus him-

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.

self refers in Luke 22:27, 28, which conversation, I am inclined to think took place after or during this washing of the disciples' feet. See N. on Luke 22:27, 28. *Laid aside*; literally, *lays aside*, it being an historical present, representing the act as passing before the eye of the reader. *Garments*. This was the outer garment, which falling down to the feet in loose and flowing folds, would have impeded our Lord in the service he was about to perform. *Took* (literally, *having taken*) *a towel*. This was a linen cloth used both as a towel and an apron. *And girded himself*. He threw this linen cloth over his shoulder and around his body in the form of a girdle, its folds or ends hanging loosely, so that it could readily be used in the manner here described (v. 5). "To be thus girded was considered by the ancients in the same light, as a person's wearing an apron is by us, namely, as indicating the exercise of some servile occupation." Bloomfield. In connection with this point, Stier's remark may be quoted, that "the washing of the feet was not simply the lowest menial service, but according to human analogy, was at the same time no other than a *service of honor and love*, which the host might render to his guests." But to my knowledge, we read of no instance except this, where the service was rendered by a superior to an inferior.

5. *After that*; literally, *then, afterwards*, marking here the succession of time. *He poureth*; literally, *casteth or putteth*, the verb indicating the ardor and activity, with which his love impelled him to arrange these preliminaries for the service he was about to perform. *A basin*; literally, *the basin*, reference being had to the one which usually stood there for use, on occasions like this. *Began to wash*. The original is not the inceptive or inchoative imperfect, but two distinct verbs giving the sense *he proceeded to wash*.

The majority of commentators, therefore, suppose that our Lord had washed the feet of several of his disciples before he came to Peter. Alford however considers the verbs *began to wash*, as not designed to show that he had washed the feet of one or more before the incident of the next verse, but as simply expressing his doing something unusual and unlooked for. He would render the connective *then* in v. 6, as equivalent to *in pursuance of this intention he cometh*, &c. But in the first place, we can hardly suppose that such express language as *began to wash—and to wipe*, &c., would be employed of a mere anticipation of the act, and not its actual commencement; and then we are led to inquire, what is to be gained by such a straining of the passage to teach, that Peter was the first whose feet our Lord washed on this occasion. It would seem more probable and natural to suppose that this disciple, while looking in amazement at the performance of this strange act upon others of the company, had ample time to reflect upon its incongruity, and to form the determination that his Master should not perform for him so menial a service. If Peter was not the one who was nearest to him, it would seem out of place, on an occasion like this, when all human distinction faded away before the majesty and exalted dignity of the Person who was stooping to such a depth of humiliation, to suppose that he would establish a difference of rank by going to that disciple first, and then perhaps to John and James, and so on in an order of descending gradation. This would foster that very feeling and desire for preëminence, which had given rise to the contention that took place among them when they sat down at the table. We have therefore no means whatever of knowing whose feet were washed first. All we know is that the service was performed for all, even for Judas, in whose black

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, ^gdost thou wash my feet?

g See Mat. 3:14.

heart the traitorous purpose had now become fully formed. Indeed it was the opinion of Chrysostom, Theophylact, and many others, that the traitor was the first whose feet Jesus washed. But this would seem, on the other hand, too much the matter of precalculation and design to single out Judas, unless he happened to be the nearest to him when he began the service. Such an act as this must not have its naturalness and simplicity marred, by forcing upon it the marks of a preconceived plan and management, either to give Peter the preëminence, or to fasten the attention of the company upon Judas, as one specially singled out to be the first whom our Lord condescended to wash.

6. *Then* as he was passing around in performing this service. *Lord, dost thou, &c.* The collocation of the words in the original is very emphatic. *Lord.* Peter first addresses his Master by the customary title of honor. We may suppose his tone to be that of surprise and earnest expostulation. The next words in the order of the original are *thou* and *my*, in which infinite dignity and worth, on the one hand, and weakness, sin, and ill-desert, on the other, are placed in juxtaposition. The next word is *art washing* (i. e. intending to wash), a service which even among poor mortal men, is committed to servants. Last of all, and as if reserved to concentrate upon it, all the gathering feelings of amazement at such an unheard stoop of love, the word *feet*, is expressed. Every word in this short interrogation is designed to give expression to the wonder and amazement, with which Peter regarded the act which his Master was now approaching him to perform. The interrogation does not, however, absolutely forbid the performance of the act; it is only expressive of astonishment that it

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

h Ver. 12.

should be thought of. The prohibition is found in v. 8. It is the usual remark of expositors, that here we see the ready and impetuous zeal of Peter for the honor of his Master, although, as in several other instances, he undertakes, in a spirit of opposition and even refusal, to act as a censor upon the acts and doings of our Lord. He should have received in silent submission this service of Jesus, and waited for the future revelation of its true significance, satisfied for the present that a Being of such wisdom, in the performance of this act, had a design which he would in due time unfold.

7. Our Lord gently rebukes Peter's presumption and ignorance, and at the same time promises him such future illumination as shall clear up the mystery of this transaction. *What I do*, i. e. the meaning or significance of what I am doing. *Thou knowest not now.* He had made this manifest, by his presumptuous interference with the service which Jesus was rendering to his disciples. There is an obvious antithesis between *now* and *hereafter*, which refers the meaning to the act of washing which Peter had disclaimed against, and which in the next verse he utterly repels from being applied to himself. *But thou shalt know, &c.* We shall see in vs. 13-17, how fully our Lord made known to his disciples the lesson, which he would teach them by this strange service in which he had been engaged. *Hereafter*; literally, *after these things*, i. e. after the washing of the feet of all is completed. Some refer this revelation to the world to come; but that such is not its true meaning is evident from the following context, in which Jesus did actually explain the object which he had in view in this symbolic act.

8. It cannot but excite our wonder that Peter, after this promise of our

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.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him,

2 Ch. 3:5; 1 Co. 6:11; Ep. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; He. 10:22.

Lord to reveal his design in thus washing their feet, should yet persist in repelling the service, even to a positive denial that it should ever be done to him by his Master. *Thou shalt never, &c.* "While the world standeth."

Tynd. The reply has all the characteristic energy and outspoken plainness of Peter. The literal rendering is: *thou shalt not wash my feet forever.* The interrogation in v. 6 implies a reluctance on the part of Peter, that his Master should perform for him so menial a service. But now his impetuosity has so far gained the ascendancy, that he avers, that, as long as the world standeth, he will never permit this to be done to him by his Lord. *If I wash thee not, &c.* Jesus did not seek to remove the objection of Peter, by any further reference to the specific design of the present act. But he arouses and startles his conscience by an intimation, that he must be subject to a moral cleansing, to perform which Jesus stooped to a greater depth of humiliation even than that of the cross, or he would have no part in the peace, joy, and blessedness of those whom Christ numbered as his own. That our Saviour did not refer here to the external act in which he was then engaged, is evident from the fact that Judas had received this washing, and yet had no part in Jesus. It is worthy of remark, that this reference to a spiritual cleansing is here merely incidental, as no further allusion is made to it, not even in the explanation given of the symbolical character of this feetwashing, in the verses which follow. *Part* has here the sense of participation, fellowship. See 1 John 1:3, 7.

9. Peter, on learning that he must

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 ^kye are clean, but not all.

2 Ch. 15:3.

receive this washing, in order to share in the love and favor of Jesus, now as vehemently expresses his desire to be washed, as previously his aversion to the act. He would now have even his hands and head made subject to this washing, to which such virtue was attached. Had he in this expression of desire, any view of the spiritual cleansing to which Jesus referred? I cannot but think that such was the fact, and that in designating the other parts of his body which he would gladly have washed, he only made use of this external washing, as a symbol of that which he would have performed upon every part of his moral and spiritual nature. 'Do you indeed say, that I must receive with an obedient and submissive spirit, the lesser act of humility and love from thine hand, or I cannot hope to have that spiritual washing, which thou hast subjected thyself to greater humiliation to have it in thy power to bestow? Lord, if this be so, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' Such I conceive to be the train of thought which passed through Peter's mind, and led him to ardently crave that which he had just rejected in such strong and positive language. So Stier remarks: "Thus alone can we understand, in a sense worthy of the apostle, the instant retraction of his emphatic *never*, and the impetuous going beyond of the offer of his hands and his head."

10. Peter had spoken of a washing of his feet, hands, and head. But our Lord extends the idea to a bathing of the whole body; and as this presupposed such a state of bodily cleanliness, that there would be no need of any further washing, save to remove the

11 For 'he knew who should

1 Ch. 6: 64.

dust which would gather upon the feet; so they who had been spiritually cleansed, being rendered thereby clean in every part of their moral nature, would need no repetition of that moral purification or regeneration, except from the defilement which a partially sanctified sinful nature would incur, and which, like that of the feet, would require a frequent cleansing through the pardoning grace of the Redeemer. Such I conceive to be the sentiment of our Lord's reply, the analogy being still carried on between physical purification, and that of the soul, which had been started in v. 8. *He that is washed*; literally, *he that has bathed*, or *is fresh bathed*. 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, and his wish that his hands and head should be washed as well as his feet, while it evinced a laudable desire to be wholly cleansed from all defilement, was yet unnecessary, inasmuch as the washing of the whole spiritual man had already taken place. Henceforth he would need only that cleansing process, which was well represented in bodily purification, by the washing of the feet. Prof. Crosby well expresses it: "The soul washed in Christ's blood needs only to be cleansed from the remnants of sin. The great washing has been done." *But is clean every whit*; literally, *altogether*, or *in the whole person*. This does not imply sinless perfection in the believer, but simply that when the regenerating influences of the Spirit are bestowed upon a man, his whole moral nature is cleansed, and he needs not a second

betray him; therefore said he, *Ye are not all clean*.

purification. That there is yet remaining, to a greater or less extent, indwelling sin, and doubt, and unbelief, is evident not only from other portions of God's word, but also from the exception here made in the words, *save to wash his feet*. *Ye are clean*, i. e. have received this cleansing of the Spirit, and are in a state of justification and acceptance with God. *But not all*. Judas was present, and is here solemnly excepted from the number of those who had been cleansed from sin. May not our Lord have designed to arouse his conscience by this intimation of his lost condition? Such seems to have been his merciful intention here and in v. 18, where he again alludes to the defection of Judas.

11. The superhuman knowledge of Jesus, is in various ways kept by the Evangelist before the mind of his reader. The treachery of Judas was as well known to Christ at this time, as when afterward he led forth the band of armed men to Gethsemane, and with traitorous kiss pointed out to them the one whom they were to lay hold of and bind. Hence he employed the words *not all*, with the most full and perfect knowledge of what he said. *For* shows the ground of his exception to the fact of their being all clean. *Who should betray*. The present participle is here employed in the original, denoting what grammarians call the absolute or indefinite present, reference being had thereby to an act, irrespective of the precise time when it was to be performed. A very good translation of the word in this use of it, would be, *the one betraying him, his betrayer*. Webster and Wilkinson overlook this grammatical feature, and translate the participle, *who was going to betray him*. The repetition *therefore said he*, &c., is designed to impart emphasis to his exception of Judas from the number of those who were cleansed from sin, on account of his absolute knowledge of the dark and dreadful deed which he was on the eve of committing.

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 to you?

13 "Ye call me Master and
m Mat. 23: 8, 10; *Lu.* 6: 46; 1 *Co.* 8: 6; & 12: 3; *Phi.* 2: 11.

12. *So after*; literally, *when therefore*. The narrative is here resumed from v. 6, where our Lord was interrupted in his service, by the unwillingness of Peter that Jesus should stoop to such humiliation as to wash his feet. *Had taken* (i. e. had resumed) *his garments*, i. e. the upper or outer garment. See N. on v. 4. *Was set down again*; literally, *falling back again*, i. e. resuming his reclining position at the table. The verb here made use of is not the one usually employed to denote reclining at meals, yet it has evidently that signification, with the additional idea of a sudden and rapid movement. *Know ye what I have done to you?* 'Do you understand the lesson, which this act was designed to teach you?' The question is rhetorically employed to bring the subject fully before their mind. He is now about to fulfil his promise to Peter (v. 7), that after he had finished what he was then doing, he would explain the design and import of the act. The holy ardor with which Jesus entered upon these last scenes of his earthly ministry, is evinced among other things, by the unflinching energy with which he accomplished what remained for him to do. Here is to be read, as forming a part of his explanation, Luke 22: 25-30.

13. *Ye call me*, &c. 'You acknowledge by these titles with which you address me, that I am your superior.' *Master* and *Lord* have in the original the form of direct address, as though it had been written, *O Master*, *O Lord*. Or with Stier we may give it this turn: 'when ye speak of me, ye say *the Master*, *the Lord*.' These titles are not one and the same. *Master* is the title given by disciples to their teacher. *Lord* is one whose commands are to be obeyed. In

Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 "If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; °ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

n *Lu.* 22: 27.
o *Ro.* 12: 10; *Ga.* 6: 1, 2; 1 *Pe.* 5: 5.

v. 14, the order is changed to *Lord* and *Master*, the form in which the phrase is generally used by Christians of the present day. *Ye say well*, i. e. this is a proper mode of address. *For so I am*. The literal translation *for I am*, would have been preferable, since his reply is so worded as to express the assertion, *I am* (your Lord and Master), and also to bring out that great and ineffable I AM, in which he claims the attributes of Jehovah.

14. Our Lord here teaches the lesson of humility and love, which was designed by the act in which he had just been engaged. The argument is a *fortiori* (see N. on Matt. 5: 16). If I your acknowledged superior, condescend to perform for you the service of an inferior, *much more* ought ye, instead of disputing and striving for the preëminence (see Luke 22: 24), to perform this friendly office for one another. That a literal washing of feet is not here enjoined upon the disciples, but only that humility and love, which would prompt them to do kindly and even self-denying offices for one another, is very evident. The early Christians practised no such religious custom. What is said in 1 Tim. 5: 10, is to be interpreted in the same manner in which we explain these words of our Lord, as designed to designate the hospitable and self-humbling duties which Christians should practise towards one another. There is also internal evidence, that our Lord does not mean this to be a literal injunction. In the whole of his gospel, he is careful to dispense with all ceremonies and rites. No forms are laid down for observance. No ceremonies were prescribed. The whole essence of his teaching was love. To suppose therefore that he should

15 For ^p I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 ^v Verily, verily, I say unto

^p Mat. 11:29; Phi. 2:5; 1 Pe. 2:21; 1 Jo. 2:6.

institute a ceremony, such as is performed by the Pope, when he washes the feet of twelve beggars under the lofty dome of St. Peters, is at war with the whole tenor of his teaching, which was against these outward and unmeaning rites and observances. If it be said that he instituted the Lord's supper, this surely is not to be placed in the same category with the washing of feet. The one was of such a nature as to awaken all the spiritual emotions of love, thankfulness, and joy; the other, to beget pride, false humility, and vain-glory. The one was significant of a great truth which it was designed to keep in remembrance; the other was a mere symbolical act, intended to impress upon the minds of the disciples a lesson of humility and brotherly love, but which in the form of a ritual and stated observance, would not only utterly fail to produce the result at which it aimed, but tend to beget emotions of the very opposite kind. In regard to the custom of the Pope, on Maundy Thursday, of performing this rite upon twelve aged beggars, Bengel, with well-merited sarcasm, observes that "the Pope would do a more remarkable thing, if in unfeigned humility, he washed the feet of one king, than he does in washing the feet of twelve poor men."

15. For I have given you, &c. Our Lord here plainly declares that his act was symbolical, and designed as an example of the spirit of humility, love, and self-abasement, which should characterize all their relations to one another. The word rendered *example*, literally signifies, a *sign*, *form*, *pattern*, consisting in some outward manifestation. The precept of brotherly love and humility was here enforced and illustrated, by an outward or visible act impressing itself upon the external

you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

^q Mat. 10:24; Lu. 6:40; ch. 15:20.

senses. *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.' There can be no doubt that this is the great and only lesson of the passage. If this humility, self-abasement, and brotherly love, require the performance of any menial service, even to the washing the feet, it is to be cheerfully performed. It is by no means, however, to be limited or restricted to that which is low and servile, but embraces the whole range of duty and service which brotherly love requires one disciple of Christ to render to another. As in the original is emphatic, *just as*.

16. *Verily, verily*, indicating the importance of the truth which he was about to announce. *The servant*, &c. A proverbial saying, which our Lord here makes use of, to show that the inferior should not deem himself too high to do any service which his superior has stooped to perform. The argument is *a fortiori*: if the superior thus humbles himself, *much more* should the inferior practise humility and self-abasement, when duty calls him thus to do. The saying is made use of by our Lord several times in his ministry. See 15:20; Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40. *He that is sent*; literally, *an apostle*, i. e. one who is sent forth to announce some message or execute some commission. The correlate is *he that sent*, which refers in the nature of the case to one of superior rank or station. This renders the adage very applicable to the relation

17 "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but

r Ja. 1: 25.

which subsisted between the disciples and Christ, as those whom he was about to send forth on their apostolic labors.

17. *If ye know*, &c. "The mere recognition of such a duty of humility, is a very much more easy matter than the putting it in practice." Alford. The hypothetical form of our Lord's words does not indicate any doubt on his part, as to their understanding the meaning of the act which he had just performed. The assumption that it is so, is made the ground of the assertion, that the doing of things of this sort which are known and recognized as duty, is that which secures blessedness. This is clearly shown in the original by the use of the indicative, which is employed in a conditional sentence, when the speaker has such a persuasion of the reality of the condition, that he has no doubt of it, although he does not express it as an actual fact. In the next clause, *if ye do them*, the subjunctive is used, which leaves it to experience to decide, whether the thing spoken of will happen or not. *If ye do*, i. e. in case ye do them. There is, however, no uncertainty in the happy result, which will follow this obedience to the command of Christ to practise humility and self-abasement in our intercourse with one another.

18. Our Lord's tender solicitude for Judas again finds utterance in the words of this verse. We must not forget that he was still present, and not yet beyond the power of being reclaimed by the warnings of his Master, had he listened to them, and thrown himself upon Jesus for forgiveness. *I speak not of you all*. Reference is had to the blessedness promised in the preceding verse to those, who render obedience to the duties which had been so clearly made known to them. Our Lord could not promise this blessed fruit of obedience to them all, for Judas was not

that the scripture may be fulfilled, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

s Ps. 41: 9; Mat. 26: 23; ver. 21.

of the number of his chosen ones, having in the prophetic language of Scripture, lifted up his heel against him. *I know*. Here again is that absolute knowledge, which distinguishes Jesus from every other religious teacher who had appeared among men. We are continually meeting in John's gospel with this *I know*, and that too of such subjects, as are beyond human knowledge and discernible only by the eye of omniscience. Who can doubt that this oft-repeated expression was recorded by the Evangelist, as collateral proof of his great assertion of Christ's divinity in 1: 1? *Whom I have chosen*. This cannot refer to the apostleship, for Judas was at this very time numbered among those who had been chosen to this office. Nor would a fact so notorious as the choosing of the Twelve, have been introduced by the solemn asseveration *I know*. In 6: 70, reference is had to the selection to the apostleship, the words *have not I chosen you twelve*, expressly including him in the number. But here not only do the words stand in a different connection, but an exception is expressly made in the preceding clause *I speak not of you all*, to their being all the objects of his choice to this state of blessedness which follows obedience. The subsequent context limits this exception to only one, who by his voluntary desertion of Jesus and defection to his enemies, had separated himself from those to whom pertained these promises of future blessedness. This was not unforeseen or unprovided for, inasmuch as it was in accordance with prophecy, and therefore a part of the divine counsel, which embraced not only the death of Jesus, but all the circumstances attending it, and the causes which led to it. The conjunction *but*, is not to be constructed with the clause immediately preceding—a construction which has led to the misinterpretation

19 'Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

20 " Verily, verily, I say unto

of the words *have chosen*, as referring to the mere choice to apostleship—but with the clause *I speak not of you all*, there being an implied ellipsis: *but* (thus it is with you) *that the scripture*, &c. The quotation is from Ps. 41 : 9, the reference being to Abithophel, who in this respect was the type of Judas. The words as here quoted are slightly altered from the original, *which did eat of my bread*, being *he that eateth bread with me*. There is no essential difference, both forms of expression referring to the most intimate friendship, denoted in Oriental phrase by eating at the same table. The idea of dependence is more particularly referred to in the Hebrew, because Abithophel sat at David's table and was fed by him, which could not be exactly said of the relation of Judas to Jesus, who was possessed of no worldly property, but subsisted with his followers mainly upon the bounty of his friends. But, as Olshausen remarks, "every day he received from the Redeemer the *bread of life*, and on this account was bound to be faithful to him, by a far stronger obligation than if he had only partaken of corporeal food." *Hath lifted up his heel against me*. 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 Abithophel of old, plot the ruin of one, to whom he should have felt himself bound by the strongest ties of gratitude and love. The conjunction *that*, with which the citation is introduced, does not denote purpose, but result. There was in the treacherous conduct of Judas, a fulfilment of what had been typified in Abithophel's treatment of David. The prediction, like that in Matt. 1 : 23, lies in the event referred to in Ps. 41 : 9,

you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

† Ch. 14 : 29; & 16 : 4.

u Mat. 10 : 40; & 25 : 40; Lu. 10 : 16.

and not simply in the words. See N. on Matt. 1 : 23.

19. Our Lord here adduces the reason, why he made this disclosure of the defection of one of their number. He would impress upon them the great truth, that from the very beginning he was fully cognizant of all the circumstances of his approaching apprehension and death. Additional proof would thus be furnished to his disciples, that he was the Son of God, with whom the future was as the present. *But now*; literally, *from this time*. He would have them remember the very time, in which he made this disclosure of the treachery of Judas. *Before it come*, i. e. before the perfidy of Judas has been consummated. *That I am he*. The most natural interpretation is that affixed to these words in 8 : 24. It would greatly strengthen the faith of the disciples in Jesus' Messiahship, soon to be so severely tested, to recur to the distinct terms in which he announced the circumstances of his betrayal and death. The common interpretation I regard, therefore, as the true one. Augustine's exposition is this, 'that I am he of whom this scripture speaks.' But, as Stier well remarks, this sense is too restricted.

20. See N. on Matt. 10 : 40, where these words were spoken on the occasion of the sending forth of the Twelve on their missionary tour. There is however a slight variation, the third person being used here in an indefinite sense, where the second person is employed in Matthew. The principal difficulty lies here in establishing the connection, especially with the preceding context. The majority of expositors regard the passage as intended to encourage the disciples, whose spirits may have been somewhat depressed at the sad announcement, that one of their number should betray Jesus. So Stier

21 ¶ "When Jesus had thus said,^u he was troubled in spirit,

≈ Mat. 26: 21; Ma. 14: 18; Lu. 22: 21.
y Ch. 12: 27.

paraphrases: "Be ye faithful ones of good courage, ye retain your honor as the messengers whom I shall soon send forth, the devil shall have no other among you." But, as Alford remarks, should we not have had the second person, as when the words were spoken for this purpose in Matt. 10: 40? Besides it is not clear, that the disciples at this time were seized with such great and sudden depression of spirit, as to call for words of special encouragement. Another mode of explanation, is to connect this verse with vs. 16, 17; vs. 18, 19 being parenthetical. But this establishes the position, but not the logical connection of the verse. I agree therefore substantially with Alford, that this saying so apparently abrupt and introduced with such emphasis (*verily, verily*), is designed to show the dignity of that office, from which Judas was about to fall. In being chosen to it, he had been admitted to a post of the highest honor. It was an office which rendered a service done to its incumbent, the same as though it had been done to Jesus Christ, and to Him that sent him. Hence it enhanced the guilt and condemnation of this wretched man, that he proved false to a Master who had chosen him to an office of such importance and dignity. This exposition establishes a close connection of thought, both with the preceding and following context. It gives emphasis to the awful defection of Judas, which had just before been predicted, and accounts for the anguish of spirit with which in the following verse, our Lord makes the explicit declaration, that one of their number should betray him.

21-25. JESUS POINTS OUT THE TRAITOR. JUDAS WITHDRAWS. *Jerusalem*. Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 21-25; Mark 14: 18-21; Luke 22: 21-23. In these parallel accounts of the treachery and withdrawal of Judas, the fullest

and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ^zone of you shall betray me.

≈ Ac. 1: 17; 1 Jo. 2: 19.

and most particular is that given by John. The whole of the incident described in vs. 23-26, is peculiar to this Evangelist. The same also is true of what is said about the sop given to Judas, and his immediate departure to consummate his deed of treachery (vs. 26-30). It is therefore a very valuable supplement to the account given by the other Evangelists, and should be read in connection with their record, in order that all the features of the transaction may be impressed upon the mind and thoroughly understood. Between vs. 26 and 27, Matt. 26: 25 should be interposed. The immediate result of the frank declaration of Jesus there made to the question of Judas, "Master, is it I?" is seen in the new and more virulent possession of his soul by Satan, recorded here by John.

21. *When Jesus had thus said*; literally, *having said these things*, the main emphasis being thrown by the participial construction upon the following verb *was troubled*, which, as has been remarked (Note on 12: 27), is a word expressive of the greatest mental disturbance and agitation. Something more, however, than the natural emotions of grief for violated friendship is here intended. Both here and in 12: 27, there seems to have swept across his troubled spirit, a dark foreshadowing of that awful and mysterious agony, which afterwards, in Gethsemane and on the cross, came upon him in such overwhelming power. The act of tender service which he had just performed upon his disciples, together with the thought that one whom he had chosen to the apostolic office, and admitted among the number of his most intimate friends, should be guilty of such base ingratitude as to betray him to his enemies, filled him with distress; and he seemed impelled to cast himself upon the sympathies of his disciples, by pointing out the traitor in whose heart

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

a Ch. 10:26; & 20:2; & 21:7, 20, 24.

was such black perfidy. We may suppose a brief interval of time between the preceding verse and this, the emotions of Jesus being too powerful to admit of utterance. This we infer from the verb *was troubled*, which as has been remarked, is expressive of the greatest mental excitement. The words *in spirit*, are added for the sake of emphasis, the idea being that he was troubled in the very depths of his soul—that his spirit was wrung with anguish. Here begins the illustration and proof of the great fact, that it was not bodily but mental agony, which constituted the principal sufferings of our Lord in his passion for a lost world. *And testified*, refers to an open declaration, in contrast with an indirect or covert allusion. *Verily, verily*. It is noticeable how frequently on this occasion, he uses this emphatic formula. There is a very exact agreement between this announcement in John, and in Matthew and Mark. Luke has it, “the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.” In like manner Mark adds, “one of you which eateth with me.” There is a substantial agreement between all the Evangelists, the slight verbal differences only serving to prove that they are independent of one another’s statement.

22. *Then the disciples looked, &c.* We learn from the other Evangelists, that they did this with the most lively emotions of sorrow, and earnest inquiries as to who of them could do so base an act. The searching glances which they cast upon one another, did not however reveal the traitor. Jesus, therefore, in order to show how perfect was his knowledge of the circumstances of his betrayal, and to relieve the minds of his disciples, wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement by what he had announced, points out beyond the possibility of mistake the traitor. *Doubting*; literally, *being at*

23 Now “there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

loss or in a state of perplexity. They had no means of determining who was the guilty person. Several minutes we may suppose to have been spent, in these efforts which they made to detect guilt in the countenance of some one of their number, and in their appeals to the Lord to establish for each his innocence. See Ns. on Matt. 26:22; Mark 14:19.

23. John now records an incident, which is omitted by the other Evangelists, although hinted at by Matthew (26:23). *Now there was leaning, &c.* John reclined next to Jesus at the tricladium (see N. on Matt. 23:6), and hence his position was such, that he could address his Master in tones so low, as to be heard by no one else at the table. *Whom Jesus loved.* Here for the first time John refers to himself, as one for whom Jesus had a peculiar affection. The expression occurs again in 19:26; 21:7, 20, which latter reference compared with 21:24, shows beyond all doubt, that the Evangelist himself is referred to by this designation.

24. Peter with characteristic forwardness and decision determines to ascertain, if possible, who the traitor is; and knowing that John shared greatly in the love and confidence of Jesus, and withal seeing how favorable was his position for addressing the inquiry to his Master, makes signs to him that he should ask who the traitor was. Peter does not suppose, as Alford intimates, that John was already possessed of this knowledge, but wishes him to learn from Jesus’ own lips the name of the betrayer. The intimacy between these two disciples (see 20:2; Acts 3:1), makes these signs which pass between them at the table quite natural. *Who it should be*, or better, *who it might* (possibly) *be*. There is a sort of incredulity in the question, as though after all, it could not be possible that

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?

any one of the number could do such an act.

25. *Lying*. This is a different word from that made use of in v. 23, rendered *leaning*. Its literal signification is, *falling* or *throwing one's self upon*. Compare Luke 15: 20. Most commentators think that it refers to a slight change of position, by which the head of John was brought nearer to that of his Master, so that the slightest whisper could be heard by the latter. Dr. Robinson explains it, "throwing himself back on Jesus' breast as he reclined at table." So Alford: "I understand it, that John, who was before lying close to the bosom of Jesus, now leaned his head absolutely upon his breast to ask the question." Webster and Wilkinson go so far as to suggest, that he may have embraced Jesus before proposing the question. *Lord, who is it?* That the rest of the company did not hear what passed between John and his Master, is evident from vs. 23, 29.

26. To this question of the beloved disciple, our Lord answers without reserve. It was the one to whom he should give the sop, who should betray him. This might be better and more literally translated, *the little morsel* or *bit*, referring doubtless to a small bit of bread broken from the loaf, and about to be dipped in the broth made of bitter herbs. See N. on Matt. 26: 23. The private intimation given to John, is not to be confounded with the answer of Jesus to the inquiry which they made in general, *Lord, is it I?* That was doubtless made before this response to John's private inquiry, which resulted probably from Peter's inability to understand to whom the words of Jesus, recorded in Matt. 26: 23, had special reference. *And when he had dipped*; literally, *and having dip-*

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*.

ped. The participial form both here and in the preceding clause, shows that the act of dipping the sop, was subordinate to the giving of it to Judas. It was that which especially pointed out the traitor. Here we may suppose the question of Judas (Matt. 26: 25) to have come in, which with conscious guilt he proposed, doubtless in a low voice, especially if, as some suppose, he reclined so near Jesus, as to hear his reply to John. Alford remarks, that this giving of the sop was one of the closest testimonials of friendly affection. If so, we see that our Lord, up to the very time of his going forth to consummate his black and perfidious deed, gave him the most friendly tokens of affection. This should have won him back to the path of rectitude which he had already left (Matt. 26: 14-16; Luke 21: 3-6), and to which it would soon be impossible to retrace his steps. Stier, who inclines to the belief that Judas partook of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, regards this as a second and more direct indication of the traitor, which did not take place till after the supper. The first indication he thinks appears in vs. 21, 22, and synchronizes with the report of the other Evangelists (see Matt. 26: 23; Mark 14: 20). But the more I study the harmony of the events here spoken of, the more I am persuaded that Judas withdrew before the Eucharist, and that no such first and second intimation, as Stier speaks of, were given to John at different times. The circumstances took place in the order in which they are here recorded, with no such interruption as would result from interposing the celebration of the Lord's supper between vs. 22 and 23.

27. *After the sop* (i. e. the giving of the sop to him as related in v. 26) *Satan*

27 ^b 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.

^b Lu. 22:3; ch. 6:70.

entered into him, i. e. now took full possession of him, and swayed him to the commission of the perfidious deed he had been contemplating. This entire possession of Judas by Satan, took place, as the passage here clearly indicates, immediately after he had received the sop, and had been pointed out (see Matt. 26:25) as the betrayer. Infuriated with rage at the detection of his treacherous design, and apprehensive of still further exposure should he remain in the company, he hesitates no longer in putting into execution his purpose. With the last words of Jesus ringing in his ears—an admonition to do quickly what he was about to do—he went forth in the dark hour of night to achieve the most stupendous crime ever committed on earth, making his name a synonym of every thing vile and infamous. *That thou doest* (i. e. art intending to do) *do quickly*. Trollope says that this is a proverbial phrase, expressive of submission to an act, mingled with contempt for the agent. The word rendered *quickly*, is of stronger import in the original, being a comparative adjective used adverbially, *quicker* (than was your intention) i. e. *as quickly as possible*. Our Lord in the exercise of his omniscience, knew that the miserable man had now yielded himself up fully to the devil, and made therefore no further attempt to reach his conscience and reclaim him. This is not to be regarded, therefore, as a command, serving in any sense to exculpate Judas from sin in the commission of the deed which he is here told to do quickly. It was not the direction of our Lord that the act should be performed, but that having been fully determined upon, it should be executed without delay. His hypocrisy in

29 For some of *them* thought, because ^c 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.

^c Ch. 12:6.

lingering in the company of the disciples, and pretending to innocence by joining in the general inquiry *Lord, is it I?* is here exposed and reproved. He goes forth fully aware that to Jesus, at least, his whole heart lies bare; and thus he performs his deed of treachery in the direct face of new evidence from the omniscience of our Lord, that he was the Son of God.

28. John had given no intimation to Peter of the reply of our Lord in answer to his question; and as both he and Judas reclined near to Jesus, their conversation with him was carried on in such low tones, that the disciples were not aware of what had passed between them. Hence *no man at the table* (i. e. not even John who knew the traitor, but had received no intimation that the deed was to be so quickly done) *knew for what intent* (i. e. in reference to what thing), *he spake this unto him*. Some would explain it *no man* (except John), his exclusion from the number who were ignorant of our Lord's meaning, being readily suggested to the reader by what is recorded in vs. 25, 26. So Stier remarks: "It must be assumed that no man knew or observed any thing, save John, who as the reporter of this ignorance excepts himself, as having known." But it is more natural to suppose that John did not understand the import of our Lord's direction to Judas, and was ignorant of the intent with which the traitor rose up and went out so suddenly. Such was his love and zeal for his Master, that he would hardly have permitted him to leave unmolested, had he known the purpose for which he went forth.

29. This verse stands connected with the preceding context, as furnishing, in part at least, the reason why they did not discern the import of the direction

30 He then, having received

the sop, went immediately out; and it was night.

given by Jesus to the traitor. They were under the impression, that it was in some way connected with the purchase of things necessary to the proper celebration of the feast, or to provide alms for the poor, and they gave it at that time no further thought. Hence the betrayal of the Lord in the garden, came upon them as suddenly and unexpectedly, as though they had received no warning whatever of the treachery of Judas. His continued absence on so solemn an occasion, may have been noticed, but as in so large a number of persons, some one or more must have frequently been absent in the transaction of items of business, and that too for some time, it doubtless did not cause much if any surprise. *The bag.* See. N. on 12: 6. *Had said*, i. e. had meant by what he said. *Buy those things that we have need of.* The words *those things*, need not have been italicized in our version, the literal translation being, *buy what we have need of.* This shows beyond question, that Jesus was now celebrating the feast of the Passover. If it was necessary to make further provision for the present feast, or bestow gifts upon the poor as a part of the offerings of the festival, there was a reason why Judas should do quickly what was intrusted to his charge. The feast would soon be over, and unless supplies were seasonably procured, they would be of no use. But not so, if the passover feast was to be celebrated on the evening of the following day. There would be no need of haste to make provisions for its celebration, or indeed that Judas should leave the company at this time. In regard to the lateness of the hour, which it might be supposed would have prevented their mistaking the purpose for which Judas went forth, Stier agrees with Tholuck, that "their suppositions were confused and distracted." There was left them no other solution of the words of Jesus and the hasty withdrawal of Judas from the company. Although the hour of the feast was somewhat advanced, yet

nothing was more natural than for them to connect the command of Jesus and the departure of Judas with something pertaining to its celebration. *Give something to the poor.* Alford thinks that this gift to the poor might be something to help them procure their paschal lamb. But this is based on the mistaken notion, that our Lord anticipated the proper time of celebrating the Passover. Besides, as has been remarked, there would hardly be any necessity of haste, if Judas was supposed to have gone forth to procure something for the celebration of a feast which was to take place nearly twenty-four hours afterwards.

30. The conviction that Jesus was fully acquainted with his treacherous designs, and his apprehension that he would be exposed to the other disciples, together with a new and more fierce assault of Satan upon his integrity, put an end to the vacillating purpose of Judas, and he immediately went forth on his mission of evil. There was probably the lapse of a few moments only, between the giving of the sop and our Lord's words in v. 27. Under the sudden impulse of rage, and perhaps of despair that he could ever regain his Lord's love and confidence, he went forth to consummate his dark design, yet with such an entire control over his external movements, that none of the disciples had any suspicion of the foul deed which he had gone forth to perpetrate. *It was night.* Olshausen remarks that these words arouse in the reader a reflection on the affinity between the deed of Judas and the time and hour. Tholuck remarks, however, that had the Evangelist designed this, he certainly would have used the word *darkness*, instead of *night*. Stier remarks upon this criticism, that the word *darkness*, was not needful, *night* here intimating the coincidence between external and internal darkness. "It was night in the soul of Judas, and by this fearful word the Evangelist dismisses him into the darkness without,

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, ^d Now is the Son

d Ch. 12:23.

with the yet deeper and more real night in his own spirit." Alford thinks that all which is intended here, is to bring all the events detailed in this chapter and onward to 18 : 3, into precision, as happening on one and the same night. At the same time he feels with Meyer, that there is something awful in this termination—*it was night*. In view of all these opinions, I have come to the conclusion that it is a part of the history of the transaction, and not to be regarded as a reflection on the part of John of the state of the traitor's mind, or that the night was symbolical of the night which was in his spirit. The pass-over feast could not be prolonged after midnight. It was therefore at some period previous to this time that the betrayer went forth ; and if the view is correct that he retired before the institution of the Eucharist and the discourse of our Lord which followed that rite, he must have gone forth at least some two hours or more before the middle of the night. This would also be a more seasonable time to communicate with the rulers and priests, and arrange the plan for apprehending Jesus, than would have been a later hour in the night.

31. The word rendered *therefore*, is omitted in some old MSS. and Versions, which has led some critics to connect the words *when he was gone*, or *when he went forth*, with the preceding clause, and *it was night*. But the abruptness, with which the following words *Jesus said*, would then begin, seems so harsh and unlike the easy and well-chosen connectives with which John unites the parts of his narrative, that I cannot doubt for a moment that the reading and punctuation, as it stands in our common version, is the correct one. It should be remembered, however, that the division of verses is not the work of the writers of the New Testament, but of a printer in the sixteenth century, and therefore entitled to little or no consideration in determining the construction or sense of any given passage. The

of man glorified, and ' God is glorified in him.

e Ch. 14:13; 1 Pe. 4:11.

illative *therefore*, introduces this exclamation of our Lord in regard to his approaching glorification, as the consequence of what has just been related, that Judas had gone forth to betray him to death. It did not daunt or disturb the composure of our Lord. It rather filled his soul with holy joy, that the great conflict in which he was to gain the victory over sin and death, was so near at hand. *When he was gone out*, and our Lord was relieved of his presence. His defection had given Jesus great pain. But he had left no means apparently untried, to reclaim him from his purpose. He had uttered the most solemn and awful warning of the doom of the one who should betray him (Luke 22 : 22). He had sought to melt his obdurate heart, by washing his feet in common with those of the disciples who remained faithful to him. His position at the table was near to him, if not the one next to him on the side opposite to that occupied by John. But all these efforts had failed to move him from his dark purpose ; and when he had closed his soul against every heavenly influence, and given himself up to be fully possessed by Satan, it could not but have been a great relief to Jesus, when he was rid of his presence. As soon as the door had closed on Judas, he seems to have broken forth in the words of triumph and joy which are here recorded. *Now is the Son of man*, &c. Here commences what Olshausen so beautifully and fitly terms, *the holy of holies*. His remarks on this portion are so fine, that I cannot forbear to quote them : " These were the last moments which the Lord spent in the midst of his own before his passion—and words full of heavenly meaning flowed during them from his holy lips :—all that his heart, glowing with love, had yet to say to his own, was compressed in this short space of time. At first the conversation with his disciples takes more the form of usual dialogue ; reclining at the table they mournfully reply to and question him. But when (14 : 31)

32 / If God be glorified in him,
God shall also glorify him in him-

f Ch. 17: 1, 4, 5, 6.

they had risen from the supper, the discourse of Christ took a higher form: surrounding their Master, the disciples listened to the Words of Life and seldom spoke (only 16: 17, 29). Finally in the sublime prayer of the great High Priest, the whole soul of Christ flowed forth in earnest intercession for his own to his Heavenly Father." *Now*. The work had actually commenced. Judas had gone forth, and the powers of evil were marshalled for the conflict. *Is the Son of man glorified*. The verb in the original is in the aorist or past time, the glorification being regarded as already completed. This is in accordance with the vivid style of prophecy, in which future events of certain fulfilment pass before the eye, as having already taken place. "The momentary force of the aorist expresses yet more forcibly than the perfect, the inevitable, and as it were instantaneous development of that which is yet future." Kühner. The glorification here spoken of, while it embraces in its highest and most enlarged sense, the glorification of Christ in heaven as King and Head over all things to the church (Eph. 1: 22), has specific reference to glorification by the death of the cross. It was this mainly by which his heavenly exaltation was effected, and the first step in the process implies the full completion of the glorious result. That Christ's sufferings and death are here referred to, is evident from the emphatic *now*, of this verse. The reference in 12: 24, to the decay of a corn of wheat in the process of germination, by which was illustrated the glorification of the Son of man spoken of in the preceding verse, shows that this was not the consummation and perfection of his heavenly glory, but the entering upon that state through his predestined sufferings and death for our race. *God is glorified in him*. This glorification of the Son of man, was not his apart from the glorification which should accrue to the Father in him. The glory of the one is that of the other. Yet we are to no-

self, and ^g shall straightway glorify him.

g Ch. 12: 23.

tice the fact, that God is not here said to be glorified *through*, but *in* the Son of man. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5: 19). He was glorified in the whole life of Jesus, and especially in his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2: 8). Christ came not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him (see 6: 38). Hence in his whole life, as the Son of man, he was continually revealing the power and glory of the Father (see 1: 18). But in reference to this passage, which thus incidentally covers the whole previous life of Jesus, we must not lose sight, that both the glorification of the Son of man, and that of God the Father in him, have special reference here to that which had now actually commenced in the going forth of Judas, namely, his sufferings and death on the cross. This was his crowning glory as the Son of man, and in this great propitiatory sacrifice which he made of himself for the sins of men, the Father also received the highest glory.

32. The sentiment of this verse is, that if God has thus been glorified in the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, He will not fail to give glory to the Son. That a new and more exalted state of glorification is here referred to, there can be no doubt. It is represented as directly conferred upon Jesus by God, and so conferred that the glory shall be his own, existing in himself, and not the reflection of that which belongs to another. Thus was it with Jesus, whose resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven followed his glorification by death on the cross, and constituted that high condition to which he was exalted at the right hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, all things being put under his feet, and it having been given him to be Head over all things to the

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; ^h and as I said unto the

church (Eph. 1 : 20, 22). This was his glorification in God ; as God in his life, sufferings, and death on earth, had been glorified in him. On earth he had been manifested as the Son of man acquainted with sorrows and grief. His divine nature had been hidden from the human eye. But now he was to be declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1 : 4). The simple sentiment then of this sublime passage is, that as God was glorified in Jesus Christ as the Son of man, especially in his obedience to the death of the cross ; so was Jesus to be glorified in God, by his resurrection from the dead, to a state of exaltation at His right hand. Both these states of our Lord's glorification were at hand. In a few hours he was to be nailed to the cross, and to experience the mysterious agony in full degree, which had previously bowed him to the dust in Gethsemane. Close upon that awful scene, were to follow his resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven. In view of the near approach of this final close of his earthly ministry and consequent exaltation at God's right hand, suggested by the withdrawal of the traitor Judas, our Lord could not repress his joyous emotions, but gave them utterance to the astonished ear of his disciples.

This twofold glorification of Jesus, as the Son of man on earth, in which condition of humiliation God also was glorified in him ; and as the Son of God in his state of exaltation in heaven, in which he is glorified in God, is clearly brought out in the tenses of the verbs here made use of. The verb *be glorified*, like that of which it is the repetition in v. 31, is the aorist, but not the aorist of anticipation, or the prophetic future (see Note on *is glorified*, in v. 21), but is to be taken in its usual aoristic or past signification. When God *shall glorify* the Son *in himself*, the glorification of God *in the*

Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you.

h Ch. 7 : 24 ; & 8 : 21.

Son is considered as past and finished. The earthly career of Jesus is ended. He has finished the work which was given him to do (17 : 4). He has bowed his head in death. The grave has received him. Now the second act in the drama of man's redemption begins, and Jesus, declared by his resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven, to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1 : 4), *shall* enter upon that state of ineffable glory and blessedness, which is here referred to in the words, *shall also glorify him in himself* (i. e. in God). *And shall straightway* (i. e. immediately) *glorify him*. This final glorification, although subsequent to that which was first to be experienced by our Lord in his sufferings and death, was yet close at hand. The form of expression in the original, is very peculiar and emphatic. We should naturally suppose it would be, *and he shall straightway do this*. But the repetition of the verb *glorify*, gives emphatic prominence not only to the idea represented by *straightway*, but to the act of glorification thus repeated in the verb. It is as though our Lord discerned such bliss in this state of glorification, that he loved to dwell upon the word by which it was expressed.

33. Having indulged in the joyous and triumphal rhapsody occasioned by the departure of Judas, our Lord now in the most tender and consoling language addresses his disciples. The phrase *little children*, occurs only here in the Gospels, although it is several times found in the first Epistle of John, and once in Gal. 4 : 19. It is a term of familiar endearment, but differing somewhat from *friends* (15 : 15), in that it suggests the idea of weakness, dependence, and comparative ignorance of the sublime mysteries which he was now unfolding. The epithet *friends*, conveys the idea of equality, confidential intercourse, and is given to these weak disciples in 15 : 15, in contrast with the idea of servitude and slavish

34 'A new commandment I

i Lo. 19:18; ch. 15:12, 17; Ep. 5:2; 1 Th. 4:9; Ja. 2:8; 1 Pe. 1:22; 1 Jo. 2:7, 8; & 3:11, 23; & 4:21.

dependence implied in the word *servants*. *Yet a little while*, &c. This declaration, which twice before in a different connection (7:34; 8:21) he had made to the unbelieving Jews, he repeats now to the disciples, in order to fully apprise them, that they were soon to be deprived of his presence and counsel. *Ye shall seek me*, i. e. you shall feel the want of me. To this expression in 7:34, is appended, "and shall not find me;" and in 8:21, "ye shall die in your sins." Neither of these clauses are here found, and the implication of this omission is that, though the Saviour's visible and bodily presence is so withdrawn, that they can no longer see him and lean upon him for support in times of trial; yet this separation will only be a temporary one, and their seeking him will result in the end in their finding him, and again rejoicing in his presence and love. *As I said unto the Jews*, &c. It was in one sense as impossible for the disciples to follow and find Jesus, as for the unbelieving Jews. He was about to enter heaven through the portal of suffering and death. To that place of bliss and glory, the Jews with their proud heart of unbelief could never come. Nor could his disciples, however much and earnestly they might desire it, be reunited to him in his heavenly abode, until their work on earth was ended. Their exclusion from his presence was not however permanent, as in the case of the Jews, but temporary (see 14:3). Hence during their separation from him, they are commanded to practise towards one another all the kind offices of brotherly love, and thus patiently to await the time when they shall all be reunited again in his presence above. This renders the connection with the following verse natural and apparent.

34. The connection with the preceding context has been hinted at. Christ was soon to leave his disciples. For a time they were to be deprived of his

give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

bodily presence. This would afflict them with grief. But they would nevertheless enjoy his spiritual presence; and nothing would give them greater assurance of this, than their love to one another as constituting the family of the redeemed on earth. *A new commandment*, &c. It was so called from being the first and principal one given under the Christian dispensation, and refers to a love unique, simple, self-renouncing, and ever fresh, like that which Jesus had manifested towards them. The preceptive form of the commandment in the Old Testament dispensation, was to love one's neighbor as one's self (Levit. 19:18). This was an obligation universal and general; but that which our Lord here enjoins is special and particular. However strange and incredible may appear this Christian grace of brotherly love, to such as have had no experience of its presence and power, yet to those whose hearts have been thus drawn out to one another, it is as much a matter of conscious knowledge as their own existence. Powerful as may be the restraints imposed on every outward expression of feeling, by the artificial rules and usages of social intercourse which from time to time may prevail in the community, there will not be wanting occasions, when the love here enjoined in this *new commandment* will so manifest itself, that the world will be constrained to say, as in the early days of Christianity, "see how these Christians love one another!" *As I have loved you*. This pattern and measure of their love, was what made it peculiar to the new dispensation. The clause *that ye also* (as I have loved you) *love one another*, is an emphatic repetition of the sentiment previously expressed, and hence Stier errs in giving to the second *that*, the sense of *in order that*. Such emphatic repetitions are quite common in the Evangelists, and especially in John's gospel.

It is thought by many that at this

35 ^k By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Je-

^k 1 Jo. 2:5; & 4:20.

particular point of time in the feast, the Eucharist was instituted and ordained. It will be noticed, and it is an omission that has excited great wonder and led to various conjectures as to the ground of it, that John has made no mention whatever of the establishment of the Lord's Supper. Our limits are too prescribed, and the consideration of other and more practical topics too pressing, to spend time upon a point, which after all that may be said, must be left very nearly where we found it. It is sufficient to remark, that John, who had the Synoptic Gospels before him, perceiving that they all contained the account of the institution of the Eucharist, and that too with sufficient particularity and clearness, passed it over in silence, and records at length the warnings, exhortations, instructions, and consolations, with which the institution and celebration of this rite was accompanied. In almost every verse of this great sacramental discourse of our Lord, and the prayer with which it was closed, there is to be found evidence more or less direct, of the establishment of just such an institution as we find recorded in the other Evangelists, and which we denominate *the Lord's Supper*. Indeed from no other standpoint than that feast of love, can we arrive at the full meaning of portions of this farewell discourse of Jesus. In short, there is abundant internal evidence that our Lord pronounced this discourse at the Eucharistic table, and that the Evangelist, while he has himself omitted to record the establishment of this sacrament, fully recognizes the great fact as recorded by the other Evangelists.

35. The observance of this new commandment, would not only serve to secure and perpetuate the Saviour's spiritual presence with his disciples, but

sus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but ^l thou shalt follow me afterwards.

^l Ch. 21:18; 2 Pe. 1:14.

evince to the world around, that they were his disciples, as really and truly so after his death, as when he was on earth with them. As a historical fact, there has been no feature of Christianity exemplified in the life and conduct of believers, so potent in meeting and overcoming opposition to its great doctrines and precepts, as the love which the disciples of Jesus in all times and countries have borne to one another. There has been something so heavenly, so pure, so unlike all the selfish, insincere, and heartless professions of love which characterize to a great degree all worldly intercourse, that men have been allured to examine the principles of that religion, which works out such astonishing results in cementing the hearts of believers in brotherly love. It is found by them on examination, that as Christ himself was an example of every thing lovely and unselfish, so his followers possess the same spirit of disinterested love and self-renouncement which he exhibited, and are therefore what they profess to be, his obedient and loving disciples. Thus the gospel secures its achievements and triumphs, Christ is honored, the church enjoys his spiritual presence, and men are brought to embrace a religion, the foundation commandment of which is the brotherly love here enjoined by our Lord upon all his followers.

36-38. JESUS FORETELLS THE FALL OF PETER AND THE DISPERSION OF THE TWELVE. *Jerusalem*. Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week.

36. Peter with his characteristic forwardness and curiosity, now inquires whither it is that Jesus is going. The question however implies more than is expressed in words. It conveys an intimation that Peter and his fellow disciples would not forsake him, but if needs be, would die in his behalf, or at

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will ^m lay down my life for thy sake.

m Mt. 26: 33, 34, 35; Ma. 14: 29, 30, 31; Lu. 22: 33, 34.

least would lay down their lives with him, so that death itself should not separate them from one whom they so much loved. That it savored of forwardness and self-presumption is evident from the next verse, where Peter presses the inquiry, wherefore they cannot accompany him now, adding the boastful pledge that he at least will lay down his life for his Master's sake. Alas! that in the truthful history of this eventful crisis of human redemption, we should be obliged to follow this noble-spirited but presumptuous follower of Jesus to a defection, which, but for the sovereign grace of God, would have consigned him to the fellowship of Judas, rather than to that of James, and John, and the other disciples who remained true to Jesus. *Thou canst not follow me now*, i. e. 'thou must remain still longer on earth. There is yet a service for you to perform, which will prevent your accompanying me now to the place whither I go.' A recurrence to v. 33, will show that our Lord's reply is a repetition of what is there expressed. The *now* in that verse, which was in part concealed by its adverbial relation to *say*, is here repeated by a *now* of stronger import in the original, and in a position more emphatic. Upon this word then lies the stress of the reply, and strongly contrasted with it, is *afterwards*, in the next clause. Expositors are agreed that the following words, *thou shalt follow me afterwards*, are an intimation, that Peter in due time shall follow his Master by a similar death of martyrdom. There is no doubt that Peter thus understood his Lord's words, and that in the ardor and impetuosity of his love, he inquires why he cannot thus follow him at the present time. No one can doubt the sincerity of his heart in proposing this inquiry. He

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.

felt willing to suffer obloquy, shame, and death, for one whom he so much loved. But he mistook his strength of purpose. He knew not the full meaning of the great declaration, *thou shalt follow me afterwards*. He overlooked the necessity of preparation by a life of labor and self-denial, for this future experience of death in behalf of Jesus, and thought only of that physical courage, which he felt conscious that he possessed in a degree sufficient to justify his assertion, that he was ready to lay down his life for his Master's sake. It is evident from this passage in its connection, and also from Luke 22: 33, that Peter thought our Lord's death was referred to in what had just been said.

37. This verse in its connection has been explained in the preceding comment. *Why* or *for what reason*. Peter is apprehensive that his physical courage, as well as his devotion to his Master, is doubted. His whole thought concentrates upon the words *thou canst not* (i. e. *art not able*), which were so repugnant to his natural intrepidity and impetuosity. He pauses not to make more particular inquiry as to the meaning of Jesus, but in boastful and extravagant terms, although with the utmost sincerity, professes his readiness to die for him. Stier finds a resemblance in Peter's *why cannot I follow thee?* with the *we are able*, of the sons of Zebedee, in Matt. 20: 22. There was doubtless much presumption and self-confidence, at this time, in all his disciples. See Matt. 26: 35; Mark 14: 31.

38. *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?* The construction of the original is more emphatic, *thy life for me wilt thou lay down?* This places in strong contrast his boasted readiness to lay down his life, and his awful defection in regard to so small a matter, as

the public acknowledgment that he knew Jesus (see Luke 22:34). The assertion of our Lord is, that so far from being willing to die for him, he would deny all knowledge of him, and that too in thrice repeated and most emphatic language. Stier gives this turn to the question: 'Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Hast thou reached that point? Simon, Simon (Luke 22:31), bethink thyself who thou art and how it stands with you all—Satan hath desired to have you.' Webster and Wilkinson find a gentle irony in this question of our Lord, but the occasion was too solemn to admit of this in the least degree. The inquiry was simply designed to bring out in strong rhetorical contrast Peter's boastful words, and the predicted fact, that he would that very night be guilty of a persistent denial of his Master. *The cock shall not crow*, &c. See Ns. on Matt. 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34. This reference to the cock-crowing, connects the whole discourse with the time of night referred to in v. 30.

CHAPTERS XIV.—XVI.

These chapters contain what may be termed the farewell discourse of Jesus to his disciples, and in the best Harmonies of the Gospels, are placed directly after the institution of the Lord's supper. Whether the Eucharist took place immediately after the announcement of Peter's denial of his Lord, or immediately preceding that incident, is of little comparative importance, and probably will never be definitely settled by harmonists. But one thing is very clear, and that is, that the discourse which here follows, was pronounced at the table, and in view of the affecting scene which had just been enacted in the establishment of this Christian ordinance. In some respects it has peculiar characteristics, much like John's Epistles, especially the first one, being full of love and tenderness, while at the same time it has a spirituality and power, which evinces that the words are His "who spake as never man spake." It possesses all the traits of a free and unrestrained conversa-

tional discourse, and hence is less severely logical than one more public and formal. Indeed some of its grandest truths and revelations, such as the promise of the Spirit, his glorification and union with the Father, are inter-fused and blended together, in a manner quite desultory, and yet perfectly in keeping with the familiar and colloquial style, in which he was addressing for the last time his beloved disciples.

Notwithstanding this somewhat discursive freedom in the arrangement of the topics of this discourse, yet there are distinct and well-defined divisions, or, as Stier designates them, *corresponding masses of thought*, which will assist us much in the exposition of its subordinate parts. The *first* of these great heads or divisions, is an exhortation to unwavering faith in God and his Son Jesus Christ; the *second* relates to the mutual love which should subsist between his disciples, as springing from love to him with whom they are in vital connection, as the branch is united to the vine; the *third* is a definite revelation of that which shall result from his departure. These great truths are blended and interwoven together in the true style of familiar conversation; and interspersed with them are other revelations, predictions, and promises, one of the most important of which is the promise of the Comforter (14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:7), who is to teach them, give peace to them, vindicate the character of Jesus, convince the world of sin, and render efficacious the means of salvation provided in and through the death of Christ. Other great truths of this farewell discourse will be more particularly reverted to, as they come up in the way of exposition. It hardly need be said that great difficulty attends the explanation of many passages, and it would not be strange, if the reader should find in my comments that from which, in the exercise of his own judgment, he may dissent.

CHAPTER XIV.

1-31. JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES. THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED. *Jerusalem*. Evening introducing the sixth

CHAPTER XIV.

LET ^anot your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

day of the Week. Bloomfield divides this chapter into three heads, vs. 1-4, consolation for impending affliction; vs. 5-15, exhortation to faith in Christ; vs. 16-31, a promise of the Holy Spirit. Indeed love, faith, and the promised Spirit, are topics which underlie and pervade the whole discourse. This will appear more clearly in the exposition of its parts, upon which we shall now enter.

1. *Let not your heart, &c.* The beauty and tenderness with which our Lord commences his farewell discourse, must be apparent to every reader, who enters at all into the circumstances of the occasion which gave rise to it. He had spoken of his separation from his disciples, and the great sufferings he was to undergo, before he could enter upon that high state of exaltation which was his as the promised Messiah. He had declared in the most explicit and affecting terms, that one of the Twelve whom he had chosen to the apostleship, was to betray him to his enemies. The disciples, although ignorant that on that very night he was to be apprehended and tried before the Sanhedrim, and afterwards dragged before the tribunal of the Roman governor to be condemned to the cross, had sad forebodings that they were soon to be deprived of his presence and instruction. This feeling of sadness was deepened by the terms in which the Lord's supper had just been instituted: *this is my body* (Matthew, Mark, Luke); *this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many* (Matthew, Mark); *this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you* (Luke). Their downcast looks indicated their sorrow of heart. The hopes which had been inspired by his triumphal entry into the city, that his Messiahship would be acknowledged by the nation, and that the days of his humble, unpretentious life were now to be followed by the pomp and splendor which prophecy had at-

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not

^a Ver. 27; ch. 16:3, 22.

tached to the Messianic reign, were all crushed and dissipated. Darkness rested upon the future. They had not whither to look for hope or comfort. Our Lord, after a suitable pause, as we may suppose, addresses them in this tender, soothing, cheering language: *'Let not your heart be troubled. Be not sad or disturbed in your heart. Ye believe in God. You have unshaken confidence in the existence of God, and that all things are subject to his providence and control. Believe also in me.'* He thus reminds them of the essential unity between him and the Father, which renders the belief in one, a reason why a like confidence should be entertained towards the other. Special reference is had here to belief in his Messiahship, which was now to be so severely tested by the depth of humiliation and suffering, to which in accordance with the economy of redemption, he was about to descend. Consistency required them to place the same confidence in him which they did in God, since he had given them the most indubitable evidence, that he had been sent of God, and indeed that he was God's Son. In the original, the verbs are in the same mood, but the form is such that they may be translated as imperatives or indicatives. Some translate them both as imperatives, *believe in God, believe also in me*. Such is the view of Stier, Tholuck, Alford, and some others. This deprives the passage of its force and pertinency, for they had given no evidence of having lost their confidence in God. But their saddened countenances indicated such dejection of spirit, as would naturally result from a weakened faith in him as their Messiah; and hence in the very commencement of his discourse, he cautions them to maintain their confidence in him firm to the end. They believed in God. They were also to believe in him. They were as soon to

so, I would have told you. ^bI go to prepare a place for you.

doubt the power, goodness, and veracity of Jehovah himself, as that of his Son whom he had sent into the world for the redemption of man. This is evidently the true exposition. That the employment of the same verbal form in two different moods in the same sentence, is somewhat unusual we will not deny; but as Webster and Wilkinson remark, this is not of much weight, if we are satisfied, that the construction and context are greatly in favor of the indicative in the first, and the imperative in the second member. The design in employing the very same verb and in precisely the same modal form in both clauses, seems to have been to give emphasis to the idea of the essential unity of Jesus Christ with God, so that faith in him was only the more full and perfect development of faith in God, or in other words, that faith in the one implied faith also in the other.

2. Having thus prefaced his discourse by exhorting them to put their trust in him as in God, he goes on to show the necessity of his temporary separation from them, in order to make preparation for their reception to bliss when called to follow him. *In my Father's house.* The word *Father*, is henceforth employed throughout the whole discourse, for *God* in the first verse. *House* is here put for *heaven*. See Ps. 33 : 13, 14; Isa. 63 : 15. The word rendered *mansions*, literally signifies, *dwelling-places, abodes*. The word *many*, does not refer to or imply sameness of degree, in regard to the happiness or dignity of the blessed, but simply, that there is room for all Christ's followers in the presence of his Father. In beautiful harmony with this sentiment, we may refer to Luke 14 : 22 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 1-3 ; 2 Pet. 1 : 11. But the question may arise why he employs the word *many*, which so far transcends the number of dwelling-places requisite for the disciples who were then gathered around him. The question implies a gross conception of the whole subject. No reference whatever is made in the

3 And if I go and prepare a

7 Ch. 13 : 33, 36.

passage to material abodes or to dwellings, one of which was to be assigned to each disciple. The simple idea couched under this figurative language, is that there will be abundance of room in heaven for all the redeemed, so that none need fear that the provisions of grace will not prove adequate, even though the whole human family accepted the offers of salvation, and were to be received into heaven. Olshausen refers this declaration *in my Father's house*, &c., only to the transition state of believers, as "at the resurrection, all souls will return to the glorified earth, and heaven itself will dwell upon it." But a return from those heavenly mansions in the house of the Father to this world, would be a descent both in dignity and bliss, which we do not believe will ever befall those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and concerning whom he says, "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." The notion that the mansions here spoken of are the planets and fixed stars, where the souls of the pious are to be distributed, which Olshausen refers to as broached in a modern theory of the universe, is too fanciful and unsupported by Scripture to need a labored refutation. The language of Revelation is very simple and perspicuous on this point. The saints are to dwell with God in heaven, where Christ also is to be, with whom they will enjoy the most ineffable bliss, and from whom they will never be separated. That there will be the most enlarged freedom of movement and power to visit and explore the various parts of Jehovah's dominions, there can be no doubt. But heaven will be the home to which the saints will ever return, to gain fresh strength and joy in the presence of Him whom they will never cease to adore as their God and Saviour.

If it were not so ; literally, if not, i. e. otherwise, had it not been so, I would

place for you, 'I will come again, and receive you unto myself;

c V. 18, 23; Ac. 1:11.

have told you. He would not have excited their hopes, had there been no ground of assurance, that they would be admitted by the Father to share in the glory and blessedness which awaited his return to heaven. The language is that of the most tender assurance, and is just such as would naturally be addressed to a group of persons, who, in regard to the spiritual comprehension of the great truths and facts set before them, were yet as little children (see 13:33). *I go to prepare a place for you.* The simple idea is that Christ by his death was to make such an expiation for sin, that believers would have access to the glory and blessedness of heaven, from which otherwise they must have been forever excluded. He therefore kindly pleads the necessity of making provision for their future welfare, as the reason why he must for a short time leave them. We must guard against so materializing this great utterance, as to refer it to actual dwelling-places like our earthly homes. See 2 Cor. 5:1-4. But while we should exclude from our conceptions of heaven every thing gross or material, yet we are warranted from this, and from other passages of God's word, as well as from the nature of the case, in connecting with it the notion of place in some part of Jehovah's dominions. Where that place is, it were presumptuous and useless to inquire. It is sufficient for us to know, that it is where God reveals his presence, where Jesus our great Forerunner has gone, and where all believers shall be gathered in due time to enjoy his presence and love.

3. The sentiment of this verse is, that if Jesus left his disciples for the purpose here made known, it would follow as an obvious inference, that he would return to conduct them to the seats of bliss thus provided for their reception. The words, *if I go and prepare*, are rendered by some, *when I shall have gone and prepared*; but the original will not

that ^d where I am, *there* ye may be also.

d Ch. 12:26; & 17:24; 1 Th. 4:17.

admit this, nor would the meaning be so lively and expressive. There is no real contingency in the clause *if I go*, but only one assumed, for the sake of uniting with it in closer emphasis the consequence, *I will come again*. So Stier well remarks, that the *if* indicates a convincing inference: "*only for that purpose have I gone before, that I might return and take you to myself.*" *I will come*; literally, *I come*, reference being had to a future event, but not directly, the idea being that of an act unalterably fixed and determined. *I come* in accordance with the great purposes of grace in the economy of redemption. In regard to this coming of Christ to take the believer to himself, commentators have been divided, as to whether it refers to the day of judgment, or to the day of each man's death. The ancient expositors and some of the modern ones, adopt the former of these views; the majority of modern expositors, the latter. It cannot be denied that Christ at the day of judgment will come to gather his elect into the kingdom prepared for them by his Father, in such a grand and sublime sense, that it cannot be applied, except in a subordinate way, to any other coming of his referred to in the New Testament. I cannot doubt that the coming here spoken of, is to be referred primarily to his great and final coming at the last day. In a subordinate sense, however, he comes to every believer at the hour of death (see N. on Matt. 24:44), and this coming is also included in the expression taken in its most enlarged meaning. "Collectively, the promise refers to the day of judgment (1 Thess. 4:16, 17); individually, to the day of death (2 Cor. 5:6-9; 1 Thess. 5:10; Ps. 49:15; 73:24)." Webster and Wilkinson. Olshausen remarks, that a comparison of 14:18, 23; 16:7, is sufficient to produce the conviction, that here we are to understand by *come*, the spiritual coming of Christ in the communication of his Spirit. But this

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord,

destroys the correspondence between the clauses, which evidently requires a personal return of Christ, if his previous departure was a personal one, as it really was. Alford takes it in a more general and enlarged sense of all our Lord's manifestations: "the coming again of the Lord is not one single act,—as his resurrection, or the descent of the Spirit, or his second personal advent, or the final coming to judgment; but the *great complex* of all these, the result of which shall be his taking his people to himself to be where he is. The *coming is begun* (v. 18) in his Resurrection—*carried on* (v. 23) in the *spiritual life* (see also 16 : 22 and following), the making *them* ready for the place prepared; *further advanced*, when each by death is fetched away to be with Him (Phil. 1 : 23); *fully completed* at his coming in glory, when they shall forever be with him (1 Thess. 4 : 17) in the perfected resurrection state." So also Stier refers this coming "to the whole of Christ's influence, drawing, setting free (12 : 32; 8 : 35, 36), beginning with the resurrection and ending in his final manifestation; his entire work of bringing home and preparing us for our place after the place is first prepared." But this is too diffuse and general to suit the wants of the passage, one distinct coming being evidently referred to, which as far as relates to each individual, is at the hour of his death, but in a collective sense, unquestionably referring to the coming of Christ at the day of judgment. *Receive you to myself*. These words are expressive of the most tender affection. The verb literally signifies to *take to oneself*, as a wife, an adopted son, a partner, helper, ally. This meaning of the verb is rendered still more emphatic, by the words *unto myself*, imparting the idea of the closest and most inseparable union. *That* (so that) *where I am*, &c. His love will not permit them to be long separated from him. He will return and conduct them

we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

to the place of his glorified presence, and thenceforth where he is there shall they be. The collocation of the original is very emphatic, *that where am I, also you may be*. It was not without significance that the pronouns *I* and *you*, were thus placed in juxtaposition. Shades of thought and degrees of emphasis are expressed in the Greek, which cannot be transferred into our language, without a cumbrous circumlocution.

4. *Whither I go ye know*. This is considered by expositors, not so much an assertion, as an assumption for the purpose of recalling to their mind his previous instruction, and exciting them to further inquiry. So Webster and Wilkinson. *You know*, i. e. you cannot help knowing, if you only call to mind what I have said on former occasions. The word rendered *whither*, is literally, *where*, the idea of the place of rest after the verb of motion *I go*, being rendered predominant. Our Lord was soon to enter into his rest. The seat was prepared for him at God's right hand, where he was to sit enthroned as King in Zion. See Mark 16 : 19; Heb. 1 : 3; 8 : 1; 10 : 12; 12 : 2; 1 Pet. 3 : 22. The prepositional construction of the original gives prominence to this state of rest, as something upon which the mind of Jesus delighted to dwell. *The way ye know*. Our Lord had several times predicted in the plainest language, that he was to be delivered up to his enemies and be crucified (see Matt. 16 : 21; 17 : 22, 23; 20 : 18, 19; Mark 8 : 31; 9 : 31; 10 : 33, 34; Luke 9 : 22-44; 18 : 31-33). The way therefore of his departure from life was not unknown to his disciples. But that their Master should suffer a violent death, was so repugnant to their preconceived ideas of his Messiahship, and so subversive of all their hopes of his public acknowledgment by the nation, that they rejected it as an unwelcome truth which they trusted would never be realized.

5. The connection of the words of Thomas with the preceding context is

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am
‘the way, ’ the truth, and ’ the

^e He. 9 : 8.
^f Ch. 1 : 17; & 8 : 32.

this. In v. 3, our Lord promises to return for his disciples, who were for a season to be left behind him on earth. In v. 4, he reminds them that they must well know whither he is about to go, and the way of his departure from this life. This would seem to imply that he expected his disciples to follow him, when the proper time came, without any other guide or direction, than what he was here giving. Thomas, therefore, either self-prompted or at the instance of some of his fellow-disciples, interposes a difficulty in the way of following him, from their ignorance of the place whither he was about to go. We cannot account for such dulness of apprehension, even on the part of Thomas, who was of so slow and doubtful a temperament, except from so strong an inclination to the prevalent ideas of a victorious, reigning Messiah, that he and all the rest were blind to any thing which seemed to contravene this notion. Such an interruption as this of Thomas, would have been so characteristic of Peter, that some expositors account for his silence by supposing him temporarily absent. But not to say that Peter had already penetrated in part at least our Lord's going away (13 : 37), the awful prediction of his fall yet ringing in his ears, is sufficient to account for his silence during this whole discourse of Jesus.

6. Our Lord replies first to the words of Thomas, *how can we know the way?* Then in the words *no man cometh unto the Father but by me*, he plainly intimates that he was about to return to the Father, and that access to heaven was to be attained only in and through him. *I am the way.* This is spiritually spoken of that union of the believer with Christ, which opens a way of approach to God, so that as Christ himself returns to the Father, the believer may follow in his footsteps and attain to the same place of glory and bliss. It will be seen by closely inspecting the

life: ^k no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

^g Ch. 1 : 4; & 11 : 25.
^h Ch. 10 : 9.

form of the question, that our Lord's reply includes the way he himself has trod. *How can we know the way* (thou goest)? The answer is, *I am the way*, which I and all my followers must pursue in order to reach the abode of my Father. So in 10 : 1, 2, 7, Christ declares himself to be the Door, and also the true Shepherd who enters in by the door. There is no difficulty in the right understanding of this seeming confusion or blending of ideas. Christ opens for all his followers a way to heaven, by the atoning efficacy of his blood. He is therefore figuratively declared to be *the way*, because he is thus the author of salvation to them that believe in him. But as God-man, having a perfect human as well as divine nature, he has himself led the way to God; not that he needed to make any atonement for himself or open for himself this way (Heb. 7 : 26, 27), but in opening it for his people he condescended to walk therein, and thus approve himself not only the Redeemer of his people, but their Guide and Forerunner in the way to heaven. While Jesus then declares himself to be the way, he also bids his people follow in his footsteps, and thus reach the same blissful abode, whither he has preceded them, in order by his death to remove all obstacles in the way of their approach to heaven (see Heb. 10 : 19, 20). *And the truth*, &c. There is some difference of opinion among expositors, whether these are to be regarded as independent clauses, or as simple explanations of the first clause. The latter view I cannot accept. The words are of too weighty import, and have too important a position in the original, to be made subordinate in any respect to the first clause. Indeed so far from this, the construction of the sentence is evidently climactic, *the truth* and *the life* being an advance of the idea contained in *the way*. Alford says that *the truth*, “is only another side of the same idea of *the way* :

God being true, and only approached by and in truth, *Christ is the truth* (Col. 2 : 3), in whom only that knowledge of Him is gained, which (17 : 3) is eternal life." Stier gives this turn of thought to the passage: '*the way*, because he is *the truth and the life*.' Yet this expositor cautions against losing sight of the decisive *I am*, which belongs to all three, and which indicates that he is the fountain of truth and eternal life. It appears to me that the three assertions are independent, progressive, and yet intimately connected in thought. As *the way*, Christ refers to himself in the comparatively subordinate office of introducing the lost and wandering soul to the favor, enjoyment, and presence of God. But no one was to mistake him as only a mediate source of good, or as simply making heaven accessible to the penitent and believing soul. He was also *the truth*. Not simply a light to irradiate the way to God, otherwise so dark and devious. He was the very essence and fountain of all truth. Here his divine nature asserts its prerogative. He cannot prove a false and deceitful way leading to death, for He is *truth* itself; and still more than that, He is *the life*. Whoever enters upon this *way* to God, at once receives into his soul the element of spiritual life, and can never die. Hence this *way* is the true way, and leads to life and peace in heaven. This exposition closely connects the three expressions, but not in such a way as to make the last two merely explanatory of the first. They bring out the divine attributes of *truth* and *life* inherent in Jesus as God's Eternal Son, and therefore rendering it impossible that *the way* to God, which He declares himself to be, should prove other than the right way. It is worthy of notice, that in this hour of gloom and depression, the disciples are cheered by these sublime declarations, which Jesus could only make of himself as the supreme and eternal God. No language could be better suited to dispel all fear and apprehension, and restore to their troubled souls a calm trust in the protecting power of God. *No man cometh*, &c. This explains what is

meant by the figurative declaration, *I am the way*. It was by him that a way of access to the Father was to be attained. There was no other mode of reconciliation between sinful man and his offended God, than that which had been effected by the expiatory offering of himself in man's stead (see Acts 4 : 12). It will be seen, therefore, that in declaring himself to be the way, our Lord also discloses the place to which he was going, and hence this may be regarded as a full and explicit reply to the question of Thomas. Inasmuch as his inquiry referred only to the place to which Jesus was going, and the way thither, no mention is made in this clause of *the truth and the life*, which Jesus had just declared himself to be. These ideas are expanded in vs. 7, 10, 11. *Cometh*. The present of an universal and absolute truth. *By me* as the only way. A question here arises, whether it is essential to the salvation of every man, that Christ shall be known, as he is revealed to us who have the gospel of salvation for our guidance. We would say unhesitatingly *no*. A heathen man, who shall improve the light of nature given to him for his guidance, and in his darkness feel after God if haply he may find Him, may be saved by the benefits of Christ's death, even though he has never heard of his name. The way to the Father, if trodden by him through the abundant mercy of God, which even from pagan lands may gather trophies of its richness and power, is however this very way which Jesus declares himself to be, and which he has opened by his blood shed for all in every age and nation, who turn from the vanities and sins of this world to the worship and service of God. It is another question, however, whether any of the heathen do thus improve the light of nature, and seek after the worship and service of the true God. Without denying that such may be the fact, yet the melancholy truth cannot be doubted that the great mass of the heathen die in their sins, not only ignorant of the true God, but estranged from every pure and heavenly sentiment, which they might have obtained

7 'If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father

i Ch. 8: 19.

from His works and providence, had they sought earnestly His guidance and favor.

7. Here is evolved and illustrated the great declaration, I am *the truth and the life*. These, as we have remarked, are the attributes of Deity. No created being, without the rankest blasphemy, can lay claim to the incommunicable attributes of eternal truth and life. But our Lord not only claims these attributes in the plainest terms, but he makes the additional assertion, that his unity with the Father is so complete and essential, that whoever knows him knows the Father also. The assertion *if ye had known me, &c.*, is not hypothetical in regard to the essential unity existing between the Father and Son, but only in regard to their knowledge of the Son referred to in the first clause. The simple idea is, that if they had known the Son in the high sense here intended, it would have followed as an inevitable consequence, that they would have known the Father also, on account of the essential unity existing between the two. This appears the more clear, when it is remembered that the connection in which this declaration of Jesus stands, refers beyond all doubt the knowledge here spoken of to Christ's attributes of divinity, which he had so often put forth, and which were of such a nature that none could mistake them, unless their eyes were blinded to the truth. A knowledge or discernment of these, implied a like knowledge of the attributes of the Father, for they were one and the same. *From henceforth, &c.* Some expositors, as Stier and Alford, refer this to the time commencing with Christ's glorification, and paralleled by the *now*, of 13: 31. But this hardly meets the wants of the verb *have seen*, which refers to time present by means of the definite perfect, rather than to the future. Chrysostom feeling this difficulty, and yet desirous of retaining the general signification of the future, thus para-

also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

phrases it: "Soon will ye know him, and ye have already *seen* him, (to wit: without knowing him)." Calvin, whom Tholuck here follows, gives *from henceforth*, the sense of *even now*; "God would now be revealed to them, if they would but open their eyes." In this sense, the words are supposed to convey a reproof. But if the present is the sense, I like better the exposition of Webster and Wilkinson; 'now that I have clearly made the revelation, *from this time ye know,*' &c. Such also is the view of Prof. Kendrick: "from this time, after the declaration which I have now made to you, ye may consider that ye know him," &c. Winer also contends against the proleptical use of the present here, and translates: *from this time ye know him and ye have seen him*. It seems to me that the general usage of tenses in a pregnant sense, which characterizes this last discourse of Jesus, would justify us in so modifying the idea of time, as to make the ignorance denoted in the clause *if ye had known me*, and the knowledge spoken of as that which they would henceforth have, not *absolute*. but *comparative*. The knowledge which the present discourse would enable them to gain of his true character, was a great advance on that which they had previously possessed. Hitherto in their strong desire that their hopes of a temporal Messiah might be realized, they had looked rather on those external manifestations of his power, which they hoped would be followed, on his part, by a public avowal, and on that of the nation, by an acknowledgment of his Messiahship. On the other hand, they had overlooked the abundant proofs of his divinity furnished by his life, doctrine, and miracles, which had it been discerned and acknowledged would have rectified at once their low and temporal views of the kingdom which he had come to establish. Now as their dreams of temporal power and aggrandizement were dispelled, they would

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me,

look upon him in his true nature and dignity, as God's Son, whose kingdom was to be established in the hearts of men. That a present knowledge of his claim to be one with the Father is referred to, seems to be placed beyond a doubt, by the reproof given to Philip in v. 9. This, Olshausen justly remarks, our Lord would not have done, if the knowledge of him could only be attained through the future outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

8. Philip seems to have taken our Lord's language in a literal sense, and requests that he would make this manifestation of the Father to them. Whether he expressed the sentiments of others at the table, as well as his own, we have no means of knowing. Such was their position at the table, that the group immediately around him might by previous concert have made him their mouth-piece, without any disarrangement of their places or any disturbance whatever. *Show us the Father.* While Philip erred in regarding Jesus as a being wholly separate from the Father, yet this request shows his confidence in the superhuman power of his Master, to bring before their eyes a vision of the Father. As the ancient prophets had been favored with a vision of Deity, Philip may have desired to see a similar manifestation. *It sufficeth us.* 'We shall be satisfied. Our happiness will be complete.' I cannot think that the satisfaction of a vain and morbid curiosity is here referred to, but a fulness of all their wishes and aspirations.

9. In the most tender manner, our Lord disabuses Philip of his mistake in supposing that any other manifestation of God was referred to, than that which had so long been presented to their eye by his own personal presence. There is a tone of gentle reproof at the blindness of this disciple, in not perceiving

Philip? *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

℣ Ch. 12:45; Col. 1:15; He. 1:3.

the tokens of his oneness with the Father, better seen in the original than in our common version: '*so long a time with you am I, and you have not known me, Philip?*' Could I have expected that you would thus long be insensible to my true character? Have all my miracles, teachings, and declarations, failed to convince you that I am no mere man, but One who possesses a nature coequal and coessential with the Father?' Olshausen remarks, that "the language of Jesus to Philip plainly indicates, that the struggle with the weakness of the disciples formed a part of the Redeemer's sufferings." *He that hath seen me, &c.* No language could more strongly and unequivocally express the essential unity of the Son and the Father, than that which is here made use of. How could the sight of Jesus be that of the Father, if he were any thing less than divine? Between the highest conceivable created intelligence and the infinite God, there is so vast an interval, that the sight of such an intelligence would no more be the sight of the Father, than would be that of the weakest and lowest individual upon earth. The doctrine of Christ's supreme divinity, which underlies and pervades these great texts, is not to be met or evaded, by supposing a moral resemblance to be all which is asserted. Such a resemblance, to a greater or less extent, subsists between all good beings and God. How then could our Lord, if he were only a created being, claim this in proof, that whoever looked upon him looked upon the Father *also* (i. e. in that very act)? "It is true we may perceive *rays* of the higher Light in excellent persons, but the *divinity itself*, in living concentration, has appeared only in Christ Jesus." Olshausen. The declaration is tenable only on the ground, that "in him dwelt all the fulness of

10 Believest thou not that 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak

l Ver. 20; ch. 10: 38; & 17: 21, 23.

the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2: 9), and that whoever looked upon him looked upon one who was God. "Yet that by which he was visible, was not God, any more than the visible outward frame of a man is *the man*." Webster and Wilkinson. "The Son is ever the visible face of the Father—rather could we see a man independently of or apart from his face, than we can see God independently of or apart from his Son, who is His face." Zeller. It should ever be borne in mind, that this seeing of the Father in the face of his Son, includes also, as an essential idea, the knowledge of Him as He is revealed by Jesus Christ. See 1: 13; 6: 46. *How sayest thou*, &c. This question implies that the previous manifestations of his supreme divinity have been so abundant and conclusive, that the disciples ought not for a moment to mistake his meaning, when he speaks of their having seen the Father (v. 7). This does not contravene the fact, that after his passion and ascension, and under the enlightening dispensation of the Spirit (16: 14), they were furnished with still higher proof of the divinity of Christ. Irrespective of this, however, they already possessed abundant evidence of this truth. The stupendous miracles, divine teachings, authoritative expositions of God's law, the enactment of new rules and ordinances to supersede those which had become old and effete—all put the question beyond a doubt, that Jesus was himself a Being of undervived power and authority, and was to be worshipped as the true and blessed God.

10. *Believest thou not*, &c. 'Art thou still in doubt of the intimate relation which subsists between me and the Father?' There is here a tone of wonder and gentle reproach, that a truth supported by such evidence, should gain so slow admittance to their understandings and full belief. *That I am in*

unto you ^m I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

m Ch. 5: 19; & 7: 16; & 8: 23; & 12: 49.

the Father, &c. The reciprocal indwelling and unity denoted in this formula, has been commented on in N. on 10: 38. Our Lord here refers to it as a weighty utterance, which should have been pondered upon by his disciples, and regarded as a solemn attestation of his divine character and mission. 'Believest thou not that I am what I declared myself to be to the Jews? Have you so soon forgot my words?' *The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself*. They are not the words of a fanatical and visionary man. They are not the expression of mere human wisdom, but are given me of the Father to be revealed to men. However strange and mysterious they may be; whatever apparent discrepancy may exist between my present condition, and the divine Sonship and unity with the Father which I claim for myself; yet, as my words and declarations are not mine own, but those given me of God, they should be received in the spirit of the most ready and profound belief? *Of myself*; literally, *from myself*. See N. on 12: 49. *That dwelleth in me* (as I also dwell in him), *he doeth the works*. We should have expected, *he speaketh the words*, but for *words* is here substituted *works*. This is not without meaning. The *works* of Jesus constituted no small part of his testimony to his divinity, and hence by the substitution of this for *words*, we have the condensed form of statement, that neither his *words* and *works* are of himself apart from the Father, but are those which the Father speaks and does in and through him. We are taught in this interchange of Christ's *words* and *works*, that they are correlative, harmonious, and unitedly constitute the testimony, on which he rests his claims to be regarded as divine. The word *dwelleth*, is literally *remaineth*, *abideth*, and stands opposed to an interpenetration or indwelling which is merely tem-

11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in

me: "or else believe me for the very works' sake.

n Ch. 5: 36; & 10: 38.

porary. The repetition of the pronoun *he*, in the latter clause, is very emphatic. *He* (the Father himself) *doeth the works*. 'He is in me, as I am also in Him. All that I do is done by Him; all that He does is done by me. Hence in me you see the Father. He it is that gives utterance to the great truths and doctrines I have revealed, and performs in like manner the works I have done.' What intimate mysterious union between the Father and Son, is here revealed. Neither of them acts apart or distinct from the other in any essential sense, but the works and words of one are those of the other. Does this introduce confusion into the office work, which the Father and Son have respectively assumed in the work of human redemption? Not any. An ineffable harmony of action, based on the essential unity of these divine persons of the Godhead, and developed in all the words and works of the Great Revealer, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person (Heb. 1: 3), is here revealed, which is the surest guarantee that all the purposes of divine love will be accomplished, and that those who rely on Jesus for salvation, will find a realization of all their hopes, not only in his promised love and protection from evil, but in the concurrent love and protection of the Father.

11. *Believe me*. The plural form shows that our Lord now addresses all his disciples who were present. This verse may be regarded then as a resumption of his general discourse, which had been temporarily interrupted by Thomas and Philip. The train of thought is carried forward, however, from v. 10, as is evident upon the very face of the passage. He strives to impress upon their mind and memory his oft repeated declaration, that He and his Father are essentially one. The terms in which he challenges their belief in this great and fundamental truth of the Christian system, are not unlike those

with which he demands of the woman of Samaria, her assent to the declaration which he was about to make to her (4: 21). In both instances, he condescends to preface the great truths which he was about to communicate, with a most earnest injunction of belief in his words. In the present instance, this is rendered more impressive, by the repetition of the words, *that I am in the Father and the Father in me*, from the preceding verse. The general connection is: 'Dost thou believe, Philip, that I and the Father exist in this mutual indwelling state? I fear that you are yet incredulous to this great truth. But remember that there is such unity between the Son and the Father, that all my words and works are to be regarded as His also. *Believe me* (I exhort you, my beloved disciples, when I assert) *that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*. Give full credence to this truth, which once received and acknowledged in all its glorious reality, will enable you to understand the great purposes of redemption, and to see how puny are all the efforts and machinations of my enemies to retard the work I have come to accomplish, or diminish aught from my glorification, when I shall return to the bosom of the Father.' The original is not *believe on* or *in me*, as in v. 1, where belief in his Messiahship, or in his ability to help his followers, is the main thing intended; but *believe me*, as one who speaks a solemn and weighty truth. *Or else*. Some think that this implies a distrust in their willingness to take this great truth of his unity and equality with the Father, on his mere assertion. But this does not appear to be so. It is to be taken rather in the sense of additional testimony drawn from his works, and constituting another great line or branch of evidence by which his claims to supreme divinity are supported. These works, although so conclusive of his divinity, yet would not be so apart from his own

12 ° Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ;

o Mat. 21: 21; Ma. 16: 17; Lu. 10: 17.

declaration. His words and works are to be regarded in the close and mutual relation they sustain to one another, as uttering a combined and concurrent testimony in favor of the supreme dignity of Jesus. Yet as his works made a more vivid and forcible appeal to the eye of sense than his words, they are appealed to as evidence which puts the truth of his assertions beyond all doubt or question. *For the very works' sake ;* literally, *because of the works themselves*, in contrast with the assertion upon which he had in the first clause rested his claim upon their belief. The preposition here translated *because* or *on account of*, denotes the *moving* and not the *efficient* cause of belief.

12. At first sight the connection between this and the preceding verse is not very apparent. But a closer inspection of the train of thought, will show that this verse is designed to confirm the faith of his disciples in the declaration he had just made. The miraculous gifts conferred upon them would bear testimony of the power and presence of their Lord, even when they were no longer permitted to see him with the bodily eye. The power to perform these miracles, however, sprung from and was dependent upon their belief on him as the Son of God. *He that believeth on me as the works, &c.* The design of these miraculous gifts was not to produce faith in him, but to increase and confirm that which already existed, although comparatively weak and wavering. *He that believeth on me, not believeth me*, as in v. 11, for here reference is had to belief, not on his simple testimony or assertion, but on his Messiahship in the high and divine sense in which he had just explained it. These varied forms of expression are all to be carefully noted, in order to attain to a clear understanding of the words of our Lord. *The works that I do, &c.* A similarity in kind, but not in degree, is here intend-

and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

ed. We find this promise verified in the Acts of the Apostles (3: 7, 8; 5: 5, 10, 12, 16; 8: 13; 9: 40; 13: 11; 14: 10; 19: 11, 12; 20: 10; 28: 5). The *I*, both in this and the last clause, is emphatic, and makes strong the contrast between our Lord and his disciples, in the strange revelation here made, that weak and frail as they are, they shall do greater works than He, of whom in the preceding verse supreme divinity has been predicated. *Greater works, &c.* Reference can scarcely be had to miracles in the ordinary acceptance of the term; for the disciples, although abundantly furnished with miraculous power, could not be said to have transcended the stupendous miracles wrought by Jesus Christ. There can hardly be a doubt, therefore, that reference is had here to that great and standing miracle of Christianity—its rapid propagation in face of such powerful and active opposition from its enemies. On the day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were converted to a belief in Him, who a short time previous had died the death of a malefactor amidst the jeers and taunts of an angry populace. From the time of the dispensation of the Spirit on that remarkable day, the gospel spread with amazing rapidity and power, until the whole habitable world was reached by its blessed influences. This founding of the church through the agency of Christ's apostles, may be designated, Tholuck says, as the greatest of miracles. The success attending their ministry far transcended that of their Master, for the reason that the Holy Spirit sent conjointly by the Father and Son (v. 26), rendered their labors successful. "He sowed, we reap; and the harvest is greater than the seed-time." Stier. *Because I go, &c.* It was not simply the departure of Christ, which enabled the disciples in his stead to perform these great works; but because his spiritual presence could

13 ^r And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,

p Mt. 7:7; & 21:22; Ma. 11:24; Lu. 11:9; ch. 15:7, 16; & 16:23, 24; Ja. 1:5; 1 Jo. 3:22; & 5:14.

not be vouchsafed, until he had entered upon his glorified state. The dispensation of the Spirit was not to begin, until Christ had ascended into heaven. Hence his return to the Father is here given, as a ground or reason why his disciples should perform these *greater works*, inasmuch as the Spirit's influences, in the special sense here alluded to, were withheld until after that event.

13. Our Lord here discloses to the disciples the great secret of their success, promised in such ample terms in the preceding verse. It was by prayer to Him who would then be seated on his Mediatorial throne, endowed with all power both in heaven and on earth, and ready and able to give success to all their efforts to extend the knowledge of his name. By this spirit of grace and supplication which He would pour out, according to promise (Zech. 12:10) upon his servants, they would become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might (Eph. 6:10). The only limitation to this promise is contained in the words *in my name*, which clause Alford interprets, "in union with me, as being mine, manifesting forth Jesus as the Son of God." But this limitation is not to be passed slightly over, as of little moment. It shows that those prayers only are prevalent with Jesus, which have his glory in view as their ultimate object. It is prayer offered in Christ's name which is successful. The furtherance of his cause must be that on which the heart is supremely fixed. Some expositors deny that Christ himself is the Being to whom prayer is to be addressed, and give this as the sense, *whatsoever ye shall ask* (of the Father) *in my name*. But such is the unity declared to subsist between the Father and Son, that prayer offered to one is offered to the other; and the annexed clause, *I will do*, shows very clearly that by promis-

that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

ing to answer prayer, our Lord proposes himself as one to be addressed in prayer. The first prayer after the ascension, was offered to Him (Acts 1:24), and the disciples in early times were known, as those who called upon his name. *That will I do*, shows that *he shall do*, in v. 12, is not spoken of the believer's own unaided strength, but of what he shall be enabled to do by the power of Christ working in him and producing these results. *That the Father*, &c. This is appended as the object or purpose of this readiness of our Saviour, to do for his followers whatever they shall ask in his name and for the advancement of his cause. Wherever the gospel was preached the name of God would be known and glorified. The history of the cross was the history of human redemption, in which the great central feature was, that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to die, that the world through him might be saved (3:16, 17). Hence the glory of the Son in this great transaction, was that of the Father; and conversely, the glory of the Father was that of the Son. But our Lord with his accustomed humility while in the flesh, places his own glory in the background, and gives prominence to that of the Father.

14. The repetition is designed to give emphasis to this great declaration. In v. 13, the assertion was in a manner incidental, but here it becomes a direct promise. *If ye shall ask any thing*, does not denote a contingency or doubt, as to the fact, that the disciples would proffer their request to him for aid in the prosecution of their work. It is designed as an emphatic averment, that *as sure as they should ask* (Webster and Wilkinson) *any thing in his name he would do it*. The pronoun *I*, which in the original was implied in the first person of the verb in v. 13, is here emphatically expressed, as though there

15 ⁹ If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father,

q Ver. 21, 23; ch. 15: 10, 14; 1 Jo. 5: 3.

had been danger of a misapprehension of his power or willingness to grant them aid in answer to prayer. *I will do it.* 'All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28: 18), and I will preserve and defend you from every foe, and render your labors in my cause successful.' This shows very clearly, that Christ himself is to be addressed in prayer alike with the Father. Luther well expresses the force of the emphatic *I*. "Who is the I? I thought he would say, 'whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will do it.' But he speaks of himself for a testimony; and these are strange words for a man to speak so loftily. For by these words he gives us plainly to understand, that he himself is the true, Almighty God, equally with the Father." As Stier remarks, the *he will give* in 16: 23, is not a contradiction of the *I will do*, in the present passage, for such is the unity of the Father and the Son, that now one form of expression is used, and then the other, the design being evidently to prevent one from taking so narrow and imperfect a view, as to suppose that any one of the Persons of the Godhead, in the work of redemption, acts apart from and independently of the others, so that prayer is to be solely and exclusively offered to him. In the fervor of Christian devotion and under strong emotional influence, the Persons of the Trinity, may be individually addressed in prayer, but never in such a sense as to exclude the whole Godhead from being the object of prayer.

15. The connection of this with the preceding context is quite obvious. In order to possess themselves of the aid promised them in the prosecution of their work, they must testify their love to him, by a strict observance of his commandments. Love and its fruits are here connected with the faith, referred to in v. 12, as a prerequisite to the performance of the works there specified.

and ⁷ he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

r Ch. 15: 26; & 16: 7; Ro. 8: 15, 26.

Thus faith worketh by love (Gal. 5: 6), and draws the soul of the believer to Christ, to receive new accessions of spiritual life and energy. This love is not cold and inoperative, but exhibits itself in a strict adherence to all the Saviour's commands, even to those which in their performance require the extremest self-denial.

16. We come now to one of the richest and most remarkable promises made by our Lord to his disciples, and upon the verification of which is made to depend the salvation of men through the blood of Jesus Christ. When Christ returned to the Father, his presence through the Spirit of promise was still vouchsafed to his disciples. He did not leave them alone to prosecute their arduous and self-denying work, but sent down the Spirit of grace and truth, to comfort, guide, and strengthen them, and give success to their labors in his behalf. They were to wait in Jerusalem, until they received this promised Spirit, and ever after to put themselves under His divine illumination and guidance. This was the gift of the Father, in answer to the prayer of Jesus, the great Intercessor for his people. *I will pray the Father.* Our Lord's prayers as Intercessor, are not to be regarded as in kind precisely like ours. We as sinners confess our offences, and pray for pardon through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. But his prayers are to be regarded, as declarative of his sovereign will and pleasure in regard to his people, who have been given to him in the covenant of redemption, and over whom he has thrown the robe of his own righteousness. Hence by virtue of his being the covenant Head of his people, and in accordance with his essential unity with the Father, he is said in 15: 26, himself to send this Comforter from the Father. See also 16: 7. In the economy of redemption, the Father is regarded as the original

source whence flow all the provisions of grace; the substratum, on which reposes the whole grand superstructure of redeeming love. He sent the Son to make propitiation for the sin of man. By his elective grace He draws to the Son, those whom in the covenant of redemption He has given to be his peculiar inheritance (6: 37, 44). To Him the mediatorial kingdom is to be given up, at the time of the final consummation of things (1 Cor. 15: 24). In accordance with this economical arrangement, the Father is said to send the Spirit, and the Spirit is said to proceed from the Father, not that the Spirit as one of the Sacred Three, is essentially subordinate or inferior in any respect to the Father, but the idea is simply one of official subordination. Thus in all these passages where the Spirit is said to be sent and given, we are to adopt the same general principles of interpretation, which guide us in the exposition of those passages which speak of the Son as subordinate to the Father. A subordination of office and not of essential being, is referred to. In the language of Revelation, the Father sends the Son, and the effluence of the Spirit is the gift of the Father in conjunction with the expressed will of the Son. But this, as has been remarked, is founded on no essential relation of these persons of the Godhead to one another, so that subordination of office finds its counterpart in the very essence of the divine Tri-unity. As composing the Godhead, they are coequal in every respect, so that priority of rank or order can in no respect be predicated of them. *Shall give you.* So far as believers are concerned, the dispensation of the Spirit is a gift, as much so as salvation through Jesus Christ. But in relation to the plan of salvation, the gift of the Spirit is a part of the purchase of Christ, and as such, is to be included in the covenant of redemption entered into by the Father and Son.

Comforter. This word, upon which so much has been written, and such a variety of opinions expressed, is found in the New Testament, only in

John's Gospel, and in his first Epistle (2: 1). In the latter instance, it is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ himself in the sense of *advocate*, *intercessor*, one who pleads the cause of another before a judge. In the use of the word as a designation of the Holy Spirit, commentators have generally adopted one or the other of the meanings, *advocate*, *comforter*, *consoler*, that is, one who bestows spiritual aid and comfort. That the word is susceptible of any one of these meanings, may be seen from the signification of the verb from which it is derived. This verb is compounded of a simple verb signifying, *to call*, *summon*, *invite*, and a preposition signifying, *by* or *to the side of*, *in front of*. Thus compounded the verb signifies *to call*, *to aid*, *call in*, *send for*, *summon*, and in a derived or secondary sense, *to call to* one, in order to exhort, cheer, and encourage him. These generic significations, the verbal adjective *paraclete*, as found here and elsewhere in John's writings, retains. It has the passive signification, *called to one's aid*; and also the active sense, *assisting*, as in a court of justice, whence comes the substantive, *an advocate*. The word has also a secondary sense corresponding to that of the verb, *a helper*, *adviser*, *comforter*. We have seen that in 1 John 2: 1, the word is applied to Jesus Christ, in such a connection that its obvious sense is *advocate*. We should naturally then affix to the word in the present connection, the same meaning of *advocate*, especially as Christ promises the Spirit in place of himself, as *another paraclete*, another advocate and intercessor. But then we may properly ask, is not the office work of the Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, in giving force and power to divine truth, in comforting, instructing, guiding, and enlightening believers, a more comprehensive one, than can properly be embraced in the designation *advocate*? Thus it seems to me, and we must therefore take the appellation here in a more enlarged sense, than simply *advocate*, or *comforter*, the meanings adopted respectively by the two great classes of expositors. The

latter of these significations is open to still greater objections than *advocate*, inasmuch as it is still more circumscribed and specific, and refers to only a small part of the functions of the Spirit in the renovation and sanctification of the believer.

Alford takes the opposite view, and assigns to the word the idea of *help* and *strength*, as included in that of *Comforter*. This he maintains to have been the sense in which Wickliffe, from whom we have this translation 'Comforter,' employed the word *comfort* from the Latin *comfortari*. So Worcester: *comfort*; Lat. *conforto*, to strengthen much. This is unquestionably its primary etymological signification. But common usage has attached to the word *comforter*, the idea simply of one who imparts consolation in the hour of darkness and trial. Such a comforter or consoler will no doubt, if he be true to his office, strengthen and confirm the afflicted person to the best of his ability; but such a service is not necessarily implied in the appellation of *comforter*, given him as the bearer of kind words and wishes. I am not convinced, therefore, by Alford, that the word *comforter*, is as generic as he maintains it to be; or that this is a felicitous translation of the word, to designate the varied offices of the Spirit, given by the Lord Jesus to be the PARACLETE of his people. We must seek another term more comprehensive, which shall embrace indeed the idea of a *consoler* or *comforter*, but include also the other acts and operations of the promised Spirit. Such a general and comprehensive term is the word *helper*, which is closely allied in signification to the idea of *advocate*, which, as we have shown, is the proper translation of the word in 1 John 2:1. A *helper* is one who defends, intercedes for, assists, advises, instructs, comforts, and consoles, all which the Holy Spirit, in the great office of Paraclete, does for the believer. It cannot be denied, that this discourse of our Lord, which was designed preëminently to comfort and encourage his disciples, in the dark and trying scenes which were soon to pass before them, requires a

peculiar prominence to be given to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter of God's people. But these words of Jesus were intended also for the great body of believers in every age, whose varied and peculiar circumstances might require the prominent exercise of some other of the functions of the Spirit, than that strictly implied in the word Comforter. In the times of Luther, the Spirit was required as the Illuminator of God's people, that they might rightly apprehend divine truth, as taught in the Scriptures unsealed to the gaze and study of the laity and common people. In the times of Wesley and Whitefield, the presence of the Spirit was especially required to restore believers to a living and spiritual worship, which had been forsaken for a cold and dead formalism. In our own day, the operations of the divine Paraclete are evinced in the enlarged benevolence, activity, and enterprise of the church, in the diffusion of the gospel throughout the world. To these and other special manifestations of the Spirit, which have marked the history of the Christian church, the word *Comforter*, is too special and restricted in its signification to be applied. But not so with the designation *helper*, which is so comprehensive, as to include each and every function of the Holy Spirit, whether as having reference to the church as a body, or as composed of individual members.

A special appropriateness is given to this meaning from the word *another*, which is here found with it. The Holy Spirit was to be given as *another Paraclete*, i. e. in the place of Jesus, who had thus far acted as the *paraclete* of his disciples. Was he their *paraclete* only as a comforter? Was it the principal object which he had in view, while passing in their company from place to place in Galilee, or in Perea, to comfort them in view of their approaching trials and dangers? By no means. He instructed, guided, enlightened, re-proved, confirmed, comforted his disciples; and now he promises *another paraclete* who shall act in his stead, and be as it were his representative, to assist and enable them to perform

17 *Even* *the Spirit of truth; 'whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither

s Ch. 15:26; & 16:13; 1 Jo. 4:6.

t 1 Co. 2:14.

the great work of evangelizing the world, which he was about to commission them to execute (Matt. 28:19). The operations of the Spirit were to be even more various and comprehensive, than those by which Jesus trained his disciples for the work which they were to accomplish. To Him was assigned the office of regenerating and sanctifying those who had been given to the Son in the covenant of redemption. This great work embraced all those influences and agencies which are employed in bringing men to Christ, and in preparing them to do his will and service both here and hereafter. "It was this office (i. e. helper, strengthener, consolator) which Jesus had filled to his disciples while with them;—and which the Holy Spirit was to fill even more abundantly (and in a higher sense because their state would be higher) on the removal of Jesus from them." Alford. The wants of the passage are therefore more fully met, by the word *helper*, than either that of *advocate* or *comforter*, which are too special and restricted to embrace the full scope of its meaning. At the same time, so sweet and precious is the word *Comforter*, so associated with every thing gentle and tender, that I would consent to no change in our English translation, but retain the word, not overlooking however the comprehensive signification which it evidently has in this great connection.

That he may abide, &c., denotes the result, and not the end or purpose of this gift of the Spirit. This is another proof that the Greek particle translated *that*, may have the *eventual* sense, as well as that of *design* or *purpose*. See N. on Matt. 1:22. *Forever* is here put in contrast with the departure of our Lord from his disciples. This other Paraclete was not to leave them as the first. He was to remain with them forever. By this I understand their

knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, "and shall be in you.

u 1 Jo. 2:27.

present and future life—their whole eternal being. So Stier: "This *forever* literally and essentially involves eternal communion with God in Christ through the Holy Ghost." The impossibility of losing the Spirit's influences here implied, is not a natural but a moral one, founded upon the everlasting compact of redemption, by which a certain and definite number have been given to our Lord Jesus Christ as *his own*, and whom he has pledged his power and grace to bring home to himself in glory. Compare 6:37; 10:27–29. From these his chosen followers the Spirit will never take his departure, acting as He does in Christ's stead, who has promised to come and take them all to himself in the house of his Father.

17. This verse is in explanatory apposition with the preceding, and defines more distinctly the nature, and office work of this Spirit of promise. He was to be the *Spirit of truth*, i. e. the author of all truth as revealed in the word of God (16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). The Spirit also opens the understanding to perceive the spiritual import of God's Word, and thus quickens and sanctifies the soul by the indwelling influence of truth. Indeed truth is the great instrumentality of the Spirit, in preparing the believer for glory. The article in the original *Spirit of the truth*, is not to be overlooked or treated of no account. It refers to the Paraclete as the *Spirit of all truth*, both that which has already been given, and that into which they were to be led by His future teaching. Stier after Beck remarks: "that it is not a dead word, such as all scholars have from their teachers, but a living word, the Spirit of the truth—for the life of the word is the Spirit." *The world*, i. e. the unconverted world, the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14), who, as Alford remarks, "has no receptivity of the things of God." This is what is

meant by *cannot receive*. Until the soul is regenerated and quickened to the perception of divine things, it has no inclination to receive the truth. It is blinded by the god of this world, so that the glorious gospel of Christ in all its exuberant and amazing wealth of love, is wholly shut out from its vision. *Because it seeth him not*. The reason is here given for the rejection of this Spirit of truth by the unbelieving world. It *sees not* the Spirit, and as it walks by sight and not by faith, it has no appreciation of this heavenly agency for the regeneration and sanctification of the soul. The following verb gives additional emphasis to this deadness of the world to the presence of the Spirit of the truth. It not only has no perception of this Spirit, but no knowledge of him. An intellectual or theoretical knowledge is not here referred to, for this the unconverted, especially in lands where the light of the gospel has been diffused, possess. But it is a spiritual perception and knowledge to which reference is had, and this the world does not possess. Webster and Wilkinson interpret this clause, "as a proof of the fact spoken of, and not as a reason for it, otherwise the reason and the result in the one case are inverted in the other." But Olshausen well remarks here: "these (implied in *the world*) cannot receive the Spirit, because they are unable to see and know him. Hence the latter is the condition of the former, although it might have been supposed that, inversely, the reception must precede the knowledge. This is true of the most profound form of knowledge, but nevertheless a *preliminary* knowledge is necessary to the reception of the Spirit, for such knowledge awakens the slumbering desire within." For all this knowledge, whether preliminary, as Olshausen terms it, or that which is subsequently enjoyed in full degree, the soul is indebted to the Spirit of truth, whose province it is to open the eyes of the understanding (Eph. 1: 18), which before was darkened, they being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because

of the blindness of their heart (Eph. 4: 18). The conjunction *because*, does not then here introduce proof of the declaration, that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, but the grand reason for such a non-receptivity. *But ye know him*. There is here what grammarians call a *prolepsis*, that is, the anticipation of the event spoken of, before its actual occurrence. The present tense well suits the great idea of the passage, for the advent of the promised Spirit, and his reception or non-reception by those dwelling upon the earth, were future events, yet the disciples had *then* that perception and knowledge of divine things, which would render their souls and even their bodies fit temples for the indwelling of the promised Spirit (see 1 Cor. 3: 16; 6: 19; Eph. 2: 22). *For* introduces the reason why the disciples had the knowledge of the Spirit here spoken of. *He dwelleth with you*. As Christ during his public ministry had remained with his disciples, and by his presence and intercourse had enabled them to know him; so was this *other Paraclete* to abide with them, and enable them to fully know and recognize his presence and sanctifying power. *With you in companionship and love*. *Shall be in you*, is an advance on the idea of fellowship and communion indicated by *with you*, in the preceding clause. The highest and most blessed result of this gift of the Spirit, was His taking full possession of the heart and affections, and swaying the whole inner man to the obedience and service of Christ. The verb in the original is future, "because through their knowledge of the Spirit proper to their complete state, and his dwelling, remaining, among them, had in some inferior sense begun,—his *dwelling in them had not*." Alford. Stier, losing sight of the progression in holiness denoted by this future in connection with the proleptic present, prefers the reading *is*, instead of *shall be*. This expositor, however, rightly remarks, that "this general contrast with the unbelieving world, not with other believers and disciples, makes it plain that this promise of the Comforter, and the *but*

18 ^a I will not leave you comfortless: ^y I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the

^a Mat. 28: 20.

^y Ver. 3, 23.

ye here, by no means applies to the Apostles alone."

18. *I will not* (when I go to the Father) *leave you comfortless*; literally, *orphans*, which would be the better rendering, inasmuch as *comfortless* denotes the effect of this orphanage, and not the state or condition itself, as in the original. *I will come to you*; literally, *am coming to you*. What coming is here referred to? Say some, the final coming at the day of judgment. This was the opinion of Augustine. But it seems evidently to refer to a coming less remote and magisterial than that of the last day. Some mistaking the force of *yet a little while* (v. 19), find in it his reappearance and intercourse with the disciples, between the time of his resurrection and ascension. But this was only an appearance to his disciples, and not to believers in every age, to which, as Stier has shown, this whole passage refers. That appearance also was of too short duration, to fill the full measure of their desire for his presence, and prevent their being left in orphanage. Stier refers it to a "perspective connection of comings" (see N. on v. 3); or, as Alford expresses it, "the great Revisitation in all its blessed progress." But this is too general to furnish the specific ground of encouragement here manifestly intended by the promise. There is but one other coming which remains for our adoption, and that is the coming of Christ by his Spirit. That this is the true exposition, is evident not only from the preceding context, which refers the gift of the Spirit as *another Comforter*, which he was to send in his stead, and whose advent would not be consistent with the personal presence also of himself with the disciples; but also from v. 23, where the coming of the Father and Son, must in the nature of the case be a spiritual one. The disciples were not then to be deserted and left in a state

world seeth me no more; but ^a ye see me: ^a because I live, ye shall live also.

^a Ch. 16: 16.

^a 1 Co. 15: 20.

of orphanage (see N. on v. 16). Jesus would be present by His promised Spirit, the Helper, Confirmer, Comforter (see N. on v. 16), and thus satisfy all their longing desires for his bodily presence. Olshausen well remarks: "*With the Spirit and in him*, Christ himself comes, for the Spirit takes of that which is Christ's and shows it unto them (16: 15.)"

19. *Yet a little while*. The next day he was crucified and buried. *Seeth me no more*. There is no evidence that any of the Jews apart from his disciples, saw him during the forty days which intervened between his resurrection and ascension. *But ye see me*. Alford finds the immediate reference to the forty days (Acts 10: 41), but only as leading on to its wider and deeper reference to the spiritual life. Such also is Stier's exposition: "*Ye shall see me first externally, then and thereafter in the Spirit, ye shall live as I live, when ye have me abidingly in the Spirit.*" But is not the demand of the context, which insists so strongly on Christ's spiritual presence, through the Comforter or Helper whom he was to give as his representative, most satisfactorily met, by referring this sight of him solely to the sense which they were to have of his spiritual presence? It impairs the beautiful connection and harmonious relations of the parts of this discourse, thus to combine in one act the natural and the spiritual. As to what is said, that the antithesis requires the verb *see*, to be taken in the same literal sense in both clauses, this might be so, had we not been apprised in v. 17, that a spiritual perception and knowledge of the Spirit—and by implication of Christ's presence—was what constituted the distinguishing characteristics of believers. This feature runs through the whole contrast here drawn between his disciples and the world. Although depriv-

20 At that day ye shall know that ^b *I am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 ^c He that hath my command-

^b Ver. 10; ch. 10:38; & 17:21, 23, 26.

^c Ver. 15, 23; 1 Jo. 2:5; & 5:3.

ed of His bodily presence, they were to be blessed with His spiritual presence; but the world, when once he ascended to His Father, would never have a sight of him again on earth, either physical or spiritual. The present *see*, has obviously the sense of the future *shall see*. This proleptic use is quite common. See N. on v. 17. *Because I live*, &c. Here again expositors have been divided as to whether natural or spiritual life is referred to; or whether there is a combination of both ideas. I think there can hardly be a doubt, that in the first *I live*, is included life in its most extensive and generic sense, and that the present tense is used because, as Alford remarks, the principle of life is immanent in him. But in the phrase *ye shall live also*, spiritual life only can be immediately intended, although even here life in its lower sense must necessarily be included (see N. on 11:25). As their spiritual life was to receive a new impulse and development, by his promised presence through the Spirit, the verb very properly is put in the future, *ye shall live*. The passage then teaches, that the guarantee of the spiritual life of the believer, is the principle of life which inheres in the Redeemer, as the primeval source of all life (see 1:4). As his followers are united to him by the Spirit, his life becomes their life—as *he lives, they shall live also*.

20. *At that day* is a prophetic formula, used for the indefinite future. "No particular day; but each of these periods, as its continually increasing light breaks upon you, shall bring increased knowledge of your unity in me with the Father, and my dwelling in you by the Spirit." Alford. *Ye shall know*. The perfect knowledge which under the dispensation of the Spirit, they would have of His unity with the Father, and of the mutual indwelling of Him and them, is here impliedly con-

ments, 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.

trusted with their present doubts and fears. In the words *ye in me and I in you*, nothing more is meant than a unity or indwelling of love. The notion of Olshausen, that here is a sort of consubstantiality, and that the profound idea of John is, that the Redeemer imparts his own essence, and in the holy supper, even his glorified humanity to his brethren,"—although he softens the assertion by saying that "this communication of his nature is pure love,"—is erroneous and mischievous in its tendency. Our catechism very properly guards against any tendency to consubstantiation, or the belief of any physical incorporation of the body and blood of Christ, so natural to the human mind, which seeks after the corporeal and sensual, to the neglect of that which is unseen and spiritual. "The worthy receivers are not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by *faith* made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace." Assemb. Short. Cat., Ans. to Q. 96.

21. The former part of this verse is a repetition of v. 15, and serves to limit the love-union and mutual indwelling of Christ and the believer, to such as obey from the heart all his precepts. The sentiment in *he that keepeth*, &c., is not unlike that of Matt. 7:24, *that hath* corresponding to *that heareth*, with the additional notion of having in permanent possession, as opposed to the mere hearing of them from the mouth of another. So *keepeth them*, is a little more than *doeth them* in Matthew, referring as Stier says, "more to the inner *will* to keep them than to the absolute observance, which can only follow on high degrees of spiritual advancement." *He it is*, &c. The idea is, that there is no evidence of love where the commands of Christ are not obeyed from the heart. Hence

22 ^d Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said

d Lu. 6:16.

e Ver. 15.

the pronoun in the original is emphatic, as though it had been said, *he it is* (and no other) *that loveth me*. In the clause *shall be loved of my Father*, is the promised result of the supreme love for Christ which manifests itself in obedience to His commandments. Here again the unity of Christ with the Father, is brought forward under a new aspect. They who love Jesus and obey his commands, shall be loved of God and of his Son (*I will love him*). As there is a oneness of love between the Father and Son, so there is a like unity in that which they have for those who believe in Christ—the love of the one presupposes that of the other. *Will manifest myself to him*. This is to be taken of a spiritual manifestation (see v. 19). The verb *will manifest*, is one, however, of strong import, its literal signification being *to make apparent, to show forth, make clear or plain*. In Matt. 27:53, it is employed of the saints who came forth from the grave after our Lord's resurrection, and *appeared* unto many. See also Heb. 9:24. Hence some expositors refer this manifestation to the appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his resurrection. But this is too restricted an application of this glorious promise, than which, as Stier remarks, “there is no promise greater or higher for man,” and which belongs to every believer down to the end of time. This divine manifestation is not a transient, distant, imperfect view, which the believer obtains of Jesus at distant intervals, when the thick clouds of unbelief part asunder; but is the indwelling of the Son who with the Father comes to him, and takes up his abode with him (see v. 23).

22. *Judas—not Iscariot*. As the traitor had previously left the table, this remark seems to have been made, to

unto him, ^e If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, ^f and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

f 1 Jo. 2:24; Re. 3:20.

keep that fact before the mind. The Judas who speaks here, was *Judas* (in Matt. 10:3, Lebbeus) *Thaddeus*. See Mark 3:18; Luke 6:16. See also N. on Matt. 10:3. *How is it, &c.* This restricted manifestation of Jesus to the circle of his disciples, seemed so incongruous with the public display, which they in common with their Jewish countrymen supposed would attend the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, that Judas interrupted our Lord with the question here recorded. *How is it*; literally, *what has happened?* There is in the inquiry a tone of surprise, as though something had occurred to frustrate that manifestation to the world, which it was supposed that the Messiah as King and Judge of the nations would make. *Wilt manifest*; literally, *art about to manifest*, the idea of intention or purpose being implied. *To us*, thy disciples who are now present. *And not unto the world*. Jesus had not said in direct terms that he would not manifest himself unto the world. This was implied, however, in his promise to manifest himself to those who testified their love to him by a life of holy obedience. As *the world* is a generic term for those in it who are Christ's enemies, and neither see nor know the Spirit of promise whom he was to send (see v. 17), it is of course excluded from the enjoyment of the manifestation here promised. In this aspect, Judas had correctly understood his Lord. But his mistake lay in his low and temporal views of the Messianic kingdom, which led him to suppose, that Jesus as universal King must necessarily appear openly to the world; and then as a natural deduction from this temporal view, he mistook the application of the promise of Christ's manifestation to those only who were

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.

g Ver. 10; ch. 5:19, 38; & 7:16; & 8:28; & 12:49.

present at the table. He should have seen that *the world*, as here used by our Lord, comprised those in it who were the enemies of truth; and as such could not have been put in contrast with the disciples only, but with all the good who were then or afterwards to be on the earth.

23. Our Lord does not furnish a direct reply to the question of Judas. This would have been a mere gratification of his curiosity, without the instruction that his case demanded. He explains the nature of this manifestation. It is made to those who love and obey him. It is a spiritual and invisible manifestation, for it is made conjointly with the Father, the invisible God. It has reference not to the congregated masses of men, but to each individual believer. Thus the *what has happened* of Judas, is shown to be founded on a gross misconception, the manifestation spoken of being one, which the Father in the counsels of his eternal wisdom had graciously determined to make conjointly with the Son, to every believer. *If any man love me, &c.* Our Lord here repeats as of the last importance, the necessary and indissoluble union which exists between love and true obedience. *Words* is here substituted for *commandments*, in vs. 15, 21, with an enlarged sense; as the words of Jesus comprehended besides his commandments, all that he says about repentance, love, humility, self-denial, and the like. All these sayings of our Lord are to be treasured up in the heart, and made the foundation of all the acts and purposes of life. *My Father will love him.* Christ's love, which was fully expressed in connection with that of the Father in v. 21, is here implied. The fact that the Father loves those who love and obey his Son, implies such essential unity, that love to the Son is love also to the Father; and the love of the Son for those who love and obey him, is that also en-

tertained for them by the Father. There is no other way of explaining these great utterances of our Lord, than on the ground of the essential union and equality of the Father and the Son. *We will come unto him, &c.* Here the Father and Son are associated in one ineffable WE; and no exercise of human ingenuity can evade or set aside the great truth, that the unity and distinct personality of both Father and Son, as related to the Godhead, are taught beyond all question. *Will come unto him, and make our abode* (literally, *dwelling-place*) *with him*, is progressively spoken, the idea being metaphorically that of a man removing his abode from one place to dwell in another. The promise is one of infinite and marvellous condescension, and should awaken the deepest love and gratitude in every breast. Compare with this great promise, Rom. 8:9-17; 1 John 4:12, 13, 16; Rev. 3:20. Although the words *with him*, might seem to indicate what is commonly expressed by having one's dwelling-place near that of a friend; yet the sense expressed in varied language, is the same as that in v. 17, where the *indwelling* of the Spirit is referred to.

24. The same general idea is here, according to John's usage, negatively expressed. The negative repetition of the sentiment not only gives it emphasis, but is thus shaped, in order to preserve a correspondence with the negative portion of Judas' inquiry, *and not unto the world*, as v. 23 constituted the reply to his *thou wilt manifest thyself to us. He that loveth me not, &c.* The form of expression is inverted from v. 21. An exact correspondence would have required, *he that keepeth not my sayings loveth me not.* It corresponds however to the order of the words in v. 23. These varied forms of expression are designed to show, that love implies obedience, and obedience, love, and where one exists the other is found also.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

26 But ^athe Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Fa-

^a Ver. 16; Lu. 24:49; ch. 15:26; & 16:7.

ther will send in my name, 'he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

ⁱ Ch. 2:22; & 12:16; & 16:13; 1 Jo. 2:20, 27.

He that loveth me not, is equivalent to *if a man love me not*, the same hypothetical form adopted in the corresponding portion of v. 23. The form presupposes the realization of the condition, and the consequence follows, that one who loves not Jesus *will not keep his sayings*. The necessary implication from the preceding verse is that the Father will not love him, nor will the Father and Son come to him, and take up their abode with him. It hardly need be said, that not to love Jesus Christ, is essentially and necessarily to hate Him, there being no neutral ground between the extremes of love and hate. See Ns. on Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13. *Sayings*, the same in the original translated words, in v. 23. *And the word which ye hear*, &c. This is added to give importance to the words of Jesus, which were acknowledged and obeyed by his disciples, but rejected by the world. The word was not his own apart from the Father, but was *the Father's who sent him* to bear just such a message to men. This makes the rejection of the gospel of Christ, rank and open rebellion against God's word and authority. I cannot forbear to refer the reader again to the evidence of the unity of the Son and of the Father, which is taught openly or by implication in all these great declarations of Jesus. At the same time the phrase *which sent me*, here, as elsewhere in its frequent utterance by our Lord, indicates not only his divine mission, but his official subordination to the Father, and is thus an expression of the profoundest humility, when regarded as spoken by one, "who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6).

25. *These things*, i. e. these instructions and consolations. *Being yet present with you*, i. e. while present with

you. The idea is implied, that soon he will leave them and his instructions will cease. Before he takes his final departure, he announces these truths to them, anticipatory in a measure of the more full and perfect revelation, which he will make to the soul of the believer by the Spirit of promise. The verb *have spoken*, is taken by Stier in its most enlarged sense, as contemplating the conclusion of all his discourses with the disciples, this not being however its sole meaning, the sense being rather, "with these last-spoken words, my speaking, teaching, discoursing, have an end." It would almost seem that our Lord was intending to finish his discourse at this point, but that from some unexplained cause, he continued it in the words which follow. "As if he had already spoken all, he continues to speak. His words begin anew and are prolonged on and on, as takes place at all important farewells; and the 'I go now,' may have been more than once uttered." Stier. See N. on v. 31.

26. *But the Comforter*. See N. on v. 16. *The Holy Ghost*, called in v. 16, *the Spirit of the truth*. The adjective *Holy*, is rendered emphatic by its position in the original after the noun to which it belongs, *the Spirit* (viz.) *the Holy*. This is the great and glorious appellation of the third Person in the adorable Trinity. See N. on Matt. 28:19. The word rendered *Ghost*, is the same as in other places is translated *Spirit*, and it would have been well had this been the word by which it was invariably translated. *Whom the Father will send in my name*. In v. 16, the Spirit is said to be given by the Father, in answer to the prayer or declared will of Jesus. This connection of the gift of the Spirit with the will of Christ, is denoted here by the words *in my name*, which, as Alford remarks, is not here

to be taken in the sense of "*in my stead*, but *in regard of me*, in answer to my prayer and prayers in my name—to those who hear my name—and as a means of manifesting me." This however does not exhaust the meaning of the phrase. As Christ declares that he came *in the Father's name* (see 5 : 43), meaning thereby, that the Father had sent him, and that he proceeded from the Father; so here *in my name*, refers to the fact, that Christ concurrently with the Father sends the Spirit (see N. on 15 : 26) on His mission, and in such a manner that the Son is in him and comes with him. There is an unfathomable mystery in this, as well as in all other things pertaining to the blessed Trinity. But of nothing are we taught more clearly and explicitly, than that while the persons of the Godhead are distinct, yet there is between them such essential unity that where one is there are all, and that the works and operations of any one of them, are essentially the works and operations of the whole Godhead. That the Holy Spirit is a distinct personality, is shown, not only from the name here given Him, but from the pronoun *he*, by which in the following clause He is referred to. But that Jesus Christ operates *in and through Him*, is also a truth taught with equal explicitness in the New Testament. See Ns. on vs. 18, 21, 23. Compare also Rom. 8 : 9; Gal. 4 : 6. *He shall teach you all things.* 'He shall instruct you in all that pertains to the proper discharge of your apostolical duties, and enlighten your minds in regard to many things which now to the eye of sense look dark and mysterious.' *All things* in the first clause, is not to be constructed with the words *whatsoever I have said unto you*, for they belong only to the clause *bring all things*, &c. The idea is that not only were all things, which Jesus had himself taught and said while personally with them, to be recalled to their mind by the Holy Ghost, but all other truths necessary to their ministerial work, were to be revealed to them by this same Helper or Comforter. *All things* is not absolutely but relatively spoken. It has a

very comprehensive sweep, but does not go beyond the bounds of what may be proper and essential for the disciples to know, in the discharge of their duty as religious teachers of men. The misinterpretation of this passage by the Church of Rome and by fanatical men, as a promise of a continued revelation under the dispensation of the Spirit (Tholuck), has led some interpreters, as Grotius, to connect *all things*, in both instances, with the clause *whatsoever I have said unto you*. But with the restricted sense, demanded by the scope and design of the passage to be given to *all things* in the former clause, no shadow of proof can be found in it of a continued teaching of new things, and the making of new and distinct revelations, such as the Romanists claim, without a wresting of the passage from its obvious and legitimate import. *Bring all things to remembrance.* Who can doubt that John himself in the composition of this Gospel, experienced the truth of the promise here made. It was forty years or more, after the Ascension, when he wrote it. After so long a period, he could not have related with such minute accuracy the discourses of Jesus, unless the Holy Ghost had brought these things to his remembrance. Stier after Gerlach takes this expression in the deep sense of not "merely calling back the words to their remembrance, but the opening to them the words which they had heard, but which had remained obscure; in short, the disclosing with undeceiving clearness the meaning of the sayings of Jesus." That this is implied in the words there can be no doubt; yet the fundamental idea is what lies upon the face of the passage, *a bringing back to one's mind, a reminding* of words formerly spoken, or events of the past. A question here arises, whether this promise was addressed to the great body of the believers in every age, or to the apostles alone. There can be no doubt from the nature of the case, and the limitation denoted in the words *whatsoever I have said unto you*, that special reference is had to those who were then reclining with him at the table.

27 ^kPeace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. ^lLet not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

& Phil. 4: 7; Col. 3: 15.

^l Ver. 1.

^m Ver. 3, 13.

But as a great Illuminator and Enlightener, to give life and energy to God's word, and to open the understanding for its reception, all which is embraced in the scope of this promise, the Spirit is the gift of the whole church in every age.

27. Stier supposes a short pause between this and the preceding verse, to enable the disciples to reflect upon the consoling promises which had just been made to them, after which he proceeds with the farewell, which in v. 25, he had already begun. *Peace I leave with you, &c.* This was the form of parting salutation. But the time and occasion impart to it something more than a mere form of farewell. It was intended as a gracious indication of his love and tender regard for their welfare, at this solemn moment when he is about to leave them and return to his Father. *My peace*; literally, *peace that* (which is) *mine*. Some expositors find a distinction between these words and *peace* in the first clause. There it has the sense usually given to such a parting salutation among men. In the second clause, it refers to the peculiar inward peace which Jesus gives to those who are his true disciples. This, as Alford remarks, he gave over and above that other. *Not as the world giveth*, i. e. not in that formal and heartless manner, in which such salutations are exchanged among men. In the mouth of Jesus, it was not the utterance of an unmeaning compliment, but the bestowment of a real blessing. There is no denial here that there is peace of a certain kind enjoyed by the world, or that men may be sincere in their wishes for the peace and happiness of others, even when they are strangers to the love of Christ. But the simple idea is, that

28 Ye have heard how ^mI said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, ⁿI go unto the Father: for ^omy Father is greater than I.

ⁿ Ver. 12; ch. 16: 16; & 20: 17.

^o See ch. 5: 13; & 10: 30; Phil. 2: 6.

true and lasting peace is in the gift only of Jesus; and that when he bestows it in the form of a gracious benediction, it becomes the real possession of the soul of the believer. *Let not your heart be troubled, &c.* An emphatic repetition of the first verse, having increased force and pertinency, from the rich promises and consolations with which the discourse of Jesus abounds. *Neither let it be afraid.* This is added to the exhortation as it stands in v. 1. The verb here employed is derived from a word signifying *cowardly, faint-hearted*, and hence *miserable, wretched*, through cowardice and continual fear. The word therefore is one of strong import. They were not to prosecute the work of their mission in a dejected and timid frame of mind, but with all joy and boldness, as those upon whom rested the peace and favor of their Lord and Master. How well they obeyed this parting direction of their Lord, is seen in their whole history, as set forth in the Acts of the Apostles.

28. *Ye have heard, &c.* Reference is had to his announcement of this fact in 13: 33. In the words *and come again unto you*, there is a condensed epitome of all which he had said in the preceding discourse. See vs. 3, 16-19, 21, 23. *If ye loved me.* Our Lord does not here deny that they loved in any degree. The expression has a comparative force: 'if ye loved me with that full measure of love, to which by the gift of the Spirit, you will soon attain, *ye would rejoice*; literally, *ye would have rejoiced.*' See Matt. 11: 21. It appears quite evident from this, that his words of tender consolation had failed to dispel the feeling of sadness, which, in view of his declaration that he was soon to depart from them, was weighing down their spirit.

He now reminds them, that this sorrow and dejection of spirit are the result of their want of supreme love to him. If they were possessed of this love, they would even rejoice in the announcement, that he was about to go to the Father. His departure would be the occasion not of grief but of positive joy.

For my Father, &c. This is logically connected with the preceding *ye would rejoice*, as a reason, and inasmuch as it can have no direct relation to their own immediate welfare, the reason must be founded on an elevation to a higher state of glory, to which the Redeemer was about to be advanced. This will serve as the key to the meaning of this causal sentence, *for my Father is greater than I*. This superiority of the Father is susceptible of two meanings : 1. *My Father is greater than I* in an essential or metaphysical sense. But this contradicts the abundant testimony of the whole gospel of John, that the Son is essentially the coequal of the Father, and that no inferiority of essence can be predicated of him. And how, we may ask, could this be a subject of joy to his disciples ? Was the mere fact that the Father was greater than the Son, a reason why they should rejoice that Jesus was about to leave them ? In his present condition, the Father was greater than he, and wherein would this relation be essentially changed in his returning to the Father, that it should be urged upon them as a ground of joy ? If his Father was essentially greater than he, it was an infinite excess of greatness ; and the Lord Jesus Christ would approximate no nearer to the awful and infinite majesty of the Father, by ascending into heaven, than by remaining on earth, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Between the infinite and finite, there is an infinitude of disseverance which defies all approximation of the latter to the former. The highest step which a created being could reach in imagination, would leave infinite heights yet to be scaled, before the Eternal Mind in all its illimitable perfections was approached. We ask then again, if superiority of essence is here denoted, in what

respect that superiority was a reason why the disciples should rejoice that Jesus was about to go to the Father, when the superiority spoken of already existed, and would exist in full degree wherever Jesus might go ? The passage thus interpreted seems to have no appreciable sense.

The only other meaning which remains to be attached to these words, is that of *official superiority*, and conversely, that for the time being there was in him an *official inferiority*. This inferiority which belonged to him as God-man, Messiah, was in the future ages to be laid aside, but not by one sudden act disconnected with the great moral results to be secured by the redemptive economy. He was to perform the functions of Mediator, Intercessor, King, and final Judge, before he could surrender up his trust to God the Father, who had sent him on this mission of atoning love. His return to the Father is here spoken of as a reason for joy, because it was the first step in his elevation from the depths of humiliation, into which as Redeemer of mankind he had descended, to his original glory and equality with the Father, which he yet essentially possessed, but of which, in the wonderful stoop of his grace, he had virtually disrobed himself. The second and final step would be taken, on that awfully sublime occasion, when he should give up the kingdom unto God even the Father that God might be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 24-28). With this view, which we believe to be the scriptural one in regard to our Lord's true and essential being, we are able to elicit from the clause the highest reason, why the disciples should rejoice, when he announced to them that he was about to go to the Father. He would then enter upon that glorified state, which was to follow his life of suffering and humiliation on earth, and this would be antecedent and preparatory to the final accomplishment of the work of redemption, and his laying down the Mediatorial office, as declared in 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

Alford makes this comment on the passage : "*greater*, and therefore the going of Jesus to the Father is an

29 And ^p now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

p Ch. 13: 19; & 16: 4.

advancement. This word *greater*, as Luther well remarks, "is not here used as referring to the nature or essence of the Son as related to the Father, but as indicating that particular subordination to the Father in which the Lord Jesus then was, and the cessation of that state of humiliation, and entering into his glory, which would take place on his being received up to the Father." So also Calvin: "Christ does not here compare the divinity of the Father with his own, nor his human nature with the divine essence of the Father, but rather his present condition with the celestial glory into which he was soon to be received." Tholuck thus expresses the same idea: "this inferiority must consist in something which the return of Christ to the Father would fully remove, consequently, not in the humanity itself, but only the humanity in its state of lowliness." With this view, Stier, and Webster and Wilkinson, substantially accord. Olshausen makes the superiority of the Father the necessary result of the eternal generation of the Son. "The Son is born of the essence of the Father, but not inversely the Father from the Son: hence the Father is the cause of the Son, but the Son is not the cause of the Father. The Son proceeding thus from the Father, there was necessarily in him a desire to return to the Father, as every being is attracted to its source; accordingly the return to the Father was the satisfaction of the desire, felt by the Son who longed after his source, and this is the relation of the Son to the Father indicated by the words *greater than I*. This exposition of Olshausen carries with it its own refutation. The *greater than I*, if founded on an essential relation of the Son to the Father, as born of or proceeding from him, must have eternally existed, and will eternally exist, and the absolute equality

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: ^q for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

q Ch. 12: 31; & 16: 11.

of the first and second Persons in the Godhead is given up, whatever may be said to the contrary.

29. *And now I have told you*, &c. Our Lord here refers to what he had told them in regard to the Comforter, who should come after his departure, and in whom should be enjoyed by them his own spiritual presence. *Before it come to pass*, i. e. before the manifestation of the promised Spirit. The verb *come to pass* (i. e. happen, take place), has that tense in the original, which denotes a momentary act, and not one continued and incomplete. The word, however, which is here employed, shows that it is not an event which has actually taken place, but one yet in the future. Thus the certainty of the thing spoken of, is the same as though it were already a matter of history. These shades of the Greek, it is impossible to transfer into English, without circumlocution. *That* denotes the object or purpose of our Lord's revelation at this time of the descent of the Spirit. *When it has come to pass* (literally *whenever it may happen*), i. e. when the Holy Spirit has been sent according to promise. *Ye might* (better *may*) *believe*. "The effect of these disclosures would be that their faith would the more certainly connect him personally with the gift of God, the Holy Ghost." Webster and Wilkinson.

30. *Hereafter*, i. e. from this time onward, until my apprehension and death. The declaration *I will not talk much with you*, in the nature of the case, is to be limited to the time embraced in the conflict referred to in the words, *the prince of this world cometh*. As the thing asserted depends not on his own will or purpose, but upon the event spoken of in the following clause, the simple future *I shall not talk* (i. e. have opportunity to talk), would have been a preferable translation. The

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me com-

mandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

r Ch. 10:18; Phi. 2:6; He. 5:8.

word *much* refers to a long and extended discourse, and by implication, as Stier remarks, shows that "he had *some* words more to say, and was not about to break off at v. 31, as some have supposed." *For the prince of this world cometh* (to make his final and chief assault upon me), *and hath nothing in me*, i. e. hath no power over me; or as Alford conjectures, finds in me no sinful propensity, "no point of appliance whereon to fasten his attack." So Hutcheson: "Christ being free from sin, Satan had nothing of his own in him, either to accuse him, or of corruptions, upon which to fasten his temptations and make them prevail." *The prince of this world* is evidently Satan, the prince of devils (see N. on Matt. 12:24); the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), who after the temptation in the desert had departed from him for a season (Luke 4:13), and now was about to return, in order to make one effort more to thwart the purpose of his mission, or at least, to gratify his malignancy by effecting his death. "The approach of Satan at this period, and his agency in our Lord's great trial, are marked in various ways (see 12:31; 13:27; Luke 22:31, 53)." Webster and Wilkinson. The coming of the prince of this world, includes not only the personal presence of the arch adversary, in this last and great conflict with the Redeemer, but also all his tools and instruments, such as Judas, the chief priests, Pilate, Herod, the soldiers, mocking rabble, &c.

31. *But that the world, &c.* There is an ellipsis which must be here supplied, in order to maintain the connection with the preceding context. Alford thus fills out the sense: *But* (his power over me for death will be permitted by me) *that the world, &c.* There is another mode of construction, which is to make the clause beginning with, *that the world may know*, to depend upon *so I do*, i. e. 'my conduct in this

crisis and my voluntary submission to the indignities of my enemies, result from my desire to evince thereby my love to the Father who sent me; and *therefore as the Father hath given commandment*, and ordained that I should pass through suffering and death to a state of glorification at his right hand, *thus I* give myself up to my enemies and *do his will*.' There is still another method of construction, which is founded on an interpretation of the words, *arise, let us go hence*, as an incitement to go forth and meet the adversary, and all the agencies of evil which he was marshalling to action against the Redeemer. These words, constructed with *but*, instead of constituting, as they do in our common version, an independent sentence, would give this as the sense: *But arise let us go hence* (i. e. let us go forth to meet this array of sin and death, led on by the prince of this world), *that the world may know, &c.* In this case, *even so I do* would refer to this holy zeal and boldness contained in the words, *let us go hence*. Of these three modes of construction, I prefer decidedly that which I have first given. *Arise, let us go hence*. This is not, as some think, an anticipatory direction to be obeyed at the close of his discourse, but one to be carried into immediate effect. It was a command to rise from the table, and make preparations to depart from the city. The only question is, whether as a matter of fact they left the guest-chamber immediately, or lingered yet around the table, until after the remaining discourse and prayer of Jesus contained in the 17th chapter. Webster and Wilkinson take the ground that they went forth immediately, the subsequent portion of the discourse and the prayer being pronounced on their way to the garden. It will always remain an open question, whether they went immediately out; or lingered around the table, unwilling that a con-

versation so heavenly and comforting should be broken off. I incline decidedly, however, to the latter view. All that is recorded in Chaps. XV.-XVII. was probably spoken in the chamber, where they had reclined at the feast, our Lord and his disciples now assuming, however, a standing posture. If the remaining portion of the discourse and the prayer were spoken on their way to Gethsemane, the hymn alluded to by Matthew and Mark, must have been sung previous to their departure from the guest-chamber; for we cannot suppose that they would have run the hazard of arousing their enemies, by a hymn, sung by so many voices, either in the streets of Jerusalem on their way out, or in the valley which separated it from the Mount of Olives. But a comparison of Matt. 26:3; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39; John 18:1, will show beyond all question, that the last exercise which they performed previous to their going forth into the garden, was the singing of the hymn. If this be so, and the hymn was sung in the upper room where they celebrated the passover, the whole discourse and the prayer must also have been pronounced there. Dr. Schauffler places the thanksgiving hymn between the words "arise let us go hence," and the residue of the discourse, which he rightly thinks was pronounced while the disciples were standing about our Lord in the upper room. This was the natural place for the hymn; but may we not suppose that it was deferred a few moments by the discourse of our Saviour, which was almost immediately resumed?

It seems also very unlikely in itself considered, that words of such calm and gentle import and so evidently continuous of the preceding discourse, and especially the prayer in Chap. XVII., would have been pronounced in a dark night to a company of eleven men while making a hasty egress from the city, and by no means in so compact a body as to permit their all hearing the speaker, unless he addressed them in a loud tone. This, as has been remarked of their singing the hymn on their way out of the city, would have exposed them

to their vigilant enemies. So Stier well observes: "we cannot imagine how our Lord could have uttered these most confidential final sayings in the open air, amid the crowds which we must assume at the feast time—the last prayer especially requiring a secluded and undisturbed place." I think therefore that when our Lord gave this direction, the company rose up from their reclining posture, and as some moments must have been consumed in arranging the things of the table, so as to be left in orderly appearance, they continued to linger, and thus seeing how anxious they were to hear something more from his lips, he continued his discourse, as related in 16:1. After the discourse and prayer were ended, they sang the hymn, and then went forth with silent and uninterrupted steps to the garden, where our Lord entered upon his agony as related by the Synoptic Evangelists, and passed over by John, who had so fully recorded the discourse and prayer at the table.

CHAPTER XV.

1-27. CHRIST THE TRUE VINE. HIS DISCIPLES HATED BY THE WORLD. *Jerusalem.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. This discourse, as has been remarked in N. on 14:31, must be regarded as the continuation of the preceding one, pronounced not on their way out of the city, but in the same upper chamber, where they had celebrated the passover, and where had been instituted the sacrament of the Lord's supper. That part of the discourse contained in this chapter is very closely united, and yet we may discern some natural points of division, which may help us to the right understanding of the chapter. Vs. 1-6 contain the similitude of the vine and its branches; vs. 7-10, the application of the figure to their union with him, the outward manifestation and proof of which was their observance of his commandments (see Ns. on 14:15, 21, 23, 24); vs. 11-17, the consequent joy and love for him and one another, and the friendship which should cement them and him in one eternal bond of union; vs. 18-

CHAPTER XV.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 "Every branch in me that

a Mt. 15:13.

25, the hatred of the world as the counterpart of this love, and the sources of comfort to be derived from the fact, that he their Master had experienced also this enmity of the world; vs. 26, 27, the renewal of the promise of the Comforter, as a co-witness with them of the things pertaining to him and his gospel.

1. *I am the true vine.* This similitude reminds us of that contained in 10:1-18, yet the relation denoted is much more intimate and vital, than the relation of a shepherd to his flock, which denotes rather fidelity and love. The loving union of believers to Christ, is here illustrated and enforced by the organic and dependent connection of the branches with the vine to which they belong. The *true vine* is something more than that to which prophecy refers, or that which is simply abiding and substantial, as opposed to the natural vine which is subject to decay and death. It is CHRIST, the true archetype of that union, which is so strikingly set forth in the natural organism of the vine and its branches. "The material creations of God are only inferior examples of that fine spiritual life and organism, in which the creature is raised up to partake of the divine nature." Alford. The reasons for the imagery here made use of, such as that there was a vine trained about the window of the chamber, or the carved vines on the doors of the temple, or the vineyards on their way to the garden, are all too fanciful to be adopted as true and legitimate. Our Lord and his disciples were too conversant with the vine, to require the similitude here made use of, to have been suggested by the actual sight of one at the time it was spoken. There is no doubt, that our Lord very frequently drew his imagery from sensible objects around him. But this must not be so

beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

far pushed, as to render it necessary that these natural objects should be present always to the eye, when he drew therefrom the materials of his metaphors and similitudes. *My Father is the husbandman.* This accords with the truth which he had so often repeated, that he had been sent of the Father, and that he had come into the world to do His will. It is consonant also with that great parable, in which the householder sent his son to receive the stipulated fruits of his vineyard (Matt. 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16). God sent his Son into the world, 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."

2. *Every branch in me, &c.* Besides the fruitful branches which are to remain in connection with the vine, there are also unfruitful ones which are to be lopped off, in order that those which are fruitful and healthy, may bring forth more fruit. This evidently designates the visible church of Christ, with its true and false professors, and also the excising process by which all who have no vital connection by faith with Jesus Christ, are to be removed as worthless branches from the vine. These false and barren professors have an external connection with Christ ("*every branch in me* that beareth not fruit"), but this is their only connection. They do not draw from the vine that living nutriment and support which is essential to fruit-bearing branches. *He* the husbandman, removes them therefore from the vine, as being worthless in themselves, and taking the moisture and support which properly belong to those branches which are fruitful. But the vine-dresser does not stop here in the pruning process. Not

3 ^b Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

^b Ch. 13: 10; & 17: 17; Ep. 5: 26; 1 Pe. 1: 22.

only are the barren branches all carefully lopped off from the vine, but the fruitful branches are also subjected to the pruner's knife. *Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it*, i. e. he clears it of all its worthless parts, and prevents its excessive growth, by shortening the branch, and removing its exuberant leaves and twigs. The expression *every branch*, both here and in the previous clause, is placed absolutely in the sentence, and thus is rendered emphatic. *He taketh away* is literally, *he taketh it away*, and thus it conforms to the construction, *he purgeth it*. The clause, *that it may bring forth more fruit*, stands as the ground or reason for the pruning process just before mentioned. The efforts of the vine-dresser are all directed to this one object, that the most abundant fruit may be obtained from the branches. It should be noted, that the vine is here represented as in a perfect and healthful condition. There is no necessity of loosening the soil around it and applying manure, as in the case of the barren fig tree (Luke 13: 6-9). No threat of excision is pronounced against it, in case its branches do not all bear fruit. It is planted in such favorable soil, and is so vigorous and healthy, that it suffices to furnish its life-giving sap to all its branches, however numerous they may be, and to whatever extent they may draw upon it for the elements of life and strength.

3. Our Lord here departs for a moment from the figurative language, which he is employing to denote the intimate connection between himself and his people, and seems to refer back to the symbolical act of washing, which he had performed upon his disciples during the feast (13: 4-11). The word *now*, has here the sense of *already*, as opposed to a future time when they shall attain to a still higher measure of sanctification. They were already fruit-bearing branches, but would nevertheless

4 ^c Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the

^c Col. 1: 23; 1 Jo. 2: 6.

be subject to the pruning process, in order to their increase in grace, and the fruits of holiness. The word *pure*, is not a varied form of expression for *purgeth*, which in the original is of kindred etymological signification, but has a more general sense. In v. 2, special reference is had to the removal from the branch of every thing superfluous and hurtful, and which would obstruct or divert the healthful flow of the sap from the vine, or injure the clusters of fruit which were forming and ripening. But here reference is had to a moral purity or cleanliness, as opposed to the defilement of sin. The word has, however, in this place a comparative sense. The disciples were in a measure freed from ignorance, prejudice, and sin; but they would be increasingly so, under the dispensation of the Spirit and the enlarged measure of grace which they would then enjoy. *Through the word*, &c. This was the great agent of their purification. It was to them spirit and life. So in his prayer (17: 17), the word is declared to be the sanctifying agent of his people. See also v. 7. Hutcheson remarks on this passage that, "when the word is not operative on men, it is no evidence that they are purged, or that what they seem to be, is real." *Which I have spoken unto you*. Reference is had principally to the instructions of Jesus himself. But in a general sense, this includes the whole word of God, the Old as well as the New Testament. The Spirit of inspiration is the same in all parts of the sacred volume, and therefore "all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.

4. The similitude of the vine and its branches, is here applied to the relation which subsisted between our Lord and his disciples. This is more distinctly brought out in v. 5. *Abide in*

vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches. He that abideth in

me. It is here assumed, that they were already connected with him by a vital union, and this connection they are commanded to carefully preserve. The words *abide in me*, when regarded in the light of the similitude here made use of, signify that they should remain in such connection with the vine, and bring forth such fruits of love and obedience, that the vine-dresser might not deem it necessary to remove them as worthless and unproductive branches. Here the similitude however ends. They were not like the branches, incapable of volition and effort to preserve the connection with the vine. They were rational men, free moral agents. They could see and appreciate the great good which would result from the connection established between them and Jesus Christ; and therefore a command is addressed to them to abide in him, which could in no sense be applicable to the natural branches of a vine. No one then should so pervert this figure, as to make it teach that the connection of the believer with Jesus Christ is such, that no more responsibility for the maintenance of this bond of union rests upon him, than upon the branch which adheres to the vine. This feature of the similitude is thus referred to by Alford: "The natural strictness of the similitude is here departed from. The branch cannot sever itself from the vine; but such a case supposed, every one will see the inevitable consequence. It is the permitted free will of the creature, which makes the difference between the branches in the two cases." *And I in you*, is not here a promise, but a part of the command, *abide I in you*. The relation of believers to Christ is so intimate, that his abiding in them is secured by the simple act of their abiding in him. Hence the performance of the command on the part of the believer, secures the indwelling of Christ designated by the words, *I in you*. Al-

me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much ^d fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

d Ho. 14:8; Phi. 1:11; & 4:13.

ford expresses it: 'Take care that ye abide in me and I in you; both these being necessary to the bringing forth fruit.' So also Stier: 'So abide in me that I may abide in you.' *As the branch cannot*, &c. This mutual connection is shown to be necessary to the bringing forth of fruit, as the connection of the branch with the vine is a necessary condition of its fruitfulness. *Of itself*; literally, *from itself*, i. e. from its own unsupported, organic life. *Except it abide in the vine*. The idea is: 'but can only bear fruit if it abide in the vine.' We must not supply, as the grammatical construction would seem to demand, the words *of itself*, from the preceding clause. That ceases to be a condition real or supposed, when the branch is connected with the vine. In such a case, there neither can be, nor is there needed any other source, whence the element of life and fruitfulness is to be derived, than the vine itself. *No more can ye* (bear fruit), *except ye abide in me*. This shows that there must be such a living connection between Christ and the believer, that as the branch is united organically with the vine, and receives thence all its nutriment and support, so the believer must draw all his spiritual life and strength from the Redeemer. Hence in the application, we must suppose no other connection of the unfruitful branch with the vine, than that which is external. The real connection is evinced only by the criterion here laid down, the bringing forth of fruit. Where this sign of a living connection with Christ is wanting, the evidence from a mere profession of his name before men, is of no value. In the clause *except ye abide in me*, the words *and I in you*, are omitted, because the former implies the latter and the repetition from the first clause in the verse, where both conditions are expressed, would be unnecessary and cumbrous.

5. In order that his disciples might

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and

e Mt. 3:10; & 7:19.

not mistake the point of the application, he emphatically expresses, in plain language what was implied in v. 4, that he himself was the Vine, and the disciples its branches. The pronoun *I* and *ye*, are emphatic in the original, and serve to render the relation of Christ to his disciples, denoted by this similitude, distinct and impressive. *Ye are the branches*. This was addressed to the disciples, but is evidently true of all in every age, who by faith in Christ have become united to him, as the branch to the vine. It is strange that Webster and Wilkinson should say of this passage, as they do, "this justifies and explains the language of the Baptistal Service, 'seeing now that this child is regenerate and grafted (Rom. 11: 16-24) into the body of Christ's church.'" No proof whatever can be adduced from these words addressed to such men as Peter, James, John, and their fellow-disciples, that baptized infants are 'regenerate' and living branches of the Great Vine. *He that abideth in me*, &c. The sentiment of the preceding verse is here positively expressed, but with an enlargement of promise. What was *cannot bear fruit* in v. 4, is here *bringeth forth much fruit*. The idea is, that this living and abiding union with Christ is conducive to the highest perfection of a fruit-bearing branch, both in quantity and quality, for this latter element is without doubt implied in the general expression *more fruit*. The repetition from v. 4, of the phrase *I in him*, is designed to give emphatic prominence to the indwelling connection which mutually subsists between Christ and the believer. *The same* is in the original highly emphatic, *this person* (and no other) *bringeth forth*, &c. The words *he that abideth*, &c., are placed absolutely in the sentence, the pronoun *he* being repeated in *the same* (literally *this*), which is thus rendered very prominent and emphatic. *For without me*, &c. The reason why those who abide in Christ bring forth

is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

much fruit, is here given in the form of a denial, that any fruit can be borne by one who is not thus vitally connected with Christ. *Without me* represents a branch that is severed from the vine, or what is the same thing, has no vital connection with it. He to whom this feature of the similitude applies, receives from Christ no power to bear fruit, and hence strives in his own unaided strength to produce such results as will indicate true discipleship. But in this he must prove unsuccessful. Christ says to every person who thus depends on his own righteousness for salvation and the fruits of holiness, *without* (or apart from) *me ye can do nothing*, i. e. can bring forth no spiritual fruit, or accomplish any thing peculiar and appropriate to the true believer in Christ. Some refer the verb *can do*, to the bearing of fruit. But this is expressed by a different verb in the original, and it is better therefore to give it the more generic sense of doing good. This comports with the general scope of the passage, and adds force to the argument of the necessity of the vital union with Christ here set forth and illustrated. The general sentiment is that separate and apart from him, not only can they bring forth no fruit, but can accomplish nothing whatever of good.

6. The fearful end which awaits such as have no inward and real fellowship with Christ, is here depicted. *If a man abide not in me*. Apostasy from a real and vital union with Christ is not here referred to—although that danger is always regarded in God's word, as imminent and only to be averted by prayer and holy living in connection with his unchanging love—but an external profession of the name of Christ, without a living connection with him. The expression, *if a man abide not in me*, does not imply the termination of a living connection, but that true union and fellowship with Christ was never enjoyed by this worthless branch. There

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ^f ye shall ask

^f Ver. 16; ch. 14: 13, 14; & 16: 23.

is no true branch of the Vine that does not bear some fruit. It is a faithful and gracious promise, that even the most feeble and sickly of these living branches shall be cleansed by the vine-dresser, so that they shall bring forth more fruit. Before the unproductive branch is cut off and cast forth to be burned, the evidence of its utter worthlessness is seen in its unproductive state. This unfruitfulness never appears in a branch so connected with the vine, as to be in full reception of its nutritious and fruit-producing sap. We do not intend by this to adopt or defend the supralapsarian error, that the true child of grace cannot in any sense whatever fall away. This he can and would do, were it not for the unchanging grace of God, which from the foundation of the world chose him to life everlasting, and keeps him in the path of truth and holy obedience. But what we contend for against Alford is, that "falling from grace" and "the steps of the fall," are not the teaching of this passage; but the simple idea is, that those who have no living connection with Christ, represented by *abiding in him*, are to be cut off eventually even from the outward and visible connection with his body, and cast forth with his other and more open enemies from his presence and favor. The difficulty, which here and elsewhere besets the exposition adopted by Stier and Alford, is their mistaking the warnings of God's word against apostasy, as proof that some will actually apostatize, in the very face of the plain declaration of our Lord (10: 27-29), and of Paul (Rom. 8: 28-39; Phil. 1: 6). 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."

But the question may arise, if this does not refer to such branches as have a real connection with the vine, how it can prove a warning to those who are the true children of God. The reply is very easy. No one except by continued holy living and unwavering

what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

faith in Christ, has evidence that he is one of the living branches; and if he should presumptuously suppose he had become so confirmed in holiness, that such warnings, as those here addressed to his disciples by Jesus Christ, had no application to him, this very presumption and self-confidence in his good estate would be the most alarming evidence, that he had never been united to Christ as a living branch. As to Alford's explanation of the withering of the branch—which he seems to regard as a second step in apostasy from the truth—that "it has lost the supply of life-giving sap," is not this pressing the similitude too far? Every branch in the natural vine has indeed a real and palpable connection with it; but is this true of all the branches of the spiritual Vine? Are there not some who have all the appearance of thrifty, vigorous, leafy branches, and yet in fact are dry and unproductive, and as it will appear when "the hidden things of dishonesty" are brought to light, were never in vital and organic connection with the Vine? No one surely can deny this. If in accordance with the metaphorical language here made use of, such branches are lopped off, is it strange that they are said to wither away and dry up? The idea couched under this imagery is, that they shall no longer appear to the eye of man, as green and thrifty branches, but as they really are and have been from the beginning, worthless and unproductive, never having absorbed from the vine any of its life-giving and nutritious properties. Hutcheson's exposition of this passage is so clear and conclusive, that I can do the reader no better service than to quote in full his language. "The second argument pressing the exhortation is an enlargement of what is said, v. 2, and taken from the danger of apostasy, and which those professors will incur, who being outwardly, by visible communion, in Christ, do not evidence the reality of their inward fellow-

8 ^o Herein is my Father glo-

g Mt. 5: 16; Phi. 1: 11.

h Ch. 8: 31; & 13: 35.

rified, that ye bear much fruit;
^h so shall ye be my disciples.

ship, by constant adherence to him and drawing virtue from him for fruitfulness, but do fall off and decline. This is held forth under the usual similitude, that as branches which do not incorporate with the tree, but do hang to it, or fall off, are by the vine-dresser east away, and having withered awhile, are gathered to be fuel for the fire, so rotten [not true] members who make apostasy are cut off from Christ and in due time sent to the pit. Albeit no real saints can totally and finally fall away and perish, yet the elect have need that the danger of apostasy, and the dreadful wrath following upon it, be laid before them, to make them afraid of defection. Therefore is this threatening laid before the disciples, to press them to their duty, albeit it will only be verified in the outward, fruitless branches, who are to be cut off (v. 2).” *Is cast forth*; literally, *was cast forth*, the act being spoken of, as if the great day of retribution and of judgment were fully come, and its results already made a matter of history. See Ns. on v. 8, also 13: 31. Winer makes the tense equivalent to the present, with the additional idea, that the not abiding has the instantaneous consequence here spoken of, namely, the being east forth as a withered branch. *As a branch*; literally, *as the branch*, i. e. the unfruitful one referred to in v. 4. *And men gather them*, &c. Under this imagery of the gathering together and burning of these dry and worthless branches, is depicted the awful end of those who profess a connection with Christ which they do not in reality possess.

7. Having warned his disciples of the dreadful doom, which should overtake all such as evince by their unfruitfulness that they have no living connection with him, our Lord now promises to such as abide in him, the most full and gracious answer to all their petitions, and thus advises them, as to the best means of increasing their fruitfulness and maintaining their con-

nection with the true Vine. This verse therefore is very intimately connected with the preceding, and is a sort of merciful equipoise to the severe language there employed to denote the fearful end of false professors and self-deceived souls. *My words abide in you*, is a varied expression for *I in you* in vs. 4, 5. The word of Christ is his own presence. Where that dwells and forms the rule of conduct, he dwells. Hence the terms are convertible and substantially the same. *Ye shall ask what ye will*, &c. This is not a promise, as some absurdly suppose, that every request made by Christ’s disciples shall be granted; but that such petitions as result from his indwelling word, and are therefore in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, shall be heard and answered. See Ns. on Matt. 7: 7; 21: 22. The verb *shall ask*, is read by Stier and Alford, as an imperative, *ask what ye will*. In such a case, the verb would be used proleptically for the future. *It shall be done unto*; literally, *it shall happen for you*, i. e. your request shall be granted.

8. The fruitfulness of the branch having been declared to be the sole evidence of its vital connection with the Vine, our Lord proceeds to show that the Father is glorified by the abundant fruit which his disciples should bear, and thus he furnishes a powerful incentive to the attainment of this essential virtue. We should be cautious, however, not to refer the bearing of fruit, which is here made the criterion of true discipleship and the means of glorifying the Father, to the external results only which crown a life of activity in the service of Christ. These are included in the expression, but the main reference is to the growth of grace in the soul, the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22, 23), as evinced by a close walk with God, and his Son Jesus Christ. This inward life will always be productive, to a greater or less extent, of the external fruits of piety, and thus

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my command-

i Ch. 14:15, 21, 23.

others will be enabled to see the evidence of true discipleship, and be led to glorify their Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). *Herein*; literally, *in this*, reference being had to the clause, *that ye bear much fruit* (see N. on v. 5). *Is glorified*. Here also as in v. 6, the aorist, *was glorified*, is employed for the future, to denote certain fulfilment, as though the act were already accomplished. See N. on v. 6. As it regards this glorification of the Father, the reader is referred to my Note on 13:31. It will suffice here to remark, that it results from the essential unity of the Father with the Son, by which any honor conferred upon the latter is virtually bestowed upon the other. A life of piety and active benevolence illustrates also the knowledge and fear of God, and conduces to the increase of vital godliness in others. *So shall ye be*, &c. This is the condition of discipleship in the school of Christ. *Shall be*; literally, *shall become*, i. e. prove yourselves to be. Two results are here represented as following their abundant fruitfulness, namely, the glorification of the Father, and the evidence of their true discipleship.

9. Under the similitude of the vine and its branches, our Lord had illustrated the vital and intimate connection which subsists between him and his disciples. He now goes on to show, that this connection is one of love, having the same characteristics as that which subsists between the Father and Son. *As*; more literally, *according as*, *just as*. The Father's love to him, and his love to his disciples, are declared to be of the very same kind. The possession of this love was essential to the relation which they sustained to him as his true disciples, and hence they were to continue in it. The same verb is here made use of, as in vs. 4, 5, 6, 7, where they were directed to abide in him, as

ments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

the true and living branch abideth in the vine. Now he shows that this inherence in him is one of love. It is to be noted that it is a continuance in *his* love, which is here enjoined upon the disciples. This is the great bond of union, that Christ first loved them, and gave himself to die for them, and the sense of this marvellous love begets in them a corresponding love for him. They were therefore by their love and obedience, to show themselves worthy recipients of his love, and thus secure its continuance. As the life-giving sap flows forth from the vine through all its branches, so the love of Christ is shed abroad in the heart of the believer, and becomes the life of the soul. A discontinuance in this love would be a severing of the branch from the Vine, and hence the abiding in Christ as the branch abides in the vine (see v. 4), is that abiding in his love which is here enjoined.

10. Prayer in v. 7 was adduced as a means of securing and perpetuating this vital union with Christ. Obedience to our Saviour's commands is here specified, as another way of effecting the continuance in his love. There is no evidence of the soul's connection with Christ, only as it is furnished in a life of faithful obedience to his revealed will (see 14:21). But not only is this obedience the proof of true discipleship, it is here declared to be the very means of indissolubly uniting the soul to Christ. The verb *keep*, is the same as that which was employed in 14:21, 23, 24, and refers not to external obedience only, but to that of the heart. *Shall abide* is the same verb employed to denote the connection of the vine with the branch (v. 4), and the union of the disciples with him, designated in vs. 4, 5, 6, 7, by the phrase *abiding in him*. *In my love*, i. e. his love for them as in v. 9. No one should so

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and ^kthat your joy might be full.

^k Ch. 16:24; & 17:13; 1 Jo. 1:4.

12 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

ℓ Ch. 13:34; 1 Th. 4:9; 1 Pe. 4:8; 1 Jo. 3:11; & 4:21.

lose sight of the analogies of the vine sending forth its sap through the branches, as to suppose that this primarily means the love of the disciples for him. See 1 John 4:19. *Even as I have kept*, &c. Here again we have our Lord's obedience to his Father's command and his continuance in His love, as an illustration and proof, that obedience on their part should be followed by a continuance in his 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. 53:3). As his devotion to his Father's will, while thus entering into the physical infirmities of our nature, secured His full and abiding love; so our obedience, amidst the temptations of life, will ensure to us his abiding love. He is in this as in other respects our great pattern, and it should be our chief aim to imitate him in his example of perfect love and obedience.

11. Our Lord again uses a form of speech, which would seem to imply that he was about to bring his discourse to a close. See Ns. on 14:25, 29. But either through the eagerness of his disciples to hear more, or the desire on his part to impress the truth upon their mind by other considerations, he continues his discourse. Alford finds in this and the places above cited, a prolepsis, that is, a hastening to the end of his discourse, and treating it as though it were ended. The words *have I spoken*, are then anticipatory of what he might more properly utter at the end of his discourse (see N. on 16:1). Such in-

terjected sentences served to show his object in thus addressing them. *That* (i. e. in order that) introduces the purpose of his discourse. *My joy*; literally, *the joy* (which is) *mine*, and hence was a gift at his own disposal. *Might remain in you*. Our Lord here refers to another form of his indwelling in his people. In v. 4, it was *I in you*, and in v. 5, *I in him*. Under a varied form of expression, his indwelling presence is denoted in v. 7, by *my words abide in you*. Here it is, *my joy might remain in you*. The verb is the same in all these instances, and refers to a fixed and permanent dwelling in the soul of the believer. There is a beautifully progressive order in these ideas. 1, His presence; 2, His words; 3, His joy at their love, faith, and obedience. The obvious antithesis between *my joy* and *your joy*, shows that it is our Lord's joy over his faithful and beloved disciples, and not their joy concerning him, or that which proceeds from him, to which reference is had. Alford takes it in the high and extended sense of his own holy exultation, the joy of the Son in the consciousness of the love of God and of his unity with the Father (see v. 10). I prefer, however, to restrict this indwelling joy of Jesus to that which results from the unity of the believer with him, and the fruits of holiness which are consequent thereon. *And that your joy might be full*, i. e. perfected, rendered complete. This clause is grammatically dependent upon, *these words have I spoken unto you*, yet the joy spoken of is connected with, and flows from the indwelling joy of Jesus. When that enters and takes possession of the heart, it awakens a corresponding emotion in the believer, and the fulness of the one secures the fulness and perfection of the other.

12. *This is my commandment*. In 13:34, it is styled a "new command-

13 ^m Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 ⁿ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

m Ch. 10: 11, 15; Ro. 5: 7, 8; Ep. 5: 2; 1 Jo. 3: 16.

n Ch. 14: 15, 23; see Mt. 12: 50.

ment" (on which see Note). It appears however, from v. 10, that this was not his only commandment. It was doubtless the sum and substance of all the rest, as love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 3: 10), and hence was referred to by our Lord at one time, as a *new*, and at another, as *his* commandment. *As I have loved*, &c. "The line of thought is continued from vs. 9, 10. *As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; as I have loved you, so love ye one another.*" Webster and Wilkinson.

13. The greatness of his love for them, is now shown in his readiness to lay down his life in their behalf. With this verse compare (Rom. 5: 7-10, where the love of Christ is declared to be exemplified in the fact, that he died for those who were yet sinners. This shows clearly that *for* (or *in behalf of*) *his friends*, is not to be so interpreted, as to restrict Christ's death to the benefit of his friends only. Paul adduces the death of Jesus for a *sinful* world, as one of the highest examples of love which can be conceived. But our Lord is here conversing with his disciples, and cites an example of more common occurrence, as the self-sacrifice of a man for his friends. The expression *greater love*, is not to be taken then in an absolute, but in a relative sense, of the devotion of a man to his friends. No greater love to a friend could be exhibited, than a readiness to lay down one's life in their behalf. But in a higher and more absolute sense, Paul points to our Lord's death for those who were his enemies, as one of the most vivid exhibitions of the divine love which has ever been made: "God commendeth his love toward us, in, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Stier remarks,

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.

o See Ge. 18: 17; ch. 17: 26; Ac. 20: 27.

that "our Lord does not speak of the redeeming design of his death, as in Rom. 5: 8, but of that point of similarity in his great love, which we may recognize and imitate." These words of Jesus partake of the nature of an aphorism or proverbial saying.

14. This verse contains the application of the general truth stated in v. 13. Jesus does not expressly say, that he is about to manifest this highest expression of human love, by laying down his life for his disciples. But the declarations of his approaching death which at other times he had made, together with the affecting rite which he had just established, furnished abundant evidence, that in calling the disciples his friends, he meant to be understood that he was about to give this mark of friendship. The *friends* in v. 13, are here identified with those whom Jesus was now addressing. '*Ye are my friends*, the very ones to whom I have just made reference, as those for whom it would be the highest manifestation of love for one to die.' When our Lord uttered the saying contained in v. 13, the disciples may have had misgivings, whether they were such true and devoted friends of Jesus, as to warrant his giving himself as such an example of love in their behalf. Our Lord dispels all fear and apprehension of this sort, by asserting that they were his friends, but only on the ground that they remained steadfast in love and obedience. *If ye do*, &c. Obedience to our Saviour's commands is the only evidence which any of his followers can have, that they are his friends, and entitled through grace to the benefits of his death.

15. Our Lord confirms the marvelous declaration which he had just made,

16 ^p Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ^r ordained you, that ye should go and

^p Ch. 6:70; & 13:13; 1 Jo. 4:10, 19.
^q Mt. 28:19; Ma. 16:15; Col. 1:6.

that they were his friends, by averring that henceforth he should address them by this appellation, and no longer call them *servants*. The word *henceforth*, would seem to imply, that up to this time he had designated them as servants. This must be taken in a modified sense. He had never called them servants in the low and menial sense of the term. Yet as we see from 13:13, 14, he had permitted himself to be addressed as their Lord and Master, which implies the correlative, servant, attendant, follower. But henceforth even this mode of expression was to be dropped, and he was to address them simply and solely as his friends. Alford thinks that this is proleptically spoken of the state in which he would afterward place them under the Spirit. But it seems rather to suit the intimate relationship which he was now establishing with them, to make this assertion of his to take immediate effect. *For the servant knoweth not, &c.* The confidence reposed in them was proof that they were admitted to the most intimate friendship, and no longer sustained to him the relation of servants. Our Lord had now divulged many things to them, of which they had before been ignorant. This enlightenment would be more full and perfect under the dispensation of the Spirit; yet enough had already been communicated to them to show, that they were no longer to be styled servants, but to be addressed as friends. *Knoweth not what his lord doeth*, i. e. is not admitted to his counsels, or made the confidant of his plans and intentions. This is a general truth of universal acceptance. A favorite servant may be honored with his master's confidence, but never so as to ignore or abrogate the relation of master and servant which exists between them. Indeed the very condescension of such confidential intercourse on the

bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain; that ^r whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

^r Ver. 7; ch. 14:13.

part of the master, oftentimes awakens in the servant the keenest sense of his low condition, and the most bitter regrets of his want of personal freedom. *Have called.* The verb is one of stronger import than the one translated *call*, in the former clause, having the sense of *declaring, pronouncing*. The clause *for all things, &c.*, contains the proof that they had been admitted to terms of most intimate friendship, and antithetically corresponds to the clause, *for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth*. It is noticeable how our Lord in the words, *all things which I have heard of my Father*, continues to give prominence to his official subordination to the Father. In referring however, as he does here, to his preëxistent state in the bosom of God, from whom he had received the things which he was commissioned to reveal to man, he also holds out with great distinctness, his essential unity with the Father, which in so many instances he avers to exist. *Have made.* He had already revealed many things to them; he would make still further and more perfect revelations through the agency of the promised Spirit.

16. As he had insisted so strongly upon their obedience to his commands, as an evidence of his abiding love (v. 5), and a means of continuance therein (v. 10), there was danger that they should attribute to it a kind of saving virtue. He therefore effectually prevents such a mistake, by averring that he had chosen them to a life of holiness and the enjoyment of his favor. Their good works were not the cause of this, for their choice to salvation preceded any act of obedience which they had performed. The obligation was therefore all on their side. The verb rendered *have chosen*, literally signifies, *to choose, or select out*, and in the middle voice here used, *to choose out for one's self*,

i. e. for one's own use, or in accordance with one's own pleasure. Hence it signifies a choice with the idea of favor, approval, and love. *Ye have not chosen me.* No one ever chooses Jesus in this evangelical sense of the word, until inclined thereto by the sovereign purpose and grace of God through Jesus Christ. *But I have chosen you.* The same verb is employed, but with a vastly enlarged sense. On the part of the creature, it would at best be but a finite choice, subject to the fitful impulses of a mind at natural enmity with God and averse to holiness. But when used to denote the divine choice of some to everlasting life, it refers to a purpose as immutable as the very existence of God. It embraces all those means and agencies, by which the purpose is to be rendered effectual in the conversion and sanctification of all God's elect. In a word, it comprehends the whole economy of redemption, in its relation to the salvation of the believer from the power and dominion of sin and death. *Ordained* has here the sense of *appointed*. Olshausen and Stier, after Chrysostom and some of the old interpreters, make it equivalent in sense to *planted*, in order to conform to the following words, *bring forth fruit*. So Theophylact remarks, "that the Son here like the Father, appears as a husbandman, and planter of vines." Some find a simple reference to the apostolic appointment of the disciples. But this does not meet the wants of the passage, which has a deeper signification than the mere appointment to an official service in the church. Such an exposition also forces an incongruous sense upon the following words, *should go and bring forth fruit*, which refer not to the external results of their mission, but to the personal fruits of holiness wrought in them by the Spirit. The verb *should go*, is employed to give life to the sentiment, the idea being that of a man who having been appointed to a service or duty, enters actively upon his labors. It is a picturesque expression denoting living energy and activity, a going forth under a profound sense of responsibility, and an addressing of one's self

with all his powers to the service assigned him. If in conformity with the figurative language which follows, *ordained* is to be regarded as corresponding to the planting of fruit-bearing trees, then the verb *should go*, answers to the springing up of these spiritual trees, and their developed growth in wide-spread and vigorous branches. *Bring forth fruit*, denotes the result of their divine appointment to a life of activity in Christ's service. This is further stated in the next clause, *that your fruit should remain*, which refers not so much to the external fruits or results of obedience, as to the permanent effect of a life of obedience and love to Christ upon the soul of the believer. So Stier: "it is the consummation of personal salvation, the ripening into men of God, full of good works and holy activity." This is expressed in different imagery in Eph. 4:13, as a "coming in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" and in Eph. 3:21, 22, as a "growing unto a holy temple in the Lord, for a habitation of God through the Spirit." *Remain* would have been better translated, *abide*, the same verb being employed as in vs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11. *That whatsoever ye shall ask*, &c. It will be seen by a comparison of this passage with 14:13 (on which see Note), that there is a slight verbal variation. The Father is here designated as the one who bestows the blessing prayed for, while there our Lord promises that he will bestow the blessing. Such language, in which an act is predicated of one and then of the other, establishes beyond a doubt the union and equality of the Father and the Son. This grace of prayer is not to be regarded, as the end or purpose of this divine calling and appointment. Alford makes the clause "parallel with the preceding *that ye should go*, &c., and not the result of it, the two, the bringing forth of fruit and the obtaining answer to prayer, being coördinate with each other." The promise is by no means to be regarded as of posterior fulfilment to that in

17 'These things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 'If the world hate you, ye

know that it hated me before it *hated* you.

s Ver. 12.

t 1 Jo. 3:1, 13.

the preceding clause, but as retrospective, and having its proper position in immediate dependence on the clause *ordained you*, and synchronizing with the going forth to the activities of the Christian life. Thus it is in the experience of the believer. Prayer accompanies and gives success to all Christian effort. Prayer is the great means of sanctification and growth in grace. Prayer is the very life and essence of that *going forth* in the Christian life, which is followed by the fruits of holiness. In regard to the terms of the promise here made connected with prayer, see N. on 14:13.

17. This is not the commencement of a new subject or topic, but the summation of that which our Lord had previously said. As new grounds and occasions of mutual love are evolved in the progress of his discourse, he repeats and presses this duty, and thus evinces his sense of the importance of this new and great commandment which he had given them (13:34; 15:12). The plural *these things*, is thought by Webster and Wilkinson, to refer forward to the clause *that ye love one another*, the plural being employed instead of the singular for the sake of emphasis. But while classical usage permits this, yet it should never be assumed as the basis of construction, unless there is a commanding reason for such a substitution of number. Such a reason does not exist here; and when we take into view, that this pronoun almost always refers to what immediately precedes, we cannot doubt that *these things*, refers to what he had just spoken, and that the clause *that ye love one another*, is intended as a cause or reason why he had thus addressed them. This gives to his new and great commandment (13:34) a prominence, making it not only obligatory as his command, but the result of a life of holy living and obedience to Christ's words. Alford well paraphrases it: "The object of

my enjoining these things on you is for all (since v. 12 has been an expansion of *as I have loved you*), that ye love one another (see 1 John 4:11)."

18. The foregoing reference to the mutual love of his disciples, naturally suggested by way of contrast the enmity of the world which he had himself experienced in so eminent a degree, and which would in like manner be visited upon them. *If the world hate you*, does not imply doubt or contingency, but is an actual assertion expressed hypothetically. Indeed the idea is strengthened, by thus assuming the world's enmity as an actual fact, instead of first asserting the fact and then putting it in a hypothetical form. *If the world hate*. The world's hatred is here proleptically spoken of, for that which after his death they should more fully experience. Our Lord himself was now the chief object of its hatred. *Ye know*. The disciples were by no means ignorant of the deadly hatred borne to Jesus by the enemies of truth. Alford reads this as probably an imperative, *know ye that it hated me*. The most emphatic proof of this was yet to come. The disciples had little conception of the desperate and malignant perseverance, with which on the very next day the enemies of Jesus would strive to effect his death, or the jeers and mockery with which they would taunt him while enduring the agony of the cross. Still they were not ignorant, that during the whole time of his public ministry he had been the object of their unrelenting hatred, which found expression on every occasion in which he came in contact with them. *Before it hated you*; literally, *first of you*. See N. on 1:15. This form of expression is sometimes used by English writers. Thus Milton: '*Adam the goodliest (man) of men since born,*' i. e. goodlier than any man since born. In a compound form, the superlative is found with the same usage in Col. 1:15.

19 "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but ^ubecause ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

^u 1 Jo. 4:5.

^æ Ch. 17:14.

^y Mt. 10:24; Lu. 6:40; ch. 13:16.

19. The reason of this hatred which they were to expect from the world, is here given. *If ye were of the world*, is a form of hypothesis which denies that such was the actual fact. *Of the world* does not mean specifically, *on the side* of the world, but conformed to its customs and usages, and actuated by its governing principles. The idea of their being chosen out of the world (v. 16), and therefore deriving their religious views and principles from a different source, is what is intended specifically by the expression. The imperfect tense covers all their past life, so far at least, as was embraced in their connection with him as his disciples. From their earliest discipleship, they had given ample evidence of being actuated by a different spirit than that which possessed the natural man, and hence they could not expect the world's friendship, which was enmity with God (Jam. 4:4). *His own* (more properly *its own*) refers to that which is identical in nature, and actuated by the same general principle. The love which the world is here said to have for its own, is not such as to promote union and fellowship among bad men. Wars, emulations, strifes, mark the whole course of the world's history. "In this loving their own, the children of this world fall into hating one another." Alford. It is only in opposition to truth and hatred to the followers of Jesus, that the men of the world are united, and it is in reference to this hatred to every thing that is good, that the world is said to love its own. *But because*, &c. The preceding sentiment, according to John's usage, is repeated in the negative form, with the additional idea fully expressed, that it is *because* they are not of the world, that they are the ob-

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, ^vThe servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; ^zif they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

^z Ez. 3:7.

ject of its hatred. This was implied in the words, *if ye were of this world*, &c. This *because*, has the twofold significance of furnishing the reason why the disciples were hated by the world, and of keeping before them the fact, that they were formerly of that very world which was now arrayed in such deadly opposition to Jesus and all his followers. Thus while the declaration that they had been chosen out of the world, was adapted to inspire joy at the grace which thus translated them from darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, it was also a remembrance which would beget humility in view of their previous lost condition, and inspire them with pity instead of hatred, to the world now opposed to them. The clause, *but I have chosen you out of the world* (see v. 16), 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. Hence they might expect to incur in full degree the world's hatred and opposition. *Therefore* or *on account of this*, refers to the previous clause, and establishes fully the relation of causality, which that clause sustains to the one that follows. It is noticeable that *the world*, is here in a single verse repeated five times. This is not accidental, but designed to give prominence to the contrast between the enemies of truth and his disciples.

20. *Remember the word that I said unto you*. Reference is had to 13:16, where the proverbial expression here

quoted, was employed in a somewhat different connection. There it had reference to their conduct to one another, in the light of the example which he had just set them of humility and love. Here it is cited in proof, that they must expect no better treatment from the world, than He, their Master, had received. This is evident from the application which he himself makes in the following clause, *if they have persecuted me*, &c. This adage had before been cited (see Matt. 10 : 24, 25), and for the same purpose as here, to show that his disciples could not expect exemption from persecution, when their Master had suffered from it. For the verbal explanations, see Ns. on 13 : 16; Matt. 10 : 24, 25. *If they have persecuted me*. This form of supposition, adopted to give emphasis to the inference *they will also persecute you*, does not imply doubt as to the fact of his being persecuted. Such forms of hypothesis are consistent with the most positive declaration of the truth of the supposition. See N. on v. 18. The verb in both these clauses, is in the plural. No subject is expressed in the original, but the pronoun *they*, is readily supplied from the preceding noun *world*, which is put in a collective sense for the individuals comprising it. *They will also persecute you*. The future is here employed, because the disciples had not yet been called to the endurance of persecution in the cause of Christ. That sign of discipleship and evidence of their love for Jesus, was yet in the future. *If they have kept my saying*, &c. These words have furnished much difficulty, because in the connection in which they here stand, the implication would seem to be, that the world as such had kept our Lord's saying. Hence some expositors have sought to evade the difficulty, by taking the verb in the sense of *have watched* with malicious intent. But this is a meaning that cannot in any manner be attached to the verb, which is the very one employed in v. 10, to denote the obedience to be rendered by the disciples to our Lord's commands. Others give to the verb an ironical sense.

But if our Lord ever employed irony, which is quite doubtful, the solemnity and deep tenderness of this discourse would render it here quite inappropriate. Another mode of solving the difficulty, is to affix to the hypothetical *if*, a negative idea, and thus make it equivalent to *if not*. But all the rules of interpretation would then require, that the preceding *if*, should have a like negative sense, *if they have not persecuted me*, which would obviously be the very opposite to the true meaning. The only meaning which is defensible, is that which lies upon the face of the passage, and which refers the verb to a true observance of the sayings of Christ, a meaning which it has in this whole discourse (see 9 : 16; 14 : 15, 21, 23, 24; 15 : 10, 20), and in other portions of John's gospel (8 : 51, 52, 55; 1 John 2 : 5; Rev. 2 : 26; 3 : 8, 10), and also in the other Evangelists (Matt. 19 : 17; 23 : 3; Mark 7 : 9). The word is here employed in a sense strongly antithetic to that of the verb *persecute*, in the preceding sentence, which implies the idea of disobedience to Christ's words. The assumption that they would obey the words of Christ, is here made simply to illustrate the principle which he had laid down, that the disciples must expect a like treatment with their Master, whether that were characterized by disobedience and opposition, or obedience and submission to his will. The form of the supposition corresponds to that of the preceding one, and contains in itself nothing which would imply a doubt of the realization of the obedience referred to. The actual fact so contrary to the terms of the hypothesis, is clearly evolved in the context. The simple object of the twofold supposition, is to embrace the whole conduct of men in regard to Christ, and establish the fact, that whatever that conduct might be, whether friendly or adverse, the disciples could expect no different treatment when they went forth in his name.

21. The hypothesis, made in the preceding verse for the purpose of illustrating the truth that Christ and his

21 But 'all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

a Mt. 10:22; & 24:9; ch. 16:3.

followers have the same common friends and enemies, was liable to be misapprehended. The world's hatred had not been affirmed in express and positive language, and the disciples might suppose that it would look with indifference upon their mission to convert men. Hence Jesus guards against such an impression, by averring that they would have to encounter opposition and persecution for his name's sake; and that the supposition that the world would keep either his or their sayings, was what would never be realized. This verse therefore is explicative of the preceding one, showing what treatment his disciples would receive from a world, whose hostility to their Master was so rank and deadly. *But* is adversative to the obedience to his words, assumed in the close of the preceding verse. 'If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also; *but* they have not kept my saying, and therefore *will do all these things*,' i. e. will manifest the hatred and persecuting spirit, spoken of in vs. 18-20. *For my name's sake.* Parallel to this is Matt. 10:22, on which see Note. The name of Christ is put for his person, and any expression of attachment to him, is here declared to bring upon his followers hatred and persecution. This active persecuting hatred is illustrated in the whole history of the church of Christ. *Because they know not him, &c.* They have no spiritual conception of God, although they profess to know and acknowledge him. Not recognizing therefore the true character and mission of His Son Jesus Christ, they hate and persecute both him and his followers. Thus their hatred to the truth and perverse rejection of both Jesus and his followers, are traced back to their simplest element, ignorance of God and his ways. Our Saviour refers here to the great truth to which he

22 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; 'but now they have no cloak for their sin.

b Ch. 9:41.

c Ro. 1:20; Ja. 4:17.

had given such frequent utterance, that a knowledge of the Father involved a knowledge of the Son, and that whoever knew not the Son, was ignorant also of the Father. It is this latter form of the proposition which attaches such inexcusable guilt to their ignorance of God; for had they believed on Jesus, whom the Father sent into the world to reveal to men the character and will of the invisible God, they would have believed on the Father, and attained to that knowledge of Him which would have insured His presence and blessing. This great sin in neglecting the only way of arriving at the knowledge of God through His Son Jesus Christ, is brought out fully in the following verse.

22. *If I had not come* from that God of whom they are so profoundly ignorant. 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 preëxistent state is thus kept ever before the mind, in all his discourses. Here it receives more than ordinary prominence from the phrase *him that sent me*, in the preceding verse, and *had come*, in this; for in the declaration which he was about to make, the divinity of his mission was that which enhanced the sin of rejecting him, so that in comparison with it, all other and previous sins were comparatively of no account. *And spoken unto them.* Our Lord's mission was not a secret or silent one. In numerous ways by his words and wondrous works, he sought to win men to the knowledge of the Father who had sent him. No one could plead in extenuation of his unbelief, that his faith had been demanded in a Messiah who had kept himself aloof from the world, or had spoken obscurely and enigmatically of the great truths which he had been commissioned

to reveal. Jesus had passed from town to town, and city to city, throughout the whole land. He had addressed the people in the plainest and most unambiguous language. He had expounded the law of God in all its spirituality; showed how the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in himself; pointed man to the only way of salvation through belief in him; and confirmed his teachings by the most stupendous miracles which had ever been wrought on earth. He had therefore *spoken to them* with a fulness and authority of utterance, that left them without any excuse. *They had not had sin.* This is not spoken of sin in general, for this they would have had, if Jesus had not come and spoken unto them. The sin of unbelief and hatred to him, is the one evidently intended to be conveyed in the expression. Stier virtually remarks, that *unbelief* is the great sin which in John's gospel is charged upon the Jews, and that "this sentence does not make the idle assertion: 'If I had not come they would not have fallen into the sin of unbelief;' but unbelief would not have become their last, complete, and ruining sin." The objection urged by De Wette, and substantially repeated by Alford, against unbelief as the sin here referred to, on the ground that it is self-apparent that this sin could not have been charged upon them, if Jesus had not come and preached, is very weak, if not absolutely puerile. Our Lord often makes a self-evident truth the basis of an inference, which is the more convincing and irresistible from the acknowledged truth of the premises. Besides this, we might argue against a reference to any particular sin or augmentation of guilt resulting from the mission and presence of Jesus, on the same principle; for it is equally self-evident, that had he not come into the world and spoken to men, they would not have hated and rejected him, as that they would not have believed on him. Whatever the sin was, it is clear that it was occasioned by our Lord's advent and ministry, and would not have been chargeable upon the persons here spoken of, had he not thus

come and spoken unto them. As unbelief in reference to Christ's mission was the great generic sin of the Jews, I cannot doubt that it is the one here referred to. The hatred which they manifested towards our Saviour, was a necessary out-growth of this sin, and is therefore included in it. This is the view entertained by the majority of expositors, and those who are most noted for their sound and evangelical explications of God's word. *But now, &c.* Contrasted with their comparative guiltlessness had not Christ come and spoken with them, is their culpability in rejecting him, when he had come and given such full proof of his divine mission and character. *Now* (as the matter stands) *they have no cloak* (i. e. pretext or excuse) *for their sin*, i. e. *concerning or in reference to their sin.* Winer renders the preposition *on account of, in behalf of.* Our translators have rendered it very correctly and idiomatically *for their sin*, the metaphor being taken from something thrown around a thing to hide it from view, or make it appear different from what it really is. The sin here referred to, is the same as the one spoken of in the preceding clause. They had no excuse whatever for their unbelief and hatred of him, for he had come with the most ample and convincing proofs of his having been sent of God. In rejecting him, against such evidence that he came from God, they had rejected God also, and proved beyond question, that their hatred and unbelief arose from the fact, that they had no acquaintance with God (v. 21), or desire to attain to a knowledge of His ways. Thus this verse illustrates and confirms what is declared in v. 21, that hatred to him and his followers results from the great fact that the world is ignorant of God, and therefore of His Son whom He had sent for the very purpose of revealing Him to men. The word rendered *cloak*, is literally *an appearance*, and hence *that which is alleged to cover the real state of the case, an apparent cause* as opposed to that which is true and real, a *pretext, excuse, shuffle.* The advent of Jesus had been so open and public, and the

23 ^d He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them ^e the works which none

other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

d 1 Jo. 2: 23.

e Ch. 3: 2; & 7: 31; & 9: 32.

proof of his divine mission so abundant and irrefutable, that every extenuating excuse for their unbelief was taken away, and hence this sin rested upon them in all its appalling weight.

23. The evidence of our Lord's divine mission, was declared in the preceding verse to be so abundant and clear, that there was no pretext whatever for the sin of those who rejected and hated him. What is here stated followed as a consequence, that whoever hated the Son, possessed as he was of such incontestable marks of supreme divinity, hated the Father also. This verse is also closely connected in sense with vs. 20, 21. The persecuting spirit of the world, is there declared to result from ignorance of God. But although so profoundly ignorant of Him, they are chargeable with hatred of Him by their hatred of His Son, whom He had sent into the world on such a mission of love as the redemption of mankind.

24. This verse is an expansion of v. 22, the direct train of thought suffering a partial interruption, in v. 23, which was interposed to show that the ignorance of the Father, which was charged upon them as a reason for their persecution of Jesus and his followers, was not inconsistent with hatred of Him; since although they knew not God, such was the essential unity of the Father and Son, that their hatred of the latter, was a hatred of the former also. In proof of this allegation, our Lord refers to the abundant evidence of his divine mission which was furnished by his works, which far transcended in number, magnitude, and beneficence, the works done by any other accredited messenger of God. This appeal to his miracles in confirmation of his being sent from God, shows that we are not to undervalue them in the evidence of the truth of Christianity. The words *among them*, are thought by Au-

gustine and some others after him, to be equivalent to *in them*, that is, in their bodies, reference being had to the physical results of his healing beneficence. But it is better with the mass of expositors, to give it the sense, *while among them*. Compare 12: 35. The Syriac version has it, *before their eyes*. See also Acts 2: 22, where *among you*, is literally, *in the midst of you*. The *works* here spoken of are miracles, including, however, as we see in v. 22, his word and teachings, which bore such a heavenly impress, that they confirmed the evidence of his divine mission furnished by his stupendous miracles. *Which none other man did*; literally, *which no other one did*. The reference is to miracles wrought previously on earth by the messengers and prophets of God, and not by false prophets, as some strangely suppose. These impostors, as I have shown in my Note on Matt. 7: 22, never performed miracles voluntarily, as was done by the true servants of God, but only instrumentally and involuntarily, by a power which they could not resist. *They had not had sin*. This is repeated from v. 22, the connection showing their inexcusable rejection of Jesus Christ, from the clear and abundant proof which his miracles furnished of his divine mission. In regard to the comparative value of the kind of evidence referred to here and in v. 22, it will suffice to remark, that miracles as appealing to the evidence of the senses, are first in order; but unless wrought in confirmation of that which is true and consistent with the character and revealed will of God, are of no value whatever. Miracles must be connected with a holy life and true words, to have any power and significance. Indeed, as above remarked, they will never have the stamp of true and genuine miracles, unless the life and teachings

25 But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ^fThey hated me without a cause.

^fPs. 85:19; & 69:4.

of those who perform them, are in harmony with the divine will. The evidence of his divine mission being so fully established by his miracles, as well as words (v. 22), their guilt in rejecting him was greatly enhanced thereby, and hence *they had not had sin*, is here repeated with an increased and emphatic signification. This is still further shown by the next clause, in which they are charged with having both seen and hated him and the Father. This charge of wilful and obstinate rejection of God and his son Jesus Christ, occupies a position in the verse corresponding to the words *but now they have no cloak for their sin*, in v. 22. It will be seen, therefore, that the sin of unbelief is here represented in a more heinous and aggravated form, than in v. 22, because his miracles not only furnished evidence in common with his words (v. 22), that he was the Messiah, but that the Father himself was present in him. Hence seeing him, they saw the Father; and hating him, they hated the Father also. Thus this verse not only expands and strengthens the idea contained in v. 22, but also proves and confirms what had been in a manner parenthetically expressed in v. 23. The general sentiment is that the Father was so evidently apparent in the works and words of his Son, that whoever hated the Son must of necessity hate the Father also. There is a close and logical connection between these verses, which can scarcely be apprehended, unless the great idea of our Lord's supreme divinity is clearly recognized, as underlying the whole passage. It would be a vain display of unmeaning language, to predicate this unity of love and hatred of persons other than those who are coequal and essentially one.

25. The hatred evinced towards the Father and Son, was not the result of mere accident or chance, but had been foreseen and predicted in God's word. This would tend to comfort the disci-

ples and strengthen their faith. Their Master was not brought into circumstances of peril, apart from the counsel and purpose of God. In giving his Son to die for the world, He had foreseen and provided for just such a state of opposition and rebellion to his rightful supremacy, as was now manifesting itself in the nation. But although Jesus was thus delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23), yet such was the free agency of his murderers, that it was with *wicked hands* that he was crucified and slain. *But this cometh to pass*. The ellipsis as supplied in our common version, gives the true sense. The conjunction *that*, has here, as in Matt. 1:22, the *eventual* sense; the idea being that in this extreme hatred entertained towards Jesus by the Jews, there was a fulfilment of the words *written in their law*. The citation is from Ps. 69:4, where David in the Messianic character and spirit of that psalm, says of his enemies, "They that hate me without cause, are more than the hairs of mine head." The emphasis is on the words *without a cause*, reference being had not only to the blameless life of Jesus, but to the clear and abundant evidence furnished by his words and works, that he was not only a divinely sent messenger of God, but that in Him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). In this sense the words correspond to *have no cloak for their sin*, in v. 22. The reference to the Book of the Psalms by the word *law*, is designed to indicate the reverence and regard which the Jews pretended to pay to all portions of the Old Testament, making it their professed rule and law of all action and belief. There is no irony, as some suppose, in *their law*, but as Alford remarks, it is "their law as condemning them, though their boast and pride." *Hated me* in the type furnished by the cruel and unjust hatred manifested towards David by his enemies.

26. In contrast with this satanic ha-

26 ⁹ But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even the* *g* Lu. 24:49; ch. 14:17, 26; & 16:7, 13; Ac. 2:33.

tred and malice entertained by the Jews towards Jesus, who had made such a demonstration of his Messianic character, is introduced again the peaceful and heavenly mission of the Comforter. The disciples in view of this intense and persecuting hatred, might be ready to exclaim in despair, that if Jesus was obliged to succumb to his enemies and retire from the field, how could they in their comparative weakness, overcome this malignant hatred and opposition, and persuade men that Jesus was the true Messiah? To this natural train of thought, so suited to the dejection which then weighed down their spirit, our Lord kindly replies, that the Comforter or Helper (see N. on 14:16) would bear witness in and through them, by imparting force and unction to their words, and endowing them with miraculous gifts and powers. The train of thought harmonizes also with the preceding verses, in which Jesus claims that he had made such full and convincing proof of his divine mission, that his enemies had no pretext whatever for the hatred of him which they manifested. But even after his death, the demonstration of his Messiahship would still be made by the Comforter who should come in his name and as his representative. The Messianic prophecy, that he should be hated without a cause, would receive new force and pertinency, when the Spirit should come and convince the world "of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (see 16:8). Thus vs. 26, 27, serve not only to comfort the disciples, and confirm their faith, but also to strengthen and illustrate the absolute inexcusableness of those, who in defiance of the proof which he himself gave of his Messiahship, and of the additional testimony of the Spirit, and of his disciples who had been eye-witnesses of his great works, should persist in their unbelief and hatred of him.

Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ^a he shall testify of me:

h 1 Jo. 5:6.

Is come refers back to the promise made in 16:8. In proof of the generic signification of the word *Paraclete*, translated in our version *Comforter*, it will be seen that here He is referred to as a *Spirit of Witness*. In 16:8, His office is one of reproof and conviction; in 16:13, He is to act as the guide and assistant of Christ's followers. This shows that the word *Paraclete*, embraces more than what is denoted by *Comforter*, in the acceptance of that term current in our day. As has been remarked (N. on 14:16) the word *Comforter*, is one of such precious import, and so embedded in our tenderest associations by our use of it in the common version, that I would not have it changed for any other, even though one might be selected of more fulness of signification. But let the reader be careful not to confine the office of the Holy Spirit, to that of merely imparting comfort and consolation in the hour of trial and adversity. This is an important function of His office, but constitutes but a small portion of His work as the Helper and Guardian of the saints on earth.

Whom I will send, &c. In 14:16, the Comforter is said to be the gift of the Father, in answer to the prayer of Jesus; in 14:26, He is to be sent by the Father, in the name of Jesus. Here our Lord is himself said to send the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, from the Father. There is no contradiction in these varied forms of expression. The concurrent idea of all is, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, in answer to the prayer or expressed will (see N. on 14:16) of Jesus. In order to give prominence to this latter idea, that the gift of the Spirit is the purchase of Christ, and included therefore in the covenanted reward which he was to receive from the Father for his obedience unto death, our Lord is himself said to send the Spirit from the Father. It

27 And ⁱye also shall bear wit-

ⁱ Lu. 24:48; Ac. 1:8, 21, 22; & 2:32; & 3:15; & 4:20, 33; & 5:32; & 10:39; & 13:31;
1 Pe. 5:1; 2 Pe. 1:16.

hardly need be repeated, that the foundation of all this apparent interchange of the acts of the Father and the Son, is their absolute and essential union and equality, so that what is predicated of the one, may, without any violence of language, be predicated of the other. *The Spirit of truth.* See N. on 14:16. *Which proceedeth from the Father.* "The technical word 'procession,' denoting the mode of the Holy Spirit's existence, is taken from this passage, which, however, does not explain nor prove the doctrine of the church on this subject; the procession here spoken of being that of mission, not of nature." Webster and Wilkinson. So Alford after Bengel, remarks, that "this passage cannot be alleged either one way or the other, in the controversy with the Greek church on the procession of the Holy Spirit." He is disposed, therefore, with Luthardt to take the whole of these expressions connected with the sending of the Spirit, as spoken *economically*. It is the remark of Stier, that the essential union and equality of the Divine Three, seems to be especially guarded on all sides by these words of Jesus. He himself sends the Spirit, but he gives the Father his right by the first *from the Father*; "but also in order to obviate all appearance of an exclusive subordination of the Spirit under Himself the Son, and to indicate the Spirit as of like divine nature with the Son who came forth from the Father (16:28), he expressly utters the *which proceedeth from the Father*, which advances from the economical to the essential relation." My own views of the essential and official relations of the Persons of the Godhead, may be seen in my Note on Matt. 28:19.

The preposition in *from the Father*, is not the one in Greek which expresses a removal from the interior of a thing, nor that which denotes an external removal or separation, but one which refers to a *coming from the side of*, and implies

ness, because ^kye have been with me from the beginning.

^k Lu. 1:2; 1 Jo. 1:1, 2.

that the original abode of the Spirit was *with* God. This passage therefore furnishes no proof that the Holy Spirit proceeds *out of* the Father, or that there is the least subordination in his essential being, to the other Persons of the divine Trinity. The verb *proceedeth*, refers to voluntary and spontaneous movement, and thus shows that while in the economy of redemption the Spirit is spoken of as being sent by the Father and Son, yet His coming into the world as the great Regenerator and Sanctifier, is an act wholly voluntary on His part, and to which He is not in the least coerced. *He shall testify*, &c. The pronoun both here, and in the relative clause *whom I will send*, places beyond all question the personality of the Holy Spirit. Indeed in this one verse, the whole doctrine of the Triune God is so clearly found, that we should hardly need to seek further proof of it in other portions of the Gospel. The testimony of the Spirit is not exactly that of the disciples themselves referred to in v. 27, although it is expressed in and through them. It refers to the illumination of their mind in regard to the Old Testament types, ordinances, and prophecies, such as was vouchsafed to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in regard to the Mosaic ritual and tabernacle service, as prefigurative of the spiritual sanctuary into which Christ, our great High Priest, has entered for our redemption and sanctification. Miraculous gifts and powers, the speaking with tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophesyings, discerning of spirits, marvellous endowments of wisdom and knowledge (1 Cor. 12:1-10), were all the gift of the Spirit, for the furtherance of the work of spreading the gospel in the early days of the church. This was illustrated especially by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, giving such power and efficacy of utterance to the apostles, and such living energy

to the word, that three thousand persons were converted to Christ in one day.

27. *Ye also*, in concurrence with and subordination to this higher testifying agency of the Spirit. *Shall bear witness*. The present tense with future signification is employed in the original, the idea being rendered prominent, that they were already possessed of that knowledge of him, which would qualify them to be his witnesses before men. *Because ye have been with me*; literally, *are with me*, the present including in it the past tense, inasmuch as the whole duration of their continuance with Jesus is referred to; or the act of continuance which began in time past, is regarded as reaching onward to the present time. The sense is therefore pregnant: *ye were with me from the beginning* even up to the present moment. (See N. on 8: 58.) The reason here given shows in what consisted the difference of their own testimony, and that which was peculiarly the work of the Spirit. They were to testify of that in regard to which they had been eye-witnesses (see Luke 1: 2; Acts 1: 21). Their testimony was therefore to be a personal one. It was not sufficient for the witness which they were to bear in regard to his life and teachings, that their minds were supernaturally endowed with heavenly light and wisdom, and that they were furnished with miraculous gifts and graces; but they were to give their own personal testimony to the truth of what they affirmed in regard to the life, miracles, and teachings of Jesus. 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.

These gifts therefore served to confirm the declarations which they made in regard to Jesus Christ; but by no means superseded the necessity of their rehearsing in full and orderly detail, that of which they had been eye-witnesses while with our Saviour. This distinctive use of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit should never be lost sight of, since it enables one to apprehend the meaning of the twofold testimony in the passage, "we are witnesses and so is the Holy Ghost" (Acts 5: 39), and other scriptures of like import. Webster and Wilkinson include also the acting of the Spirit upon others besides themselves (see Acts 16: 14), so that their testimony was favorably received. But I would refer that to a different office work of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XVI.

1-33. PERSECUTION FORETOLD. FURTHER PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT. PRAYER IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. *Jerusalem*. Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. Alford finds in this chapter the "promise of the Comforter expanded in all its fulness, vs. 1-15 containing the conditions of his coming and office; vs. 16-24, the withdrawal of Jesus and its immediate mournful, but ultimate (and those soon to begin) joyful consequences to his disciples; vs. 25-32, their present real weakness and imperfection, though fancied strength; their future high blessedness and share in his triumph though in tribulation in the world." Other expositors subdivide the chapter somewhat differently, and indeed the thoughts are so interlaced, and bound together, and suffer such frequent repetition in the way of expansion, explanation, and emphasis, that it is quite difficult to divide the chapter into distinct and independent portions. The simple train of thought seems to be this: tribulation and consequent sorrow (1-6), against which the disciples are comforted by the promise of the Holy Ghost (7-15); and which, although at first great and excessive in consequence of his departure, were to be turned into joy (16-22); a renewed assurance of the efficacy of prayer offered in his name (23, 24), a promise of

CHAPTER XVI.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye ^a should not be offended.

2 ^b They shall put you out of

^a Mt. 11 : 6; & 24 : 10; & 26 : 31.

an enlargement of their spiritual knowledge (25-28); a prediction of their temporary desertion of him in the hour of his suffering (29); and a renewal of the promise of peace, although in a world of tribulation (33).

1. *These things* are referred by Stier and Alford, to the warnings in 15 : 18-21, but also of the promise of the testifying Spirit (vs. 26, 27). Webster and Wilkinson would also include the special predictions about to follow. This is the true view. This verse, like 14 : 25; 15 : 11, constitutes one of the pauses in his discourse, and is anticipatory of what he might be supposed to say at its final close. The pronoun *these*, while it refers in strict grammatical usage to what has preceded, yet connected as here with words proleptically used, may be regarded as virtually taking in the whole discourse, or at least so much of it, as is relevant to the following clause, *that ye should not be offended* (see N. on 15 : 11). This result shows that the *things* referred to, were those which had reference mainly to their trials and persecutions, and the comfort and aid which they should experience from the promised Comforter, and his own spiritual presence and power. *That ye should not be offended* (see Ns. on Matt. 13 : 41; 17 : 27), i. e. in order that you may not meet with unexpected trials and hinderances, and thus become discouraged if not disgusted with the cause which you have espoused. *Offended*. "Hindered by stumbling-blocks such as are mentioned in the next verse." Crosby.

2. *They shall put you out*, &c. There were three kinds of excommunication. The highest excision was punishment by death. This is referred to in the clause, *whosoever killeth you*, &c. See N. on 9 : 23. *Yea*; literally, *but*, the spirit of deadly hostility asserted in

the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, ^c that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

^b Ch. 9 : 22, 34; & 12 : 42.

^c Ac. 8 : 1; & 9 : 1; & 26; 9, 10, 11.

this clause being placed in contrast with the comparatively mild form of excision by being put out of the synagogue. This clause therefore denotes a far greater temptation to apostatize from Christ, than mere excommunication from the external privileges of worship. *The time cometh*. The verb has here a future sense, denoting time near and certain. See 4 : 35; 9 : 4; Luke 23 : 29. The word translated *that*, is literally, *in order that*, the malignant and deadly animosity here spoken of, being regarded as the object or purpose for which the hour was coming. Webster and Wilkinson happily express the shade of thought which is very marked and emphatic, by *the time cometh for every one to think*, &c. *Whosoever* is literally *every one*, the spirit of persecution here referred to being regarded, not as developing itself alone in public assemblages, where masses of persons are congregated, but as taking possession of individuals, and leading them to regard it as their personal duty to persecute the disciples of Christ even to death. An illustration of this was Saul of Tarsus (Acts 26 : 9, compared with 23 : 1), and the forty men who bound themselves under a religious oath to kill Paul (Acts 23 : 12). The words of Jesus have been abundantly confirmed in the times of persecution, when the most bitter and deadly foes to the church, were the very persons who thought that they were discharging a religious duty in ridding the earth of the disciples of Christ. The verb *doeth*, has the literal sense *presenteth, proffereth*, which leads some expositors to give as the sense, *will think that he presenteth to God a sacrifice*. Webster and Wilkinson think that the idea of sacrifice or oblation is conveyed in the phrase. Stier, Alford, and Tholuck, however, maintain the contrary view.

3 And ^dthese things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But ^ethese things have I told you, that when the time shall

^d Ch. 15: 21; Ro. 10: 2; 1 Co. 2: 8; 1 Ti. 1: 13.
^e Ch. 13: 19; & 14: 29.

The expression is evidently intended to convey the idea of a high religious duty performed directly to God. The word *service*, literally refers to that which is rendered by a slave, and thus imparts emphasis to the act of obedience, supposed to be rendered to God in killing the followers of Christ.

3. *These things*, &c. Reference is had to excommunication from the synagogue, and to the murderous spirit with which the disciples of Jesus were persecuted. *Because they have not known*, &c. Their blindness and self-deception were by no means guiltless, since they acted thus through ignorance of the true God (15 : 21), which was shown to be wilful by their rejection of Jesus, whose works bore ample testimony that he was sent of God, and that whoever hated him hated the Father also (15 : 23, 24).

4. Our Lord here discloses his object, in thus forewarning them of the persecutions which they were to undergo for his name's sake. The adversative *but*, does not here denote opposition or contrast, but the abrupt termination of the preceding thought, as though he had said: 'I could go on to specify many things connected with the persecutions which you will be called to pass through in fulfilling your mission, *but these things* which I have said, will suffice to put you on your guard against defection or apostasy from the persecutions which may arise and of which I have forewarned you.' *When the time* (of persecution) *shall come or may come*, the indefinite or contingent future being denoted by the Greek subjunctive, after the adverb here rendered *when*, but better, *whenever*. *Ye may remember*, &c. The remembrance that they had been forewarned by their Lord, would give them strength and firmness to en-

come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And ^fthese things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

^f See Mt. 9 : 15.

dure persecution, from the evidence thereby furnished, that Christ was sent of God, and knew well beforehand all that his followers would be called to endure for his sake. *These things I said not*, &c. If reference is had solely to the persecutions which they were afterward to undergo, did not our Lord, on previous occasions, use quite as plain language in announcing these trials as here? See Matt. 10 : 17-22; 24 : 9; Mark 13 : 9; Luke 21 : 12, where they are told that they shall be brought before governors and kings, and shall be hated of all men for his name's sake. How then is this previous fulness of disclosure to be reconciled with what is here recorded, that he *had not said* these things unto them from the beginning? There have been various ways of solving this difficulty. Some expositors suppose these forewarnings against persecution were introduced into the Synoptic Gospels, by way of anticipation of what was uttered in this last discourse recorded by John. But this is too rude an assault upon the integrity of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as faithful historians, to be received as the true mode of reconciling the apparent disagreement between John's statement and theirs. Others after Augustine, would refer *these things* to the promise and office-work of the Comforter, which truths were now divulged for the first time. But the reference is too direct to the immediate antecedent *these things*, in the preceding clause, and to the same phrase in v. 3, to admit of a reference to the promise of the Paraclete in 14: 16, 26; 15: 26. That the reference in *these things*, may be so extended as to embrace what was previously said in regard to the promised Spirit, and what was about to be said still further of Him (vs. 7-15), there

5 But now ^g I go my way to him that sent me; and none of

you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

^g Ver. 10, 16; ch. 7:33; & 13:3; & 14:23.

can be no doubt. But the special and primary reference is most unquestionably to the trials and persecutions, which it had just before been predicted that they should undergo. The only other mode of reconciling John's statement with the facts as they occur in the Synoptic Gospels, is the one adopted after Chrysostom by most of the modern expositors, namely, that our Lord had not so fully and plainly declared from the beginning their future trials and persecutions, as he did on this present occasion. So Bengel: "He had spoken of the hatred of the world, but less openly and more sparingly." This which I have no doubt is fundamentally the true exposition, needs, however, some qualification. If reference be had simply and solely to the persecutions which the disciples were to experience, is not the language in which they are foretold in Matthew and Luke especially, almost if not equally as full and explicit, as that which is here employed in John? But to make good the words here recorded, the disclosure of these persecutions and trials in the other gospels, should have been so dim and indistinct, that compared with the full and explicit language in John, it was as though no revelation of the kind had ever been previously made. I cannot doubt, therefore, that while the reference is primarily to the persecutions here foretold, the other revelations and promises connected with the gift of the Spirit are also referred to, as furnishing the great source of strength and comfort in the approaching times of fiery trial and persecution. So Alford in reply to the question, to what *these things* most naturally refer, remarks, "to that full and complete account of the world's motives and their own office, and their comfort under it, which he has been giving them. This he had never before done so plainly, though occasional mention has been made even of the help of the Spirit under such trials (Matt. 10:19, 20)."

There can be no doubt that the disciples heard all which our Lord spoke on this solemn occasion, and especially that part pertaining to the persecutions and afflictions which they were to endure for their Master's sake, with a different ear, than when he predicted these things in the earlier portion of his ministry. But this of itself would not warrant the language *I said not unto you*, unless there were some things here revealed to them, which they had never known before.

5. The abruptness with which our Lord breaks off from any further disclosure of the trials and persecutions which awaited them, seems to indicate that he would turn their thoughts into a more cheerful channel. In order however to introduce the subject which he descants upon in vs. 7-15, he repeats the assertion that he is soon to leave them, and gently rebukes their want of curiosity, as to the place whither he was about to go. *But* is not the strong adversative particle, which in the Greek is employed to denote opposition or contrast, but is the one used as a general connective with a slight adversative sense. The connection is with the preceding words, *because I was with you*. Now he is to leave them, and hence this clause is introduced by a connective which denotes a slight shade of opposition. *To him that sent me*, i. e. to the Father. *None of you asketh me*, &c. This cannot be taken as a literal denial that a question of this sort had been proposed to him, for Peter (13:36), and Thomas (14:5), had both on this very occasion proposed the inquiry, as to the place whither he was about to go. It is rather to be taken in the sense, that the announcement of this fact had not made its due impression on their mind, and that their thoughts were too wholly fixed upon the future trials which awaited them. It may be presumed that after the solemn and emphatic utterance of the words, *but now I go my way to him that sent me*, there was a

6 But because I have said these things unto you, ^h sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you

^h Ver. 22; ch. 14: 1.

pause; and as his annunciation of his immediate departure called forth no inquiry or response, he gently arouses their curiosity, and directs them to the contemplation of this, as an antidote to the disheartening influence which the disclosure of their future trials had exerted upon their mind. That they were restrained by their deep sorrow of heart from making any inquiries of him, is directly affirmed in v. 6, and we cannot doubt that the train of remark which follows, was designed to counteract the sadness to which his words in vs. 1-4 had given rise.

6. The silence which indicated their sorrow of heart, is here placed in direct contrast with that lively and active state of mind, which would lead them by pertinent and timely inquiries to the full understanding of all which he said. Hence the verse begins with the particle *but*, which in the original has the strong adversative sense. *These things* have special reference here to the persecutions and afflictions which he had foretold. *Sorrow hath filled*, &c. All other things were comparatively lost sight of, in the sad picture of persecution and trial, which had now taken the place of their hopes and prospects of temporal aggrandizement under the Messianic reign. Their feelings on this occasion are fully disclosed, in that frank confession made by the disciple, on the walk to Emmaus, 'we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, but now he speaks of departing from this world, and leaving to us his disciples, a life of hardship, suffering, and death.' It was needful then that our Lord should comfort and encourage them, by disclosing more fully the office work of the Comforter, and pointing them to the rich rewards which should crown a life of activity and fidelity in his service. *Sorrow*;

that I go away: for if I go not away, ⁱ the Comforter will not come unto you; but ^k if I depart, I will send him unto you.

ⁱ Ch. 7: 39; & 14: 16, 26; & 15: 26.

^k Ac. 2: 33; Ep. 4: 8.

literally, *pain, distress hath filled*, i. e. hath taken full possession of. The words are all of pregnant and emphatic sense. Stier's remarks may be well quoted here: "These are the same disciples who afterward, when their risen Lord had ascended to heaven, without any pang at parting with him returned with great joy to Jerusalem (Luke 24: 52)."

7. Our Lord now shows them not only the reasonableness, but the kindness evinced towards them in thus leaving them for a season. *Nevertheless*; literally, *but*, the theme now to be introduced being designedly contrasted with that of the preceding context. *I tell you the truth*. This has much the same confirmatory force as his *verily, verily, I say unto you*. The pronoun *I*, in the original is emphatic, *I myself*. *It is expedient*; literally, *it is of use, conducive to your interest*. The words *that I go away*, refer to the withdrawal of his personal presence, without which the presence of the promised Spirit could not be enjoyed. This is given as the reason in the following clause, *for if I go not away*, &c. The idea is that blessings of greater richness and abundance were to accompany the dispensation of the Spirit, than in the economy of God's grace would attend the continuance of his personal presence. Hence it was to be regarded as a blessing to them, that he was to leave them, and be succeeded by one whose special office-work was to fill the soul with peace and joy. *The Comforter will not come*. He was to be Christ's representative on earth, and hence it would have been premature for him to have been sent prior to our Lord's departure. As this gift of the Spirit was included in the blessings purchased by his death, it could not be bestowed in all its richness and fulness, until Christ had finished the work of expiation for the sin

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

of the world, by his death on the cross. All the divine manifestations of mercy and of grace, before the advent of Jesus Christ, were those of the Spirit based on the prospective atonement to be made by God's eternal Son; but His more full and peculiar office work in the conversion and sanctification of men, was not to be entered upon, until after Christ had actually performed the work for which he came into this world. Dr. Skinner (Theol. Fragments No. VIII.) well says: "It [i. e. the work of the Spirit] was performed in the world, as was every work of mercy, before the atonement was actually made: but as it was needful that the atonement should be made before the Spirit could come in the fulness of his peculiar power, so was it, by virtue of the atonement, anticipated, that He previously exercised His distinctive office." See Rev. 13: 8. *If I depart.* The verb here employed signifies not simply departure, like the one in the preceding clause, but removal to another place. Hence it would be preferable to translate the first, *depart*, and the second, *go*; inasmuch as the one denotes mere absence, but the other, a going to the Father, whence he was to send forth the Spirit. *I will send him.* See N. on 15: 26. Alford remarks on this necessity that Christ should leave the world before the Comforter could be sent: "It is a convincing proof, if one more were needed, that the gift of the Spirit at and since the day of Pentecost, was and is something totally distinct from any thing before that time: a new and loftier dispensation." We may also add, that this Spirit of promise is something distinct from that spiritual life which abides in the truth, and which had been enjoyed by the Old Testament saints from the earliest history of man (see Gen. 6: 3). In a new and peculiar sense, as a more distinct personality, the Holy Spirit was to come down and dwell in the hearts of men; and this seems to be indicated beyond all question by the lan-

guage of this verse, as well as of others where his coming is referred to.

8. *When he is come* and has entered upon his office-work. *He will reprove.* The idea of reproof, although embraced in that of the verb here made use of, falls far short of reaching the full meaning of the word. *Will convince* would be better, yet in this signification we must also include that of subsequent reproof and condemnation. The word is an advance on *shall testify*, in 15: 26, denoting the result of this overpowering testimony in behalf of Christ, in the conviction of sin, and condemnation of all who do not repent and turn to God through Jesus Christ. The *world* here spoken of as thus convinced, reprov'd, and condemned of the Spirit, primarily refers to the Jews, who in the times of this outpouring of the Spirit, would be convinced of their deep and aggravated sin in rejecting Jesus Christ. This was doubtless true of thousands, not only those who believed on the day of Pentecost, and in the times of refreshing which followed that great work of the Spirit, but those also, who, while convinced by the signs and wonders which accompanied the preaching of the apostles, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man sent of God, remained yet in a state of hardened unbelief, and brought upon themselves the condemnation here implied in the verb *will convince*. But while this is primarily spoken of the Jews, it is in the highest degree true of all who have heard the name of Christ. The office of the Spirit is to convince them of sin in refusing to believe in an offered Redeemer, and to reprove and condemn them for this state of apathy and unbelief. But how was this work of the Spirit to be a source of joy and comfort to the disciples? They had been informed by Jesus, that they were to bear witness of him among men, and that hatred, persecution, and death, were to attend their ministration of his word. This was a sad and gloomy picture. How could a

few weak and obscure men combat and overcome prejudices so deeply rooted, as those which they witnessed in the unbelief of the Jews, and which would yield to no evidence, however clear and conclusive, of the divine mission of Jesus? The future was to them dark and cheerless, and they were ready to sink down in hopeless dejection and dismay. But our Lord comes to their aid in this trying hour. He promises them an Almighty Helper, who should give their testimony such power and energy, that it would reach the conscience even of their enemies—here referred to in the phrase, *the world*—and convince it of sin in rejecting Jesus Christ whom they were preaching. With such an assistant, such a Helper and Comforter, how could they be otherwise than courageous and joyful? There was no way in which he could more directly administer comfort and peace to their troubled souls, than by thus revealing to them the operations of the Spirit, as detailed in this verse.

Of sin. What the special sin is, to which reference is here made, is disclosed in v. 9. It is *unbelief* in Jesus. This has been and will continue to be, the great sin wherever the gospel of Christ is preached. It is the natural outgrowth and expression of the unregenerate heart, when first confronted with the claims of Jesus upon its love and belief. It is the office of the Spirit to convince men of this sin. Some when thus convicted, are brought in penitence, submission, and faith to Christ. Others with fatal perverseness refuse submission to Him, and thus remain under the condemning sentence of God's law, enhanced by the conviction of guilt, thus wrought in them by the Spirit, and which they have madly and persistently resisted.

Of righteousness. Whose righteousness? Surely not that of the *world*; for the convincing work of the Spirit reveals there nought save sin and unbelief. In the light of v. 10, which contains the explanation of this word, there can be but one answer, *the righteousness of Jesus Christ*. At the time these words were uttered, he was re-

garded by the Jewish nation, an impostor, a false Christ. But under the dispensation of the Spirit, his divine character and mission would be so clearly manifested and vindicated, that the world itself would be convinced that he was God's Son, the true Messiah and Redeemer of men. This is the counterpart of the convincing work of the Spirit in exposing the sin of unbelief. Not only was the enormity and inexcusableness of that sin to be so brought home to the conscience, that the flimsy and fallacious arguments which unbelief employed to maintain its ascendancy over the heart, would be clearly shown to be false and worthless; but the integrity and heavenly mission of Jesus Christ, would also be made to appear in all its glorious prominence, and command the assent of the intellect of men, even when the obedience and love of the heart was withheld through impenitence and spiritual unbelief. We are assured in other portions of God's word, that this vindication of the name of Jesus from the aspersions of unbelief, will go on with increased power and success, until at the mention of that name, "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to God." See Isa. 45 : 23 ; Rom. 14 : 11 ; Phil. 2 : 11. This glorious consummation is to be the great work of the Spirit, not, however, apart from the coöperative agency of the followers of Jesus, but in connection with their efforts and prayers, for the accomplishment of this predicted era of truth and righteousness. Sier and Alford would limit this word *righteousness* by the *world*; not that the *world's righteousness* was their own, but that of the accepted man Christ Jesus, which is (or in the case of those condemned might have been) *theirs*, and manifested in their hearts to be *their only* righteousness, that which they had before being demonstrated to be worthless and filthy rags.

Of judgment. Here is disclosed the work of the Spirit in the final overthrow, subjection, and judgment of all God's enemies, with the devil to whom they have paid their allegiance as the prince of this world (v. 11). All judg-

9 ^l Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 ^m Of righteousness, ⁿ be-

^l Ac. 2:22--37.

^m Ac. 2:32.

ⁿ Ch. 3:14; & 5:32.

^o Ac. 36:18.

ment is committed unto the Son, and yet the grounds of acquittal or condemnation will be furnished in the lives of men. They who are so convinced of their sin of unbelief, of the perfect righteousness of Jesus, and of a judgment to come, eternal and unspeakably momentous in its consequences, as to forsake their sins and turn to Him for salvation, will be acquitted at the tribunal of judgment. They, on the other hand, who are intellectually enlightened on all these points, and yet remain obdurate, impenitent, and unbelieving, will experience the realities of all those fearful forebodings and apprehensions excited in the soul by this convincing and reproving Spirit, but which proved ineffectual to awaken in them that sense of sin and ill desert, which would have brought them in submission to the foot of the cross.

9-11. These verses are appended to illustrate, explain, and confirm the great words, *sin*, *righteousness*, and *judgment*, of which it was declared in the preceding verse to be the office-work of the Spirit to convince the world. These words were of themselves too generic to admit of any special signification or application, unless further explanation had been given by our Lord. The word *sin*, might have been employed in its comprehensive sense, of the general condition of sin and guilt, into which the world has fallen ever since Adam's first act of rebellion against God. But our Lord here informs us, that it was the specific sin of *unbelief*, to which, in the preceding verse, reference was made. In like manner, *righteousness* is a word of such general signification, that unless it had been limited to the integrity and innocence of Jesus, as it is in v. 10, we should probably have failed to discern its true and special sense. The same also may be said of *judgment*. It has such

cause I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 ^o Of judgment, because ^p the prince of this world is judged.

^p Lu. 10:18; ch. 12:31; Ep. 2:2; Col. 2:15
He. 2:14

breadth of signification, that it might be expressive of all the forms and modes of judgment, which indicate the displeasure of God against the sins of the human race. But these words so generic and of such wide application, are fully explained by our Lord in these following verses. In regard to the word rendered *because*, which occurs in each verse, there is some difference of opinion as to its precise use and significance. That it has a causal signification all expositors admit, and the translation *because*, in our common version, is undoubtedly correct. It thus connects the clauses with which it stands with the preceding verb *will reprove*, which is to be mentally supplied in each verse. But the word is not only causal but also explanatory in each instance of the words *sin*, *righteousness*, *judgment*, as they respectively occur. In this use it might be translated, *in that, concerning this, that, &c.* The clauses, then, which it serves here to introduce, contain not only the reason why the Spirit will convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, but also the limitation of these generic terms to the particular points here specified. These verses therefore may be regarded as a reply to the question, as to what these words here especially refer. In regard to the definition here given to the sin of which it is the province of the Spirit to convict the world, there can be no doubt that *unbelief* is the root and essence of all other sins, and that the culmination of unbelief is the want of faith in Jesus Christ. This, as Alford remarks, "is not a mere want of historical faith, but unbelief in its very root—the want of a personal and living recognition of Jesus as the Lord (1 Cor. 12:3), which wherever the Spirit has opened His commission by the planting of the visible Church, is the *condemning sin* of the world. Of

12 I have yet many things to

q Ma. 4: 33; 1 Co. 3: 2; He. 5: 12.

this he shall *convince* those who are brought out of the world, and ultimately *convict* those who remain in it and die in their sins."

The word *righteousness*, has been explained in note on v. 8, as the uprightness of Jesus Christ, in contrast with the charge of imposition and blasphemy made against him by his enemies. But how would his going to his Father prove him to be a personally righteous man? Evidently if the Father received him to his own bosom and favor, it would evince beyond all question that he was pleased with his earthly mission, and that He ratified all which he had done and taught while on earth. But the evidence that Jesus had ascended to his Father, rested solely upon the testimony of the disciples, confirmed by the signs and wonders, which, through the gift of the Spirit, they were enabled to perform in verification of the truth of their statements. Hence the conviction of mankind in regard to the righteousness of Christ, was the work of the promised Spirit, although not apart from or independent of the truth, as preached by Christ's disciples, and taught in his revealed word.

But while primary reference is had to the personal righteousness of Christ, there can be no doubt that his justifying righteousness is also included; and this could only be bestowed upon men, as a consequence of his death and subsequent glorification at God's right hand. Christ could not justify the sinner, until he himself had finished his justifying work, and rendered full obedience to the law even unto death. So Luther: "we must know no other righteousness, with which we can stand before God—than *this going of Christ to the Father*, which is no other than that He hath taken our sin upon his own back, and for the sake of it hath suffered the death of the cross, and been buried, not remaining however under the power of death and the grave, but passing through them all in his resurrection and ascension."

say unto you, ⁷ but ye cannot bear them now.

But while his going to his Father both vindicates his own personal integrity, and provides a justifying righteousness for those that believe, yet in those who reject this salvation and trust to their own righteousness, this perfect righteousness of Christ will serve only to awaken remorse, that it was rejected by them, when they might have secured its justifying power and stood acquitted thereby before the Judge at the last day. Prof. Crosby well expresses it: "the world's only possible righteousness is in the grasping of the unseen and ascended Christ, and they will be convinced of that by God's Spirit either to salvation or damnation." *Ye see me no more.* The disappearance of his visible presence was the result of his departure from the world to his Father. This clause is therefore added to show the reality of his departure from the world, which was so near at hand. Henceforth his spiritual presence according to his promise (14: 23), was that alone which they were to enjoy, and this was to be secured and realized only by faith in him.

11. *Of judgment.* See N. on v. 8. *Because the prince of this world is judged.* The prince of this world is Satan (see N. on 14: 30). His judgment and condemnation includes that of all the powers and agencies of evil, of which he is the instigator and abettor. The judgment which will finally overtake all God's enemies, is now in a process of development through the work of the Spirit. "This judgment will be progressive like the kingdom of Christ, with which in every epoch it harmonizes." Webster and Wilkinson.

12. *I have yet many things, &c.* The object of this remark is to show the necessity of the Spirit's mission, to communicate to them those high spiritual truths, which in their present state they are incapable of fully understanding. The phrase *many things*, is explained by *all truth* in v. 13, and the plural may be used in reference to those communications of truth in a detached form,

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he

^r Ch. 14: 17; & 15: 26.
^s Ch. 14: 26; 1 Jo. 2: 20, 27.

which under the ministration of the Spirit will be wrought into one grand and comprehensive system of truth. The word *yet*, implies that he had already instructed them in many things pertaining to his kingdom, but that much remained to be said, and this would be revealed to them by the Spirit whom he would send from the Father. As Webster and Wilkinson remark, some of these things he revealed to them after his resurrection. But the great facts of the gospel were not fully understood, until their minds were enlightened on the day of Pentecost. Even then there was a gradual unfolding of the more peculiar and distinctive truths of Christianity. It was some time after the day of Pentecost, before they were fully instructed of the Spirit, to go forth and proclaim the gospel in all its richness and fulness to the Gentiles. Indeed so restricted were their views in regard to the scope and sphere of the gospel message, that they confined their labors mostly to Jerusalem, until driven out of the city by persecution, they carried the gospel to other parts of the land. Stier well expresses what was left to the teachings of the Spirit, namely, "the abolition of the typical in the old covenant through its fulfilment in his sacrificial death and high priesthood; the right position of the old law as it regards the new commandment of his new covenant; the relation of yet outstanding prophecy to the future consummation of his kingdom—in short, every thing generally which the Epistles bring in, and especially which the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse in the great conclusion unfold." *Cannot bear it*, is generally taken in the sense of, *cannot receive or understand it*. Their mind was not yet fully emancipated from the notion of a temporal Messiah; and many things which they were to know depended

upon the facts of his death, resurrection, and ascension, all of which were in the future. There is an apparent discrepancy between the assertion here made, and what is said in 15: 15, that he had made known to them all things that he had heard from the Father. Had he then exhausted his own knowledge of the things to be revealed, and was the Spirit more fully competent than he, to make up this deficiency of instruction? Surely not. The assertion in 15: 15, must therefore be taken in a comparative or relative sense; not that he had absolutely made known to them all which he had heard from the Father, but all which he had heard for the purpose of being revealed to them in the way and time here mentioned. So Tholuck: "the things which they could not yet bear, Christ had not heard for them." Stier finds another shade of thought in the expression *cannot bear*, which he thinks is a more gracious and stronger expression than *cannot receive*. "The Lord considers the weakness of their oppressed minds—their hearts being full of sorrow, and presupposing that they cannot yet fully understand his words, will therefore lay upon them no further heavy burden." But the want of spiritual power and discernment, rather than strength to bear up under the pressure of sorrow, and sustain the full burden of revealed truth, seems to be the truth clearly taught in the passage.

13. *He*. The pronoun again brings out prominently the personality of the Spirit. *Spirit of truth*. See N. on 14: 17. *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. There is no promise here of infallibility, or of any revelation of truth, over and above that which is embraced in what is alluded to in v. 12. "It contains a promise to them and to us,

upon the facts of his death, resurrection, and ascension, all of which were in the future. There is an apparent discrepancy between the assertion here made, and what is said in 15: 15, that he had made known to them all things that he had heard from the Father. Had he then exhausted his own knowledge of the things to be revealed, and was the Spirit more fully competent than he, to make up this deficiency of instruction? Surely not. The assertion in 15: 15, must therefore be taken in a comparative or relative sense; not that he had absolutely made known to them all which he had heard from the Father, but all which he had heard for the purpose of being revealed to them in the way and time here mentioned. So Tholuck: "the things which they could not yet bear, Christ had not heard for them." Stier finds another shade of thought in the expression *cannot bear*, which he thinks is a more gracious and stronger expression than *cannot receive*. "The Lord considers the weakness of their oppressed minds—their hearts being full of sorrow, and presupposing that they cannot yet fully understand his words, will therefore lay upon them no further heavy burden." But the want of spiritual power and discernment, rather than strength to bear up under the pressure of sorrow, and sustain the full burden of revealed truth, seems to be the truth clearly taught in the passage.

14 He shall glorify me : for he

shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

that the Holy Spirit shall teach and lead us, not as children, under the tutors and governors of legal and imperfect knowledge, but as sons (Gal. 4:6), making known to us the whole truth of God." Alford. Bloomfield, however, contends for the rendering *the whole truth*, referring not only to things kept back by our Lord from circumstances, but to things future, of which he had said nothing unto them. But whatever force we may give the article in the original, the reference is neither more nor less than to the whole system of Christian truth. *He will guide*; literally, *will be a guide, will lead, or show one on his way*. The word happily contrasts the perfect knowledge of Divine things which the Spirit possesses, with the ignorance of a finite and sin-darkened mind. *For he shall not speak of himself*. This clause illustrates and confirms the preceding declaration, that the Spirit would impart to them a full knowledge of the truth. It also shows that, while our Lord was soon to leave his disciples, and could not, therefore, personally communicate to them the truths necessary to the discharge of their apostolical duties, he would speak to them by the Spirit, whose province was not to speak, as independent, self-constituted, and separate from God—a thing which the essential unity of the Persons of the Godhead absolutely forbids, but which is here formally denied, in order to illustrate more fully their respective office work in human redemption—but as a Divine Legate, making known the things wherein He has been instructed by the Father and Son who sent Him. As the Son was sent of the Father to communicate those things which he had heard from Him (15:15), so the Spirit was sent from the Father and Son (14:16, 26; 15:26), to make known the things which he had heard from them who sent him. It is hardly necessary to repeat what has been so often said, that essential subordination is not here intended, but

one which is purely official, and growing out of the relations which each Person in the Trinity sustained to the work of human redemption. The phrase *of himself*, has here the same signification as in 5:19, where it is said that the Son can do nothing *of himself* (see also 5:30; 8:28), that is, apart from the Father. This was forbidden by His essential unity with the Father, and more especially by the subordinate relation to the Father, which He assumed in the work of man's salvation. So here the Spirit was not to speak *of himself*, or apart from the known will and purpose of the other Persons of the adorable Trinity. *Whatsoever he shall hear from the Father and Son*. The future is employed, because the Spirit was not to be commissioned and sent forth, until the glorification of the Son. See 7:39. *He will show (or announce to) you things to come*. This promise found its partial fulfilment in the Acts and the Epistles (Acts 21:11; 1 Cor. 15:24–28, 51–54; 2 Thess. 2:3–12; 1 Tim. 4:1); but more especially in the Apocalypse. See Rev. 1:1, 19; 22:16, 17. Indeed, one of the strongest internal proofs of the inspiration of the Apocalypse, is this promise that the Spirit will reveal things to come; for, as Stier remarks, "if this be regarded as unapostolical and spurious, we do not simply ask where would be the conclusion of the Bible, but where would be the worthy and perfect accomplishment of the word which John has here in his Gospel recorded?"

14. *He shall glorify me*, announces the great object of the Spirit's mission. As all which he reveals has reference to Christ, so in the fulness and clearness of his revelation is Christ glorified. This is declared in the most emphatic and sublime terms in 2 Cor. 4:6. God reveals himself in the heart of the believer by the enlightening rays of the Spirit, so that His glory in the face of Jesus Christ is brought to the knowledge of each one. Thus the glorification of the Father is the glorification of

15 'All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I,

t Mt. 11:27; ch. 8:35; & 13:3; & 17:10.

his Son, in whom He reveals himself to men, and the Spirit, in thus glorifying Jesus by the revelation of his truth, glorifies the Father also. The glorification of Jesus Christ is not, therefore, a thing to be regarded as an isolated fact in the economy of God's love, but as that which involves in it the glorification also of the whole Trinity, although apprehensible to man only in Christ Jesus, whose incarnation is the only medium through which we can arrive at the knowledge of the invisible God. *For he shall receive, &c.* This clause makes known the way in which the Spirit is to glorify the Son. *He shall receive* is a varied repetition of the phrase, *he shall hear*, in v. 13. The language conforms to an ambassador or legate, who *receives* his instructions from the one who sends him forth. Thus the Spirit is here spoken of as receiving from Christ the truths which he is to communicate in his mission to this world, as the Comforter, Helper, and Illuminator of God's people. *Of mine, or of that which is mine.* This indicates, beyond all question, that the things which the Spirit is commissioned to reveal, are those relating to the work of redemption, which our Redeemer came into the world to accomplish. But, as we have shown repeatedly in our comments on these great Trinitarian passages, there is such essential unity in the Persons of the Godhead, that *the things of Christ* are the things of God, so that in revealing Christ, God also is revealed. We need not fear, therefore, that in honoring Christ we shall misplace the honor and glory which belong to God, for besides that He is verily God as well as verily man, such ineffable union subsists between the Persons of the Sacred Three, that in honoring one we honor in like manner and in equal degree the others. *Shall show it unto you.* The verb literally signifies *to announce*, as a messenger, and is the same one which is employed in the clause *will shew you*

that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

things to come, in the preceding verse. This has led some to suppose, that the revelations of the Spirit were to be limited to those of a prophetic character. But the verb conforms rather to the idea of a messenger, who is sent forth to announce the will of the one who sent him. This may have reference to present or to future truth, not being necessarily confined to either. In v. 13, the connection refers the action of the verb to the revelation of future events. But in the present verse, it is used of a revelation more general and comprehensive, embracing all the things which pertain to Christ and his kingdom.

15. In order that the disciples might not so misapprehend his words, as to suppose that the honor and glory of the Father was made of secondary importance in the work of the Spirit, or that *the things of Christ*, were something independent and apart from those of the Father, our Lord here expressly informs them that these *things of his* were those which were possessed also by the Father. This great truth, in which Stier says that "our Lord rises from the announcement of an economical impartation (v. 14), to the eternal foundation of all in the interior, essential, eternally trinitarian relationship," is repeated even more fully and emphatically in 17:10. What created being, even though possessed of all the perfections which the mind of man or of angels can conceive, could say, in regard to the treasures of infinite wisdom, 'all things that the Father hath are mine?' In the glorification of Jesus, by taking the things that are his—which belong equally to the Father—and revealing them to men, the Spirit glorifies the Father also. Thus by this one great declaration that all things belong equally to the Father and the Son, our Lord prevents any misconception of the language which he had just employed; as though the Spirit, by receiving the things of his and showing

16 "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little

u Ver. 10; ch. 7: 33; & 13: 33; & 14: 19.

them unto men, would make thereby the glory of the Father of inferior importance. *Therefore* (i. e. on account of this community of possession subsisting between the Father and Son) *said I, &c.* This was not the reason, but the justifying ground of what he had said. The future, and all that pertains to it, our Lord in his previous teaching had declared to belong to the Father (see Mark 13: 32; compare also Acts 1: 7); and therefore the Spirit could not receive the revelation of the future, as a portion of the things of Christ to be revealed, unless this revelation, as well as all other things which belonged to the Father, belonged also to Christ. *Shall take.* In v. 14, it was *shall receive*, which is expressive of official subordination, as a legate receives his commission and instructions from the power in whose name he acts. But here the Spirit, by virtue of His undivided and coequal power and dignity, *takes* of the things of the Father and Son, and shows them unto men. Thus these great declarations, while they unfold the respective relations and offices assumed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the work of man's redemption, do not in the least degree contravene the doctrine of their independent, self-existent, coeternal, and coequal nature as Persons of the Godhead.

16. 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. "What a transition, or, rather, what a return back, between vs. 15 and 16, from the depths of the Triune Essence of the Godhead, to the immediately near present of his disciples' destiny, and the great change of the now impending day!"—Stier. The announcement here made, that he was soon to leave them, was doubtless preceded by a short pause, in order that the great and sublime truths to which he had just given utterance,

while, and ye shall see me, "because I go to the Father.

w Ver. 23; ch. 13: 8.

might be impressed upon their mind, and treasured up in their memory. The expression, *a little while*, is in the original but a single word *little*, yet its sense is well given in our common version. *Shall not see me*; literally, *do not see me*, the present being employed for the future, to denote in a tender and solemn manner, that he was soon to be removed from their sight by death. In regard to the following clause, *ye shall see me*, expositors are divided as to whether reference is had to his visible presence after his resurrection, or to his spiritual presence in the church in all subsequent time. Olshausen remarks: "All the better expositors are now agreed, that a reference to the bodily resurrection is not here to be supposed, as is indicated by the words, *because I go to the Father*, with which such a reference would not be consistent." In company, therefore, with almost all modern interpreters, after Luther and Calvin, he interprets the promise as referring only to the internal spiritual work of Christ. This also is the exposition of Tholuck and Alford. On the other hand, Webster and Wilkinson give as the interpretation, that "in a very few hours he would be taken from them by death; then, after a short time, they would see him again, when he should rise from the dead." Such also is Bloomfield's exposition. Stier, however, combines the two interpretations; and while, by the force of the words *again a little while*, he would take this of the physical reappearance of Christ to the disciples after his resurrection, would also make this reappearance a prophetic type of the spiritual presence of our Lord with the church. This appears to me to be the true exposition. The obvious antithesis between these clauses, rendered still more prominent by the repetition of *a little while*, is inconsistent with any exposition which makes the one refer primarily and exclusively to his visible, and

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 ?

the other, to his spiritual presence. The *not seeing* and the *seeing* must, by all the laws of interpretation, refer to the same kind of presence. If it was his bodily presence which was to be withdrawn after a little time from their sight ; it was his bodily presence, which again after a little time was to be enjoyed. This reappearance was, however, a pledge of the fulfilment of his great promise here made and repeated after his resurrection, that he would always be with them, even unto the end of the world. The fact that he rose from the dead, and was seen in visible form by them for forty days, and then ascended into heaven, was to them the most convincing and cheering proof, that he would vouchsafe to them his spiritual presence, according to his promise ; and hence we do not wonder that they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Ascension with great joy (Luke 24 : 52). The clause *because I go to my Father*, which Olshausen regards as conclusive evidence that Christ's spiritual presence is alone referred to, is added simply as proof that he was to rise from the dead, since he could not otherwise ascend to his Father. As his resurrection from the dead was that which constituted the principal fact of which they were to bear witness (Acts 1 : 22), the conclusion would inevitably follow, that they must have ocular proof of this fact, and that it would be but a little while before they should see him again. The sentiment fully expanded would then be : ' a little while and I shall be removed from your sight by a violent death ; but be not disheartened at this, for after a short interval, I shall rise from the dead in order to ascend to the Father, and you shall see me in bodily form, and thus have the surest pledge of the enjoyment of my spiritual presence which I have promised to you.' *Because I go*, &c. This, as above remarked, is ad-

duced as proof, that he would rise from the dead and show himself again after a little time to them ; and that the scene of suffering upon which he was soon to enter, lay directly in the path to his subsequent glorification. It was not then a ground of sorrow, but rather of joy, that he was so soon to suffer and die, inasmuch as a short time only would elapse, before he would enter upon his glorified state with the Father.

17. His disciples did not penetrate the meaning of his words, especially the apparent contradiction of terms in the clauses which they here repeat. This shows conclusively that they understood the second annunciation, *a little while and ye shall see me*, as referring to his bodily presence. Having as yet however no consistent views of his resurrection, although it had been repeatedly foretold to them, they could not reconcile the one assertion with the other. It seemed to them as contradictory a declaration, as that the same thing was to be and not to be. No difficulty in reconciling this statement would have been felt, had the first clause been referred by them to his death, and the second to his spiritual presence. But referring both clauses to a physical disappearance and reappearance, and not remembering what he had told them, that on the third day he should rise from the dead, they see nothing but the most palpable contradiction in the language which he here made use of. The clause, *because I go to my Father*, was not in itself obscure, for they had so recently and in such plain language been informed of this, that they could not, except by the most unaccountable dullness of mind, misapprehend its purport. But they did not see the connection of this declaration, with the paradoxical, if not contradictory assertion which he had just made, and which they here repeat, in order to give prominence to the ob-

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.

secrecy of his saying. Those who suppose that this discourse was held with his disciples on their way from the city to the Mount of Olives (see N. on 14:31), find here a chasm in the conversation, Jesus having withdrawn himself, or going on in advance as in Mark 10:32; Luke 19:28. But we find these pauses very frequent in this discourse, and they are much more easily explained on the supposition that the company was yet in the guest-chamber, than that they were pursuing their way amidst the darkness of night (see N. on 18:3), to the Mount of Olives, Jesus at times advancing beyond them, and then calling them to him (Webster and Wilkinson) and resuming his discourse.

Then said some of his disciples. The word *some*, is not in the original, but is implied. The idiom is met almost exactly in the translation, *an inquiry arose among them*. It appears very evident, that this was confined to a few of the disciples, and that at least some of them pondered upon his words in silence. *And, Because I go, &c.* The conjunction is here employed to denote, that this clause constituted a ground of difficulty in itself. The meaning of this clause independent of its connection with the preceding assertion, could not have been mistaken ; but as constituting the reason why he should pass away from their sight, and then after a very little time return to them, its sense was obscure. See N. on the preceding verse.

18. This verse presupposes that after a few moments of discussion and inquiry among themselves as to the purport of his words, they came to the

settled conviction, that they could attach no adequate meaning to what he had said. They repeat the words which constituted the chief ground of their difficulty, *a little while*, for it will be seen that this word (in the original *little*. See N. on v. 16), joined as it is with both *not seeing* and *seeing*, gives emphasis to the apparent contradiction of the clauses, or at least renders the sentiment much more confused and obscure. *What is this, &c.*, i. e. what means this *little while*, of which he speaks? *We cannot tell, &c.* They despair of being able to penetrate the mystery of his words. *What he saith* ; literally, *what he is talking about*. The verb is a different one from that employed in the preceding clause.

19. There was that indescribable majesty of demeanor in Jesus, as he approached the close of his official labors, which repressed his disciples from all vain curiosity or undue familiarity. But although their timidity prevented them from ascertaining by inquiry the meaning of his language, He was not ignorant of what was passing in their minds, and repeating the words which had so perplexed them, he proceeds to explain more fully their meaning. It is remarked by Webster and Wilkinson, that although our Lord does not here restate the words, *because I go to the Father*, yet he explains them in their order in vs. 23-27.

20. *Verily, verily, &c.* This solemn asseveration challenges their most fixed attention to what he is about to say, as something of the highest importance. *Ye shall weep and lament.* The most excessive grief is denoted in these words, such as would be indulged in

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 re-

α Is. 26 : 17.

wailings and lamentations for the dead at funerals. Hence this constitutes a plain answer to their inquiry, as to what he meant by the words, *a little while, and ye shall not see me*. The expression indicates that his death was at hand, and that his earthly presence would soon be withdrawn from them. The effect of this bereavement would be, that they should *weep and lament*. These verbs do not differ much in signification, and are designed to give emphasis to the depth of grief here denoted. The first denotes a loud and inarticulate wailing for the dead; the second is employed of funeral dirges and lamentations. This was literally fulfilled, as we see in Mark 16 : 10. *But the world shall rejoice*. This is placed in marked contrast with the sorrow of the disciples at the death of Jesus. There can be no doubt that this also was literally fulfilled, in the joy felt by the priests and rulers in their temporary triumph over Jesus. *Ye shall be sorrowful*, repeats the sentiment expressed in the first clause. The pronoun *you*, in the original is emphatic, and is put in strong contrast with the *world*, which is represented as exulting over the death of Jesus. *But your sorrow shall be turned into joy* (literally, *shall become for joy*, i. e. shall serve to produce joy). Now our Lord enters upon the explanation of *a little while and ye shall see me*. The grief of the disciples is here represented as a funereal grief, one which was to result from the death of their Master. The antithesis refers their joy, therefore, to that which should result from his restored presence. The expression is equivalent to the declaration, that they should see him again. The words of Jesus are therefore those of consolation. His disciples would lament his death and burial, as though he were withdrawn forever from their sight. But their sorrow would be

membereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

speedily turned into joy, at his resurrection and reappearance in visible bodily form. This verse throws much light on v. 16, and shows that his physical and not his spiritual presence, is that to which primary reference is there made. But as was remarked in the comment on that passage, this visible appearance of Christ, was the proof and foretaste of his spiritual presence promised to his disciples after he had returned to his Father.

21. Our Lord by a striking similitude, and one of frequent use in the Bible (see Isa. 21 : 3 ; 24 : 17 ; 37 : 3 ; Jer. 4 : 31 ; 22 : 23 ; 30 : 6), illustrates the sorrow which his disciples would feel at his departure, and the joy with which they would hail his subsequent return to them. *A woman*; literally, *the woman*, the article referring it to class or kind. *Is in travail*, i. e. undergoing the pains of child-birth. *Hath sorrow* from the pangs of labor, and the peril to which her life is exposed. *Because her hour (of travail) is come*. The word *hour*, is to be taken here, as oftentimes elsewhere, in the sense of *time*. *She remembereth no more the anguish*, i. e. she feels it no more ; it is no longer in her thoughts, through the superabounding joy that a child is born unto her. The word *man* (i. e. male child), is here put for a *child*, without regard to its sex. It cannot be denied, however, that with the Orientals, and especially the Jews through the hope which every married female indulged, that she might be the mother of the promised Messiah, a male child was the occasion of livelier joy than one of the opposite sex. The joy referred to here, is not that alone which results from the addition made to the human race, but from the natural love of offspring implanted in the mother's breast, and the sense that her extreme suffering is past. The joy resulting from these combined circum-

22 ^v And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and ^z your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask

y Ver. 6.

stances, was so great and positive, that all her past sorrows came no more to remembrance. No illustration could have been selected better adapted to express the superabounding joy of the disciples, when they should be permitted to see their risen Master, and realize the glory to which he was about to be exalted at God's right hand. All their sorrow in the dark hour of his apprehension, trial, crucifixion, and burial in the tomb of Joseph, would be obliterated from their mind, as though these sad scenes had never wrung their souls with anguish. Webster and Wilkinson remark, that the same image of child-bearing occurs in Rev. 12 : 2, 5, in connection with the sorrows and trials of the church, and the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Olshausen in his usual vein finds here a deeper reference, than that which lies upon the face of the passage in its obvious connection. "The proper meaning of the figure seems to be, that the death of Jesus Christ was, as it were, a painful act of travail on the part of all humanity, in which act the perfect man was born into the world; this birth of the new man forming the source of eternal joy for all, since by him and by his power the renovation of the whole is made possible." Tholuck hesitates to acknowledge this view, which hesitation Prof. Kendrick in his Note on Olshausen pronounces rational, "the point of comparison being simply that the present distress of the disciples will be succeeded by a joy springing out of the very *cause* of their distress, namely their sad abandonment by their Master, just as the pains of travail are forgotten in joy over the new-born child." Alford accords with the views of Olshausen, applying the sentiment however to every Christian who is planted in the likeness of Christ. There may be an

me nothing. ^a Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

z Lu. 24 : 41, 52; ch. 14 : 1, 27; & 20 : 20; Ac. 2 : 46; & 13 : 52; 1 Pe. 1 : 8.

a Mt. 7 : 7; ch. 14 : 13; & 15 : 16.

analogy found here between the joy of the mother over her new-born infant, and that of the new-born soul, or as Luthardt denotes it, *the new birth of the church*, but to seek this as taught other than by implication in the comparison, is to adopt what is called the *double sense* interpretation, in its most objectionable form.

22. Our Lord here applies the comparison to the present and future condition of his disciples. *Ye now therefore have sorrow.* 'Your present circumstances are such as to weigh down your hearts with grief. *But I will see you again.*' This is a repetition of the promise, *a little while, and ye shall see me*, and is additional proof that the physical appearance of our Lord is there referred to. Alford finds here the manifold meaning, "will see you at my resurrection—by my Spirit—at my second Advent." *Your heart shall rejoice*, i. e. joy shall pervade your whole soul. It was not an external and transient joy, but one which was internal and abiding. *Your joy*; literally, *this joy of yours*. It was their peculiar joy, in which no one, unless sustaining a like relation to Christ, could share. It was a joy which the world knew not of. *No man*; literally, *no one*, the indefiniteness of the expression referring it to any agency. *Taketh*, is the present indefinite used emphatically for the future. The sentiment is: 'no created being in the universe, can at any time deprive you of this joy.'

23. *In that day.* No specific day or period of time is here referred to, but the whole future, beginning at the time of his resurrection. This as Stier well remarks, "is the great turning point of the future, which our Lord, since 14 : 3, has had always before his eyes, and which has its commencement in the resurrection morning after the night of

suffering and death." But how are we to explain what is here said, that in that day *ye shall ask me nothing*? A bare reference to all the explanations given by expositors from Augustine downward, no two of whom seem to precisely agree, would transcend the limits of these brief comments, to which I am constrained through want of space to confine myself on all these great utterances of our Lord. To refer this declaration to the dispensation of the Spirit, in the sense that the mind of the disciples would then be so enlightened, that they would be under no necessity of seeking further illumination, would be contrary to the whole tenor of the apostolical history, and the life and experience of the Church. Prayer was incessantly offered by the apostles for guidance and grace; and such is the duty and privilege of all believers in every age since their time. On the other hand, it will not do to limit it to the forty days of Christ's visible presence with the disciples after his resurrection, for the question in Acts 1: 6, was a sample, doubtless, of many inquiries proposed to him during this period. There remains only the view adopted by Stier, and concurred in essentially by Alford, that "our Lord spoke these words concerning the day of resurrection or pentecost, only in as far as that introductory day was the starting-point and type of the *perfect day of the Spirit*, and in its strict literalness only of the consummation and close of this latter." The idea is evidently a progressive one. 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 under-

stand. 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. 13: 12. *Verily, verily, &c.* The usual formula of asseveration to show the importance of the truth about to be announced. *Whatever ye shall ask, &c.* There is no contradiction between this promise and the preceding declaration, with the interpretation above given it. The way to attain to that state of perfected blessedness and knowledge, is to pray for the spiritual blessings promised in answer to prayer offered to God in the name of Jesus Christ. "The way to *ask nothing* any more, is to ask and pray the more diligently until that day comes." Stier. There is no such contrast between *me* in the first clause, and *the Father* in the second, as to teach that it is not lawful to address prayer to Christ; for as Alford remarks, asking the Father in Christ's name is in fact asking him. Indeed we may go further and say, that such are the mutual relations of the Father and Son in the economy of redemption, that no blessing can be asked of either, independent of or apart from the other. The form of expression made use of by Jesus, corresponds to the official superiority of the Father in the work of redemption, which renders it appropriate that prayer should be offered to Him in the name of the Son—not in such a sense, however, as to forbid our addressing prayer to the Son himself. We have the most indubitable evidence that the apostles prayed at times directly to Jesus (Acts 1: 24; 7: 59, 60; 2 Cor. 12: 8). In regard to the restriction of this prayer to things which are agreeable to the mind of the Spirit, as opposed to the notion that the promise embraces every thing which may be asked for, see Ns. on Matt. 7: 7; 21: 22. Some expositors construct the sentence so as to read, *he shall give it you in my name*. The sentiment is not changed by such a construction, but the usual arrangement of the words harmonizes best with the order in v. 24.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name : ask, and ye shall receive, ^b that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken

b Ch. 15: 11.

24. *Hitherto have ye asked nothing, &c.* Christ's office of Mediator and Intercessor had not yet fully begun, nor had they until now been directed to offer their prayers to God, *in his name*, or on his account. This form of prayer was suitable to be offered only after his glorification. 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. 7: 7), the appended clause *in my name*, revealing the ground of the efficacy of prayer, which had hitherto been concealed from the most eminent saints on earth. Their prayers through faith in a Saviour to come, and by virtue of his atoning sacrifice, shedding its blessings by way of anticipation on all the past, were effectual, but yet were not offered in the name of the coming Messiah, but simply to God, who had revealed Himself as a merciful Being to whom prayer was to be made. But now as the atoning Sacrifice was about to be offered, and Christ was soon to ascend to the Mediatorial throne, which had been prepared as the reward of his obedience even unto death, the disciples and all who were to come after them, are directed to offer prayer *in His name*. "As in the Old Testament way of holiness, the problem had ever been to learn better how to pray, so also we have in the practice of prayer in the name of Jesus, the only way of progress towards perfect holiness, knowledge, and the joy of the heart." Rieger. *Ask and ye shall receive*. See N. on Matt. 7: 7. *That your joy, &c.* The *eventual* sense is here intended. See N. on Matt. 1: 22. The *joy* here spoken of, is that which results from a sense of the Saviour's presence (v. 22). The great facts of

unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

his resurrection, ascension, and promised presence in and through the Spirit, would be confirmed by prayer offered in his name; and hence this was the way to attain to that fulness and perfection of joy which was reserved for them. *May be full or complete*. This fulness of joy is to be reached by degrees. It is not the result of a single act or religious emotion, but of a life of faith, prayer, and activity in Christ's service.

25. *These things, &c.* Here is another of those pause-divisions of this great discourse. The *things* here referred to, are his previous declarations in regard to his relations to the Father, the advent of the promised Spirit, his withdrawal from their sight, and speedy return to caeer them for a time with his presence. These and similar truths had been revealed in language above their comprehension, blinded as they had been by prejudice, and misconceptions of the nature of His office and mission. The word here rendered *proverbs*, would have been better translated, *figurative discourses, dark sayings*, and hence obscure to the understanding. Not only were the words of this discourse dark and enigmatical, but the same was true of much of his previous instructions. This resulted, as is above said, from the prejudices and false conceptions of the Messianic kingdom, and also from the fact that much of his discourse was a revelation of the future, which is always more or less obscure, until the events themselves interpret the predictions. But his work of personal instruction was now about to be ended. The great events of his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, were soon to be matters not of prophecy, but of history. All would be made clear to their minds, which up to the present time was enveloped in

26 'At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto

c Ver. 23.

you, that I will pray the Father for you :

mystery. *The time cometh* and is near at hand. The time of the Spirit's dispensation commencing on the day of Pentecost is here referred to. Alford would not refer this to any one period of time exclusive of all others, but would understand it of the several steps of spiritual knowledge. But these steps or degrees of spiritual knowledge must have some starting-point, and to this the expression most unquestionably refers. The contrast between his manner of speech while personally present with them, and that which was to characterize his spiritual communications, and to be followed by such attainments in knowledge of divine things, is only intelligible, on the supposition that he refers in the latter to the teachings of the Spirit which began on the day of Pentecost, and to enjoy which, they were commanded after his ascension to tarry at Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 8). The words, *when I shall no more*, &c., have obvious reference to his teachings and instructions when bodily present with his disciples. These teachings were of necessity communicated in language somewhat unintelligible and obscure; not through a want of clearness and method in the teacher, but the blindness of mind of the persons taught, and the nature of the subject, which in many of its aspects and relations lay in the future, and could not be apprehended by finite minds, as though the things spoken of were already enacted and past. But although his personal instructions were soon to be ended, yet by his spiritual presence he would continue to impart unto them knowledge, and that too in language so plain as to need no explanation. *I shall show you plainly of the Father*; literally, *announce to you plainly of things concerning the Father*, i. e. concerning the ways of God, especially in the work of human redemption. Some expositors refer this to the counsels of the Father, that is, the Father's will as touching Christ's kingdom; others interpret

it concerning the Father, as being in the Son, and the Son in the Father, that is, the essential unity of the Father and Son. Reference is had here to the work of the Comforter (14:26; 15:26), whose inward teaching would be but the expression of His words and commands, who had sent him forth from the Father. Alford quotes Olshausen, that the *showing plainly*, "is spoken here by the Lord in its ideal perfection (as it will hereafter be); and is only approximated to on earth; for as long as the *old man* yet lives in us, we require still the Lord's intercessory prayer (17:15), daily washing from the pollution of the world; by which intercession alone the faithful man, notwithstanding his imperfection can enjoy in peace the grace of God vouchsafed to him." It should be remembered, however, that it is not so much the perfection and summation of knowledge which is here referred to, as the plain and open manner in which it is communicated. The simple idea is, that the instructions of our Lord while with his disciples on earth, were necessarily somewhat obscure, and they had oftentimes been obliged to ask him the meaning of his words; but in the dispensation of the Spirit which was now at hand, every communication would be thoroughly understood, for it was His province to guide them into all truth, and to take of the things of Christ and shew it unto them (see 16:15).

26. *In that day*. See N. on v. 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. "When the end of that day is reached, in which it will melt into the fulness of eternity, into perfect knowledge and holiness, then indeed there will be no more asking." Stier. Our Lord in the words *in that day*, v. 23, seems to have passed beyond the boundaries of time, and rested his thoughts upon the perfect knowledge and blessedness of his

followers, which left them nothing further to ask of him. But almost in the same breath he tells them, that whatsoever they asked the Father in his name should be given them. This shows that his thoughts suddenly revert again to the time of their earthly pilgrimage, anterior to their entering upon their heavenly rest. In the repetition of the phrase *in that day*, we are justified therefore from the context which immediately precedes, in making it refer to the time which they were to spend on earth, instructed and illuminated by the Spirit of promise. This was a period of prayer and eager desire for spiritual knowledge. They were not to remit their efforts to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, until they were called away to enter upon their heavenly rest. Indeed, as they approached that moment when all prayer and spiritual conflict, all doubt and despondency would end, and the soul be satisfied with the realization of its highest aspirations, the more ardently would they offer prayer to God in the name of Jesus. Thus Stier remarks, "The growing knowledge of the Father of Jesus Christ, as our Father, leads even more deeply into prayer, and the exercise and experience of prayer requires again that knowledge." *I say not unto you*. There certainly can be no denial of the intercessory mediation of the Son, for not only is that mediation clearly and explicitly promised in this last discourse of Jesus, but it is the constant doctrine of the Epistles (see Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1). The negation cannot therefore be absolute, but must be so modified as to harmonize with this truth. Prof. Stuart explains it as equivalent to, "I need not repeat to you what I have expressly promised." This is substantially the exposition of Grotius, which Alford thinks comes nearest to the truth, although it does not express the whole meaning, "I pass by that, as less important than that which I now infer from it." Alford ingrafts upon this exposition, the setting forth in the strongest light their reconciliation and access to the Father.

He therefore explains our Lord's words: 'ye shall ask the Father in my name, and *I do not now say unto you*—I do not state it in this form,—*that I will ask the Father for you*—as if there were no relation of love and mercy between the Father and yourselves; (v. 27) *for the Father himself loveth you—why?—because ye love and believe on me.*' This is also Stier's view: "The Lord is far from denying his continuous and ever-necessary intercession. He rather limits it to the special meaning which he now assigns it, viz., that he repels every notion of intercession, which would represent the Father as not already loving." This I think to be the true interpretation, and one happily and briefly expressed by Webster and Wilkinson: "To say nothing about my asking the Father for you, the Father himself loveth you," &c. The passage is far from teaching that there will be only one intercessory prayer, offered at a particular time, and never after to be repeated—for that is expressly contradicted by Heb. 7:25—but that this intercessory prayer is not designed as a means to avert God's wrath, or to awaken in the Eternal Mind, a feeling of love for them, since the Father himself loves them, and is ready, self-moved and of his own abundant compassion and tenderness, to grant to all who love His Son Jesus Christ, the spiritual blessings which they desire. The idea seems simply to be this: 'God the Father so loves those who in the compact of redemption are given to His Son (6:37), and whom he has drawn to him (6:44), that he requires not the intercession of Jesus, to render Him accessible to them, because He himself already loves them for the love which they bear His Son, and for their faith in Him as one truly sent from God (v. 27).' The intercession of the Son is not rendered useless or nugatory, by this love of the Father towards them in whose behalf it is offered; for this is the channel in which the love of the Father flows forth to the believer, and is the declaration of the Son's pleasure, that the love of the Father should thus be bestowed upon

27 ^d For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have ^e believed that I came out from God.

^d Ch. 14: 21, 23.

His chosen ones. What encouragement is here furnished to believers in Christ. Not only is the promised intercession of their Lord, the sure pledge of their final deliverance from sin and misery, and participation in the peace and blessedness of heaven; but the love of the Father, so free, so abundant, so spontaneous, ensures the same blessed result in perfect harmony with the will of the Son.

27. This verse has been substantially explained in the exposition of v. 26. The logical relation introduced by *for*, is very manifest. There was in itself no need that Christ should pray for his followers, *for the Father himself* so loved them, that He would grant their requests made in the name of his Son. The pronoun *himself*, has the force of *self-moved, unsolicited*, and stands opposed to the idea, that there was something in the Father, which would exclude them from His favor, unless His love of complacency was awakened by the intercession of Christ. The Son loves them as his purchased inheritance; the Father loves them, because they love and believe on His Son, and listens to the intercessory prayer of Christ on their behalf, as the declaration of his will and pleasure in regard to those who have believed on him (17: 24). *That I came out from God*. On the use of the preposition to denote *from the side of*, with the idea of the closest proximity, see N. on 15: 26. The preposition in this relation denotes the very opposite in regard to motion, to that employed in the second clause of 1: 1 (on which see Note), and brings out alike with that great passage, the essential unity of the Son with the Father, and at the same time His distinct and independent personality. This same preposition is employed in 1: 6, but in a secondary sense of *by* God, or *from* God, as His messenger.

28 ^f I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

^e Ver. 30; ch. 3: 13; & 17: 8.

^f Ch. 13: 3.

28. This verse is designed to confirm their faith, by a reassertion of the fact, that he had actually come forth from the Father, and was about to return to Him again. *I came forth from the Father*, means something more than simply to be born into the world. It refers to his preëxistent state of ineffable bliss with the Father, and hence is followed here by the clause, *am come into the world*, which relates to his natural birth, and is not a pleonastic repetition of the preceding clause. In the following clauses which speak of his departure from the world and return to his Father, we have the same twofold form of expression; *I leave the world*, referring to his departure by death, and *go to the Father*, denoting his resumption of that state of glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world (17: 5, 24). Nothing can be more explicit than these declarations of his, in regard to his preëxistent nature and incarnation. Indeed the evidence of his divinity and humanity runs all along through this discourse in luminous and parallel lines; so that on the one hand, we see in Him our Almighty Saviour, and on the other, one who entered fully into our nature, and thus fitted himself to be a compassionate and merciful High Priest, having been "tempted in all points as we are and yet without sin." Heb. 4: 15.

29. There was something so loving and cheering in his words—especially in the declaration that the Father from whom he had come forth, and to whom he was soon to return, so loved them, that of Himself He would grant them rich supplies of grace and strength, provided that they preferred their request to Him in his name—that they all profess to understand his words, and renew the expression of their faith in him as one who had come forth from God. There may have been in these words of the

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 Now are we sure that ^o thou

o Ch. 21:17.

disciples, a slight allusion to the promise made in v. 25, the intimation being that he did not speak to them in proverbs or dark and mysterious sayings, as he had said, but with a clearness which put all misconception of his words out of the question. In this averment, they probably emphasized *now*, in opposition to his words in v. 25, *the hour cometh*, &c. "The hour to which the Lord had referred, appears to them already come, notwithstanding that he had expressly said that he spoke for the present in parables." Stier. But they were far from understanding the full meaning of those divine utterances, to which they had been listening. Augustine well expresses it: "So little do they understand, that they cannot even understand that they do not understand." It cannot be overlooked, however, in the general view of the train of thought and expression, that our Lord seeing the great perplexity into which they had been thrown by his previous words (vs. 17, 18), did speak from v. 19, much more openly and plainly in regard to his going again to the Father, and the consequent expression of his Father's love to them, than he had before spoken. His closing words in v. 28, brought them again to the contemplation of what he had said in v. 16, and finding that they had attained to a clearer conception of what he meant by returning to the Father, than when this mystery was first announced to them, in the fulness of their joy, and as if to make amends for their previous dulness, they exclaim that every thing is made plain, and that he no longer speaks to them in language obscure or hard to be understood.

30. The disciples here profess their faith in our Lord's omniscience: *now are we sure* (literally, *now do we know*) *that thou knowest all things*. But what had Jesus said that led them to this conclu-

knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this ^a we believe that thou camest forth from God.

h Ver. 27; ch. 17: 8.

sion? Evidently he had so interpreted their inmost thoughts and feelings, that they were fully convinced that their hearts were open to his view. His words from v. 19, had been so pertinent to the difficulties with which their minds had been perplexed, that it was as though their thoughts had been exposed to him, by inquiries on all the points brought to view. He had answered questions which had arisen in their minds, but to which they had given no open expression. No higher evidence could be given that he was fully conversant with all their thoughts, than had been furnished by his response to what lay concealed from human eye in the recesses of their mind. The expression *all things*, is not to be restricted to all things in *their* mind, but inferentially embraces the thoughts of all men, and indeed the whole universe of being and action. *Needest not that any man should ask thee* questions, in order that you may become acquainted with the points necessary to be cleared up to his right understanding of what is said. Our Lord had anticipated and answered their questions, as clearly and orderly, as though they had proposed them in open terms; and from this they correctly inferred, that he needed no open interrogations to reply to the questions which lay concealed in the heart of any man. Stier so well expresses this idea, that I cannot forbear quoting him: "All other teachers must be diligently questioned by their disciples, if they would enter into their condition of mind and effectually teach them—but He who came out from God needed this not. As they thus invert the Lord's word in v. 23—for He had spoken of their not needing any longer to ask—they would in fact assent (by a very unwarranted anticipation)—Thou speakest now so plainly and tellest us so clearly unasked what is in our hearts, that *we* also

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be

z Mt. 26: 31; Ma. 14: 27. k Ch. 20: 10.

have no need to ask thee any thing." It is very evident from their words, that they had misapprehended the true purport of vs. 23-25, which referred to the times of the promised Spirit, but which they supposed had been realized in his very utterances on the present occasion. But this does not impair the soundness of their conclusion, that he must be endowed with omniscience to know so well what was passing in their mind. *That thou comest forth, &c.* As their confession of faith did not embrace in so many words, the supplementary truth to this, that he was about to return to the Father, some expositors seize upon this as proof, that their faith was yet too weak for the reception of the whole truth, as it had been announced by Jesus. But is not the omission one which was very natural, and perfectly consistent with their belief in all which he had said? Nothing is more common than the reference to a whole proposition, for brevity's sake, by its first words, or opening clause. It is very unlikely, at the very time they were expressing their full conviction that he knew the thoughts of every heart, and their faith in the truth of his declaration that he came forth from God, that they should designedly omit his solemn assurance that he was about to leave the world and go to the Father, through doubt or a want of courage to commit themselves to this declaration (Stier). It was no such admixture of faith and unbelief, no such want of boldness to commit themselves to the whole declaration in v. 28, but true and childlike trust and confidence, which led them to make this confession of their faith, after listening to the wonderful words of Jesus. There was doubtless much darkness and error in their mind, much unbelief and sin yet to be eradicated from their heart; but yet their words were sincere, their love

scattered, ^k every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and ^l yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

l Ch. 8: 29; & 14: 10, 11.

deep and tender, and their faith, imperfect as it was compared with its power and strength after their baptism of the Spirit, embraced all his declarations.

31, 32. There was an over-confidence indicated by their words, which our Lord deemed it proper to check. There is however no irony here, as Webster and Wilkinson suppose, but the tone of deep solicitude and tender affection. *'Do ye now believe?'* Would that your faith were so confirmed, that it would be proof against all trial and temptation. But *behold the hour cometh,* &c. This makes out a clear and natural connection between vs. 31 and 32, and leads me to reject the notion of Stier, and Alford, that this clause is an assertion and not a question. The clause *yea, is now come,* is an emphatic assertion, that the time was close at hand, when they should forsake him in the manner here predicted. *Ye shall be scattered.* See Matt. 26: 31; Mark 14: 27. *Every man to his own,* i. e. each shifting for himself, and seeking a hiding-place which he deems most secure. Many expositors try to elicit more from this simple clause than the words justify. Bengel, and with him Stier and Alford, refer the phrase *his own,* to those things which they had left, previous to their attaching themselves to the company of Jesus. This would constitute a defection infinitely worse than that of Peter; for he denied his Lord through the impulse of fear, but with no desire or intention of forsaking him for the things which he had before left for his sake. *Shall leave me alone* in the midst of my enemies. *Alone,* so far as earthly friends are concerned. How truly this was fulfilled on that very night, we find recorded in Matt. 26: 56; Mark 14: 50. *Yet I am not alone.* This is one of the most sublime declarations which was ever made.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that ^m in me ye might have peace. ⁿ In the world ye
m Is. 9:6; ch. 14:27; Ro. 5:1; Ep. 2:14;
 Col. 1:20.

On that dark and awful night, when his disciples fled in terror from the band of fierce and brutal men, who with savage cruelty and insult were leading Jesus from the garden, and when, as far as the human eye could judge of circumstances, he was bereft of all sympathy and friendship, there was with him as a comforter and supporter, the great and eternal God, from whom he had come on this errand of love and mercy, and who was soon to receive him again to that state of glorious exaltation, which he had possessed from the ages of eternity. God the Father did not leave his beloved Son to enter alone upon his great redemptive work, but was with him through all the scenes of his bitter agony, sympathizing in his distress and anguish of spirit, even when as the God of infinite justice, it was necessary to bruise him and put him to grief and make his soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10). The expression *with me*, denotes here as in 8:29 (on which see Note), the most intimate connection, not one of mere companionship, but of participation in every thing that is done, felt, or suffered by the other. The mind starts back with horror at the impious daring of men, who would presume to offer indignity to One, united in such ineffable bonds of companionship with God.

33. Here we are brought to the final close of this sublime discourse, and the comprehensive summary of its grand purpose, that *in him the disciples might have peace*. The phrase *in me*, refers to that living faith in him, so vividly represented in 15:1-8, by the organic connection which subsists between the vine and its branches. It was only by their union with him, and confidence in his supreme power and faithfulness, that they could enjoy that inward serenity and peace, which would lift them above the trials and vicissitudes of life, and especially the opposition and per-

shall have tribulation: ^o but be of good cheer; ^p I have overcome the world.

n Ch. 15:19, 20, 21; 2 Ti. 3:12. *o* Ch. 14:1.
p Ro. 8:37; 1 Jo. 4:4; & 5:4.

secution which they might expect from the enemies of truth. The word *peace*, is here put in contrast with *tribulation*, and hence embraces not only the idea of inward serenity, but also of hope and confidence of salvation in the midst of trials and dangers. These last words of Jesus have never failed of the result, to which they had such merciful reference. Thousands have experienced their animating, renovating, peace-inspiring influence, when ready to sink under the accumulated sufferings, which a revengeful and persecuting world in its hostility to their Master was heaping upon them. But not to those only who have been called to pass through the furnace of persecution, have these words of Jesus brought peace, consolation, and encouragement; believers in all ages and in all conditions of life, have drawn from this rich and heavenly discourse unspeakable peace and comfort. In no other portion of the gospels, does the soul come in more sensible contact with the blessed Saviour, than in this discourse and the sublime prayer with which it is brought to a close. *In the world*, i. e. while you live in the world. Stier would refer *in the world*, as opposed to *in me*, to indwelling sin, unbelief, and spiritual imperfection. This is doubtless true, yet the principal reference, in the light of such passages as vs. 1-3, not to refer to other predictions of open and violent persecution, is to the opposition which they must expect from the enemies of truth. Alford very well expresses it: "This tribulation is not only persecution from the world, but trouble and inward distress, while we are in the world, a comforting assurance that he is in Christ and no longer of the world. (Stier)." *Be of good cheer*. Take courage and be not disheartened. *For I have overcome the world*, and thus in my victory over every form of evil and opposition, secured to you a final triumph over all your and

my enemies. The pronoun *I*, in the original is emphatic, and refers to the inherent, undervived power of Jesus, who was united to the Father in the bonds of coequal fellowship, and had ample power of himself to crush every foe to truth, and bring his chosen ones in peace and safety to the inheritance of the saints in light. Here is the ground of all faith, confidence, and hope. There is tribulation and dismay without and within (see 2 Cor. 7 : 5). Only as the soul rests in Jesus, and confides in his power to save from evil, can it attain to that spiritual peace and comfort, which is the foretaste of blessedness above.

CHAPTER XVII.

1-26. CHRIST'S LAST PRAYER WITH HIS DISCIPLES. *Jerusalem.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. This prayer doubtless followed immediately upon the close of the preceding discourse. In the nature of the case, it is almost certain that it could not have been offered on the way from the city to the garden of Gethsemane. Such calm and continuous supplication implies some quiet and secluded place, like the guest-chamber, and not a great thoroughfare out of the city, upon which, even to a late hour of night, on such an occasion as the passover, would be found many persons going to and fro. It was uttered, therefore, beyond all question, just before they left the upper room to repair, as they were wont to do each night, to the Mount of Olives. As it regards the nature and design of this most remarkable prayer, it has generally been styled our Lord's *intercessory* prayer, and so it is, as far as its great features can be expressed in a single word. Yet our word *intercessory*, does not convey the full idea which we wish to express, when we apply it to this prayer of Jesus. It seems to convey too much the notion of a petition, offered by one to his superior. Such an idea must not be suffered to enter upon our conception of this prayer. Christ did not ask these blessings for his disciples, as a man asks the favor of God for himself or his fellow-man. It was the Eternal Son who here ad-

dresses the Father, and his prayer is to be regarded as a great DECLARATION OF HIS WILL, in respect to those who have been given him in the solemn covenant of redemption. It is his almighty *fiat*, addressed to the Father, as Him from whom he came forth, and as the One that had covenanted to save and bless all who by the drawings of His ineffable love had come to Jesus Christ. It is the proclamation of his eternal purpose in conjunction with that of the Father, "to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him." We must not lose sight of this great feature of the prayer, for *prayer* it is, although only such as we may conceive would be offered by one, officially subordinate to God, yet in all the essential attributes of his character, the full equal of the Father. Webster and Wilkinson have seized upon the true idea, that "the language is rather that of communion with an equal than petition to a superior."

In regard to the composition of the prayer, the words flow on in simple majesty, free from all obscurity of construction, so plain that the most unlettered man can discern the true sense, and yet having such profound depth of meaning, that the eternal mind of Jehovah were as easily sounded by a finite intelligence, as this wondrous outpouring of the heart of Jesus, in behalf of those who are embraced in the covenant of Infinite love. Olshausen remarks, that with all their perspicuity and freedom from difficulties, the thoughts are so unfathomably profound, that every attempt to exhaust them is in vain. So Luther: "Plain and artless as it sounds, it is so deep, rich, and wide, that no one can find its bottom or extent." Tholuck and Olshausen both quote Spencer as remarking, "that he never ventured to preach on this prayer of Christ, inasmuch as the full understanding of it, surpasses the measure of faith which the Lord usually imparts to his people in their earthly pilgrimage." As this sainted preacher drew near his end, he caused it to be read three times aloud to him, thereby expressing how dear and con-

CHAPTER XVII.

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven,

soling it was to him, although so far above his full comprehension. Similar sentiments have been uttered by such profound expositors, as Bengel, Melancthon, Stier, all of whom bow in the deepest reverence to this "high priestly prayer," as the latter of these expositors terms it, and acknowledge their inability to reach its full significance.

The general divisions of this intercessory prayer, are brought out the most distinctly and satisfactorily by Stier. He reduces it all to three main divisions. Vs. 1-5, the prayer for the glorification of the Son, as the ground and summary of the whole; 6-19, the specific intercession for his own whom he leaves behind in the world; 20-26, prayer in the widest comprehension for his whole church, all one in him as he is in the Father. The first of these general divisions, Tholuck would extend so as to include vs. 1-8, and it must be confessed that vs. 6-8, seem rather to be connected with the designed manifestation of his glory, referred to in the previous context, than with his specific prayer for his disciples, which follows from v. 9. The remaining divisions of Tholuck accord with those of Stier. This same general division is adopted by Olshausen, only the second and third divisions of Stier and Tholuck, he unites in one, thus dividing the prayer into two parts, 1-8, and 9-26. In the subdivision of the second part, he finds three subordinate parts, the prayer in vs. 11-16, that his disciples may be kept in his name; then in 17-19, that they may be sanctified in the truth, as he has sanctified himself for them; and lastly, in 20-26, expanding his view over the whole future church, represented by the Apostles in its germ, prayer that *all* believers may form such a unity in love, as that which exists between the Father and Son.

In the exposition of this prayer, we must never lose sight of the great fact of the supreme divinity of Jesus, which

and said, Father, "the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

a Ch. 12: 23; & 13: 32.

it was the main design of John's Gospel to prove and enforce. This will enable us to understand, what would otherwise be unintelligible, such declarations as those made in vs. 5, 10, 11, 21, 24, 25. Nor on the other hand, must the humanity of Jesus be overlooked, which interpenetrates all those passages in the prayer, in which our Lord acknowledges an official subordination to the Father, as in vs. 2, 8, 18, 22, etc. By thus keeping before the mind Christ's divinity and humanity, there will be found no clashing or conflicting between the various portions of this prayer, in which he is declared to have possessed a glory with the Father from eternity (v. 5), and yet to have been sent of Him on a mission to this world (vs. 3, 8, &c.)

1. *These words spake Jesus, &c.* This establishes fully the connection between the previous discourse of Jesus and his prayer which is here recorded. It also strongly implies that the previous discourse was spoken continuously, and not in a fragmentary manner, as would have been the case, had our Lord uttered it, as some expositors suppose, on his way out of the city. See N. on 14: 31. *Lifted up his eyes to heaven.* This is the natural direction of the eye in prayer, the habitation of God being regarded as high above the firmament. According to the Jewish idea, the seat of Jehovah, was in the heaven of heavens, or above the starry heavens. See N. on Matt. 6: 9. Hence a Jew in offering prayer to the Deity, would look upward. No proof can be drawn therefore from this circumstance, that our Lord offered this prayer in the open air, as Webster and Wilkinson think, in some part of the road between the city walls and the brook Cedron, along the banks of which they might have to walk some distance, before they came to the ford or bridge. Alford remarks that our Lord lifted up his *eyes*, but not his *hands*, "for he prays not here as a suppliant, but as an Intercessor and a

High Priest, standing between earth and heaven." *And said.* The Evangelist no doubt has here recorded the very words used by our Lord on this occasion. *Father.* The first great word in the prayer, bringing out the ineffable union which subsisted between the Father and Son, and disclosing the foundation of that holy confidence which he reposed in God, that he would himself be glorified, and that all his followers would be sanctified with him and be made partakers of his glory. 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 Matt. 26 : 39, 42, "but simply *Father*, that Great Name in which all the mystery of Redemption is summed up." Alford. *The hour* in which he was to offer himself up as a sacrifice for sin, and to enter upon those dreadful sufferings which were to precede his glorification at the right hand of God. *Is come*, not absolutely but virtually present. His earthly ministry was now ended. He had pronounced his farewell address to his disciples, and nothing remained but for him to be led as a lamb to the sacrifice. The words indicate the readiness of Jesus to enter upon this work of expiation for sin. The voluntary devotion of God's Eternal Son to this service, had been made in the counsels of eternity, and now he reminds the Father that the hour of human redemption has come, and as it were incites Him to exact the payment, which as man's surety he was to make by laying down his own life a ransom for sin. There is a moral sublimity in this readiness of self-devotion, which has elsewhere no parallel. *Glorify thy Son.* As his exaltation was to be effected by his death, reference is not had here to his essential and undivided glory, but to that to which he was exalted as God-man, and Mediator. It would deprive it of its high significance, to limit this request of our Lord, to the signal tokens of divine favor which attended his crucifixion, although

these are not to be regarded apart from the exaltation upon which he was soon to enter. The reference is mainly to that state of glory to which he was to be exalted at God's right hand, as Head over all things, and as the final Judge of the quick and the dead (Eph. 1 : 22 ; 2 Tim. 4 : 1). The glorification here spoken of, was the consummation of all his preparatory work of suffering and death in behalf of fallen man. In this great petition, there is not only an acquiescence in his Father's will, as in his subsequent hour of agony in the garden, when he closed his earnest supplications by saying, "not my will but thine be done;" but there is a full and cheerful offering of himself to death, a presentation of himself to receive the stroke of justice, which was to be inflicted upon him in the compact of redemption, before he could enter upon the glorification here referred to. There is in these words, as in the preceding clause, "Father the hour is come," a holy incitement to action, indicative of the fervor and self-devotion of our blessed Redeemer in this crisis of the world's redemption. *Thy Son.* This is the correlative of *Father*, and brings out at the very commencement of the prayer, the peculiar relation which subsists between the Father and Son. In v. 5, it is *glorify thou me*, the objective form of address giving place to the subjective, which is more direct and impressibly tender. *That thy Son also may glorify Thee*, in submitting cheerfully and fully to Thy will, and by his death making a full display of all the divine attributes concerned in the work of human redemption. The purposes of God's saving grace, were all manifested in the death of His Son, by which eternal life was communicated to mankind. This result is here made dependent on the glorification of the Son, because the sufferings and death of Christ, through which that state of exaltation was to be reached, were the means by which the Father was to be known and adored by lost men. But how could this reciprocal glorification of the Father and Son take place, if either of them were less than infinite? What

2 ^b As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many ^c as thou hast given him.

^b Da. 7: 14; Mt. 11: 27; & 28: 18; ch. 3: 35 & 5: 27; 1 Co. 15: 25, 27; Phil. 2: 10; He. 2: 8.
^c Ver. 6, 9, 24; ch. 6: 37.
 d Is. 53: 11; Je. 9: 24.

presumption and even blasphemy would it have been in the Son, to speak in such a connection of glorifying the Father, if he were less than his coequal? So Stier: "What creature could stand before his Creator and say, *glorify Thou me, that I may glorify Thee?*" The glorification here spoken of, is not that which man bestows upon his Creator by obedience to His will; but it is the same in kind, as that of which the Son is the subject, and is the giving back to Him the same meed of honor, glory, and power, which the Son had himself received from the Father. But this reciprocity of glory, which so conclusively proves the supreme divinity of the Son, from the utter impossibility that a finite or created intelligence could thus give back the same amount and kind of glory as he received, is the inevitable consequence of the essential unity of the Father and Son, the glory of the one being necessarily that also of the other. Thus are we conducted in the very opening of this sublime prayer, to the mysterious unity of the Father and Son, which is the great foundation upon which all that follows is based. If Jesus Christ be not the coequal of the Father and supremely divine, this whole prayer is nothing else than an unmeaning and blasphemous rhapsody.

2. Our blessed Lord having expressed his readiness to enter upon the work of expiation, for which he came into the world, and by which both He and the Father were to be glorified, now recurs to the promise, that power was to be bestowed upon him to give life to all who had been given him in the covenant of redemption. *As thou hast* (in accordance with thy promise) *given power*, &c. This covenanted bestowal of universal power, is here advanced as a reason, why the glorification of the Son should

3 And ^d this is life eternal, that they might know thee ^e the only true God, and Jesus Christ, ^f whom thou hast sent.

^e 1 Co. 8: 4; 1 Th. 1: 9.
^f Ch. 3: 34; & 5: 36, 37; & 6: 29, 57; & 7: 29; & 10: 36; & 11: 42.

be perfected, as prayed for in v. 1. The power here referred to is not that which he possessed in his essential divinity, but that to which he lays claim in his Mediatorial capacity. *All flesh* comprises here the whole human race, which is to be made subject to the Redeemer's rule, either by the voluntary acknowledgment of his rightful authority, or compelled thereto, when He shall come in the glory of His Father to judge mankind and give to all their final award. Alford would comprise in this term, "not only all mankind, but all that has life, all that is subject to death, all that is cursed on account of sin." This may be included (see Rom. 8: 22), but it needs no argument to prove that mankind, as sunk in sin and misery, and the objects of God's wrath, until reconciled to him through the death of his Son, are principally if not solely referred to. *That he should give*, &c. This shows the purpose of the delegated power and authority of the Son. It was that eternal life might be bestowed upon all those, who had been given to him in the covenant of redemption. This accords with the great declaration of the design for which the Son had been sent into the world, made by our Lord to Nicodemus (3: 16, 17). *Eternal life*. See N. on Matt. 19: 16. See also John 3: 15, where this life in its highest sense, as denoting eternal happiness, and not mere continuance of existence, is promised as the result of faith in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men. This principle of eternal life is communicated to the soul in the present life, by faith in Christ, and is consummated in the full enjoyment of God's favor in the world to come. *As many as thou hast given him* in the covenant of redemption. It will be seen in what follows, how much prominence is given in this

prayer of Jesus, to the fact that a definite number have been given to Him, as his peculiar inheritance and reward.

3. Our Lord here expands the preceding sentiment by defining *eternal life*, and revealing the only way in which it may be attained. This verse is in a manner parenthetical, and is evidently spoken for the benefit of those for whom this intercessory prayer was offered, that they might be under no misapprehension as to the nature of this heavenly gift, to confer which upon men, all power had been given to the Son (v. 2). It will be seen that the language of this as well as other portions of the chapter, is that of colloquy rather than of prayer. Our Lord converses with the Father, as one who meets Him on equal terms, and has no other than an official subjection to Him. *This* (i. e. that which is asserted in the next clause) *is life eternal*. The way or means of attaining this blessing is not here alone or principally referred to, but that in which it essentially consists, namely, the true, living knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent. This the world in its unregenerate state possessed not (16 : 3), and it was to lead men to this knowledge, that our Lord condescended to humble himself to the lowest condition of humanity. "This saying may serve to explain what *knowledge* means in Scripture (2 Cor. 8 : 2, 3; 13 : 12; Gal. 4 : 9). Not apprehension, imagination, thinking in cold speculation, or false mysticism, nor is it belief as mere admission and credence, but a living conscious possession of fellowship with Him. *To know God*—the highest thing possible to the creature, or for which the creature was formed! When that is perfect, the life is consummate." Stier. *The only true God*, not the God of truth, or one whose statements are to be received as absolutely true, although this is implied in the term. The words have a higher sense, *the true God*, as opposed to the false gods which were worshipped by so great a portion of mankind, at that period and since. God is to be known as the great and incomprehensible Je-

hovah, possessed of all those infinite attributes, which render him worthy of the love and adoration of every intelligent being. In order to avoid the appearance of inferiority to God, which the position here assigned to Christ would seem to indicate, the Latin Fathers constructed the sentence thus: *might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*, (also) as the only true God. Chrysostom to avoid this construction which the sentence evidently cannot bear, included Jesus Christ in the phrase, *only true God*. But it weakens the proof of our Lord's divinity, to resort to such questionable if not unwarrantable liberties with the laws of sound interpretation. There are texts in abundance from which this great article in our creed can be proved, without pressing into service those of doubtful import, or torturing them to give a testimony other than what lies upon their face as the true and obvious sense. The fact that eternal life is here declared to consist in the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ, is of itself sufficient to prove that he was no created or inferior being. Stier with his usual vividness of conception, and affluence of language, among other excellent observations, says that, "as neither the Archangel Gabriel or Michael could present himself before the throne of his Creator, with the words which precede and which follow these—Glorify me, that I may glorify Thee! I have glorified Thee, and now glorify Thou me!—no more could he presume on such a juxtaposition as is found here in v. 3." So Olshausen well remarks, "the juxtaposition of God and Christ adopted here, can only be appropriate on the supposition that Christ himself is of Divine nature, and thus as God bears life in himself. Every one feels that it cannot be said, under any condition: 'this is life eternal to know God and Abraham or Moses.'" There is a fellowship of honor and dignity asserted of the Father and Son, which runs through the whole prayer, as well as the preceding discourse, and which renders the proof of the supreme divinity

4 ^o I have glorified thee on the earth : ^h I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify

^g Ch. 13:31; & 14:13.

^h Ch. 4:34; & 5:36; & 9:3; & 19:30.

of Christ wholly independent of any single passage or mere verbal statement.

But not only has this passage been pressed beyond measure to furnish direct and positive evidence of our Lord's supreme divinity, it has been seized upon by another class of interpreters, to prove the very opposite of this. They contend for this as the true translation: *and Jesus (to be the) Christ whom thou hast sent*. But this would require the article in the original before *Christ*, and therefore cannot be received as the true translation. J. M. Faber translates it: *and Jesus Christ to be he whom thou hast sent*; Stolz: *Jesus Christ as thy Sent One*. This latter is also Lücke's translation, and is the favorite rendering of all, who would make Jesus Christ to be no more than a *man* sent by God. Some have supposed that the use of the name Jesus Christ, by our Lord himself, is proof that this verse is an interpolation of John himself. But this is an unwarrantable inference, and is as De Wette well says, "an offence against historical propriety." It is much more probable that the use of this name by our Lord himself, on so solemn an occasion as this, may have been the reason for its adoption by his disciples after his ascension. "They speak of him as he spoke of himself before God—this was the Spirit's suggestion to their minds." Stier. The name *Jesus Christ*, is one of high and heavenly import. Dr. Schauffler remarks: "In saying 'that they might know Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,' Jesus said, 'that they might know Him who is Jehovah their Saviour, and the anointed King and High Priest of His own people.'"

4. In this and the verse following, our Lord refers specifically to the three great periods of his pre-existent glory with the Father (v. 5 end); of his condi-

tion of humiliation on earth (*I have glorified thee on the earth*); and of his future exaltation at the right hand of God (*and now glorify thou me, &c.*) *I have glorified—I have finished*; literally, *I glorified—I finished*, which Winer refers to our Lord's past acts, viewed as filling only one point of time past, as simply a past event. *I glorified* in my whole past life, &c. But it is preferable to take the tense in a proleptic sense, inasmuch as our Lord could not say that he had finished his work, until after his suffering and death on the cross. This whole prayer is anticipatory of his heavenly mediation. Wrapt in divine ecstasy, he takes full possession of the joy which was set before him, and speaks of his work as already finished. This manifests his unshaken purpose to undergo the bodily and mental sufferings, which in the garden and upon the cross awaited him. The reference then in *I have glorified thee*, is not only to the days of his ministry, which were now ended, but to his obedience to the death of the cross, which in the proleptic style of this prayer is regarded as already past, although in reality yet to be undergone. This reference both to his ministerial life and his passion, is repeated in the next clause *I have finished*; (literally, *finished, brought to a full close*) *the work*, which serves also to explain in what sense he had glorified God on earth. The word *work*, is here employed generically for the whole work of his ministry, including, as has been remarked, also his death on the cross, and its attendant sufferings. *Which thou gavest me to do*. In the very midst of utterances which he could only make, as the coequal with the Father and possessed of supreme divinity, our Lord makes constant reference also to his official subordination, as one sent of the Father (vs. 3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25), and as having

ⁱ Ch. 14:31; & 15:10.

^k Ch. 1:1, 2; & 10:39; & 14:9; Phi. 2:6; Col. 1:15, 17; He. 1:3, 10.

a definite service given him to execute. See vs. 11, 12, 22, 24.

5. This verse corresponds to the preceding, as a kind of antithesis. Our Lord had completed his service. His obedience was now to receive its stipulated reward. The glorification for which he now prays, is not the mere reciprocation of love, but is to be regarded in the light of a stipulated reward for a definite service. *Me*, not *the Son*, as in v. 1, the grandeur of the relation between *Father* and *Son* with which the prayer begins, now giving place to the more direct and tender personality of *I* and *Thou*. The pronoun *me*, refers here to our Lord in his incarnate state. He prays that as Mediator, he may take upon himself the same glory with which he had been invested from eternity with the Father. The collocation of the words in the original, are very striking and emphatic; *and now glorify me, thou, O Father*, &c. *With thine own self*. Our English preposition *with*, denoting mere accompaniment, gives a very inadequate rendering of the original, which signifies the closest proximity and fellowship between the divine Persons here referred to. See Ns. on 1:20. Webster and Wilkinson, who have paid scholarly regard to the force of the prepositions, paraphrase it, *with thyself, as thy fellow*. The pronoun *thine own self*, adds still greater force to the expression, for it limits the glory of the Son here spoken of to that of the Father, in contradistinction to that of any created being. The implication is, that the glory of the highest created intelligence falls infinitely short of that which the Son possessed previous to his incarnation, and to the full enjoyment of which in his glorified humanity, he now prays to be raised. *With the glory*. In the interpretation of language having reference to a theme so mysterious and sublime, every word must be carefully weighed and taken in its precise sense. The English pronoun *with*, in this clause has no corresponding preposition in the original, although the relation which it expresses, is denoted by the construction of the word *glory*, as the means or manner of

the glorification referred to. This word is therefore used here of all the circumstances of glory, which invested the Son of God in his preëxistent state before his incarnation. This divine majesty in all its fulness of glory, was now to be resumed by Jesus in his exaltation as the Saviour of men. *Which I had with thee*, &c. This clause shows that the glory to which the God-man was to be exalted, was not at all inferior to that, which as the Divine Logos, He had possessed from eternity. It was the same—for such is the force of the article in the original—*glory* with which He had before been invested, which was to invest him now. There was however this great difference, that his preëxistent glory, like that of the Father, for aught we know, may have been incommunicable to men (see 1:18); while that of the God-man stands forth fully revealed (1:14; 2 Thess. 1:10); and filling the souls of his chosen ones with ever increasing admiration and rapture. *Which I had*, i. e. originally possessed. “He does not say, *which I received*; he always had it, and never began to have it.” Bengel. *With thee*. This is parallel with the preceding clause *with thine own self*, and by the repetition of the idea in a slightly varied form, gives great emphasis to his community of glory with the Father. At the same time, it teaches, as does the former phrase of which it is essentially the repetition, the distinct personality of the Son, as opposed to the heretical doctrine, that the Logos before the creation of the universe, resided in the divine mind as a power or energy, waiting for the great period of its active development in the creation of the universe. This passage is directly opposed to such a view, for the glorified state or condition of the Son was not *in* but *with* the Father. These words, although in the original somewhat removed from the verb, are rightly constructed in our version with *had*. The word *world*, in this clause refers to the whole universe of mind and matter, and thus the “*before*,” reaches back to that period in the everlasting ages, when the Triune Godhead alone existed. This absolute-

6 'I have manifested thy name unto the men ^m which thou gavest

¹ Ver. 26; Ps. 22:22.
^m Ver. 2, 9, 11; ch. 6:37, 39; & 10:29; & 15:19.

ly forbids any conception of Jesus as a created being, for had he been such, he would have belonged to the world, *the cosmos*, and could with no propriety or truth have spoken of himself, as enjoying a glory with God, *before the universe was*. The sentiment corresponds with that in 1:3; for *if all things* (embraced here in *the world or cosmos*) *were made by him*, his existence must have been prior to that of any created being, which leads us to the same great doctrine of his eternal and uncreated being, as that to which we are irresistibly conducted by the present passage.

6. From the consideration of the essential glory which was His before the worlds were, and to which as God-man he is again to be exalted, and which therefore in his subordinate state or condition as Messiah, he with perfect consistency prays for, our Lord now turns his thoughts upon those who in the compact of redemption were to be the subjects of his renewing grace. Alford says that, "this verse particularizes v. 4, and forms the transition to the intercessory prayer." *I have manifested* (i. e. showed openly, made a full display of) *thy name*. The tense here, as in v. 4, has its proper and perhaps better translation as the indefinite past, *I manifested*, the stand-point of our Lord by anticipation, being after the completion of his earthly labors and sufferings. The word *name*, here as elsewhere refers to God, not so much in reference to His proper name Jehovah, as to His essential being and attributes, which are known only to us as they have been revealed by Jesus Christ (see Ns. on 1:18; Matt. 6:9). The being and attributes of God had been revealed in the Old Testament, but yet not in that richness and fulness, especially in regard to His purposes of redeeming love, as in the New Testament by Christ himself. Hence the reference in *the men which thou gavest me*, is primarily

me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

to the disciples, who had enjoyed his personal instructions; but as they were representative men, the whole body of believers are also included in the words.

Which thou gavest me out of the world. The gift here spoken of is that to which reference has been frequently made (see 6:37, 44, 45), as provided for in the economical counsels of the Divine Three, and in pursuance of which, a definite number were to be drawn to the Son, and donated to him, as the reward or recompense of his Mediatorial work. It is a mystery of grace and love far beyond our comprehension, but should be received, like all other high and sublime truths, with the most ready and unwavering belief, leaving it with God to vindicate Himself from the false and impious charges of favoritism, which originate in pride, unbelief, and a total misconception of the scheme of redemption as revealed in His Word. The verb *gavest*, in the best editions, is the perfect, *hast given*, but the aoristic historical tense suits better the general recapitulation of our Lord's past acts in his progress towards the final result, and conforms to the tense of the verb *have finished*; literally, *finished* (see N. above). *Out of the world*. The reference here is to the world of mankind, the unbelieving world, a sense which the word has onward in this prayer, until v. 24, where it has again as in v. 5, the enlarged and general sense of *the universe*. The preposition rendered *out of*, is the one in Greek, which signifies a removal from the interior of a thing, and expresses the fact that the disciples were among the unregenerate, until made the subjects of Christ's elective grace. *Thine they were* in the purpose of redemption, even while they were yet *of the world* (see vs. 14, 16). This does not deny, as De Wette thinks, that all men previous to their conversion are the children of Satan. It teaches simply that those who have

7 Now they have known that

been given to Christ in the compact of redemption, belong also to the Father, through the love which unites the Father and Son. The Father therefore not only in accordance with the covenant entered into with the Son, but also through His own everlasting love for the elect, will not fail to draw them to the Son as his peculiar inheritance. They must have belonged to the Father, else they could not have been given to the Son; and for our Lord to have said that they were his as all mankind are simply by creation, would have been so unmeaning an assertion in such a connection, that we cannot suppose for a moment this to have been the intended sense. Alford refers these words *thine they were*, to the fact that they were *Israelites—Thy people before*; not only outwardly, but Israelites indeed (1:48), and thus prepared to receive Christ. But this does not reach the full and blessed import of the passage, which has reference to the covenantal inheritance of Jesus Christ, known, determined, and provided for, before the foundation of the world. The preparation of heart by which Nathanael and others, were ready to receive and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, was as much a part of the drawing of the Father to Christ, of those whom His elective grace had already marked as His own people, as their subsequent devotion to Christ, when he actually called them to his outward service. On this general subject see vs. 9, 10; Acts 18:10; Eph. 1:4-6. *And thou gavest them me*, is an emphatic repetition of *which thou gavest me*, in the preceding member. *They have kept* (see N. on 14:21, 23, 24; 15:10) *thy word*, in which they have been instructed by thy Son Jesus Christ. This reference to the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel as the *Father's Word*, is in perfect harmony with the official subordination of the Son to the Father, which throughout this discourse and prayer is kept so prominently before the mind. Stier, who refers this whole

all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

passage to the goodness and preparation of heart to receive the Messiah, which characterized the apostles before their introduction to Jesus, takes *thy word* in the sense of the Old Testament ordinances, in which Zecharias and others who were looking for the Deliverance of Israel, walked blameless before the Lord. See Luke 1:6. But as I have remarked, this is too low and restricted a view to take of the passage, which refers to the fulfilment of the Father's covenant pledge made in the counsels of eternity to the Son, in drawing around him in love and obedience the disciples, who are here the representatives of all who are brought to Christ by the drawings of the Father's love. That reference in *thy word*, is had to the Gospel revelation, is clearly indicated also by the tense *have kept*, which connects the completed action with the time present to the speaker. Hence it cannot in any way be referred to an observance of the Mosaic ordinances, before the disciples had any personal knowledge of Jesus.

7. The adverb *now*, brings the time referred to, down to the present moment of the speaker, and shows that the *word* spoken of in the preceding verse, was not the Mosaic ritual, but the living gospel of Jesus Christ. *They have known* is emphatic, *they assuredly know*. This is not to be taken, however, in such an absolute sense, as to preclude their growth and progress in the knowledge of divine things, under the teachings and superintendence of the promised Spirit. But the simple assertion is that they had reached, at this time, the most unclouded conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, and that his words were to be received and obeyed, as those of one who gave the highest evidence that he had been sent of God. *All things whatsoever*, are to be referred to both the words and works of our Lord. These were harmonious in their testimony to his divine mission, and together formed the very highest evidence of his Messiahship. *Thou hast*

8 For I have given unto them the words ⁿ which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, ^o and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they

ⁿ Ch. 8: 28; & 12: 49; & 14: 10.
^o Ver. 25; ch. 16: 27, 30.

given me. Our Lord was constant in the affirmation that his doctrines were not his, but those of the Father who sent him (see 7: 16), and that his works were also given him to do, from the same divine source. See 5: 36; 9: 4; 10: 25. *Are of thee*, i. e. are of divine origin. In this verse our Lord reaffirms, that his works and doctrines are those which his Father gave him to make manifest, and that this great truth is now fully believed in by his disciples.

8. This verse confirms and expands the sentiment of the preceding one. The fidelity with which the Son made known to men, the doctrines which he had received from the Father, is here adduced as the reason for the profound conviction of the disciples that his words and works were of divine origin. The word rendered *for*, would have indicated more clearly the connection, had it been translated *inasmuch as*. The words and works of Jesus are both referred to in v. 7, but inasmuch as faith has reference principally to that which is spoken, *words* are here substituted for the more general term there made use of. But even here we would not exclude the idea of the works of Jesus, which were so stupendous, as to render it impossible to believe that he was other than what he professed to be, a messenger sent from God. *I have given unto them the words*, &c., is therefore the same as to say, that he had fully declared to them the gracious purposes of the Father, in sending His Son to die for men, and in giving eternal life to all who believe in him. This of course includes as a foundation doctrine, the mysteries of the Incarnation, and the Trinity. *Which thou gavest me*, in order that I should reveal them unto men. *Have received them* in faith and love. No one can suppose that a mere

have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: ^p I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

p 1 John 5: 19.

intellectual reception of the truth of the Gospel is here referred to. The adverb *surely* (i. e. to a certainty), imparts additional emphasis to the verb as here repeated from v. 7. Alford remarks, that the fact of his having come from the Father (*I came out from thee*; or better, *I came forth from thee*), is more a matter of conviction from inference (see 3: 2), and hence is referred to by the *have known*; whereas in the words *thou didst send me*, denoting the other side of the same truth, the act of the Father unseen by us is more a matter of pure faith, and the verb is therefore changed to *have believed*. Our Lord by the word *surely*, characterizes their knowledge as of a higher type than the *we know* of Nicodemus, at the time when he visited Jesus in the earlier days of his ministry. His knowledge had doubtless undergone much transformation, in regard to the object of Christ's mission and the spirituality of his kingdom, since his first interview with Jesus by night.

9. Stier remarks that here begins the fulfilment of what our Lord had promised in Matt. 10: 32, as well as in John 14: 16. *I pray for them*, i. e. my intercession is respecting them. The preposition *for*, would have been more literally and perhaps better translated *concerning*. The *world*, i. e. the unbelieving world. See N. on v. 6. 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 he 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 Christ. The idea is simply, that the intercessory prayer of Jesus embraces

10 And all mine are thine, and

q Ch. 16:15.

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" (v. 20). These constituted the great company of believers who were not of the world, having been given him of the Father. In the whole prayer, this great company of believers are placed in strong antithesis to the world of unbelievers. If it be asked in what category *the world*, in vs. 21, 23, is to be placed, I would reply, that if the belief there spoken of be genuine and evangelical, and more than an intellectual concession of the divinity of the Christian religion, it is evident on the very face of the passage, that the expression *world*, must then be employed—according to a common figure of speech, by which the whole is put for the part—for those who previously to their conversion were a part of the unbelieving world. So we speak of evangelizing the world and bringing it under the dominion of Christ, not implying thereby, that every person in the world will be converted, but that great numbers will be brought therefrom, who will submit themselves to Jesus as their rightful King and Lord. If vs. 21, 23, refer to a saving belief in Christ, and no such discrimination in sense be affixed to the term *world*, it follows as an inevitable consequence, that the whole world including every individual is to be brought to a belief in Christ, as the result of the love union with God and one another, which is here the object of our Lord's intercession. This is contrary to the teachings of other portions of God's word, and of the historical experience of the church from the days of the apostles to the present time. It will be seen, however, in the comments made on vs. 21, 23, that saving faith is not there referred to, and hence there is to be no departure whatever from the usual sense in which the term

thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

world, is employed in this prayer, as embracing those who are incorrigibly and finally impenitent. It will suffice here to repeat, that our Lord is to be regarded as expressly denying that he prays for the unbelieving world—by which is meant those of mankind not included in the covenant of redemption—in any such sense, as he prays for his disciples and those who were afterwards to become believers in him, through the word which they and their successors were to preach. To attach any other sense to the declaration here so positively and plainly made, would deprive it of all significance. The sentiment is rendered still more plain and impressive, by the repetition of *them*, with the explanatory clause, *which thou hast given me*, which restricts the intercessory prayer to those to whom he was to give eternal life, in the exercise of the power with which he had been endowed by the Father (see v. 2). *For they are thine*. The tense is changed to the present from v. 6, in order to conform to the tense of the principal verb *pray*. In v. 6, it stands connected with verbs expressive of past time, *I have manifested—thou gavest—have kept*, and hence by the law of grammatical sequence was put in the imperfect tense. There is therefore no ground for the distinction made by Alford, that in v. 6, reference was had to their *preparation* for Christ (for the refutation of which view, see N. on that verse), while here the idea is one of *abiding* in Him. In both instances, reference is had to the peculiar ownership which the Father has of all those, whom in the covenant of redemption He has given to the Son, and whom in due time He will draw to him (see 6:44), as his promised reward and inheritance (6:37). The clause *for they are thine*, is appended, therefore, 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. Some may prefer to construct this

11 " And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy

r Ch. 13:1; & 16:23.
s 1 Pe. 1:5; Jude 1.

clause with the verb *pray*, as a reason for the performance of that act. This construction yields a good and consistent sense, but that verb is too remote for such a reference, and the correspondence with v. 6, of which this is a manifest repetition, is not so well preserved.

10. In this verse we are led back to 16:15, where the Son claims to be possessor of all things which belong to the Father. But here the sentiment is reciprocally stated, which brings out in stronger relief the supreme divinity of the Son, and his absolute equality with the Father. Luther says: "It would not have been so much if He had simply said, 'All that which is Mine, is Thine. For every one may say that all he has is God's. But he inverts the words, and says, 'All that which is Thine is Mine.' No creature could thus speak before God." The English version, *all mine are thine*, would seem to refer to persons alone; but the neuter of the original includes not only *persons* but *things*, in the widest sense, as Alford remarks, even the *Godhead* itself. But in its connection with the preceding verse, as illustrative and confirmatory of the clause *they are thine*, its immediate reference is to persons. The great idea of the passage is, that such absolute and perfect copartnership subsists between the Father and Son, that whatever attributes or prerogatives belong to the one, belong equally to the other; and hence the Son, in this prayer for blessings to be conferred upon his followers, only takes from that fulness of love, grace, and power, which belongs equally to himself with the Father. *And all mine*, &c. This verse is grammatically coördinate with the preceding, the argument being progressive, while at the same time it confirms and illustrates the foregoing assertion. *And I am glorified in them*. This is the infer-

Father, " keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, 'that they may be one,' as we are.

t V. 21, &c. u Ch. 10:30.

ence. The Son as well as the Father, is to be glorified in those who are thus made the subjects of his renewing grace; for no glory can be conferred upon the one, which by the essential unity of their being is not conferred in equal degree upon the other. *In them*, not *by them*, as some interpret. The pronoun is to be referred in sense to the *all* in the preceding clause, which, although neuter in order to embrace in the largest sense the whole universe of mind and matter, even to the attributes and prerogative of the Godhead, yet has primary reference, as has been said, to the persons included in the everlasting covenant of redemption. The idea contained in the phrase *in them*, from which Christ's glory is to result, is the same as that spoken of in v. 23, and refers to the divine life which his indwelling presence communicates to the soul, as the sap from the vine runs through and gives life to all the branches, with which it is in organic connection. This is spoken by way of anticipation of that which has its full development in the times of the Spirit's dispensation, inasmuch as our Lord's glorification in the redeemed, can properly commence only after his death, resurrection, and ascension.

11. This verse commences with a statement of the ground of the petition, which our Lord offers for his disciples. He was soon to leave the world, where-in they were yet to remain for a season. Bereft of his personal counsel and guidance, they would need the protecting power and presence of the Father, and this he prays for in the clause *Holy Father*, &c., which is the first direct request which he makes for them in this prayer. It will be seen that from this verse onward, direct petitions in behalf of his disciples are mingled with much that is colloquial, as one addresses an equal. The phrase *in the world*, has

here its usual signification of *place*, and does not denote, as Alford teaches, *the state of men in the flesh*. Our Lord was speaking of his bodily and not his spiritual presence. *But* is neither a literal or felicitous rendering of the conjunction, which is *and*, denoting the cotemporaneous state of the Lord and his disciples. The double conjunction in such simultaneous clauses may be rendered *both—and*, or the first may be translated as an adverb of time, *while I am no longer in the world, these are*, &c. Union and companionship are here indicated, notwithstanding a temporary separation of person. It is as though our Lord had said: 'I and these my followers are soon to be separated, and therefore they will need the presence and support of the Father.' The clause *I come to thee*, explains more fully the first one, in which the simple statement is, that he is soon to leave the world. The pronoun *I*, which was omitted in the first clause, is here emphatically expressed, to give prominence to its antithesis with *these*, referring to his disciples, and the demonstrative force of which is as though he had pointed to them, or made some gesture with his hand, indicating that he had special reference to them in this prayer. *I come*, has reference to the immediate future, and hence *am coming*, would be the more accurate translation. *Holy Father*, i. e. adorable, revered Father. *Keep*. This verb literally signifies, *to have an eye upon*, with the idea of protection; hence *to watch over, take care of, protect*. The personal absence of Jesus is urged as a reason, why the Father should now watch over the disciples, protect them from all evil, and give them the spirit of love and harmony. *Through thine own name*; literally, *in thine own name*, the idea being that of dwelling or abiding in the protective power of God, indicated here by his *name*, which is expressive of all the divine attributes. Winer says that, "*in*, in the phrase living or being *in God*, indicates with greater force and precision, than could be done by *through* or *by*, one's taking root, as it were in the strength of God." The idea doubtless originated in dwell-

ing in fortresses and places of strength, secure from the attacks of enemies. Compare 2 Sam. 22: 2, 3; Ps. 18: 2. This idea conforms to the meaning of the verb, *to watch over* with the idea of protection. *Those whom thou hast given me*. The recurrence of this circumlocution for *disciples, followers*, founded on the covenant of redemption, shows what importance Jesus attached to that great transaction. *That they may be one*, i. e. united in the bonds of brotherly love. *As we are*; literally, *as we*. The essential or hypostatical union of the Father and Son is not here referred to, but the love union which subsisted between the persons of the Godhead. We need not fear that we weaken the argument for the essential unity of the Father and Son, by this interpretation. We should run the hazard of doing this, if we sought to claim for the union of Christ's people with one another, a sameness of nature with that mysterious, ineffable, essential union which makes the persons of the Sacred Three, an absolute and veritable Unity. In no such sense are God's people united together. Their bond of union is one of love (see N. on v. 21), and this they attain to and preserve, by their indwelling in peace and love *in the name* of the Father, as here prayed for by our blessed Lord. In no manner whatever can the people of God be said to be *one* with one another, in precisely the same essential relation, as that which subsists between the persons of the Trinity. This passage cannot therefore be advanced as furnishing any clue, by which the nature of the Trinity of the Godhead may be understood and explained. That is too deep a mystery for the human intellect to fathom. The fact only has been revealed to us. With that let us for the present be content. What revelations may be made to us, when we shall see "face to face," we know not; but that the illimitable future will unfold to us much that in our present state of imperfection is hidden from view, is scriptural, reasonable, and delightful to contemplate.

12. The sentiment of this verse is closely connected with the preceding

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

æ Ch. 6:39; & 10:28; He. 2:13.

y Ch. 18:9; 1 Jo. 2:19.

context. Our Lord there prays, that the Father would watch over his disciples, whom he was now about to leave. In this verse he shows how indispensable would be this divine care and oversight, inasmuch as he whose protecting care they had hitherto experienced, was about to withdraw from them his personal presence. There is a concealed argument *a fortiori*. If they stood in need of God's protecting care, while Jesus was personally with them, *much more* would its continuance be necessary, now that they were to be left by him, to carry on the great work of evangelizing men. It was remarked by Cyril, that this bold expression in which the Lord makes his own and the Father's keeping one, must rest upon their equal power and dignity. "Who, leaving this world, could thus speak to God, but he who is One with him?" Stier. *While I was*. The word is prophetically used, as he had not yet actually left them. It will be seen that the great stand point of this prayer, is by way of anticipation, after his glorification had commenced. *I kept them*; literally, *was keeping them*, the imperfect tense denoting continuous past action, being employed. *In thy name*. See N. on v. 11. Again, *those that thou gavest me*, to denote those who were made *his own* in the covenant of redemption. See N. on v. 11. *I have kept*; literally, *I kept*, the time of the prayer by prolepsis, being after his departure from earth. The verb is not the one employed in the first clause, nor in v. 11, but one which expresses more strongly the idea of defence and protection, the literal signification being *to guard* with unremitted vigilance. *But the son of perdition*, i. e. Judas who is thus styled, because of his great sin and its awful consequences. The same appellation is given in 2 Thess. 2:3, to Antichrist, who like Judas the type

is lost, * but the son of perdition; † that the scripture might be fulfilled.

æ Ch. 6:70; & 13:18.

α Ps. 109:8; Ac. 1:20.

of all apostasy, was devoted to destruction. A question here arises, whether this scripture teaches that Judas was included in those whom the Father had given to the Son. Alford contends that he was, and makes this passage to show "(1) the sense in which the phrase *whom thou gavest me*, is to be taken in the previous instances of its occurrence; and (2) that of such persons it is true, that there is for them no *irresistible grace*, no 'keeping in God's name,' independently of their 'keeping God's word' (v. 6), which Judas did not do. But how can we include Judas among the true disciples of Christ, in face of such scriptures as 6:37, 39, 40, where it is expressly asserted, that none of those given the Son by the Father shall finally perish? See also 10:27-29, where the same truth is declared in another form of words, and in another connection; also 18:9, on which see Note. As to what Alford terms *irresistible grace*, we have no trouble in believing, that the Father can make sure the fulfilment of his covenant with the Son, without interfering in the least with the laws of free agency, or rendering it physically impossible for them to violate his law, apostatize from truth, and thus be lost forever. Although men are not saved, as if they were machines to be wound up and run according to fixed and necessary physical laws; they are nevertheless so drawn to Christ by the almighty grace of God (6:44), and so kept by His power through faith unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:5), that it becomes morally certain that all who have been given to his Son in the covenant of redemption, will be guarded and kept from apostasy, and made happy at last in the presence of Him to whom they rightfully belong. There is no reference in the whole Gospel to Judas, which can lead us to suppose, that he was ever included in the

13 And now come I to thee ; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 ^b I have given them thy

^b Ver. 8.

number of those who were given to Christ, and by his apostasy furnishing proof, as Alford asserts, that the grace of God is not *gratia irresistibilis, irresistible grace*. "Have not I chosen you twelve (to the apostleship) and one of you is a devil?" See N. on 6: 70. He was a child of the devil from the very beginning, and his love for Jesus was only pretended and fictitious, like that which his prototype Abithophel entertained for David. The word *but*, has here evidently the sense of *but only*; and the *son of perdition*, is the subject of the exception here made, because he had been chosen to the apostleship alike with the other disciples. So Doddridge well paraphrases: "*unless it be counted as a kind of exception, that the son of perdition perishes by his iniquity; that wretched creature, who in a lower sense was indeed given to me, but never like the rest, was taken under my special care, but, is left to fall into deserved ruin, that the scripture might be fulfilled,*" &c. The original translated *but*, is the same as that employed in Luke 4: 26, 27 (on which see Note), where *save* or *saving*, does not imply that the Sidonian widow belonged to the widows of Israel, or that Naaman was an Israelitish leper. *That the scripture might be fulfilled*. This prediction and its certain accomplishment, did not necessitate Judas to commit his great sin of betraying Christ. He was not the son of perdition, *in order that* the scripture which spoke of his apostasy might be fulfilled, as Alford maintains, but in his voluntary choice to do this great sin, he was fulfilling the purpose of God, as expressed in the scripture. See N. on 13: 18; Acts 1: 20.

13. *And now I come to thee*, is a repetition of the words *but I come to thee*, in v. 11. But the connection here refers it by way of antithesis, to the

word; 'and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world,' ^d even as I am not of the world.

^c Ch. 15: 18, 19; 1 Jo. 8: 13.

^d Ch. 8: 23; ver. 16.

clause in v. 12, *while I was with them*, &c., the sense being as Alford well remarks, "but I shall be here to keep them no more. And therefore I pray this prayer in their hearing," &c. Some may prefer with Webster and Wilkinson, to regard it as resumptive from v. 11, and introductory to the words which follow. There is no essential difference in these modes of construction. *These things I speak*, refers to the words of the prayer, which he was then offering in the hearing of his disciples for their comfort and instruction (Stier). *In the world*, i. e. while I am here below with them. It is implied that Christ's intercession for his people will be continued after his glorification, but doubtless in terms suited to the essential unity and mode of communion which subsists between the Persons of the Trinity. *That* (here *in order that*) *they might have my joy* (i. e. the joy which is mine to give) *fulfilled in themselves*. The sentiment is that our Lord uttered this intercessory prayer in the hearing of his disciples, in order that it might be a source of comfort in the dark hour of trial and affliction to them, and also to all who should come after them (v. 20), and be inheritors of like promises and blessings.

14. In this verse our Lord indicates the means by which he had kept his disciples while he was with them. He had given them the divine word, and as a necessary consequence, it had provoked the hostility of the world, and they would therefore stand in preëminent need of protection from above. The verb *have given*, refers to the communications which our Lord had made from time to time, of the will of the Father and the nature of the Messianic Kingdom which he had come to establish. It was the message of the Father which he came to make known to men, and hence he calls the gospel, *thy word*.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world,

The tense of the verb *hath hated*, requires the translation *hated*, reference being had proleptically to the effect upon the world of the preached gospel, in exciting its hatred and opposition. The great work of preaching the gospel, is more specifically pointed out in v. 18. This hatred of the world in view of the truth which the disciples were commissioned to make known, had already begun to manifest itself, and would by no means be abated after his departure. See Acts 4: 24-30. *Because they are not*, &c. This denotes the reason why they were the object of the world's hatred. The sentiment is repeated from v. 19, on which see Note. *Are not of this world*, i. e. are not possessed of its spirit or actuated by its principles and motives of action. Thus through his regenerating love they were like Christ. This is the point of the similitude; but it must not be pressed to teach that believers are not originally of the world, because Christ was not so, or that the same absolute freedom from worldly influences characterized their walk and conversation, which was true of him. "During the whole time of his being in the world, he had not been for one moment of the world—but had been elevated above it in kingly majesty. But in the case of his disciples, the same world which hateth them hath still something of its own within their hearts." Stier.

15. This verse implies a conflict, not only between his disciples and the world *without*, in consequence of the self-denying doctrines of the cross which they were commissioned to disseminate, and the zeal with which they should seek to make converts to Christianity, but also with the world *within*, according as indwelling sin gave force to the temptations by which they might be beset. It was necessary, therefore, that they should remain for a time on earth, to proclaim the gospel message to their fellow-men, and prove themselves his true followers by overcoming

but 'that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

e Mt. 6: 13; Ga. 1: 4; 2 Th. 3: 3; 1 Jo. 5: 18-

the world, in its insidious and persevering efforts to draw them away from Christ. Our Lord therefore does not pray for their removal from this world, but rather that while discharging their official duties as ministers of his word, they may be kept from evil and be enabled to pursue the conflict both external and internal, until they should be crowned with victory. Such I conceive to be the connection of this verse with the preceding one, which at first sight seems somewhat obscure. *That thou shouldst take them*, &c., refers to an immediate removal from earth, and is intended to teach the disciples, that the work of the ministry to which they had been called, forbade their accompanying or immediately following him to the place of blessedness whither he was about to go. *Out of the world* refers here to removal by death, a sense different from that which these words have in v. 6, on which see Note. *Away from the world*, would perhaps have been a better translation; the term *world*, here meaning the world of living men, the earth as the abode of mankind. *Shouldst keep* is the same verb thus translated in v. 11, on which see Note. Followed as here by *from the evil*, it has the additional idea of separation from the world, so as not to be overcome by its opposition, or enticed from truth and duty by its sinful and alluring pleasures. There can be little doubt that *the evil*, is in the neuter gender, and is put generically for every form of evil by which the good are beset in this sinful world. Such is the view of Doddridge, Stier, Tholuck, Olshausen, Bloomfield, Webster and Wilkinson. On the other hand, Beza, Bengel, De Wette, and Alford, interpret it as a masculine, *the Evil One*. But there is an obvious correspondence between *the world* in the first clause, and *the evil* in the second, which demands that both shall be taken in the same general sense. This is strengthened by the fact, that the same prepo-

16 ^f They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

^f Ver. 14.

g Ch. 15: 3; Ac. 15: 9; Ep. 5: 26; 1 Pe. 1: 22.

sition is employed in both clauses, signifying *out of* or *from* the interior of the *world* or *evil*, which shows that the latter expression is not to be referred to *evil*, as a personality, but as a comprehensive term for the *world of sin*, in which his disciples were yet for a time to dwell. Olshausen's remark is just, that had the Evil One been referred to, it would have been more definitely expressed by *the prince of this world*—a designation, which our Lord had thrice before employed of Satan the great foe and seducer of man. See 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11. The substitution of *evil*, in the second member for *world*, is to be referred to the use of that word in the first clause, not so much in the sense of an evil world, as the abode of the living, which men are to leave at the hour of death. Hence *evil* in the second clause, is a varied expression for the *world* regarded as sinful, and opposed to Christ and all his followers.

16. This verse fully discloses the reason, why the Father's protecting care was to be exercised over the disciples after the departure of their Lord. *They are not of the world*, is repeated from v. 14. It was there introduced as the ground of the world's hatred; here it 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, *they are not of the world*, more prominent and impressive. Their separation from the world was in one sense as real, as though they had been removed out of it. There had been wrought in them a radical and entire change of the governing motives and principles of action, which regulate and control the men of this world. As Jesus had been actuated by a supreme desire to do his Father's will, so they were influenced by a like heavenly spirit and temper. In this they were diametrically opposed to the

17 ^g Sanctify them through thy truth: ^h thy word is truth.

^h 2 Sa. 7: 23; Ps. 119: 142, 151; ch. 8: 40.

world. Their whole life and purpose was an antagonism of good with evil, truth with error, light with darkness, which rendered it necessary, that in order to their final victory, his disciples should be watched over and protected by the Father.

17. Our Lord here prays for the positive blessing which was negatively invoked in v. 15. *To keep from evil*, in its strictest sense, is *to sanctify*, inasmuch as sanctification is freedom from moral defilement. Here then we have the great idea of our Lord's intercessory prayer for his people. It is that they may be cleansed from every moral impurity, and thus rendered meet for the inheritance of the saints in heaven. The meaning which some would here affix to the verb *sanctify*, as designating an external separation or consecration to the apostolical office, is not for a moment to be entertained as the true one. The very meaning of the verb, which, when employed of persons, in contradistinction to vessels appropriated to a ceremonial use, signifies to *cleanse* or *purify* in a moral sense, forbids our attaching to the word as here employed, the low sense of an external consecration to the work of the ministry. The connection also is opposed to this interpretation. As has been remarked, *sanctify them*, is but the positive form of expression for, *shouldest keep them from the evil*, in v. 15. This requires a far deeper sense to be attached to *sanctify*, than a mere external separation or setting apart to an official work. This meaning is sought to be confirmed by the use of the word *sanctify*, in v. 19. But a reference to the comment on that verse will show, that consecration to the Mediatorial office is not what is there specifically meant, but a state of perfect holiness, by which our Lord had rendered himself an acceptable sacrifice to divine justice. Even if external consecration were the only or principal thing referred to in v. 19, it would be unsafe

18 'As thou hast sent me into

2 Ch. 20: 21.

to argue, that such is the meaning of the word in this place, applied as it is to poor sinful men. In the one case, it is consecration to the service of God by renunciation of sin, and faith in a crucified Saviour. In the other, it is the spontaneous self-consecration of One who knew no sin, and whose chief and only delight was to do the will of his Father.

Prof. Stuart renders the passage, *consecrate them for the truth*, i. e. for the word or doctrine given to them to preach to the world. But as has been said, this does not accord with the general usage of the word in the New Testament, nor with the context, which happily is so plain in its demands, that no one can well mistake the sense required in this verse. *Through thy truth*, is literally *in thy truth*. The word of God was to be the element in which this sanctifying process was to go on; or as Stier terms it, the medium of sanctification. Dr. Schauffler well expresses it: "They who are true disciples of Christ live and move in the word of truth as their element. They breathe it. This element, like all the means of grace has a sanctifying tendency." Some prefer the instrumental sense of the Greek preposition, *by thy truth*. I cannot see any essential difference in these two modes of exposition. If truth is regarded as the sanctifying element in which the believer lives, it is surely a medium or means of sanctification. The one implies the other. *Thy word is truth*. This refers the truth here spoken of to the word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. The truth, as embodied in the inspired word of God, when received into the soul and rendered efficacious and active by the indwelling Spirit, will always be productive of holiness. An illustration of the powerful agency of truth as contained in the revealed will of God, to sanctify the soul and establish it in the worship and service of God, is found in the 119th Psalm, where every verse, in varied language, reveals

the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

this great truth. Compare Acts 20: 32. Prof. Lewis (Divine Human in the Scriptures, p. 3) refers the *word* here spoken of, to the Incarnate Word, "the true sanctifying Word, by union to which men become holy, separate from the world, united to God, and partakers of the divine nature." But while this is in the highest sense true, I have much doubt whether our Lord as the eternal Logos, would say, "*the Logos which is thine*." Besides, the living word of inspiration, that is, the revelation which the Incarnate Logos made of God, is the divinely appointed means of sanctification.

18. The necessity of their sanctification in and through the word, is here shown from the mission on which they were about to be sent. *As thou hast sent—even so have I also sent*. The translation in accordance with the tense of the original is, *as thou didst send—even so I also sent*. This shows the prophetic character of the verse. Alford says that it received its fulfilment in 20: 21. It need not be repeated, that many portions of the prayer are offered from a stand-point of time, after his resurrection and glorification. *As thou hast sent me, &c.* Christ was sent into the world on a mission of redeeming love. See 3: 16, 17. *Even so have I also, &c.* To extend the knowledge of salvation through a Redeemer, was the object of the apostles' mission. Hence there was an obvious similarity between the purpose for which they were ordained and sent forth, and that for which Christ came into this world. God the Father had sent the Son; the Son, by virtue of the Mediatorial authority with which he was invested, sent his disciples to carry on and perfect the work which he had begun. As he had met with hatred and opposition in his divine mission, so they would be the subjects of the world's scorn and hatred, as he had formerly said (15: 20). This evinced the necessity of their sanctification through the indwelling word of God; and the verse contains therefore

19 And ^kfor their sakes I sanc-

^k 1 Co. 1:2, 30; 1 Th. 4:7; He. 10:10.

the reason for the petition offered up in the preceding verse. Those expositors who interpret v. 17, of a consecration of the disciples to their missionary work, find in this verse simply the object for which they were thus consecrated, namely, the promulgation of truth. This was the great purpose for which he had come into the world, and was to be the special work to which he prays that they may be now solemnly set apart. All this is true, but is rather implied than directly asserted in the words, *sanctify them in thy truth*.

19. This verse has occasioned much difficulty, chiefly from the attempt to reconcile the sanctification of Jesus here spoken of, and the sanctification of the believer which follows as the intended result. The difficulty would mostly disappear, if instead of assigning to the verb *sanctify*, in v. 17, the comparatively low signification of external consecration to the apostolic work, we should give it the sense of a moral cleansing or personal sanctification which unquestionably belongs to it, if regard be had to the primary meaning of the word, or the important connection in which it stands. The difference between this act, as predicated of him and of his disciples, is twofold; (1) he sanctifies himself; (2) this very self-sanctification proves his personal holiness from the very beginning. But the disciples were sanctified by the Spirit of God, operating upon their heart in and by the truth, and this by a like moral necessity proves them to have been previously defiled by sin. Why then did Christ speak of self-sanctification? Evidently to show that his eminent fitness for his Mediatorial office, consisted in his perfect holiness, and that his disciples could be prepared for their work, only by the answer to his prayer in v. 17, for their personal sanctification. He does not mean to say, that he attained to this state of sanctification by a process similar to that which constitutes the way and means of the believer's sanctification. The state of entire

tify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

freedom from sin, which qualified him for the work of human redemption, is all that is intended to be expressed in the words *I sanctify myself*; and this condition of holiness is assumed as necessary to give life and success to the ministry of the word, by the labors of those whom he had commissioned to promulgate it throughout the world. Webster and Wilkinson thus express the sense: "The Son of God was naturally and essentially holy; yet he may be said to have made himself holy—to have purified himself—inasmuch as perfect holiness was necessary to the constitution of his character as the Sacrifice, the High Priest, the Advocate." See Heb. 9:14; 7:26, 27; 1 John 2:1. It is a very low and erroneous view, to refer this great utterance to the mere act of Christ's consecration or official devotement to the work of human redemption. This is implied, however, in the design for which he thus sanctified himself, which was, that He might be the High Priest of his people, by having offered himself, through the eternal Spirit, without spot to God, to purge the consciences of his people, from dead works to serve the living God. Heb. 9:14. *For their sakes* (or more literally, *in their behalf*), *I sanctify*, &c. refers to the whole work of Christ's ministry in its effect upon human salvation. He came into the world and offered himself a sacrifice without spot or blemish for human transgression. His sinless perfection rendered his offering of himself in the sinner's stead acceptable to God. His intercessory gifts are all the result of his own personal dignity and worthiness. Indeed his whole official work and service, is embraced in this comprehensive expression, *I sanctify myself*. The words *for their sakes*, are appended to denote the object or purpose of Christ's self-sanctification. The argument is, that inasmuch as he had sanctified himself, and by his voluntary and perfect self-devotement had provided salvation for his people, they would stand in need of a like sanctifi-

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 ¹That they all may be one;

cation through the truth, not only to become partakers themselves of the provisions of his love and mercy, but also to be the messengers of salvation to others. *I sanctify*, is what grammarians call the absolute present, comprehending indefinite time, and referring to no particular moment when the action takes place. The mediatorial work of Christ, designated by this comprehensive and expressive term of self-sanctification, was then going on, and would not cease, until the end should come, referred to in 1 Cor. 15: 24. *That they also might be*, &c. This was the great end or purpose of his self-sanctification and devotion to the work of redeeming love. Stier happily expresses it, "Christ sanctifies himself for all, that all may be capable of sanctification." *Through the truth*; literally, *in the truth*. ~ Sec N. on v. 17.

20. We now come to that portion of this prayer, which is so dear to all believers, inasmuch as it entitles them to all the privileges and blessings, which he had thus far prayed for with special reference to his disciples. *Neither pray I* (all these things) *for these alone*, i. e. the prayer which I offer for my disciples who are now with me, is not intended for them apart from others who shall believe on me. The words *for these alone*, are explained by 10: 10, where our Lord refers to other sheep not of that fold; and also by 11: 52, on which see Note. The reference here is however more unmistakably comprehensive, and includes all of every age and nation, who should believe on him through the word first preached by the apostles. *But for them also*, &c. The persons here referred to, are believers in Jesus, through the preaching of those whom he commissioned and sent forth as ministers of the word (Luke 1: 2). It would deprive this passage of its great and comprehensive significancy,

as ^m 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.

~ V. 11, 22, 23; ch. 10: 16; Ro. 12: 5; Ga. 3: 23-
^m Ch. 10: 33; & 14: 11.

to limit it to believers of that age, or those who were converted by the personal labors of the apostles. The great promise in Matt. 28: 20, "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world," proves beyond all question, that the preceding command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," is addressed to all Christ's ministers down to the end of time. *Through their word*, is therefore to be taken in its most comprehensive sense, of the labors of all Christ's ministers in every age down to the end of time. The apostles are primarily referred to, but yet as representative men. This might have been inferred from the nature of that office to which they had been chosen; but our Lord has condescended for the instruction and encouragement of all his ministers in after times, and all who shall be gathered into his fold through their labors, to declare in the most unequivocal terms, that he embraces all his followers in this prayer, and therefore he says, *I pray not for these*, &c. The words *through their word*, are to be connected with *I have sent them into the world*, in v. 18, showing the object of their mission, namely, to declare the word of his salvation to a sinful and perishing world. This passage is valuable, as defining the true position of the preached word in all which pertains to the salvation of men. This is laid down and carried out at greater length, in the argument by which the apostle Paul establishes the fact, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." See Rom. 10: 14-17. Stier, with his usual depth of exposition, says: "All faith in all ages comes *through the word*. This, on the one hand, maintains the doctrine of prevenient grace, the grace of Him who calls, as universal for the world, and as special for the individual, without which faith could not be spoken of

at all; while, on the other hand, it recognizes the freedom of our own decision, for *through the word*, means the free way of light and conviction."

21. It becomes a question, whether this verse is to be regarded as the object or purpose of the prayer, or as the result of the things prayed for. Both these meanings of *that*, seem to suit equally well the wants of the passage. *Alford* refers it as the object, not so much to *I pray*, as to *I pray for these things*. The inevitable result of sanctification in and through the truth made effectual by the Spirit, will be a unity of love and action. This is undoubtedly true, but it is easy to see that this union of believers, which is the result of their sanctification through the truth, may also be regarded in the light of a direct object of our Lord's intercessory prayer. The oneness of believers here spoken of, is not one of essence but of love. It is the unity of the Spirit, resulting from their being "one body, one Spirit, one hope of the believer's calling, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6). It is referred to in 10:16, by 'one fold and one shepherd,' and also by the "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," spoken of in 1 John 1:3. It is the unity which breaks down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and which places upon the same level the learned and unlearned, the rich and poor, high and low, bond and free. It is the unity which brings into one great brotherhood all believers of every land and clime, of every condition and complexion, in every age of the world's history to the end of time. All human distinctions, all differences of education, all grades of knowledge and refinement, all diversities of condition from the monarch to the slave, are merged in this great principle of Christian love and discipleship, so as to relatively disappear and become of no account whatever. This will be true on earth, although in consequence of indwelling sin, which oftentimes interrupts the harmony of Christian fellow-

ship in the church below, will find its full realization only in heaven.

It may be proper to remark, in order to prevent misconception of the true meaning and scope of this passage, that the unity here prayed for, does not imply (1) an absolute sameness of opinion on matters of religious faith and practice amongst Christ's followers. This is impossible from the very constitution of the human mind. There cannot but be a difference of opinion, even among the most earnest and sincere inquirers after truth, according as they investigate a subject under different circumstances, or variously affected by the force of prejudice or education. These causes of themselves, not to speak of the imperfection of human reason, and the darkening influence of indwelling sin, which is not wholly eradicated until the soul leaves its earthly tenement, are sufficient to account for all those different shades of sentiment, entertained by good men in regard to the doctrines and duties of Christianity. There will probably be minor differences of opinion among Christ's followers, as long as the world shall endure. Nor (2) does the union for which our Lord here prayed require, that silence should be kept when error is taught, or when a Christian brother goes astray. On the contrary, the very essence of this union, which is the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, requires that error should always be opposed, and a warning voice raised against those who inculcate it, even though they may be regarded as true disciples of Christ, and in the main sound and correct in all their doctrinal views. In like manner, the spirit of union requires tender and faithful dealing with a brother who has gone astray. A private rebuke or admonition may be attended with unpleasant circumstances, however judiciously and kindly administered; but if the subject of rebuke be a child of God, it will be followed by the outpourings of confidence and love, and the spirit of union and harmony fully restored. It may be further remarked, in order to disencumber this subject from every thing which

tends to destroy or impair the spirit of true Christian union, that it does not (3) require the surrender of any essential point of belief, in order to effect a compromise of doctrinal views, and thereby seek to remove all denominational distinctions. We are commanded to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good;" and again to "hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." Union based upon the surrender of any essential evangelical doctrine, would be like the union of Pilate and Herod at the crucifixion of Jesus. The spirit of our Lord's petition is however aimed against those sectarian prejudices and animosities, those ecclesiastical strifes and divisions, those assumptions of prelatical superiority and exclusive church polity, which have so often brought dishonor upon the religion of Christ, and which must all disappear before the era of truth and righteousness, for which the disciples of Jesus are laboring and praying, will be ushered in.

As thou, Father, art in me, &c. This is the pattern of the union, which our Lord prayed to subsist amongst his followers. The terms clearly indicate, that it is a *love union*, and not one of *essence*, which is intended. The essential union of the persons of the Godhead, could not be expressed by the preposition *in*, in its literal sense. It would be a confusion of personality, not to speak of the absurdity of the idea, to interpret this passage as teaching, that there is an essential indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity in one another. Such is not the utterance of the great trinitarian passage 1:1, where the Logos is declared to be *with God* (see Note on the force of the Greek preposition), but not *in God*. All such passages therefore as speak of the mutual indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity, are to be referred to an indwelling of love, and not to one of essence. But the context also, as well as the passage itself, shows that reference is not had to the essential union of the Divine Three. If a union of essence were intended, how could such a union ever prevail among Christians? Are they

ever to be brought *essentially* and *necessarily* into a unity, like that which constitutes the Unity of the Godhead? No one can believe this. The pattern then of the unity of believers, is the unity of *love* which subsists between the Persons of the Godhead. See N. on v. 11. As the Father and Son are one in love as well in essence, so believers are to be united in the bond of love, and thus show that they are possessed of the Spirit of Christ.

That they also may be one in us. By the indwelling Spirit of God, believers attain to fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). This is the abiding in Christ's love, spoken of in 15:10. No essential or numerical unity is here intended, but only the unity with the Father and Son by the Holy Spirit working in believers, and producing the fruits of love and obedience. Stier finds in this clause a deepening advancement in the meaning of the words *in us*, referring to a further and more perfect unity. It is better, however, to regard it as an emphatic repetition of the first clause, the words *in us*, being added in consequence of the pattern union designated, in the clause, *as thou, Father, &c.*, and also with reference to what was asserted in v. 11 (end).

That the world may believe, &c. This is not so much the purpose, as the result of the unity among Christians here spoken of. Hence this clause should not be constructed in immediate dependence on *I pray*, understood from v. 20, but as denoting the fruit of the union among believers, which is the object of the prayer. *That the world*, is here the unbelieving world, exclusive of those who shall believe in Christ referred to in the latter part of v. 20, there can be not the least doubt. The verb *may believe*, does not refer then to what is called *evangelical* faith, but to that which in theological language is denominated *historical* faith, or the assent of the understanding to the truth of Christianity, without any saving knowledge or practice of its duties and precepts. This is Calvin's view. Stier opposes this on the ground that

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ;

Jesus would not thus reduce the meaning of this great word *believe*, so sacred throughout the prayer, and besides that an *unsaving historical faith* could not stand here as the object of Christ's desire. He therefore compares this expression with, "that the world might be saved in" (3: 17), and "all men might believe" (1: 7), as denoting now at the end, his own desire and will that all the world might believe. Stier does not however teach that, as a fact, all or any of the unbelieving world here referred to will believe on Christ, but only that this should be regarded as the goal, however unattainable in itself, of all the efforts of the united love of his people. Alford goes still further, and includes in the *world*, some who are real believers, as may be seen by his paraphrase of the passage: "that this their testimony, being borne by them all, and in all ages, may continue to convince the world, so that many in the world may believe," &c. But how he can elicit this meaning from the passage, if the latter clause in v. 20, includes *all* believers, it is hard to see. Nor is it clear how he can append as he does, "here our Lord certainly *prays for the world*," and urge this in proof of the correctness of his exposition of v. 9, that our Lord's declaration that *he prayed not for the world*, simply meant that he was not in that part of his prayer praying for the world, but for those who had already believed on him. It seems to me that this excellent expositor has not only mistaken the drift of the prayer in its two grand divisions, as first offered for his disciples, and then for those who should believe through their instrumentality—which latter expression embraces, as we have shown in Note on v. 20, all believers in every age to the end of time—but that he has overlooked the great meaning which the *world* has in this whole prayer, except in vs. 5, 24, namely, the *unbelieving world*. Nothing seems clearer than, that a

"that they may be one, even as we are one :

n Ch. 14: 20; 1 Jo. 1: 3; & 3: 24.

strong and well-defined antithesis between *believers* and *the world*, runs through the whole prayer—a great moral gulf, as impassable through the obstinate unbelief of the finally impenitent, as that which in Hades separated Lazarus and Dives.

22. The union of believers by the indwelling Spirit with the Father and Son from whom the Spirit proceeds, entitles them through grace to participate in the glory given to Christ; for the reference is not here to the incommunicable glory of the divine nature of Christ. This glory imparted by Christ to believers, is that indwelling spiritual life, which manifests itself in the unity of which he had just spoken, and which was to command the admiration and intellectual assent of the world itself to the divinity of Christianity. This declaration of our Lord, is confirmed by the whole history of the church in its relation to an unbelieving world. Nothing has furnished such irrefutable evidence of the presence and power of Jesus, as the Son of God and Saviour of men, in the heart of believers, as the love union which has subsisted among his followers, despite the minor shades of difference, which as we have shown in N. on v. 21, result from the very constitution of the human mind. This sense then is to be regarded as an amplified explanation of the preceding one, showing the peculiar glory of that unity, which was to produce such a profound conviction of the divine mission of Jesus. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Grotius, add as an element of this glory, the working of miracles, and other wonderful gifts of the apostles; but it is a sufficient answer to this, that the whole body of believers, and not the apostles only, are here referred to. Webster and Wilkinson explain the glory here spoken of, as the means by which Christian unity was to be effected. If so, it must be interpreted as equivalent to the gift of the

23 I in them, and thou in me,
 ° that they may be made perfect
 in one; and that the world may

o Col. 3:14.

Spirit, and such is the opinion of these expositors. "What is meant is probably the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which they would be brought into the glorious fellowship of the Father and the Son, made sons of God, and one in Him (1 Pet. 4:14)." This in its general aspects is true, but we are hardly justifiable in making the glory given to the Son, and by him communicated to believers, to be the gift of the Spirit. I should rather regard the Spirit, as the medium through whom this peculiar gift was to be conferred upon believers, than as the gift itself. *Which thou gavest me*, as thy messenger to men. This shows clearly that our Lord possesses an essential glory which is incommunicable, and which as Webster and Wilkinson rightly say, "believers may behold (v. 24), but cannot share." *I have given them*. "The glory of Christ as the only begotten Son (1:14), full of grace and truth, by virtue of his exaltation and the unity of all believers in him through the Spirit, has become theirs (Eph. 1:18; 2:6; Rom. 8:30); not yet fully, nor as it is his, but as each can receive and show it forth." Alford. *I have given*, is proleptically spoken for the performance of the act after his own glorification. *That they may be one*, &c. This is the result of his communicated glory to believers. The hidden spiritual life which they possess through faith in him, and by which they become partakers of his glory, unites them all to him, as the branches are united to the vine; and hence the outward development of this unity, is but a necessary consequence of this internal union with Christ, by which his glory as Mediator and Saviour of men becomes virtually, if not essentially, theirs. The train of thought then is simply this: Christ by his Spirit enters into and takes possession of the soul of the believer. In thus doing, he communicates the element of spiritual life, by uniting the soul to himself in a living union, so that his

know that thou hast sent me,
 and hast loved them, as thou hast
 loved me.

life and his glory become the possession of the believer. This union with Christ, and participation in his glory, of necessity are productive of a like union of all believers with one another, so that they become one, even as the Father and Son are one. *Even as we are one*. Here again the love unity, and not the numerical and essential oneness of the Godhead, is referred to. See N. on v. 21.

23. *I in them, and thou in me*, does not refer to such a mutual indwelling as to blend in confusion all individual personality, but to an indwelling of love, an interpenetration of the same spirit, an entire unity of purpose, aim, desire, love, and every other emotion and affection (see N. on v. 27). This is the highest type of unity, and springs from the essential unity of the Sacred Three, although as above remarked (N. on v. 21), it does not consist in that oneness of essence, which in the highest and most absolute sense makes the three Persons of the Godhead, ONE GOD. It is a moral unity, and not one of essence, and the reader cannot be too careful to keep this distinction ever before the mind, while reading this great passage, in which our Lord prays, that Christians may be one, even as he and the Father are one. But while we should be careful not to become bewildered by vain attempts to refer the indwelling of Christ in the soul of the believer, to one of essence, so that in a pantheistic sense, the soul itself becomes a part of the Divine Mind; we should, on the other hand, as carefully guard against interpreting this declaration *I in them, and thou in me*, as a mere figure of speech, referring to the relation of discipleship which all assume in taking the vows of Christ upon them, or the general care which as the objects of his love, Christ exercises over the church. In the beautiful and forcible language of Prof. Lewis (Divine Human in the Scriptures, p. 319), "in the

primitive Church it was a reality affecting every other aspect 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 mortal 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." This great truth may be summed up in a single sentence: it is Christ dwelling in the believer by his spiritual presence. Further than this we cannot go. All beyond is as impenetrable to human vision, as the indwelling of the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father (v. 22). Its reality we cannot, must not doubt; the nature of this mutual indwelling is beyond our comprehension, save that in the light of other teachings of the Word of God, it is not such as to destroy or impair the personality of the Sacred Three, or so to deify the soul, as to make true the pantheistic dreams, that it is a portion of the divine mind, which after death will return and be lost in the infinite, from which for a season it has been dissevered.

That they may be made perfect in one. Moral perfection is not here referred to, but a completeness and perfection of unity, according to the pattern of that which subsisted between the Father and Son. The words *in one*, would be more literally rendered *into one*, which implies motion and progress towards the state of perfect unity. See 1 John 2: 5; 4: 12, 18; Eph. 4: 13. *That the world may know*, &c. This is parallel to *that the world may believe*, in v. 21, and is expressive of the same sentiment. The knowledge here referred to, cannot be saving knowledge, for the reason given in N. on v. 21, against taking the faith there spoken

of as true evangelical faith. Alford in consistency with his interpretation of the parallel clause in v. 21, refers *may know*, here to "that salutary knowledge by which from time to time the children of the world are by God called to become the children of light." But this, as I have said in N. on v. 21, would require *the world*, to be taken in the sense of those in it to whom this recognition proves "salutary," that is, *true believers*. Not to speak of the unwarrantable license of thus arbitrarily shifting the meaning of the word *world*, which as Prof. Crosby remarks, "is always Christ's enemy," so that it may signify the believing portion of mankind, such an exposition would make the persons referred to, in "all who shall believe on me through their word" (v. 20), either to include a portion only of believers, which restriction is forbidden by the very language there employed; or if inclusive of the whole family of believers, to be repeated in the clauses *that the world may believe*, and *that the world may know*, which would reduce the whole declaration to an absurdity, inasmuch as it would make the unity of the whole family of believers prayed for in v. 20, to be the ground and impelling cause of their *own* belief and acknowledgment of Christ. Stier, in view of the absurdity of this mode of interpretation, says: "We reject at once all those explanations of the relations of *believing* and *knowing*, which assume the *world* to be those to be saved out of the world." There is but one consistent interpretation, and that is with Calvin to refer the *world* here spoken of, to those who are unregenerate, but who are compelled by the Christian temper and union manifested by the disciples of Christ, to acknowledge the divinity of Christianity. This however is far from denying, that the godly walk and conversation of the pious may be the means of bringing men to Christ in true love and faith. Such is undoubtedly the fact, and is consonant with the word of God (see N. on Matt. 5: 16), and with human observation and experience. But those persons who are

24 ^p Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which

^p Ch. 12:26; & 14:3; 1 Th. 4:17.

thus converted, in the language and scope of this prayer, are included in the number spoken of in v. 20, and in the eye of Christ, as it glances through the whole future of the church on earth, are regarded as his own followers, and are thus referred to. There is therefore nothing left in the *world*, but the unbelieving portion, who intellectually perceive and acknowledge the truth of Christianity, as acted out in the lives of its followers, but there stop and do not yield their hearts to Christ. Stier as in v. 21 refers this to the desire of Jesus, that the whole world, even the unbelieving portion, may come to the saving knowledge of his name: "He includes in his petition even that which will not be fulfilled; just according to the *will* of the Divine counsel, that all men might be saved, though all men are not." It is preferable, however, to make this clause the result of that perfection of love among Christians, referred to in the preceding clause. It is quite clear, that the *world* in the sense which it has in this chapter, does not share in the intercessory prayer here offered by Jesus.

It may be remarked, that the very nature of the subject restricts the *world*, to that portion of it where the gospel of Christ has been preached, and men in greater or less numbers have been converted to its belief and heartfelt acknowledgment. *That thou hast sent me*, is repeated from v. 21. The remaining clause, *and hast loved them*, &c., is an advance on the parallel sentiment in v. 21. The evidence of the Father's love for believers, is here declared to be the great love which they manifest for one another, and the unity and harmony of purpose and aim, which pervades their life. This evinces their true discipleship, and adoption to the position and privileges of the sons of God, and by necessary consequence,

thou hast given me: ^q for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

^q Ver. 5.

their being made partakers of the Father's love.

24. Our Lord now looks onward to the final glorification of his followers with him in heaven. He had prayed for his disciples (vs. 9-19), and for all who should believe on them and the preachers of the word who should follow them (vs. 20-23), that they might be kept from all evil (v. 15), sanctified through the word (17), and made perfect in love (21-23). He now prays that after their work on earth shall be ended, they may be with him, and see his Mediatorial glory. The verb *will*, is not to be regarded as the expression of increased earnestness and desire, but of a right from his essential equality with the Father, as well as from the covenanted power supreme, which had been given him as Mediator both in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:19), to order and decree the eternal happiness and companionship with himself of all his followers. This shows that the verb *pray*, in vs. 9, 15, 20, is to be taken in a modified sense; for if our Lord had a right in the exercise of his supreme authority to *will* his disciples' presence with him in heaven, he had surely the right to *will* their protection from evil and union with one another, while they were on earth. But the divine and the human in Jesus most marvellously blend in this whole discourse and prayer, and vain is the effort so to separate them, as to predicate one assertion of his divinity, and another of his humanity. It is sufficient to know that it is the God-man, who is holding ineffable communion with the Father; and in our exposition of the recorded words of the prayer, we would never forget that we are standing on holy ground. The reference in *they also whom thou hast given me*, is not to the apostles alone, but to all believers, the prayer from v. 20, onward to the end, embracing in its

25 O righteous Father, 'the world hath not known thee: but 'I have known thee, and 'these

r Ch. 15: 21; & 16: 3.

scope all Christ's followers. *Also* refers in sense to *be with me*, as opposed to their personal separation from him, while they remained on earth. *Whom thou hast given me*. The repetition of these words in this connection, shows beyond all question, that those who have been given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, embrace all who shall eventually be saved out of the world. The number is known only to the omniscient God; but that it will constitute a vast majority of the human family taken in the aggregate, we have every warrant in the Scriptures for believing. Our blessed Lord shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied (Isa. 53: 11). Compare also Rev. 7: 9; 19: 6. *Be with me where I am*; literally, *that where I am they also may be with me*. In the phrase *where I am*, he refers to his state of exaltation in heaven. The sentiment of this verse harmonizes with 14: 2, 3, on which see Notes. *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 this glory." Alford. Compare Rom. 8: 17-39; 1 Cor. 13: 12; 2 Cor. 3: 18; 1 John 3: 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. denotes the reason why the Father had given the Son such glory, as that referred to in the preceding context. It was the result of no capricious or arbitrary arrangement, for the sake of a mere manifestation of the Triune God in such a mystery and strangeness of relation; but it was the expression of the Father's love for the Son, prearranged and determined in the counsels of eternity. *Before the foundation*, &c. See N. on v. 5. This antedates the love here spoken of before the existence of any

have known that thou hast sent me.

s Ch. 7: 29; & 8: 55; & 10: 15.

t Ver. 8; ch. 16: 27.

created being, and refers it to the mutual love, which from eternity subsisted between the Persons of the Godhead. The *world* has here the signification assigned it in N. on v. 5.

25. *Righteous*. "An appropriate epithet. He appeals to the righteousness of God against the evil world, and in favor of his people; see 16: 10." Webster and Wilkinson. We may go further, and find a reason for the use of this epithet, in the preëminent honor and acknowledgment of God's righteousness, as displayed in the work of redemption. The righteousness of God is the great fundamental idea of the atonement, for love which disregards justice and right action, is no longer love but malevolence. God was righteous in giving up His Son an offering for sin (Heb. 10: 18). He was righteous in bestowing upon his Son thus given up, the reward of his obedience (6: 37-39). The final rejection and condemnation of those who remain in unbelief and sin, must also be pronounced just, by the assembled universe at the great day of account. *The world hath not*, &c. In the original we find the conjunction *and*, in the sense of *while*, making the two clauses simultaneous and coördinate. Some expositors make these clauses antithetic, and give to *and*, the sense of *and yet*, *nevertheless*. The *world* is the unbelieving world, placed here in antithesis with *I* and *these*, referring to Christ's followers, represented by the disciples, to whom the prayer now recurs after the more comprehensive range in vs. 20-24. *Hath not known*, in a saving sense. *The world*, as antithetic to the disciples here specially referred to by the pronoun *these*, designates the unbelieving portion of the Jewish nation. They had a theoretical or intellectual knowledge of God, but had no true conception of his spiritual nature and attributes. But as the disciples, both

26 "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love² wherewith thou

² Ver. 6; ch. 15:15.

here and in vs. 6-19, represent the whole body of believers down to the end of time,—a fact confirmed and illustrated by vs. 20-24,—so the Jewish *cosmos* or *world*, is put for the unbelieving world at large, a great portion of which in every age has remained in profound ignorance, even of the name of the only living and true God. *I have known thee*. This shows in what sense we are to take the preceding *hath not known thee*, predicated of the world. There is a marked difference between this knowledge, and that spoken of in v. 23. This is the saving knowledge of God; that, the mere conviction of Christ's divine mission, or in other words, of the divine origin of Christianity. This knowledge may be attained to, and yet fall far short of the knowledge of God, which Jesus Christ and his disciples are here declared to possess. *That thou hast sent me*, in this connection implies the knowledge of God, as seen in the face of Jesus Christ, and hence is far in advance of the intellectual conviction, which in v. 23, the world is said to have of the divine mission of Jesus. *I have known thee*, in its deepest sense, is to be referred to the knowledge which the Son has of the Father as his coequal. Hence the knowledge that he had been sent of the Father, embraces the great truth of his essential divinity; for as Webster and Wilkinson remark, "his perfect knowledge of the Father was the source of the knowledge and belief to which his disciples had attained, as opposed to the world, which rejected the knowledge of God in rejecting him."

26. *I have declared*; literally, *I declared*. See N. on the declaration *I have manifested*, in v. 6, of which this is an emphatic repetition. The verb is not the same as in v. 6, but one of stronger import, *I have made known*, or *caused to be known, thy name*. See N. on v. 6. *And will declare it* more fully through the promised Spirit. *That the love, &c.*

hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

² Ch. 15:9.

This stands as the result of the verbs, *have declared* and *will declare*. The clause, *the love wherewith thou hast loved me*, refers to the love of the Father for his Son Jesus Christ. This love embraces also those who have been given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, not apart from and independent of him, but as being one with him, by his indwelling presence (*I in them*). Christ then here as elsewhere, represents himself as the only medium of the Father's love; and it was to the end of its being enjoyed by his disciples, that he had revealed and would still further reveal the character and will of his Father. *I in them*. As the Son was loved of the Father, his indwelling presence secured for his followers a participation in the Father's love. This love of the Father dwells in the believer, only in and through the mediation of Christ, and the *I in them*, is therefore a grand pledge that they shall possess that love, not only in time, but throughout the ages of eternity. He will ever remain in their hearts, "the hope of glory" in this life, and its full fruition in the life to come. "Christ in us, the love of the Father in us—is no other in its truth and power, than the communion of the Holy Ghost, who bringeth through the grace of Christ the love of God to men; this therefore approves itself as the final aim and end of this petition. Such a conclusion, *I in them*, is a more sublime seal than any Doxology, than any Amen of other supplication—which indeed could find no place here." Stier.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1-12. JESUS RETIRES TO THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, WHERE HE IS BETRAYED AND MADE PRISONER. *Mount of Olives*. Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week.

1. In connection with this verse, see Notes on Matt. 26:30, 36-46; Mark 14:26, 32-42; Luke 22:39-46. *He*

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, ^a he went forth with his disciples over ^b the brook

^a Mat. 26: 36; Ma. 14: 32; Lu. 22: 39.

went forth from the guest chamber and the city. The words *over the brook Cedron* (literally, *the brook of Cedron*) where was a garden, denote the termination or limit of the action denoted in *went forth*. Hence the mention of the passage of the brook immediately after the verb *went forth*, is both natural and necessary, and is no proof whatever, as Webster and Wilkinson suppose, that the discourse in chaps. XV.—XVII., was held on the way from the supper room to the place here named. The sense is that he went to a place, where was a garden over the brook Cedron. The word rendered *brook*, literally signifies *winter-flowing*, *storm-brook*, and is used of those streams which are filled in the rainy season or winter, but are dry in summer. The stream Cedron or Kidron, rises a little north-west of Jerusalem, and flows through the valley of Jehoshaphat, between the city and the mount of Olives. It is always dry, except in the rainy season after very heavy rains. See Rob. Lex. *Where was a garden*. See N. on Matt. 26: 36. *Into which he entered*, &c. This is all that is recorded by John, the agony of Gethsemane being wholly passed over in his Gospel. This omission has given rise to many conjectures and much discussion. Some expositors have gone so far as to suppose, that by a chronological inversion, the Synoptical writers record as having taken place in the garden, what really took place in John 12: 27; or that John there anticipated the event, and related it out of its proper order. But John's omission of this circumstance is so accordant with his omission of other facts carefully and fully recorded by the other Evangelists, that it is quite unwarrantable to argue therefrom, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, post-dated the event to the hour before his apprehension. The circumstantial account which they all give of his agony

Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

^b 2 Sa. 15: 23.

in the garden, proves beyond all question that it was a verity as related, and not identical with John 12: 27. By a parity of reasoning we must decide also against the theory, that John, in 12: 27, anticipates the scene of suffering, in the garden. These two occasions of our Lord's mental distress, have too many points of dissimilarity, to admit of their coincidence. There have not been wanting writers who deny the reality of the whole transaction, on the ground, that John, who alone of the Evangelists was the eye-witness of this occurrence, has passed it by in silence, while he has recorded at such great length the discourse and prayer of Jesus, and given such a minute account of what transpired at the trial and crucifixion of his Master. But this would require us to reject all that is recorded in one Gospel, but not in the others. The raising of Lazarus, found only in John; the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in full only by Matthew; the parables in chaps. XIV.—XVIII., peculiar to Luke; and other incidents, and instructions in the life and ministry of Jesus, found only in one Gospel, or omitted in one where it might have been supposed they would have been inserted—would all be thrown out of the sacred record, as unsustained by the united testimony of all the Evangelists, and therefore untrue. No one of the Gospels contains a full and complete history of the acts and sayings of Jesus. Had it been so, there would then have been no need of four independent Gospels. In regard to the selection of the facts to be recorded, and the fulness with which they were to be narrated, the Evangelists were guided by the promised Spirit of truth, who in so important a matter as this, would not leave them to their own unaided judgment. John indeed has not re-

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: 'for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

3 ^a Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees,

^c Lu. 21: 37: & 22: 89.

corded the agony of Gethsemane, but has prepared his readers for such a baptism of suffering, by what he says in 12: 27; 13: 21, and by the remarkable announcement on the part of Jesus, that the prince of this world was coming to make his final assault upon him, and his prediction that the tempter would depart, finding nothing in him which would form a basis of temptation, or through which he might divert him from the work of man's redemption upon which he had entered.

2, 3. These verses in John, are to be placed immediately after Matt. 26: 46; Mark 14: 42; Luke 22: 46. They serve to explain the narrative as found in the other Evangelists, by showing how it was that Judas should have been at hand with a great multitude, to intercept and arrest Jesus, as he was about to depart from the garden. The conjunction *and*, which introduces v. 2, would have been better translated *but*, the sense being slightly adversative. *Judas also* as well as Jesus and his disciples. The reason why Judas knew this place to be a common resort of Jesus, is given in the next clause *for Jesus*, &c. This throws light on Luke 21: 37, and perhaps on Matt. 21: 17. *Resorted*; literally, *came together, assembled*. The verb is employed as though it had been written, *Jesus and his disciples assembled there*, &c. This may have been the place where they came together each night, on their return from the city to the Mount of Olives.

3. *Judas then*, i. e. in consequence of his intimate acquaintance with the place where Jesus would be found at this hour. *Having received* as a guide, not as a leader. See Acts 1: 16. *A band*; literally, *the band* (or cohort. See

cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

^d Mat. 26: 47; Ma. 14: 43; Lu. 22: 47; Ac. 1: 16.

N. on Matt. 27: 27), i. e. the company of soldiers on duty at the time of the festival, for the purpose of maintaining order. *Officers*. These were the attendants or beadles of the Sanhedrim. See N. on 7: 32. *Chief priests and Pharisees*. They acted together on this occasion, and are therefore regarded as one body. *Lanterns* seem to refer here to lamps filled with oil. See Matt. 25: 1, 3, 4. *Torches* (literally, *lights*), may in this connection refer to any blazing substance carried in the hand, in the manner of links or torches made of pitch and tow. Tyndal renders it, *torches and firebrands*; Luther, *torches and lamps*. It was now full moon, but the night may have been cloudy; or these lamps and torches may have been required to search the deep recesses of the rocks and groves of the garden, whither they supposed that he might have betaken himself for concealment. *Weapons*, i. e. swords and staves. See Matt. 26: 47; Mark 14: 43.

4. *Therefore* or *then* serves here as a general connective, or it introduces what may be regarded as a result of this approach of armed and hostile men to the garden. *Knowing all things*, &c. What calmness and majesty does this brief parenthesis impart to all the movements of Jesus. He knew full well the dreadful sufferings that awaited him. He had just risen from the earth, on which he had prostrated himself in his agony, and well knew the bitterness of that cup which he had implored his Father to remove from him. But yet, with resignation to the Father's will, and in full view of the cross and the hiding of God's countenance so dreadful to his holy mind, he came forth calm and collected, and met those who had

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

been sent to apprehend him, with the question here recorded. *Upon him*. The preposition is here used of overwhelming suffering. *Went forth* to meet the approaching band. It is evident from v. 26, that he had not actually left the garden when he was apprehended. It was probably, however, near the entrance that the transactions here mentioned took place. *Whom seek ye?* This question indicates the very opposite of a desire to hide away from the search of this band of men.

5. *They answered him, &c.* The leader doubtless answered in the name of the rest. The use of the plural, when the reply is in sense that of the whole company, is quite frequent. *Jesus of Nazareth*. This designation was sufficiently explicit, as there was probably no other Jesus of that town; and if there was, the celebrity of our Lord would attach the name to him, wherever it was uttered. They doubtless knew Jesus when he thus presented himself, but their fear prevented them from saying *thee*, instead of *Jesus the Nazarene*. *I am he*; literally, *I am*, the pronoun in the original being emphatic: 'I am he; you need go no further, I am the man whom you seek.' *And Judas stood, &c.*; literally, *but Judas*, in opposition to what might have been expected from the preconcerted arrangement, that he should step forth and salute Jesus, as a sign that he was the person to be apprehended. Instead of doing this, he remained standing with the band, and it was only after their prostration, and in order to make sure his reward by fulfilling his engagement to the very letter, that he stepped forth and kissed Jesus, as related in Matt. 26: 48, 49; Mark 14: 44, 45; Luke 22: 47, 48. See N. on Matt. 26: 49. *With them*; literally, *among them*. His position was not prominent, yet John, who was an eye-

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.

witness of the whole transaction, detected him in the crowd, even before he stepped forth to salute Jesus with his traitorous kiss.

6. *As soon, &c.* The sudden recoil of these men before the superhuman majesty of our Lord, is to be taken into consideration, as a part of the evidence that the prostration here spoken of was not one of polite homage to a superior, but miraculous, and reverential, as made to a Being worthy of divine adoration. The only inquiry is whether the miracle was an intended one, and the result of the will of Jesus; or the mere effect of some effluence of the divine majesty of his sacred person. I prefer the latter view, although both may be combined in the production of this result. *They went backward*, does not mean that they turned and fled, but that they started back in dismay, and before the overpowering majesty of his person, fell upon the ground. That this was the miraculous result of the silently expressed will of Jesus, or the majesty of the Godhead in which he temporarily arrayed himself, there can be no question whatever. It is the wildest of dreams to suppose that it was a mere act of reverence, such as that practised by Orientals in the presence of a person of distinction. See N. on Matt. 26: 48. *Fell to the ground*, i. e. prostrate upon the ground.

7. *Then he asked, &c.* Some little pause must here be allowed for them, to recover from their fear and resume their upright position. If it be asked how they could proceed to arrest and maltreat a person, before whom they had fallen prostrate as before a superior being, the answer is to be found in the transient influence which fear exerts upon the mind, and the probable fact, that this sudden repulse was represented by the leaders as effected by demo-

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.

10 Then Simon Peter having

^e Ch. 17: 12.

^f Mat. 26: 51; Ma. 14: 47; Lu. 22: 49, 50.

niacal agency at the instance of Jesus. While they stood in a state of indecision and inaction, our Lord again proposed the question in v. 4, to which they replied the second time, *Jesus of Nazareth*. As Jesus had already avowed himself to be the person of that name and designation, the answer is now most assuredly to be attributed to their fear, which prevented them from saying: 'we seek thee.'

8. *I have told you, &c.* Our Lord refers to his plain avowal of himself to be the man they sought, as though he would have added, "Why did ye not proceed at once to apprehend me?" He thus appeals to their inward conscience, that there was that evidence of the superhuman in him, which should arrest them from the further prosecution of the wicked and daring enterprise on which they had come. *I am he*. In regard to this *I am*, here twice repeated, Bengel says, "He will say it one day a *third* time;" and Augustine remarks, "What will he do when about to pass judgment, who did such things when he was judged? What will he be able to inflict as King on his throne, who had such power when about to die?" *If therefore ye seek me, &c.* Here was a virtual surrender of our Lord, else we can hardly suppose that Judas would have dared to come forth to salute him, and the rest to apprehend him, as here related. *Let these* (i. e. the disciples) *go their way*, i. e. depart unmolested. It would seem from these words, that there was a disposition on the part of the multitude to seize first the disciples, in order the more safely

a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: ^g the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

^g Mat. 20: 22; & 26: 39, 42.

to approach Jesus. In proof of this, Webster and Wilkinson cite Mark 14: 51, 52.

9. *That the saying, &c.* Reference is had to the declaration made in 17: 12; and as the deliverance and protection there spoken of, relates to salvation from spiritual evil, the fulfilment here must be regarded as symbolical of the greater deliverance from an evil world, which awaited them as the objects of his protecting love.

10. The enemies of Jesus being emboldened by his readiness to surrender himself, and his identity having been fully established by the kiss of Judas, which at this point we must suppose to have been given, now approach to lay hands on him, at which Peter, fired with indignation, and acting as usual under a strong and sudden impulse, draws his sword in order to defend his Master from these rude and violent men. John is the only Evangelist who gives the name of the disciple who drew the sword, or of the servant who was wounded. *Having a sword*. See N. on Luke 22: 38. *The high priest's servant*; literally, *the servant of the high priest*. The presence of the article denotes that Malchus was one of the leading servants and attendants of the high priest; not that he was the only servant present, for this is contradicted by v. 26. On this incident, see more fully N. on Matt. 26: 51; Luke 22: 50.

11. *Put up, &c.* See N. on Matt. 26: 52. *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

12 ¶ Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

13 And ^h led him away to ⁱ An-

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. Here comes in the reference to twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26 : 53), to which point and force was given by the incident recorded in v. 6, and which is peculiar to John. This showed that the surrender of Jesus was voluntary, and not in the least degree compulsory. He had only to make a faint display of the supreme divinity resident in him, and those who were now approaching him with hostile intent, would be consumed in a moment. He had only to pray to his Father, and angels would descend to scatter his enemies, like chaff before the wind of heaven. But then how were the Scriptures to be fulfilled, that thus it was to be (Matt. 26 : 54)? The pronoun *it*, is not a pleonasm, but is an emphatic repetition of *cup*, to which it refers. 'Shall I not drink *it*, although so bitter and repulsive ?'

12. The strict order of events, as laid down in Matt. 26 : 50, 51; Mark 14 : 46, 47, would require in John that this verse should precede vs. 10, 11. According to those Evangelists, Jesus was seized and bound, before Peter drew the sword and smote Malchus. The position assigned to the act by John, is when the soldiers are about to lay hands on Jesus. Such slight variations do not impeach in the least the veracity of the sacred penmen, but on the contrary serve to establish and confirm their credibility, by the evidence thereby furnished, that there was no collusion among them. *The band and*

nas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

^h See Mt. 26 : 57.

ⁱ Lu. 3 : 2.

the captain and officers of the Jews. We are here informed who the persons were that apprehended Jesus, and who are referred to in the other Evangelists by the simple pronoun *they*. It was not a rabble or motley gang of worthless persons alone who came forth to arrest Jesus, but with them were persons of influence and distinction (see N. on Luke 22 : 52). The *captain* here mentioned, was a *chiliarch* or *captain* of a thousand men, and the *officers* were those who executed the orders of the Sanhedrim. This shows that the arrest was made under the order of the supreme Jewish council. See N. on Matt. 26 : 47. *Took Jesus*, i. e. apprehended him. *Bound him.* John alone records fully this fact, although it might be gathered from the other Evangelists (Matt. 26 : 48; Mark 14 : 44). The fact that his arms were now pinioned so that he could not move them, may be referred to in *sufer ye thus far*, in Luke 22 : 51, on which see Note.

13-18, 25-27. JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS. PETER THRICE DENIES HIM. *Jerusalem.* Night introducing the sixth day of the Week. See Ns. on Matt. 26 : 57, 58, 69-75; Mark 14 : 53, 54, 66-72; Luke 22 : 54-62.

13. *To Annas first.* This is peculiar to John. For the reconciliation of this with Matthew 26 : 57, where it is said that Jesus was led to Caiaphas, see Note on Matthew. This first hearing of Jesus is recorded alone by John. *For he was father-in-law to Caiaphas.* See N. on Luke 3 : 2. Webster and Wilkinson think that Annas was at this time acting as the Sagan or deputy to Caiaphas. *Which was the high priest, &c.* This, together with what is said in 11 : 49, 51, would seem to imply a recognition by the Evangelist, of the frequency with which high priests were chosen and displaced in those turbulent times.

14. See N. on 11 : 50. This parenthetic reference is intended to show why

14 ^k Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ^l And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went

z Ch. 11: 50.

7 Mat. 26: 58; Ma. 14: 54; Lu. 22: 54.

Jesus was immediately brought before Annas and Caiaphas. It was in accordance with the murderous advice of the latter, that the rulers fully resolved to rid themselves of Jesus by putting him to death. Hence it was at his direction, that Jesus was brought that very night to a trial before the Sanhedrim, convened at the palace of the high priest.

15. The Evangelist here proceeds to speak of the fall of Peter, and of the trial of our Lord, as though he had informed his readers, that Jesus had been removed from the house of Annas to that of Caiaphas. This he had not done, and we are left to infer the fact from the general current of the narrative, until in v. 24 he distinctly informs us at whose tribunal Jesus was now standing. *Simon Peter, &c.* John is far more full and circumstantial in his account of Peter's denial, than either of the other Evangelists. Most of what is here related in vs. 15-18, is found only in his Gospel. That Peter followed Jesus at some distance, and then went into the high priest's palace and sat with the servants, is recorded by all the Evangelists. But no mention whatever is made by any of them save John, of *another disciple* (literally, *the other disciple*), who accompanied him, and who was doubtless the Evangelist himself; although there have not been wanting expositors, who have absurdly maintained that it was Judas Iscariot who thus accompanied Peter. The article in *the other disciple*, does not refer it to Judas as the person last mentioned, by any grammatical necessity, and the whole sense and scope of the narrative is against so preposterous an idea. That

in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16 ^m But 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.

m Mat. 26: 69; Ma. 14: 66; Lu. 22: 54.

Peter should have laid himself under any obligation of the kind referred to in v. 16, to one of whose black perfidy to his Master, he had just been an indignant eye-witness, is utterly incredible. It is equally grammatical and infinitely more reasonable to refer it to the disciple, who was on such intimate terms with Peter, that the bare mention of one name suggested that of the other. It is as though the Evangelist had said: 'Peter and the other disciple who was on terms of intimate companionship with him, namely John.' One has only to turn to Matt. 17: 1; Luke 22: 8; John 13: 23, 24; 20: 3, 4; 21: 7; Acts 3: 1; 8: 14, to be convinced that the phrase *the other disciple*, would point out with sufficient distinctness John himself, as the disciple whom he had thus modestly designated. It were needless to inquire how John became acquainted with the high priest. The fact is all we know, and all else would be vain conjecture. *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.

16. *But Peter stood, &c.* The context refers this to the fact, that he was a stranger to the door-keeper. *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. *Unto her, &c.* Portresses were not uncommon among the Jews. See Acts 12: 13.

17. This first denial of Peter took

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.

place where he stood and warmed himself by the fire of coals, which had been kindled in the interior and open court (see N. on Matt. 26: 58), inasmuch as the nights at this season of the year were cold, especially towards morning. *The damsel that kept, &c.* Her suspicions in regard to Peter may have been awakened by some word or passionate gesture, which indicated his feelings toward Jesus, while he was waiting outside for admission. It is not likely that a person of his daring and excitable temper, would remain a cool and unconcerned spectator of what was going on, especially while standing outside of the palace, with no one but the portress to see him. But even if Peter's self-possession was such as not to betray him, the fact of his being with John, who doubtless made no secret of his discipleship, would indicate also that he was one of Jesus' disciples. *Art not thou, &c.* The form of the question in the original is such as to imply a negative answer. It denotes a slight shade of apprehension, that an affirmative answer may be returned to the question. This is expressed by us in common parlance: '*You was not with him! It cannot be that you are of his company!*' This shade of sentiment might also be communicated, by the tone in which the inquiry was proposed. *Also* as well as John, who probably made no concealment of the fact of his connection with Jesus, either here or at the cross (19: 26). We are informed by Luke (22: 56), that the damsel earnestly looked upon Peter, in order to identify him with the one whom she had previously admitted at the instance of John. We are not informed whether she proposed this question with ill intent, or from the mere wish to have her curiosity satisfied, and add to her stock of gossip. Of this however we are quite certain, that had Peter openly and boldly proclaimed his discipleship,

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: and

or been intent upon the trial of his Master, instead of attempting to conceal his position by sitting among the servants and attendants, and listening without a word of rebuke to their abuse of Jesus, he would have been spared the anguish and remorse consequent upon his great sin, which to the day of his death, although so fully pardoned by his gracious Master, must have been remembered with a feeling of shame and self-reproach. *Of this man's disciples; literally, of the (number of the) disciples of this man. I am not.* He added also other forms of denial, which are recorded by the other Evangelists.

18. This verse is interjectional, and designed to show where and with whom Peter was standing, when he thus denied all knowledge of his Master. *Servants and officers.* This marks a distinction between the persons designated by these terms. The former class were the servants of the chief priests, although oftentimes, as here, they may have been called into a more public service. The officers were the apparitors or beadles of the Sanhedrim, employed to make arrests, convey public messages, superintend the police department of the temple service, and the like. See N. on v. 3. *A fire of coals,* i. e. a charcoal fire. John alone notices the material of which the fire was composed. The same is true also of the declaration, *for it was cold.* All this shows him to have been an independent eye-witness of the transactions here recorded. *Peter stood, &c.* Literally, *and with them was Peter standing and warming himself.* Emphasis is given to the fact, that among those persons who had arrested his Master, and upon whom he had just before drawn his sword in defence of Jesus, Peter stood as though he was one of them, and had never known the prisoner, who now in his hearing was undergoing

Peter stood with them, and warmed 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
n Mt. 26:55; Lu. 4:15; ch. 7:14, 26, 28; & 8:2.

such injustice and insult at the hands of his enemies.

19. 19-24. JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS AND THE SANHEDRIM. *Jerusalem*. Morning of the sixth day of the Week. This preliminary examination before the high priest is peculiar to John, and is to be placed immediately before Luke 22: 66, which introduces Matt. 26: 59; Mark 14: 55. The narration of Peter's denial, which is carried forward in the other Evangelists without interruption, is here suspended until v. 25, where it is again resumed. *The high priest*, i. e. Caiaphas. See v. 24. Stier contends that it was Annas who, as high priest, conducted this examination, and cites as of the same opinion, Chrysostom, Augustine, Olshausen, B. Crusius, Neander, Lange, Meyer, and Luthardt. On the other hand, Luther, Grotius, Bengel, Tholuck, De Wette, Webster and Wilkinson, in the light of v. 24, refer this hearing to the tribunal of Caiaphas. As we have no positive proof in favor of either opinion, the question is one which will ever remain unsettled, and find advocates for both of the views above given. *Then* connects this verse with v. 14. *Asked Jesus of* (literally, *concerning*) *his disciples*, &c. This is in accordance with the usual form of judicial interrogation, which commences with general and indirect questions, especially in a preliminary examination like that which Jesus was now undergoing. By this general inquiry, the high priest may have hoped to elicit something from Jesus which would serve to criminate him; or at least to learn from his own lips how extensively his doctrines had spread, and who of the rulers or common people believed on him. Webster and Wil-

kinson suggest, that the inquiry concerning the disciples of Jesus arose from the high priest's acquaintance with one of them. *Of his doctrine*, i. e. concerning its nature, relations, and design. Perhaps a question or two respecting our Lord's disciples, was followed by this interrogation in regard to his doctrine, to which he replies, knowing well that the previous questions were introductory to those which followed.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

20. *I spake openly to the world*. 'I practised no concealment of my doctrines or acts. Every thing was done in a public and open manner.' The *world* is here the Jewish people, who, as we have seen in their opposition to Christ and rejection of his doctrines, were the type and symbol of the world at large, to whom the Gospel was soon to be sent by the ministry of the apostles and their successors. *I ever taught* (i. e. my practice was to teach) *in the synagogue* (generically put for *synagogues*) *and in the temple*, i. e. in places of public religious worship and instruction.

Whither refers to both the antecedents, *the synagogue* and *temple*, but more particularly to the latter, as the great place of public resort at the time of the national festivals. *Always* on the prescribed days of worship in the synagogue, and on the great festal occasions which drew people from all quarters of the land to the temple. *In secret*, &c. This is spoken in a comparative sense, and is no denial of the fact, that he had communicated much instruction to his disciples in private. The idea is that he had never sought privacy or concealment in regard to his works or doctrines, and that he had said nothing in the most private and familiar inter-

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 ?

course with his disciples, which was opposed to the tenor of his public discourses.

21. Such having been the public character of his ministry, our Lord asks Caiaphas, why he seeks information from him in regard to a matter, respecting which such ample testimony might be obtained from those who had listened to his public discourses. It was contrary to all law and precedent to seek evidence from the arraigned person, which was so abundant and easy to be obtained from thousands in Jerusalem and all parts of the land. Luthardt therefore rightly terms these questions of the high priest, captious and inquisitorial. *Why askest thou me*, as though I were the only source whence you can gain the information you require? *Ask them which heard me*, who are here in Jerusalem and all over the land, and can easily be summoned to the stand as witnesses. *What I have said*; literally, *what I said*, his whole ministry being referred to as though it were a momentary act, and occupying but a single point of time. This gives great emphasis to the verb. Reference is had in *what I said unto them*, to the general purport of his public instructions. The pronoun *they*, in the original, is the demonstrative *these*, which Bengel refers to some of the multitude who were present, and to whom Jesus pointed as being well acquainted with his doctrine. Alford hints that the officers spoken of in 7:46, may have been present.

22. His answer so completely exposed the motives of the high priest in thus questioning Jesus, and withal was so triumphant a refutation of the charges implied in the questions proposed (v. 19), that he was stirring up rebellion against the Romans and teaching heresy, that one of the officers, either enraged that the high

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me ?

o Je. 20:2; Ac. 23:2.

priest should be so baffled in his wily plan to entrap Jesus, or through a desire to curry favor with his superiors by the zeal with which he espoused their cause, struck Jesus, and thus was the first to inflict a blow upon the sacred person of the Redeemer of men. *Which stood by*, i. e. near to Jesus. *Struck Jesus with the palm of his hand*; literally, *gave him a slap* with the open hand. See N. on Matt. 26:67. A blow or slap of this sort upon the face, was deemed an act of the highest indignity. See Job 16:10; 1 Kings 22:24. This inferior officer would not have dared to commit this outrage upon Jesus while under examination, had he not been fully aware of what was predetermined against him by the Sanhedrim. *Answerest thou, &c.* He seeks to justify this gross indignity, by pretending to find in the reply of Jesus, disrespect to the high priest. A similar scene was enacted in the trial of Paul, as recorded in Acts 23:4.

23. *If I have spoken evil*. The hypothesis is not one of doubt as to whether the reply of Jesus was blame-worthy or otherwise, but a form of stating the charge in order the more effectually to refute it. *If I have spoken*, would have been more literally translated, *if I spoke*, reference being had to the remonstrance which Jesus had just made against the inquisitorial proceedings of the high priest. The word *evil*, does not here refer to the evil quality of what our Lord had said, but to the manner in which it had been spoken. Our word *amiss*, answers very well to the idea. *Bear witness*, i. e. furnish legal proof. A mere charge accompanied by an act of violence, was not sufficient to impeach the reply of Jesus, as wrong either in matter or manner. Webster and Wilkinson refer to an important principle here laid down: "No one must prejudice or take

24 ^p Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. ^q They said therefore unto him, Art not thou

^p Mt. 26: 57.
^q Mt. 26: 69, 71; Ma. 14: 69; Lu. 22: 58.

the law into his own hands, much less may any officer of the law." But *if well*, &c. Thus, in either case, the officer had been guilty of an unwarrantable outrage, and should have been punished therefor. But so far from this, his zeal for the honor of the high priest was doubtless praised and rewarded, and this may have been in part the reason, why all the officers and servants afterward vied with one another in heaping insults and indignities upon Jesus. See Matt. 26: 67; Mark 14: 65; Luke 22: 63, 64.

24. Those expositors who suppose the hearing thus far to have been preliminary and before Annas, here find the transition to the palace of Caiaphas. The rendering of the verb in the aorist by the pluperfect, they of course reject as wholly erroneous and unnecessary. So Alford translates, *Annas sent him bound*, &c. Luthardt, whom Alford quotes as high authority, says that "John had no need to relate the hearing before Caiaphas, for he has related it 11: 47—53, and we have ere this been familiarized with the habit of our Evangelist not to narrate any further the outward process, when he has already by anticipation substantially given us the result." In order however to reach this exposition, the particle translated in our common version, *now*, which is evidently retrospective, is rejected as spurious. This is a point to be submitted to MS. authority, which I am inclined to think preponderates in favor of the common reading. It will be seen, by a reference to my Note on Matt. 26: 59, that a doubt is there expressed, whether the examination here recorded took place at the house of Annas or Caiaphas. This doubt is not yet fully solved, although

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 not I see thee in the garden with him?

at present I incline to the belief, that it was before Caiaphas that this preliminary examination took place. The words *Caiaphas the high priest*, would seem clearly to indicate that, when John speaks of the high priest, his reference must be to the person whom he thus formally announces to be the incumbent of that office. See also v. 13.

25. The narrative of Peter's denial is here resumed from v. 17. *Simon Peter*. Both here and in v. 15, his double name is given. *Stood and warmed himself*. This serves to establish the identity of this denial, with the first one narrated by the other Evangelists. They all speak of three distinct denials; the order is comparatively of little consequence. *They* (i. e. the servants who stood around) *said therefore unto him*. In regard to the harmonizing of the statements made by the different Evangelists, see N. on Matt. 26: 72. The word *therefore*, introduces the question, as a natural consequence of their leisurely position around the fire, discussing, as all such persons in attendance are wont to do, the affair which was engaging the attention of their superiors in the adjoining apartment. *Art not thou*, &c. Here again the form of the question implies the expectation of a negative answer. See N. on v. 17. *Also* has here, as in v. 17, reference to the *other disciple*, who went in with Peter, and now stood absorbed in the trial, while his companion was thus yielding to cowardly fear, and by the strangeness of his demeanor turning all eyes upon him.

26. It will appear by a comparison of the other Evangelists, especially Matthew and Mark, that there were many who recognized Peter as one of Christ's disciples, and charged him with

27 Peter then denied again; and 'immediately the cock crew.

28 ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of
r Mat. 26: 74; Ma. 14: 72; Lu. 22: 60; ch. 13

83.
s Mt. 27: 2; Ma. 15: 1; Lu. 23: 1; Ac. 3: 13:

the fact. Meanwhile, it appears from John that one of them, who had gone forth with the multitude to apprehend Jesus, and who was a relative of Malchus (see v. 10), affirmed in the usual interrogative manner, that he had seen Peter in the garden in the company of Jesus. It was his irritation and alarm at these repeated recognitions, and especially this last charge, which he feared might be followed by his arrest for attempting to prevent the officers of the law from the performance of their duty, that caused him to curse and to swear in the manner related in Matt. 26: 74. *Did not I see thee, &c.* Here the form of the question is so changed from that in vs. 17, 25, that an *affirmative*, instead of a *negative* answer, is expected. It is as though the questioner had said: 'I certainly did see you, and you cannot deny it.' This will account for the extreme agitation of Peter, on hearing this question proposed in this positive form.

27. *Peter then*, i. e. in consequence of the question which Malchus' kinsman had put to him. *Denied again*, or the third time. We learn from Matthew and Mark, that he accompanied this denial with oaths and imprecations. *Immediately*. Luke: *immediately while he yet spake*. The startling suddenness with which that sound fell upon his ear, together with the piercing, sorrowful look of Jesus, awakened Peter to a sense of his sin, and he went forth to weep tears of bitter contrition and self-reproach. See N. on Matt. 26: 75.

28-38. THE SANHEDRIM LEAD JESUS AWAY TO PILATE. *Jerusalem*. Sixth day of the Week. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 1, 2, 11-14; Mark 15: 1-5; Luke 23: 1-5. John's account of this portion of the history of our Lord's passion, is much fuller than that of the Synoptic Evangelists,

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.

t Ac. 10: 28; & 11: 3.

vs. 34-38, being peculiar to his account, and the whole narration interspersed with incidents not elsewhere mentioned. Between this leading of Jesus to Pilate's bar, and the last denial of Peter as related by John, must be put the second or principal trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrim, passed over by John, but recorded in Matt. 26: 59-68; Mark 14: 55-65; Luke 22: 63-71. Before entering upon the critical examination of this portion of John, the reader is referred for the establishment of the connection, to N. on Matt. 27: 1. It will be seen by this reference, that while John omits to notice the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrim, nevertheless in what passed at Pilate's tribunal, he gives the result so clearly, that we readily gather that the council had determined to effect the death of Jesus, by accusing him of sedition to the Roman governor.

28. *Then, or so then*, marking the progress of the narrative. *From Caiaphas*; literally, *from* (the palace) of *Caiaphas*. See v. 24. *Unto the hall of judgment*; literally, *the pretorium*. See N. on Mark 15: 16. This name, which was properly given to the general's tent or head-quarters, came to signify also the palace or head-quarters of the provincial governors. *It was early*. It appears from Matt. 27: 1, that the consultation which followed the trial and condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrim, as to the best and surest mode of effecting his death, took place in the morning. As it was yet early morning, when they led Jesus to the governor's palace, it shows with what haste they urged on the preliminary steps to his execution, so that the people whose attachment to Jesus was well known, might not be acquainted with what was going on, until it was too late to arrest the proceedings or interfere in his be-

29 Pilate then went out unto

half. *They themselves went not in, &c.* The room of the Roman governor was doubtless hung with idolatrous ensigns, and filled with all the symbols of heathen worship. For a Jew to enter such an apartment, was a thing of rare occurrence; and if of necessity or through inadvertence he did this, he was ceremonially unclean till the evening. Unless Jesus anticipated the celebration of the paschal supper a day, the Jews must have eat the passover on the preceding evening (see N. on 13:1; Matt. 26:2, 17). This is sufficient authority for us to take the word *passover* here, in the general sense of the feast of unleavened bread. That it does not refer to the paschal feast properly so called, is evident from the fact, that if it had not already been eaten, it would not take place until the evening (i. e. our Friday evening), which according to the Jewish mode of reckoning time would belong to the next day, that is, to our Saturday. Hence had the Jews gone into the hall of Pilate, they could have eat the passover that evening, belonging as it did to the next day. This shows that their fear of ceremonial uncleanness had reference to the feast which followed the paschal supper, and which continued seven days called the days of unleavened bread. This argument gathers strength also from the express provision made in Numb. 9:10, that the ceremonially unclean might eat of the paschal lamb. But not only have we warrant for taking the passover in this extended sense of the paschal festival (see Luke 22:7; 2:41, compared with 43; Matt. 26:2; John 2:13; 6:4), but the word *passover*, may be taken in the sense of *paschal sacrifices*, or voluntary peace offerings and thank offerings, made in the temple during the paschal festival (see Ps. 118:27, where *sacrifice*, literally signifies *festival*; see also Ex. 23:18; Mal. 2:3, and perhaps 2 Chron. 30:22). If the word *passover*, be taken in this sense, which is forbidden by no law of exegesis, and which, as the above references show, is supported by

them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

general usage, then in the duty and desire of the chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrim to participate in these sacrificial offerings and banquets, may be found a reason, why they did not wish to debar themselves by any ceremonial uncleanness of the kind here referred to. See Robinson's Eng. Har. p. 201. In this case the verb *might eat*, may be taken literally; but if the *passover* is taken in the sense of the *passover festival*, then the verb must have the sense *might celebrate*, a meaning which it manifestly has in 2 Chron. 30:22. In view of these modes of explanation, both of which are admissible, we can hardly sympathize with those commentators, who find insuperable difficulties in the way of reconciling John here with the other Evangelists.

29. *Pilate then went out, &c.* This clearly implies that Jesus had been taken into the pretorium. See also v. 33. It is noticeable how abruptly both John and Mark introduce the Roman governor to their readers. Matthew (27:2) gives his title, and Luke introduces him to notice in the very commencement of his gospel (3:1). *What accusation* (or formal charge) *bring ye, &c.* This shows how tumultuously and regardless of all judicial forms, they had dragged Jesus to the bar of Pilate. Thrusting him into the pretorium, they seemed to have awaited with all confidence the decree of his death, thinking that Pilate would require no formal charge against the prisoner, but in order to gratify them, would pass immediate sentence upon him. But now, in the very outset, the governor demands of them a formal accusation against Jesus, before he will proceed to adjudicate the case. There is every reason to believe, that the Sanhedrim, at least so many of them as were opposed to Jesus, were present in a body with Annas and Caiaphas at their head, in order to give weight to such charges as they might feel it necessary to make, to secure the condemnation of Jesus.

30. Embarrassed for a moment by

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:

this demand of Pilate for a formal charge against Jesus, they have no other resource than to basely insinuate, that he was a well-known malefactor, or they would by no means have taken such pains to bring him to justice. As yet they make no formal charge. The lie which they meditated in charging him with sedition, to use a well known expression, stuck in their throat, and they could not give it utterance. It would not do to accuse him of blasphemy, for in that case they well knew that Pilate would refuse to take any cognizance whatever of such a charge, as was afterwards done by Gallo (Acts 18: 16). *We would not have delivered him up to thee* for punishment. What pretended innocence of all selfish ends in accusing Jesus to Pilate! The word *malefactor* or *evil doer*, is of extensive signification; and spoken of a criminal brought before the bar of the Roman governor, would almost of necessity suggest the idea of political crime. Thus craftily, by awakening the apprehensions of Pilate, did they proceed to compass their bloody design.

31. The reply of Pilate is regarded by the best expositors as ironical. It is as though he had said: 'If you suppose that I have such confidence in the purity of your motive, and in the correctness of your judgment, as to put this man to death on your mere word, why do you bring him to me? Why not dispose of him at once, according to your own law and usages?' Stier cites Souchon as best expressing the sense of Pilate's reply: "Am I to execute your judgment? If ye examine alone, then condemn alone, if ye can!"

32 "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

33 "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?"

u Mat. 20: 19; ch. 12: 32, 33.
w Mat. 27: 11.

The Jews therefore, in reply to the ironical taunt of Pilate. *It is not lawful*, i. e. we are not permitted by the Roman authority. This puts at rest the mooted question, whether the power of life and death rested with the Sanhedrim. It is not likely that these proud Jews would have so openly admitted this, had they not been compelled thereto, by their desire to obtain sentence of death against Jesus from the Roman governor. All these circumstances show how rank was their hostility to Jesus. Every other consideration for the time being, gave place to this one great desire to accomplish his death.

32. This verse is logically dependent upon the preceding one; but the general connection requires us to place after their hypocritical disclaimer of all right to inflict capital punishment upon any offender, the charge recorded in Luke 23: 2. John makes no mention of this, but evidently has it in his eye, and knowing the mode of punishment practised upon political malefactors, refers to the prediction of Jesus, as thus finding its fulfilment. The word *that*, has the eventual sense given it in N. on Matt. 1: 22. *The saying of Jesus*, i. e. what in effect he said. *Which he spake*. See 12: 33. *What death*, i. e. what kind of death. The Roman punishment was crucifixion (Acts 2: 23). Had he been remanded to the Jews for punishment, he would have suffered death by stoning.

33. Jesus remained in the pretorium (see N. on v. 28), while Pilate went forth to ascertain on what charge he had been brought before him. He now

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a

reënters the judgment-hall and proposes the question, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* The charge made in Luke 23: 2, although not expressly recorded by John, is therefore fully implied in this question of Pilate.

34. *Sayest thou this of thyself*, i. e. from any personal knowledge that I have set myself up as a king. *Or did others* (i. e. the Jews) *tell it thee of me?* "I regard this question as intended to distinguish the senses of the word *King*, as applied to Jesus, of course not for the information of Him who asked it, but to bring out this distinction in Pilate's mind. If he asked of *himself*, the word could certainly have but one meaning, and that one would be wrongly applied;—if from information derived from the Jews, this very fact would open the way to the true meaning in which He was King of the Jews." Alford. Stier and Ebrard discern this meaning in the question: "Hast thou thyself, not now as *man*, but as the *governor* of these Jews, who can tolerate no king over them, come by any facts, to the knowledge of my making myself a king?" But because this was not so, and Pilate forbore, as Jesus knew he would, to inquire more earnestly into the deep meaning of this word, the second point of the dilemma alone remains, which Christ knew that Pilate would affirm—He thus speaks and acts because the Jews have told him! But after all, is it not more natural to give to this inquiry a sense, vindictive of the innocence of Jesus in regard to the charge that he was aspiring to be king of the Jews? The question implies that Pilate, with all his vigilant and jealous oversight, had never of himself (i. e. through his own agents and informers) detected in Jesus any act or aspiration for temporal power. This question therefore could not have originated with himself, but was clearly traceable

Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

to the envy and malice of the Jews. Tholuck adopts this as the sense, and regards it an indirect reference to the fact, that the governor well knew the baselessness of the charge. Such was the opinion of Chrysostom and other ancient expositors, and such is that also of Calvin, Doddridge, Bloomfield, and Webster and Wilkinson.

35. *Am I a Jew*, to trouble myself with their peculiarities and mystical notions? This reply conveys no taunt to Jesus, but is rather a proud disclaimer that a Roman governor should condescend to trouble himself about words and questions of the Jewish law. It also answers the former part of the question, *am I a Jew?* I must have been one, instead of being as I am a Roman, to have learned by personal observation the truth of the allegation which the Jews now make against you. *Thine own nation*, &c. "I have no knowledge whatever of this matter, save what has been reported to me by thy accusers!" "Pilate thus acknowledges that others caused him to ask that question. He thus puts himself in the false position of a Roman magistrate meddling with a purely Jewish question in nothing (according to his own view) affecting his government." Prof. Crosby. *Thine own nation*, i. e. the rulers and principal men of the nation. This is indicated by *chief priests*, which is added for the sake of explanation. It must have appeared strange to Pilate, that in the present restive and rebellious state of the Jews, the chief men of the nation should have accused any one to him of aspiring to rid the land of Roman rule. *Hath delivered thee unto me*, as a seditious person worthy of death. This was a virtual answer of our Lord's question, *did others tell it thee of me?* The question of Pilate which now follows, *what hast thou done?* indicates very clearly that he placed little reliance on the truth of

36 * Jesus answered, * My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I

ψ 1 Ti. 6:13.

the accusation made in Luke 23:2. It is as though he had said: 'the charge against you is so vague and indefinite, and appears so clearly to have been trumped up for the occasion, that I would fain learn from thine own lips what thou hast done, in order that I may have some understanding of the case.'

36. With a frankness and fullness, such as he did not vouchsafe to Caiaphas or to Herod, when arraigned at their bar, our Lord replies to the question of Pilate. He unfolds to him the nature of his kingdom. It was spiritual and not temporal, heavenly and not earthly. *My kingdom.* '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 my kingdom,* &c. He condescends to argue the question with Pilate, and convince him that his kingship is not one which should awaken the least apprehension on the part of the Roman authorities, or render him at all amenable to the civil tribunal. If he had been a temporal king, or had aspired to be one, there would have been opposition and bloodshed, before he would have submitted to be thus dragged before the Roman governor. But so far was this from being the case, he stood unarmed and alone before Pilate. Not an arm was lifted to rescue him. No bands of seditious men were roaming through the city or land, clamorously demanding his release, and threatening all manner of vengeance, if he received

should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

z Da. 2:44; & 7:14; Lu. 12:14; ch. 6:15; & 8:15.

any injury from his enemies. All was tranquil and peaceful. This showed that his kingdom was far other than his accusers had represented it to be. The argument is also a *fortiori*; for if his servants did not fight to prevent his being delivered up to his enemies, much less would they imperil their lives to gain for him a kingdom. *My servants.* The pronoun is emphatic, and therefore Christ does not deny that he had servants; the denial relates to their fighting to prevent his deliverance to the Jews, as they would do, were his kingdom of this world. The word rendered *servants*, literally signifies *attendants, ministers*, to execute the will of the ruler. The word is employed in reference to the well-known fact, that the chief men and attendants of a king are those upon whose fidelity, in times of peril, he can most rely, and who, if firm and faithful, will rally around them their own servants and retainers, in defence of their king. So Stier says: "they are not merely subjects, but agents to maintain the royal authority." *Would fight*; or literally, *would be fighting.* Reference is had in the words *delivered to the Jews*, to his apprehension by the rulers and chief priests (Matt. 26:57; Mark 14:53; Luke 22:54; John 18:13), and not to his being brought before the bar of Pilate. Stier, with Bengel, refers this to what is said in v. 31. But if reference is had by way of warning to any act of Pilate, it must have been to that recorded in 19:1; Matt. 27:26; Mark, 15:15. *But now is,* &c. An emphatic repetition of the clause, *my kingdom is not of this world.* The word *now*, is here a particle of transition. The idea of the Romanists, that *now* is temporal and antithetic to a future period when Christ's kingdom would be of this, as well as of the other

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 voice.

a Ch. 8:47; 1 Jo. 3:19; & 4:6.

world, is absurd and inconsistent with the very nature of the kingdom which Christ here avows to be his. Nor can the particle translated *now*, have in this connection a temporal signification. It is a particle of continuation or transition, marking the present condition of things, *as things now are*. The adverb *hence*, refers to *this world*.

37. *Art thou a king then?* Here John's narrative coincides with that of the Synoptic Evangelists. See Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3. Some expositors would remove the interrogation, and read, *So then thou art a king*. 'You confess that the charge made against you (Luke 23:2) is true.' But the interrogative is required not only by the original, but by v. 33 (end), of which question this is the repetition, although with a sense somewhat varied by the reply of Jesus to the previous interrogation. There was such a deep and hidden mystery in his words, that Pilate now proposes in earnest the question, *Art thou a king then?* hoping to elicit something from him, which would throw light upon his reply to the previous inquiry. Prof. Crosby remarks that, awakened by what Christ had just said, Pilate speaks for himself and not for the Jews. Alford finds in the emphatic *thou*, a slight sarcasm. I would rather say that it was the expression of wonder that a person of such calm and dignified mien, giving such evidence of perfect sanity, should speak of himself as a king, and yet not one whose kingdom was of this world. "Art thou who standest here before my bar, and bearest in thy person such marks of the bitter hatred of the Jews, and whose death they clamorously demand, *a king*, truly and really?" To this question, our Lord makes a prompt and direct reply, *thou sayest*, &c. This, according to Oriental phraseology, was an emphatic af-

firmative. Had Pilate's question contained the sarcasm which Alford finds in it, our Lord would not thus have condescended to reply to it. *That I am a king*. The pronoun has a corresponding emphasis with *thou*, in Pilate's question. *To this end was I born*, &c. The language is that employed of natural birth, but there lies in the reply, a deep significance which Pilate failed to discern. The words to *this end*, refer forward to the clause, *that I should bear witness*, &c. *Was I born a king*. The deeper sense is, *did I become incarnate*. This is more clearly indicated by the next clause, *came I into the world*, which, beyond all doubt, refers to his preëxistent nature. The pronoun in *was I born*, is also emphatic, and contrasts the high dignity of his mission as a witness-bearer to the truth, with the *thou* of Pilate, which had reference to him only as a poor, maltreated prisoner at the bar of justice. *To this end*, and *for this cause*, are the same in the original, and show that the clauses, *was I born*, and *came I into the world*, refer to the same general fact of his incarnation, the first referring to his complete manhood as born of a woman, the second, to his supreme divinity, as having come from above into the world. His humanity and divinity are therefore both taught in this great utterance to Pilate. It is noticed by Stier, that in the hearing of Pilate, a heathen, he does not say, *sent into the world*, but simply, *came*. *That* denotes the object or purpose of his coming into the world. *Bear witness*, i. e. reveal, make known, declare. *To the truth*. The article gives this the highest objectivity. It is not, so far as the form of expression is concerned, truth as existing in God or his works, but as an abstraction, by and complete of itself. "He puts the truth in the place of the living God,

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, ^b I find in him no fault *at all*.

^b Mat. 27: 24; Ln. 23: 4; ch. 19: 4, 6.

and as if above Himself." Stier. But this is only to present his office work more clearly and emphatically to Pilate's mind. How could he reveal the truth, unless it existed subjectively in himself? If resident in him, then he was the truth, as he declared himself to be, in 14: 6. The bearing witness to the truth was then the revelation of himself, as the Messiah, sent of God to accomplish the salvation of men. Thus briefly, and in words comporting with the place and occasion, did our Lord vouchsafe to make himself known to Pilate, in his complex character of God-man, whose mission it was to bring men back to the knowledge of the truth, which it was his province to reveal. *Every one that is*, &c. This shows that the kingly dominion of Jesus was in the domain of truth, that his followers were those who received the truth in the love of it, and that from all who were the subjects of truth, would be rendered to him the most implicit obedience. *Every one*. There is no exception. All his subjects are included in this great declaration of their fealty to him, as King and Revealer of the truth. *Of the truth*, is a varied form of expression for *of God* (3: 47). It refers not to those who have previously known the truth—for there are none who know it until taught of God—but to those whose hearts are prepared from above to seek it sincerely, and when found, to obey conscientiously all its requisitions. *Hearth my voice*, i. e. receives my testimony, and thus arrives at a knowledge of the truth.

38. "This word of Jesus was evidently intended to attract Pilate himself, and to induce him to avow himself a subject of Christ as a friend of truth." Olshausen. The supreme indifference, if not contempt, manifested in the reply of Pilate, shows that the offer so graciously made him by Jesus failed to awaken in him any desire to become

a subject of this kingdom of truth. *What is truth*. Pilate omits the article, as better suited to express his contempt of all philosophical theories on this subject, with which he doubtless clasped the words of Jesus. The inquiry is not one of sarcasm, as some expositors teach, but of indifference amounting almost to disgust, at any attempt to define truth. If we take into view, the numerous and fine-spun theories and speculations on *the good* and *the true*, which had occupied the attention of philosophers for so many centuries, and which led to no beneficial or practical result, we cannot wonder at the indifference and apathy on all such questions, which had taken possession of the Gentile mind at the coming of our Lord. But Pilate had no excuse therefrom, for rejecting so contemptuously the testimony which Jesus bore on this occasion to the truth. He could not but have heard of his wondrous miracles and the doctrines which he taught. Such a man, filling as he did the whole country with the fame of his marvellous works, could not have eluded the watchful and jealous eye of the Roman authorities. Now this wonderful person stands at his bar as a criminal, and professes himself to have come from a pre-existent state of glory into this world, in order to teach men the very thing of which they stand in such infinite need, *THE TRUTH*, or in other words, the nature and perfections of God, and the way of salvation through the death of His Son. It was the height of criminal stupidity for him to turn away from such an expounder of the truth, as though he were no more competent to define it, than the thousands of heathen philosophers, who had sought to sound its depths and explore its domain by lifelong and anxious study. *What is truth*, is not here so much a question as a skeptical ejaculation, evincing Pilate's supreme contempt for every speculation of this sort. It served also as an inti-

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 ?

40 ° Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. ° Now Barabbas was a robber.

° Mat. 27 : 15 ; Ma. 15 : 6 ; Lu. 23 : 17.
 d Ac. 3 : 14. e Lu. 23 : 19.

mation on the part of the governor, that the subject was to be pursued no further. The conversation had taken too serious a turn to suit his pleasure. He therefore waits for no reply, but immediately passes out of the pretorium, in order to express to the Jews his conviction of the innocence of Jesus. I would not go so far as Alford, and find in these words of Pilate a hidden negation, that there is any such thing as truth ; but I would rather find in them a weariness and disgust, at any conversation which had so fruitless an object, as the discovery and investigation of truth. *When he had said this ;* literally, *having said this*. Reference is had in *again*, to his previous coming forth from the pretorium in v. 29.

Unto the Jews, i. e. the chief priests and rulers who headed the mob, at this time doubtless beginning to gather in large numbers around the tribunal of Pilate. The pronoun *I*, stands in emphatic contrast with *you*, i. e. the chief priests and rulers, who had made the serious charges against Jesus. Alford says : " Pilate mocks both—the Witness to the Truth, and the haters of the Truth." The words *at all*, are unnecessarily italicized in our common version. See N. on 19 : 11.

39. John now passes over the sending of Jesus to Herod, and all that which is related in Matt. 27 : 12–14 ; Mark 15 : 3–5 ; Luke 23 : 4–16, and proceeds to record the unavailing effort made by Pilate to secure the release of Jesus, in accordance with the custom, that, at the feast, one criminal at least was to be released (Luke 23 : 17). *Ye*

CHAPTER XIX.

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.

a Mat. 20 : 19 ; & 27 : 26 ; Ma. 15 : 15 ; Lu. 18 : 28.

have a custom. This shows that Pilate did not establish the custom here referred to. See N. on Matt. 27 : 15. Alford refers his readers to the four accounts of this incident, as an instructive specimen of the variations in the Gospel narratives. *Will ye therefore, &c*. See Ns. on Matt. 27 : 17 ; Mark 15 : 9. *The King of the Jews*, is spoken with contemptuous reference, not so much to Jesus himself, whose innocence and dignified bearing had awakened in no ordinary degree the sympathy and respect of Pilate, as to the political degradation of the Jews, who are taunted as having no king, save one who was clearly a religious enthusiast, and to be regarded as hardly in his right mind.

40. *Then cried they all, &c*. The reason for this outburst in favor of Barabbas, is found in Matt. 27 : 20 ; Mark 15 : 11. *Again*. See Mark 15 : 8. *This man* ; literally, *this*, the pronoun being used in its contemptuous sense. See N. on Matt. 26 : 61, where our translators have employed the word *fellow*, to express this idea of contempt. *Barabbas was a robber*. See N. on Matt. 27 : 16. This concise and partially implied contrast between Jesus and Barabbas, is more fully brought out in Acts 3 : 14. Luthardt after Krafft remarks : " thus was Jesus the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, to be offered for a sin offering (Levit. 16 : 5–10)."

CHAPTER XIX.

1–3. PILATE DELIVERS UP JESUS TO DEATH. HE IS SCOURGED AND MOCKED. *Jerusalem*. Sixth day of the Week.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, ^bthat ye may know that I find no fault in him.

See Ns. on Matt. 27 : 26-30; Mark 15 : 15-19. John is here more concise than the other Evangelists, but nevertheless groups together all the principal incidents. The word *therefore*, refers to the sentence of death, which Pilate in accordance with the persistent demand of the Jews, had passed upon Jesus. See Luke 23 : 24. *Scourged him*. See N. on Matt. 27 : 26. *The soldiers*. One of the six cohorts allowed to the Roman procurators of Judea, was stationed at Jerusalem, the remaining five at Cesarea. It is not improbable that, on such great and exciting occasions as the passover, which more than any other religious feast awakened the fire of liberty in the soul of the Jew, some of the soldiers were drawn off from the garrison at Cesarea, and put on guard at the metropolis. See N. on Matt. 27 : 27. *Platted a crown*, &c. See N. on Matt. 27 : 29. *A purple robe*. In Matthew 27 : 28 (on which see Note), it is called a *scarlet robe*. The difference is harmonized and illustrated by the frequent interchange in our own language of the colors *purple*, *red*, and *crimson*. On their mock address, *hail, King of the Jews!* see N. on Matt. 27 : 29. *Smote him with their hands*; literally, *gave him blows or slaps*. See N. on 18 : 22. Various kinds of blows were given him. Those upon the thorny crown were doubtless inflicted with the reed, caught from his hand in which it had been placed in mock royalty, as a blow there could not have been given with the naked hand. See N. on Matt. 27 : 30.

4-16. PILATE AGAIN SEEKS TO RELEASE JESUS. *Jerusalem*. Sixth day of the Week. This portion of the trial is found only in John, and is a most valuable addition to the sacred record, inasmuch as it contains the reiterated affirmation of Pilate as to the innocence of Jesus. It would seem from this that the governor, hop-

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

b Ch. 18 : 38; ver. 6.

ing that the malice of the Jews was sated by the dreadful scourging inflicted upon Jesus within the pretorium, made another and most earnest appeal in his behalf, solemnly averring that he found no fault in him. But all was of no avail, and we have in v. 16, the result of his weakness, in not firmly interposing the shield of justice for the protection of one of whose innocence he was so thoroughly persuaded.

4, 5. *Therefore* or *then*, marking the progress of the narrative, and referring to the plan by which Pilate hoped to effect the release of Jesus. See Luke 23 : 16, 22. *Went forth* from the pretorium. *Again*. He had several times in this trial come forth to expostulate with the Jews in behalf of Jesus. See 18 : 29, 38; Luke 23 : 13. *Behold I bring him forth*, &c. Pilate announces his purpose to bring forth Jesus, in order thereby to give a stronger expression of his conviction of his innocence of the charges made against him. Confession of guilt was usually extorted from criminals by this dreadful scourging, which they underwent preliminary to their crucifixion. No such confession had Jesus made; and Pilate brings him forth, in order that they may see in his lacerated and bleeding person, that this evidence of his guilt was not wanting through any leniency on the part of those who scourged the prisoner. As he announces his intention, Jesus appears with the crown of thorns and purple robe. The exclamation, *behold the man!* is one of appeal to the sympathy and compassion of the multitude. It is as though he had said: 'see how his body is mangled with scourging, and bruised by the blows of the soldiers. Is not this sufficient to answer the ends of justice? Can you fear his influence with the people, after such public degradation?'

6. *The chief priests and officers*; lit-

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 cru-

c Ac. 3:13.

d Le. 24:16.

erally, *the officers* (belonging to them), i. e. *the chief priests and their attendants*. These persons led the people, in their fierce and continuous cry that Jesus should be crucified. There was no pity in their hearts for the bleeding and mangled victim. Nothing would satisfy them but his death, and that in the most cruel form which human ingenuity had devised. *Take ye him, &c.* In consequence of the warning message of his wife (see Matt. 27:19), and other considerations which had forced themselves upon him during this strange trial, Pilate wished to rid himself of all responsibility or participation in the matter; and now half in earnest, although knowing the illegality of his offer, and with the bitterest irony through irritation at the blood-thirsty malice of the Jews, offers to deliver the prisoner into their hands to be crucified, if they so wished. He repeats with increased bitterness the taunt in 18:31. In order to understand the point of sarcasm, it should be remembered that their charge against Jesus was a political one; and had they crucified him for that alleged offence, it would have been a tacit acknowledgment in the eyes of the nation and world, that Roman rule in Judea was just and proper, and therefore they of their own accord had put Jesus to death for his resistance to rightful law and authority. The only alternative was to let Jesus go unpunished, and this their hatred of him would not permit them to entertain for a moment. It was this dilemma in which they were placed by Pilate's strange offer to deliver the matter into their hands, which led them to bring forward against Jesus the charge of blasphemy, which by their law was punishable with death. Thus in whatever way, or

cify him: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, ^a We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because ^e he made himself the Son of God.

e Mt. 26:65; ch. 5:18; & 10:33.

by whosoever hands his death was effected, they could allege as the reason, his violation of Jewish law, and thus free themselves from such a taunt as Pilate had just uttered, of their putting a man to death for rebellion against the Romans. In thus shifting the accusation from a political to a religious offence, they were doubtless actuated also by the fear, that Pilate through conviction of the innocence of Jesus, would refuse to pronounce sentence of death upon him. In order that he might not escape from their hands, they resorted therefore to the charge of blasphemy, although they well knew that Pilate could take no cognizance whatever of such an offence against Jewish law, even if he were inclined thus to do. But consistency of conduct is not to be sought for in men, urged on to the accomplishment of their plans by such infuriated malice and rage.

7. *We have a law, &c.* See Levit. 24:16. Webster and Wilkinson find the reference in Deut. 13:1-5, inasmuch as cursing and reviling the name of Jehovah is not charged upon him, but the holding up of himself as one worthy of the worship of the true and only God. "It was when Jesus claimed the attributes of Deity, that the High Priest condemned him for blasphemy." See Matthew 26:63-66; Luke 22:69-71. The pronoun *we*, is put in emphatic contrast with *ye* of Pilate. The pronoun sarcastically pronounced by him, represented a poor, down-trodden people, who had in their highest court of judicature no power of life and death, and who were obliged to sue to a Roman tribunal, for the power to rid themselves of one whose death they had predetermined. The *we* of the reply, represented the

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judg-

chosen people of God, whose great lawgiver Moses, hundreds of years before the founding of imperial Rome, had given them a code of laws, one of which, the person arraigned at Pilate's bar had broken in declaring himself to be the Son of God. All the pride and haughtiness of the Jew found expression in the words, *we have a law*, &c. *He ought to die* as a transgressor. The next clause denotes in what his transgression consisted. The implication is, that if found innocent by Pilate of the charge of sedition, he ought nevertheless to be put to death for having violated Jewish law. *He made himself*, &c. He gave himself out to be, or pretended that he was the Son of God. See Matt. 26: 63-66; Luke 22: 69-71. That Christ's assumption in the Jews' estimation was something more than that of the Messiahship, is very evident; for if the claim to that office and dignity implied blasphemy, then the assumption of his rightful office by the true Messiah, whoever he might be, would lay him open to the charge of blasphemy. Had their view of the Messiah been correct and scriptural, they would have seen the fitness and truthfulness of the claim of Jesus to be the Son of God. But regarding that personage merely as a temporal king, they lost sight of his divine mission and character, and were filled with pious horror, that Jesus should assume to be the Son of God.

8. At the mention of this extraordinary claim of Jesus, the import of which he did not understand, save that it was a claim to something superhuman, Pilate is seized with new terror, and makes more strenuous exertions to deliver Jesus. He therefore reënters the pretorium, and again questions Jesus in regard to his origin and person. *That saying*, namely, that Jesus had given himself out to be God's Son.

ment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Is. 53: 7; Mt. 27: 12, 14.

Was the more afraid. That this fear had reference to the person of Jesus, there hardly can be a doubt, even if it were not so directly implied in the following verse. At the very beginning of the trial (18: 29), Pilate had evidently experienced a strange sensation of awe in the presence of Jesus. This was increased by the mysterious words of our Lord in regard to his invisible and unearthly kingdom (18: 36, 37), and still more by the strange dream of his wife which was reported to him (Matt. 27: 19). Now when he hears that this singular man, whom he had just before caused to be so cruelly scourged and insulted, had given himself out to be the Son of God, with new and increased alarm he hurries him into the pretorium, and again seeks to elicit from him some account of his origin and character, which will clear up the mystery with which he is invested.

9. *Went again*, &c. The vacillating timidity of Pilate challenges the scorn and contempt of every one who reads this narration. He had only to put forth the energy and courage, afterward manifested in the true Roman spirit by the chief captain Lysias (Acts 23: 23-33), to rescue Jesus from his blood-thirsty enemies. But he chose a time-serving policy, and thus covered his name in all subsequent time with the blackest infamy. *Whence art thou?* This does not refer to his earthly parents, the place of his birth, or the region of country in which he had been brought up. He knew from what province Jesus had come (Luke 23: 6, 7); and to suppose that he merely wished the name of his earthly parents, would be utterly at variance with the supernatural terror which had now taken possession of Pilate's mind. Equally erroneous is the idea of some, that Pilate's fear arose from the supposition that Jesus might be a divine God,

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?

11 Jesus answered, ⁹ Thou

or son of some one of the gods, according to the teachings of heathen mythology. The higher and more intelligent class of Romans, at the time of Christ's advent, gave no credence to these myths, and the whole scope and tenor of the Jewish religion, in which Jesus had been educated, was embraced in the great doctrine, that there was but one God. If Jesus a Jew, therefore, gave himself out to be the Son of God, Pilate well knew that he claimed to be nothing less than the Son of the supreme Deity. His question must therefore be attributed to a feeling of awe in regard to the person of Jesus; an indefinable and mysterious impression, that he was something more than human, and a desire to hear from his own lips something of his being, origin, and character. The form of the question *whence art thou*, is more emphatic than *whence art*, the usual colloquial form. *But Jesus gave him no answer.* To the previous questions of the governor (18:33, 35), our Lord returned a prompt reply. They were such as Pilate's office of Judge, gave him a right to propose. But now his motive is not to learn the facts of the case, in order that he may pronounce a righteous judgment; for in scourging Jesus preparatory to his being delivered up to be crucified, he had virtually condemned him to death. The manifest design of his inquiry, was to dispel the fear and apprehension which had taken such mysterious possession of his mind, and therefore our Lord returns to his interrogation no answer. Enough had already been said to convince Pilate, had his mind been open to conviction, that Jesus was no ordinary man; and now had his divine origin been fully and explicitly affirmed, it would probably have been received with expressions of scorn and

couldst 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.

9 LU. 22:53; ch. 7:30.

unbelief from the governor. Alford remarks, that "our Lord's silence, was the most emphatic answer to all who had ears to hear it;—was a reference to what He had said before (18:37), and so a witness to His divine origin. Would any *mere man*, of true and upright character, have refused an answer to such a question, so put?"

10. The haughty, unsubmissive spirit of Pilate now manifests itself. Irritated by the silence of Jesus, he forgets the admonition of his wife (Luke 23:19), and the mysterious and alarming announcement of the divine Sonship of Jesus (v. 7), and in all the pride of a Roman governor possessed of arbitrary authority, boasts of his power to put Jesus to death or set him at liberty. This shows his indifference to the claims of justice, whenever they conflicted with his self-interest; and how devoid he was of a sense of obligation to pronounce righteous judgment, irrespective of the consequences. *Speakest thou not to me?* literally, *to me speakest thou not?* The emphatic position of the pronoun indicates surprise, that a prisoner at his bar should presume to maintain silence, when interrogated by one possessed of such power and station as Pilate. Alford finds the implied idea, 'thou hast, I know, refused to reply to others before.' But this does not comport so well with the haughty pride which characterizes these words of the governor; and it is quite doubtful, whether he had been so minutely informed of the circumstances of our Lord's examination before the high priest, as this reference of Alford would seem to imply. The word *power*, would be better rendered *authority*, the possession of power rather than its exercise being referred to. See N. on Luke 4:36.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, ⁴ If thou let this man go, thou art not Ce-

11. In admirable keeping with the declaration made in 18:36, our Lord replies to Pilate, that he has no power except that given him *from above* (i. e. from God). If Jesus was a king in the high sense of his declaration in 18:36, he was the very Being who gave the Roman governor the power, of which he so vaunts himself. His reply is therefore a rebuke to the pride of Pilate, and an answer to the question, *whence art thou?* The words *at all*, are improperly italicized in our common version, inasmuch as they are contained in the original. *Against me*. The preposition signifies *down upon*, here with hostile intent. *It were given thee* (to have) *from above*. The explanation which refers *from above*, to the power lodged in Pilate's hand by the Roman emperor, or the giving up of Jesus to him by the Sanhedrim, is too absurd to merit any notice. The gravity of the occasion, and the effect which the reply of Jesus had on Pilate (see v. 12), forbid any reference to an earthly source of power. *From above* refers most unquestionably to God's abode, and this continued reference of Jesus to the unseen world where his kingship belonged, must have impressed Pilate more and more with the extraordinary, if not superhuman, character of the man who stood at his bar of judgment. The verb *were given*, has in the original a periphrastic form, the participle of which is put in the neuter gender, and refers generically to every kind of power and authority. There is in the original a sort of emphatic paronomasia in *whence* (v. 10) and *from above*, *pothen—anothen*, which must have forced itself upon Pilate's mind, as a reply to his question. *Therefore* or *on account of this*, refers to the fact, that Pilate's power over Jesus had been through divine appointment. *He that delivered me*, &c. There can be no doubt of the reference here to Caiaphas, and by

sar's friend: 'whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cesar.

℥ Lu. 23:2.

℥ Ac. 17:7.

implication to the whole Sanhedrim. The reference to Judas which some find in the words, is out of the question. He betrayed Jesus to the chief priests, but had no direct connection with the act of accusing him at Pilate's bar. See N. on Matt. 27:3. *Hath the greater sin*. The sin of Caiaphas in delivering up Jesus to Pilate, is here expressly declared to be one of greater enormity, than that of Pilate in condemning him to death. The reason is found in the fact brought to view in the preceding clause, that Pilate acted in the discharge of his official duty, and by virtue of a power, which like all human governments was ordained of God (Rom. 13:1). But Caiaphas of his own will and with the most gratuitous and deliberate malice, had perverted all truth and judgment, and accused him to Pilate as one to be judged worthy of death. Pilate through want of moral courage, became their tool; and in yielding to their clamorous demand for the death of Jesus, most grossly abused that power which had been given him from above, and therefore was guilty of a great sin. In estimating also the comparative guilt of the agents of the crucifixion of our Lord, it must not be forgotten, that Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim acted in face of testimony to the divine character and mission of Jesus, which had never been vouchsafed to the Roman governor. It is remarkable, however, that although Christ himself declares that the sin of Caiaphas transcended that of Pilate, yet the latter so violated every principle of justice in surrendering Jesus to his enemies, that he has in every age been the object of the deepest execration of mankind, as the judicial murderer of the Saviour of the world. If this be the righteous sentiment of all ages, in regard to one whose principal fault was his moral cowardice,

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judg-

ment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

how vastly more worthy of reprobation is the conduct of the high priest and the Sanhedrim, who for months had been conspiring against Jesus, and whose malice could be satisfied with nothing short of his ignominious death.

12. *From thenceforth*, i. e. from the time when our Lord uttered these deep and significant words. A better translation would perhaps be, *on account of this*. See N. 6: 66. Pilate was not only convinced of the innocence of Jesus, but there was a calm and conscious dignity in his reply, so unlike that of criminals still smarting from the cruel lash (see N. on Matt. 27: 26), that his feelings of awe towards him were awakened anew, and he makes one more feeble effort to save him from his enemies. This proving ineffectual, he interposes no further delay, but proceeds to give sentence for him to be crucified. *But the Jews, &c.* This shows that Pilate in his vain attempt to release Jesus, had come forth again from the pretorium, within which our Lord yet remained after the conversation which had just closed. *This man*; literally, *this*. See N. on 18: 40. *Thou art not Cesar's friend*. This was a master stroke of policy, doubtless originating with the high priest or some leading member of the Sanhedrim. The multitude caught up and fiercely repeated the sentiment, drowning the voice of Pilate, which was feebly raised in behalf of Jesus, and effectually deterring him from any further efforts to effect his release. Had he been inculpated to the Roman emperor by the chief men of the nation, as evincing a want of fidelity to his imperial master, in his readiness to pardon one who was aspiring to kingly authority and fomenting rebellion among so turbulent a people as the Jews, he would have lost his place, and probably his life. This would have been the more probable from the cruel, jealous, and suspicious temper of Tiberius Cesar, who was then emperor. *Whosoever*

maketh himself (i. e. setteth himself up to be) a king, substantiates the charge made against Pilate, in case he should let Jesus go unpunished. The sentiment is this: In making himself a king, Jesus had rebelled against Cesar, and given utterance to treasonable words (*speaketh against Cesar*). If Pilate failed to take cognizance of this, he would expose himself to the charge of complicity with Jesus, or at least of such a lack of zeal and energy in bringing him to punishment, as would evince that he was no true friend of Cesar. This reasoning would have been correct, had not their premises been utterly false. They well knew that Jesus had never set himself up as a king in rebellion against Cesar, nor uttered a treasonable word against the civil authorities. Their charge, therefore, was one which they themselves knew to be false and trumped up for the furtherance of their vile purpose.

13. *When Pilate therefore heard*; literally, *Pilate then having heard*. The participial construction throws the emphasis on the verbs which follow. *That saying*, i. e. the charge of disloyalty to Cesar, which they threatened to bring against the governor. Such apprehensions of peril were awakened by this threat, that he hesitated no longer, but delivered Jesus to be crucified. *He brought Jesus forth*, through the agency of some officer or attendant. It is quite unlikely that he put himself in the way of another interview with Jesus, from whom he might expect some utterance which would awaken anew his fears, and cause him to vacillate in his purpose to bring the matter to a close by delivering him up to death. *He sat down, &c.* He took his seat, as a judge about to pass a final sentence. *The Pavement*. This is supposed to have been an elevated platform, having a tessellated pavement, on which the judgment-seat was placed. That it was raised somewhat from the ground seems evident from the Hebrew name *Gabbatha*,

14 And ^k it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away

^k Mt. 27: 62.

signifying a *back* or *ridge*, and having reference perhaps to the convexity of the pavement on which the seat of judgment was placed. According to Suetonius, such a pavement was carried about on his expeditions by Julius Cesar.

14. *It was the preparation of the passover* (i. e. the passover sabbath). Our Lord was crucified on Friday, the day preceding the Jewish sabbath. See N. on v. 31. The time of preparation for the sabbath, at first embraced the hours immediately preceding the sunset, at which time, according to Jewish reckoning, the sabbath commenced. But in process of time the epithet *preparation*, was applied to the whole day preceding the sabbath, and such is its extended use here. See N. on Matt. 27: 62. This verse therefore fixes beyond all dispute, the day of the week on which our Lord was crucified. *About the sixth hour*, i. e. at noon. For the reconciliation of this with the time of Jesus' crucifixion, as given by the other Evangelists, see N. on Mark 15: 24. *Behold your King!* It is no longer *behold the man!* to excite their sympathy and effect his release. Every emotion of tenderness, every principle of honor and justice, is now lost in the desire to evince his loyalty to Cesar, and shield himself from an accusation like that threatened in v. 12. *Behold your King!* 'See the miserable fate of every usurper of kingly authority under Roman rule. Thus do I prove my fidelity to Cesar. This is my vindication from any charge of disloyalty which my enemies may make against me.' Some expositors find in this exclamation of Pilate, the same vein of sarcasm which characterizes much that he has previously said to the Jews during this trial. Gerlach says: "He seeks to avenge himself throughout on the Jews, mocking them

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 Cesar.

^l Ge. 49: 10.

in every way." Such also is the view of Tholuck, Olshausen, and Alford. In all that Pilate says in this connection, Stier finds a strange admixture of compassion, fear, mockery, hard to define, but perfectly consistent with the conflict in his mind between the awe and reverence which he felt for Jesus, and his fear of being called to account by the Roman emperor, if he released him against the will of the Jews. I cannot but think, however, that both here and in the title which he affixed to the cross (v. 19), his principal aim was to clear himself of all suspicion of treachery or lukewarmness in the service of his imperial master. With this there was doubtless also a desire to taunt the Jews, who had greatly irritated him in their persistent determination to compass the death of Jesus.

15. An infuriated cry now breaks forth from the whole multitude, that Jesus should immediately be led forth to be crucified. *Away with him*, &c. The original is expressive of the most concentrated rage and hate: *take away, take away; away, away*, bear him off to the cross. *Crucify him*. Some used one form of expression, and some another. Their loud and infuriated cries evinced their determination to compass their bloody purpose, and extinguished all hope on the part of the governor, of being able to save Jesus. *Shall I crucify*, &c. When their rage had so exhausted itself, that Pilate's voice could be heard, he taunts the Jews with demanding the crucifixion of their own king. He retorts with the bitterest sarcasm the charge of disloyalty to his royal master, which the Jews threatened to make in v. 12. The interrogative form gives keenness to the irony, as though he had charged them with being a most singularly disloyal people, to thus clamorously and

16 ^m Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led *him* away.

17 ¶ ⁿ And he bearing his cross ^o went forth into a place

^m Mt. 27: 26, 31; Ma. 15: 15; Lu. 23: 24.
ⁿ Mt. 27: 31, 33; Ma. 15: 21, 22; Lu. 23: 26, 33

persistently demand the crucifixion of their own king. The Jews are quick to discern the point of the sarcasm, and seek to parry its force by an avowal, which the lowest peasant in Galilee would have scorned to make, namely, that *they had no king but Caesar*. To such a depth of degradation did these chief men of the nation descend, in their hellish desire to rid themselves of Jesus. "When this answer was elicited from the chief priests, Pilate felt that on the one hand the humiliation of the Jews, which was his revenge, was complete, and on the other, no excuse was left him for releasing Jesus, lest he should appear less zealous for the emperor than they were." Webster and Wilkinson. Many of those who made this degrading confession, miserably perished afterward at the siege of Jerusalem in open rebellion against the Roman emperor.

16. *Then delivered*, &c. Alford thinks that the scourging spoken of by Matthew and Mark here took place, or was at least renewed, the former one not being that customary before execution, but conceded by Pilate to the mob in hope of satisfying them. But it seems quite evident, that our Lord was scourged but once, and that after it took place, a new hope sprung up in Pilate's breast, that he could effect his release, by showing him to the multitude, and exciting their pity in view of his sufferings. Although therefore Matthew and Mark say, that "when Pilate had scourged Jesus he delivered him to be crucified," this does not conflict with the recorded fact, that he suspended the final sentence a few moments, in order to make one more effort to effect the release of Jesus. *Unto them*, refers in sense to the Jews,

called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew *Golgotha*:

18 Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

^o Nu. 15: 36; He. 13: 42.

but in fact to the soldiers, who thenceforward were the tools and instruments of the priests and rulers to mock and torture Jesus. *They took*; literally, *they took or received from Pilate*, who now judiciously surrendered him up to the soldiers to be crucified. *Led him away* from the pretorium to crucify him (Matthew and Mark).

17. *He bearing his* (literally *his own*) *cross*. This is peculiar to John, and shows that at first, according to custom, the cross was laid upon Jesus, but, when weak and exhausted by his previous sufferings, he was sinking beneath its weight, they compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear it to the place of execution. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 32; Mark 15: 21; Luke 23: 26. *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—24. THE CRUCIFIXION. *Jerusalem*. Sixth day of the Week. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 35—38; Mark 15: 24—28; Luke 23: 33, 34, 38. John's account is the more full and particular, especially in reference to the parting of his garments among the soldiers.

18. *They* refers primarily to the soldiers who acted as the executioners of Jesus, but secondarily, to the chief priests and rulers who accompanied them to the cross, in order to witness with their own eyes the agony and death of Jesus. *Two others*, i. e. the

19 ^p And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where

p Mt. 27:37; Ma. 15:26; Lu. 23:33.

thieves spoken of in the other Evangelists. *Jesus in the midst.* The same position of disgraceful eminence, is assigned him in all the Evangelists.

19. *Pilate wrote a title.* This is peculiar to John. Pilate's indignation against the Jews for demanding the crucifixion of Jesus, was such, that he caused the crime for which he was crucified, to be so worded as to convey the bitterest taunt to the Jews, who passed by or stood around the cross. It was this covert sarcasm in the superscription, which was the ground of the objection made in v. 21 to its form of expression. *Wrote*, i. e. caused to be written. *On the cross* over his head. See N. on Matt. 27:37. The prepositional construction in the original, shows that the title was so affixed to the cross, as to be prominent to the eye of every passer-by. The varied form of the title as recorded by the four Evangelists, is referred to in N. on Matt. 27:37. The juxtaposition of the words, *of Nazareth* or *the Nazarene*, with *the King of the Jews*, rendered the sarcasm more biting and offensive, inasmuch as to the ignominy of the cross was added the low origin of this Jewish king. It will be seen, therefore, why John records the superscription in full, illustrating, as it does, the spirit of mockery with which Pilate had previously sought to revenge himself upon the Jews, for their pertinacity in demanding the crucifixion of Jesus.

20-22. These verses are peculiar to John. The Synoptic Evangelists refer only to the three languages in which the title was written. For the reason why more than one language was employed, see N. on Matt. 27:37 (end). *Read many of the Jews.* The implica-

tion is that there was something remarkable in the wording of the superscription, which attracted the attention of many of the Jews, both those who stood around the cross, and they who were passing along the road to and from the city. *For the place*, &c. This is subjoined as a reason why the title was so generally read by the Jews.

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.

The hill of Golgotha was just outside the city precincts, and near to one of the great public roads. The cross was therefore full in sight of all who passed. *Was nigh to the city.* The precise location of Golgotha, like other sacred places in and around Jerusalem, has been a matter of more or less dispute; but it is quite clear that it was a small eminence just outside of the city, on the north-west side. It appears from Matt. 27:39; Mark 15:29, to have been adjacent to one of the roads leading from the country into the city. *And it was written*, &c. This is added as another reason why the superscription was read by many. It was written not only in the Roman and Greek languages, so as to be understood by strangers who might chance to be in Jerusalem at this time, but also in the Hebrew or Aramæan language, which was the vernacular tongue of the common people, at the time of our Lord's appearance on earth. See N. on Matt. 27:37 (end).

21. *Then said*, &c. It is uncertain whether the chief priests made this protest against the form of the superscription, before or after it was affixed to the cross. It seems the more probable conjecture, that it was when Pilate, having formally delivered up Jesus to the executioners, gave them the plate or card on which he had written the superscription which was so offensive

22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

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.

q Mt. 27: 35; Ma. 15: 24; Lu. 23: 34.

to the chief priests. If however they only saw it when it was first attached to the cross, their request that the title should be altered, was doubtless conveyed to the Roman governor by a deputation from their number. *Write not.* Pilate had already written the title (v. 22), and hence this must be taken in the sense of, *let it not be written*, i. e. let it be so altered as to read, *that he said*, &c.

22. Pilate's reply is that of an irritated man, determined to yield nothing more to the crafty and malignant enemies of Jesus. *What I have written*, refers to an act completed; *I have written*, to its unalterable character. It is as though he had said, 'I have made the superscription, and am resolved not to alter it.' Webster and Wilkinson say that he both gratified his resentment and acted with policy, in offering the insult to the nation implied in the superscription. Pilate was thus the unwitting instrument of affixing upon the cross of Jesus a glorious truth, namely, that he who hung thereon in agony, was the King of the Jews, whose reign over them would have neither bound nor end.

23. *Then the soldiers* who were on duty at the crucifixion. *When they had crucified Jesus*, i. e. had nailed him to the cross, and erected it in its place. According to custom, he was previously stripped of his garments, which were given to be divided among the soldiers. Hence their first act after he was suspended on the cross, was to divide his clothes as here related. *Took his garments* i. e. his outer garments. His coat is particularly mentioned after-

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.

r Ps. 22: 18.

wards. *Made four parts*, according to the number of soldiers employed to preside over the execution. The outer garment or cloak was doubtless rent into such portions as, together with the girdle and the sandals, would make four equal parts, *to every soldier a part*. Thus was fulfilled the first clause of the prediction cited from Ps. 22: 18. *And* (they took also) *his coat*. For the description of the coat, and the cloak or outer garment, see N. on Matt. 5: 40. *Without seam*; literally, *unsewed*. This garment was usually made of two parts sewed together, with seams on the shoulders and sides. That worn on this occasion by our Lord, was not thus made, but woven whole, like the tunic of the high priest described by Josephus (Ant. III. 7, § 4). *From the top*, &c. The garment was begun at the upper portion and woven downward. The particularity with which this feature of its construction is mentioned, shows that it had been woven with much skill. It was probably the gift of some one or more of the women, who followed him from Galilee, and ministered to him of their substance (Luke 8: 3). *Throughout*, i. e. the whole garment from top to bottom, was woven without a seam.

24. *Among themselves*, or *to one another*. The language is employed of mutual consultation and agreement. *Let us not rend it*, is said with reference to the division of the outer garment, which being a piece of cloth nearly square, readily admitted of a separation into parts. Had the coat of Jesus been made as usual with seams, they could have reduced it to

25 *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the

s Mt. 27: 55; Ma. 15: 40; Lu. 23: 49.

its original number of pieces by ripping the seams. *But cast lots.* See N. on Matt. 27: 35. *Whose it shall be,* i. e. to determine who shall possess it. This fulfilled the second clause in the prophecy cited below. *That the scripture, &c.* See N. on Matt. 1: 22. In regard to the citation itself, see N. on Matt. 27: 35. *These things* refers to the acts of the soldiers related in vs. 23, 24, and stands opposed to what is recorded of the women in the following verse. The construction of the original is such as to place in strong contrast the unfeeling and selfish employment of the soldiers, and the sympathizing attendance of those women upon our Lord during his suspension on the cross. Our translators were not wrong, however, in prefixing v. 25, with the sign of a new paragraph, since a new topic, and one connected with the preceding context only by contrast is introduced. Webster and Wilkinson connect the last clause in v. 24 with this new paragraph.

25-27. JESUS COMMENDS HIS MOTHER TO JOHN. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. This touching narrative is peculiar to John, and shows that at some favored moment, when the jeering multitude through exhaustion or satiety of revenge, had intermitted for a season their taunts, the friends of Jesus were enabled to approach so near him, as to carry on the conversation here recorded without interruption. It should be remembered, that the sufferer was elevated but a few feet from the ground, so that, as far as his agony would permit, he could easily converse with those around him. John who had entered the high-priest's palace, and borne himself so faithfully and courageously while his Master was examined before the Sanhedrim, is found here also at the very foot of the cross, receiving the dying charge of Jesus to act as a son to his mother, into whose

wife of 'Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.

t Lu. 24; 18.

soul the sword was now entering, as predicted by Simeon (Luke 2: 35). For the most time, and while the infuriated shouts of the rabble indicated the danger which any friend of Jesus might incur by approaching the cross, these women stood at some distance from the scene of suffering. See Matt. 27: 55; Mark 15: 40; Luke 23: 49.

25. *Now there stood;* literally, *but there were standing.* This clause, as has been remarked, places in strong contrast the sympathy of this group of friends with the cold and unfeeling conduct of the soldiers just recorded. *By or near by.* As no attempt to liberate the sufferer was to be apprehended from a single man and three or four grief-stricken women, these friends of Jesus were permitted to approach near to the cross, and converse with him. *His mother's sister.* The best expositors, from a comparison with Matt. 27: 56; Mark 15: 40, refer this to *Salome*, John's own mother (see Mark 15: 40, compared with Matt. 27: 56), whose name he forbears to give, for the same reason, that he does not name himself. So Bengel: "John modestly omits his mother Salome, who however was present." Such is the view of Olshausen, Alford, Webster and Wilkinson. But Luthardt opposes this view on the ground that counting in pairs is inappropriate here, and that there must be a reason for the presence of the wife of Cleopas, while the mention of Salome without giving her name is scarcely befitting. *Mary the wife of Cleopas*, according to Luthardt's view and that of some others, is the person referred to in the preceding words, *his mother's sister.* The ellipsis of *wife*, as indicated in our English version, is very natural, and is like our *Cleopas's Mary*, i. e. of the Marys who were present, this particular one was the wife of Cleopas. The Cleopas or

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and "the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!

" Ch. 13: 23; & 20: 2; & 21: 7, 20, 24.

Cleophas here mentioned, is not the one referred to in Luke 23: 18 (on which see Note), but is supposed to be the one called Alphæus the father of James the Less. See N. on Matt. 10: 3. *Mary Magdalene.* See N. on Luke 8: 2.

26. *When Jesus saw, &c.* This would seem to indicate, that the little band had stood some moments, before our Lord's special observation was directed to them. This is not to be wondered at, when we take into consideration his intense physical and mental agony, which was at this time weighing him down, and rendering him in a measure insensible, both to the taunts of his enemies and the sympathizing presence of his friends. *Standing by his mother.* Perhaps she was leaning on the beloved disciple, in this time of her maternal distress. *He saith unto his mother, &c.* 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." *Woman.* This shows that nothing disrespectful was intended in 2: 4. *Behold thy son!* i. e. behold in him one who will discharge towards you, all the duties implied in the relationship of an affectionate son.

27. *Behold thy mother!* "The address to each, severally, rendered the transfer and charge more solemn and affecting. It also more impressively reminded each of the duties towards the other involved in their new relationship." Webster and Wilkinson. The strange perversion of this passage by the Romanists, to teach that Jesus here committed his disciples in the person of John as their representative,

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her "unto his own home.

∞ Ch. 2: 4.

γ Ch. 1: 11; & 16: 32.

to the care and protection of his mother, is hardly worthy of serious confutation. Not to speak of the entire want of proof, direct or indirect, from the Scriptures, or from the records of the early acts of the disciples, that Mary had any superintendence whatever over the apostles or disciples, save that which would naturally and spontaneously be accorded to her as the aged and honored mother of their incarnate Lord, the whole tenor and spirit of the farewell discourse and prayer, as given in chaps. XIV.—XVII., is totally against such a view. A Helper and Superintendent is indeed promised the disciples, but He is the Holy Ghost, one coequal with the Father and Son, and not a feeble, sinful woman, who during the whole time of our Lord's ministry, is introduced to the reader's notice but in two or three instances, and then in a very casual manner. Nothing but sheer want of all scriptural proof for their impious *Mariolatry*, would compel them to resort to this passage for evidence of the preposterous claims which they set up for the worship of a mere creature. *From that hour.* Some have thought that John, at the intimation of Jesus, withdrew his mother immediately from the scene of suffering, that she might be spared the witnessing of his last agony. But the text does not necessarily imply this. *Unto his own home.* We have no reason to infer that John had at this time any fixed place of residence, either in Jerusalem or Galilee. All that the passage before us teaches is, that from the time when this sacred trust was committed to him, John cherished and took care of Mary at his own home, wherever that might be. That John was possessed of private means of support, may be gathered from Matt. 4: 21, 22; Mark 1: 20 (on which see Note); Luke 5: 10. The

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accom-

plished, 'that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

≈ Ps. 69: 21.

question may arise, why the brethren of Jesus were not directed to provide for the maintenance of their mother. There may have been private family reasons which forbade this. Their unbelief at this time in Jesus, and the opposition arising therefrom, may have rendered it necessary for him to consign his mother to the immediate care of John. The question, however, is one of little comparative importance. The impressive lesson which the passage before us teaches of the duty of filial love, is that which claims our chief consideration.

28-30. CHRIST EXPIRES ON THE CROSS. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 48-50; Mark 15: 35-37; Luke 23: 46. John makes no record of the supernatural darkness, but gives in v. 28, the reason why the acid wine was offered Jesus, as related here and by the other Evangelists. Thus the narrative is rendered complete and consistent by the Evangelists, when compared with one another.

28. As above remarked, this verse is peculiar to John, and is of special interest, inasmuch as it shows, that during the time of his intense agony, Jesus was conscious that he was fulfilling a predetermined series of sufferings, and manifested no impatient haste, that they should be endured other than in their allotted place and time. *After this*, i. e. the incident related in v. 27. *All things*, i. e. all the predictions of the Old Testament, in regard to his sufferings and death. *Were now accomplished*, i. e. brought to an end, perfectly fulfilled. It is a stronger word, than that usually employed in the sense of *might be fulfilled*, Matt. 1: 22; Mark 14: 29; John 12: 38, etc. *That the scripture.* The reference is to Ps. 69: 21. *Might be fulfilled.* The same verb is here employed as in the preceding clause, and denotes entire and complete fulfilment. A question has here arisen, whether our Lord pronounced the

words *I thirst*, simply and solely to secure the fulfilment of the Messianic prediction, or whether it was simply the expression of a desire to allay his raging thirst. That the former of these suppositions is erroneous, there can be hardly a question. It would have been little short of solemn trifling for him to have uttered these words, for no other purpose than to fulfil the scripture here referred to. In order to avoid the necessity of such an interpretation, Olshausen refers the words *that the scripture might be fulfilled*, to the Evangelist himself, to whose mind it recurred, that the exclamation of Jesus fulfilled a prediction. So Lucke, while he admits that this clause is in grammatical dependence upon the verb *saith*, yet adds: "*that the scripture*, &c., is the expression of John's own typological views, not of the Lord's design." In regard to this, Stier well remarks, that a typological thought of John, that is, of the Holy Ghost in his narration, and therefore finally of the Lord's own consciousness, is not altogether an unworthy view, as Lucke would contend. But it seems quite forced and unnatural to interpret this as the remark of the Evangelist, and therefore, unless we are compelled thus to do in order to meet some necessary condition of the passage, we do far better to refer the clause to the conscious design of Christ. Bengel constructs this clause with the preceding words, instead of connecting it with *saith*, and gives this as the sense: "Jesus knew in himself that all was now so accomplished, that by this one thing more the whole Scripture would be fulfilled." But this requires the introduction of the word *so*, which is not found in the original, and which, if omitted, reduces this grammatical construction to a mere tautology: 'Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be accomplished.' We cannot but wonder

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.

α Mt. 27: 48.

that expositors should evade the plain and simple teaching of the passage, and resort to such forced and unsatisfactory solutions of a difficulty, which after all lies more in the preconceived notions and prejudices of the interpreter, than in the words themselves. Can any person read this passage in its simple language, and compare it with the parallel account of Matthew and Mark, and not attribute the exclamation of our Lord to a desire to allay his extreme thirst? Would any one dream for a moment that the words *I thirst*, were spoken solely to fulfil a prediction of the Old Testament? Every candid reader will say no. But then is there any thing strange in the concurrent, harmonious fact, that his thirst and the mode in which the soldiers attempted to allay it, were parts of those great things predicted of him, all which were to be accomplished? Certainly not. If then our Lord, in his extreme thirst, should choose to declare it aloud, in order that no preappointed circumstance might be unfulfilled, what is there strange or unworthy in such an exclamation, as he is here reported to have uttered? He thirsted, and in his recollection of the things predicted, the scripture alone remained unfulfilled in which it was said, "that in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink," and seeing in this a permission or appointment in his last moments, of a final refreshment for his lips, he thought it befitting to utter aloud his thirst (Stier). So Lampe well expresses it: "Nor would he have sought this refreshment, had he not known that this also belonged to the *criteria* of the Messiah, according to the prophets, whence arose this new motive—that the Scripture might be fulfilled." The primary motive then of the exclamation was the thirst which our Lord felt; the second

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, ^b It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

δ Ch. 17: 4.

dary one was both obedience to the Scriptures, and a desire that they might be fulfilled in every particular.

29. *Now there was set*, &c. The vessel filled with the liquor here spoken of was placed near by, doubtless for the use of the soldiers who watched the crucifixion. *Vinegar*. See N. on Matt. 27: 48. *Hyssop*, i. e. a stem or stalk of this shrub, which would be of sufficient length to reach with extended arm the sufferer's mouth, as he hung quite low. This verse is explained in the Note on Matt. 27: 48. *Put it to his mouth*, is more definite than the corresponding *gave him to drink*, of Matthew and Mark. This shows that John was an eye-witness of the transactions here recorded.

30. The parallel passage in the Synoptics, is Matt. 27: 50; Mark 15: 37; Luke 23: 46, on which see Notes. It will be noticed that the two former Evangelists omit entirely the dying exclamation of Jesus, while Luke records the words, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." John omits this, and records the previous exclamation, *it is finished*—one of the greatest and most profound utterances which ever fell upon the human ear. Stier enters largely upon the full import of the expression, but unless a very wide range of exposition is covered, setting forth in order and detail the great achievement of human redemption, having its origin in the counsels of eternity, and consummated only when that glorious period shall have been reached, in which the Son shall give up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24)—which range the restricted limits of this commentary forbids me to take—it will suffice to say, that this exclamation of our dying Lord refers to the complete fulfilment of every thing

pertaining to his humiliation, obedience, and suffering, in the work of man's salvation. It does not refer simply to the Old Testament predictions—although these are included—but as Stier well and eloquently says, “all things were done which the law required, all things established which prophecy predicted, all things abolished which were to be abrogated, all things obtained in order to be bestowed which had been the subject of promise. All things—down to the last drops of scornful compassion, and compassionate scorn, after receiving which Christ's lips uttered this great word—were suffered which were to be suffered; but therein, at the same time, all things were done and accomplished, nothing was left wanting. The theology of ages has striven to embrace this ‘all’ and to develop it; and strives to this day in vain to express it perfectly.” It hardly need be said that the death of Christ, which was just at hand, must of necessity be included in this great utterance. It was a part of his appointed course, and was virtually accomplished, inasmuch as immediately after commending his spirit to God (Luke), he bowed his head in death. It is however to be carefully noted, that the breathing out of his soul in death, is not in this great connection regarded as the sole or principal act to be consummated in man's redemption. It was rather the last in a series of acts of humiliation, suffering, and obedience, all of which had been prearranged and rendered necessary of fulfilment in the economy of redeeming love. Death was to be the last and crowning act in this sublime devotion of love. Obedience unto death was to characterize the second Adam, as disobedience which brought death and woe into the world, characterized the trial of the first Adam. Hence it was true, that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin, but yet no inference can be fairly drawn from this, that the great achievement of Christ in procuring God's favor for guilty man, was not performed in those hours of dreadful

agony, when bereft of his Father's sensible presence, and with the weight of a world's transgression resting upon him, he cried out in his insupportable anguish, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*. Death affixed the final seal upon his work of suffering, but death apart from the preceding conflict, would have been of no efficacy in averting God's displeasure from sinful man. He bore in his own body our sins upon the tree (1 Pet. 2: 24); and it was this burden that crushed him down during the hours of agony on the cross, which removed from man the curse of the law, and rendered salvation through faith in a crucified Saviour, attainable to all. *He bowed his head*, i. e. his head reclined upon his shoulder, there being no longer the exercise of the vital function, or indeed of any living consciousness, to support it. This fact which John alone relates, shows that he was an eye-witness, and not dependent upon the testimony of others, for the minuteness of detail with which he describes the particulars of Jesus' death. It was probably after his exclamation, *it is finished*, and just before his head thus dropped in death, that he commended his spirit to his Father as recorded by Luke.

31-42. THE TAKING DOWN FROM THE CROSS. THE BURIAL. *Jerusalem*. Sixth day of the Week. This passage as far as v. 37 inclusive, is peculiar to John, and furnishes the most irrefragable proof of the actual death of Jesus. Indeed it would seem to have been penned for the express purpose of meeting those doubts and denials of Jesus' death, which in every age have been put forth by the opponents of Christianity, in order to invalidate the great fact of his resurrection, and throw discredit upon the whole scheme of redemption through the death of the Son of God. John's testimony in v. 34, which he makes as an eye-witness (v. 35), has refuted and will ever continue to refute all those miserable allegations of scepticism and infidelity, that the body of Jesus was taken from the cross before life was extinct, and that being resuscitated, his disciples invented the story

31 ¶ The Jews therefore, ^c because it was the preparation, ^d that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath

^c Ver. 42; Ma. 15: 42.

of his resurrection and reappearance, as related in the Gospels. Apart from this testimony of John, we might challenge from the opponents of this great central fact of Christianity, one substantial, convincing argument, that it was within the bounds of probability, we say not possibility, that the friends of Jesus should have been permitted to remove his body from the cross, before his enemies had fully satisfied themselves that he was actually dead. That deep and determined malice which rent the air with the infuriated cry, *Away! away! Crucify him, crucify him*, did not so speedily spend itself, as to leave him to the compassion of his friends, to be taken down from the cross while life still remained in his mangled body. It was not until they had fasted their eyes upon his final agony, and the lance driven deep into his side had rendered his death a matter of absolute certainty, that they left the scene of the crucifixion and entered the city. But when in addition to the proof of Christ's death thus drawn from the nature of the case, we have the explicit testimony of the Evangelist, there remains not a shadow of doubt, that Jesus actually died on the cross, and that the body deposited in Joseph's tomb was that of a dead man.

31. *Therefore* is not illative, but the temporal *then*, marking the orderly succession of events. *Because*, &c. This clause depends upon the following one, *that the bodies*, &c. The hour of preparation admonished them that the sabbath was just at hand; and in order that the bodies of the criminals might not hang upon the cross exposed to the public gaze after sunset, which was contrary to the Jewish law (Deut. 21: 23), they go to Pilate for permission to hasten their death in the manner here described. Josephus (Jewish Wars

day, (for that sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

^d A. D. 21: 23.

III. 5, § 2,) says, that so great care did the Jews take respecting sepulture, that even the bodies of the condemned to be crucified, they took down and burned before sunset. *The preparation* for the sabbath. See N. on Mark 15: 42, where we are definitely informed, that our Lord was crucified on the day before the Jewish sabbath, that is, on our Friday. *For that sabbath*, &c. Literally, *for the day of that sabbath was great*. It was not only the sabbath which itself, with the Jews, was a high or great day, but it was the one which fell upon the second day of the festival. In answer to those critics, who contend that this sabbath was called a great or high day, because it was the first and not the second festival day, and who thus seek to prove, that our Lord anticipated the celebration of the paschal feast with his disciples one day, Dr. Robinson well and conclusively replies: "The sabbath upon which the sixteenth of Nisan or second day of the festival fell, might be called *great* or *high*, for various reasons. *First*, as the sabbath of the great national festival, when all Israel was gathered before the Lord. *Secondly*, as the day when the first fruits were presented with solemn rites in the temple; a ceremony paramount in its obligations even to the sabbath. *Thirdly*, because on that day, they began to reckon the fifty days until the festival of Pentecost (Levit. 23: 15). In all these circumstances there is certainly enough to warrant the epithet *great*, as applied to the sabbath on which the sixteenth of Nisan might fall as compared with other sabbaths. There exists therefore no necessity, and indeed no reason, for supposing, that John by this language meant to describe the sabbath in question, as coincident with the first paschal day, or fifteenth of Nisan." *Besought Pilate*, &c. They did

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
e 1 Jo. 5: 6, 8.

this by a messenger; or some of their number may have remained in the city, to watch Pilate, and see that he did not indulge in any clemency toward Jesus, by which he would be taken from the cross before death, a thing which they had reason to fear, from his great hesitation in delivering him up to death. *That their legs, &c.* "This was of course, a *coup de grâce*, intended to cause immediate or very speedy death. The fatal effect would be produced probably by the sudden access of pain, the sufferer being already in a state of great exhaustion." Webster and Wilkinson. *And that they might be taken away*; literally, *and might be taken away*, the subject being grammatically *legs*, but by necessary implication *the bodies*.

32. *Then, or therefore*, in pursuance of the orders of Pilate, at the instance of the Jews. *Of the first* (to whom they came), *and the other*. A comparison with v. 33, clearly refers this to the thieves. *With him*, i. e. with Jesus.

33. *But when they came, &c.* This does not imply, that they passed by Jesus at first, and proceeded to break the legs of the thief who was farthest from them, after which they returned to Jesus who hung in the centre. They doubtless took the bodies in order, and coming to that of Jesus, and finding that life was already extinct, one of the soldiers in a spirit of wanton and savage cruelty, thrust his spear into his side, after which they passed on to the other malefactor, whose legs they broke as those of the first. *But* is here the slight adversative particle, and introduces the fact of Jesus' death, as the reason why they brake not his legs, as they did theirs who were crucified with him. The construction in the original is, *but having come to Jesus, when they saw, &c.* This places the emphasis on

sus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

the verb *saw*, to which it here properly belongs. *Was dead already*, or *had now already died*. It is another proof of the actual death of Jesus, that the experienced eye of these soldiers detected no sign of life. *They brake not his legs*, there being no necessity of this, in consequence of the fact that life was already extinct.

34. The conjunction *but*, with which this verse commences, is strongly adversative, the wound here inflicted upon the body of Jesus, being contrasted with the breaking of the legs of the malefactors, in order to hasten their death. Although their practised eye saw that he was already dead, they did not pass him by, *but* made the fact of his death absolutely certain, in the manner here recorded. *With a spear*; literally, *the point* of the weapon, i. e. the triangular iron head of the lance or javelin. *Pierced his side*. He probably aimed at the heart, for we cannot suppose that the position of the wound was the result of a chance thrust, or that he pierced the left side of Jesus, because he approached the body from that quarter. That it was the side of the body into which the spear was thrust, is seen also from 20: 27. *Blood and water*. The pericardium of the heart was pierced, and blood and serum, or a reddish lymphatic humor, flowed forth. So various and conflicting have been the views of medical men, as to the fact here recorded, that I prefer rather to pass them over, than to encumber these pages with opinions, which in the very nature of the case must abound in the technicalities of the profession, and be therefore quite remote from the comprehension of the common reader. Suffice it to say, that no objection of infidelity, that blood coagulates so speedily in a dead body, as to render the fact here asserted, that

35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true;

it *flowed forth* from the body of Jesus, an impossibility, has ever stood the test of actual experiment. In order that the trial might be complete and satisfactory, it should be made on the body of one, who hung suspended in precisely the way in which the body of Jesus hung; and a deep wound entering the very heart should be inflicted. So Ebrard—whose learned investigation, Tholuck says, has brought the question to a new, and apparently satisfactory result—on the basis of medical observation, directs special attention to the influence exercised by the stretching of the muscles and by extravasation, on the condition of the blood of persons in suffering, and of the dead, and closes his examination with this result: "the lance might strike several blood-vessels, it might come in contact with points, at which extravasated blood was collected, where serum and placenta were in a state of separation, and the former alone flowed out, and as the lance entered more deeply, it might touch places in which the blood was fluid."

A question arises here as to what was the immediate cause of Jesus' death. Some contend that it was the dreadful anguish which he endured from the hidings of his Father's countenance, which literally burst his heart, and caused death long before it would have resulted from the physical pains of the cross. That the indescribable mental agony of Jesus hastened his death, there can be no question; but that it was the sole and proximate cause of his death, seems to be destitute of sufficient proof, and is in the light of other scriptures quite improbable. Not to refer to Philip. 2: 8, where the *death of the cross* (not *upon* the cross) is spoken of, Peter charges the Jews directly in Acts 2: 23, with having crucified and slain Jesus by wicked hands; and in 3: 15, he repeats the charge, that they "killed the Prince of life," showing that not in intent and purpose only, but in actual verity, they put Jesus to death. Compare also the

words of Stephen (Acts 7: 52), where he charges the Jews with being the *murderers of the Just One*, even as their Fathers had persecuted and slain the prophets who predicted His coming. Reference is had here beyond all question to an actual death, effected by human instrumentality, and not by the immediate hand of God. In harmony with this, is the predictive declaration of our Lord himself, that he should be delivered unto the Gentiles, who should mock, scourge, spit upon, and *kill him* (Mark 10: 34), and *put him to death* (Luke 18: 33). Other texts of similar form of expression and import might be cited, all which prove beyond a doubt, that the death of Jesus was effected by the agency of men. That it was hastened by his mental sufferings, there can be no question, for criminals hung suspended usually for many hours, before death put an end to their misery, and Pilate was astonished at the report of the speedy death of Jesus; but that it was solely and immediately to be attributed to the frown of God, which rested upon him, and which broke his heart, is alike without proof or probability. No one will dare to affirm, that, if Jesus had not been suspended on the cross, his mental distress would have caused his death. It was in the wise economy of redemption necessary, that he should suffer a violent death by the hand of those whom he came to save (see Acts 2: 23). This agency of the cross in the death of Christ, does not however militate in the least with the fact, which must impress itself upon every intelligent reader, that the ineffable mental agony of Jesus, under the hidings of his Father's face and the hellish assaults of the powers of darkness, was so great, that the pains of the cross were comparatively as nothing. But yet that instrument of death was all the while doing its dreadful work, and quickened and strengthened by his overwhelming mental distress, in the short space of six hours caused him to bow his head in death.

and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

35. This verse, as has been remarked at the commencement of the Notes on this section, puts for ever to rest all doubts as to the actual death of Jesus. John avers in the most emphatic manner, that he saw the side of Jesus pierced, in the manner related in v. 34, and that he knows therefore the truth of what he has affirmed. He doubtless stood near the cross, and as the soldiers passed on to break the legs of the other thief, he probably drew so near to the body of Jesus, that he saw the blood and water trickling forth from the gaping wound. This is a sufficient answer to the objection made by some, that the quantity of blood and water must have been so small, that John could not have seen it, so as to describe it in the manner here related. That there was something strange and unusual in the circumstance, is evident from the reiterated assertion of the truth of his statement made by the Evangelist in the next verse. But it is the extreme of hardihood, for skepticism to deny in face of such competent and positive testimony, that the thing actually took place as here recorded. *And he that saw it bare record*, i. e. he who here records the fact, was an eye-witness of it. *His record* (or testimony) *is true*, i. e. he was not only an eye-witness, but a truthful reporter of the circumstance here related. *And he knoweth*, &c. The Evangelist here appeals to his own consciousness of the truth of his statement, in order that there may be no doubt whatever in the mind of his readers, that Christ actually died in the manner here related, and that his body was subject to all the conditions of any human body in similar circumstances. The design also of this affirmation may have been to expose the error of the Docetae (see N. on 1:1), who held that the body of

37 And again another scripture saith, ⁹ They shall look on him whom they pierced.

^f Ex. 12:46; Nn. 9:12; Ps. 34:20.
^g Ps. 22:16, 17; Zec. 12:10; Re. 1:7.

Jesus was human in appearance only, and not in reality. He therefore in positive and reiterated language, asserts that he saw the spear enter the side of Jesus, and blood and water issue from the wound when it was drawn forth. *That ye may believe* that Jesus had a veritable body, and that he actually died on the cross. This clause is dependent on the three preceding clauses, and not, as some construct it, on the last alone. The pronoun *ye* in the original is emphatic, and refers to those Christian readers, for whom he primarily wrote his gospel.

36. The design of this verse is to show, that the incident just related was by no means unimportant or trivial, for it was the fulfilment of a prophecy, as well as a proof of the actual death of Jesus. The word *for*, is therefore illustrative and confirmatory of the preceding assertion. 'This is not to be wondered at, or regarded as of little moment, *for these things*,' &c. Reference is had in *these things*, to what has just been related, of their passing by Jesus without breaking his legs. *That the scripture*, &c. See N. on Matt. 1:22. The citation is from Ex. 12:46, where the paschal lamb, the type of Christ, was commanded to be eaten, without the breaking of a bone thereof (see also Numb. 9:12). Some think that Ps. 34:20, is referred to, where the Lord is said to keep all the bones of the righteous, so that not one of them is broken. But there can be no doubt that the reference is to the paschal lamb, which in so many of its aspects was the type of Christ.

37. The preceding fulfilment of scripture related to the fact, that not a bone in our Lord's body was broken in his crucifixion. The scripture here cited (Zech. 12:10), refers to the piercing

38 ¶ ^h And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly ⁱ 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.

^h Mt. 27: 57; Ma. 15: 42; Lu. 23: 50.

ⁱ Ch. 9: 22; & 12: 42.

of his side with the spear. It will be seen that *me*, in the original Hebrew, is changed by the Evangelist to *him*, because John must necessarily speak of Christ, as looked upon by those who pierced him, in the third person. It is worthy of note, that in the original the nearest antecedent to *me*, which John in the application of the prophecy here refers to Christ, is *Jehovah*, in vs. 1, 4, which is another proof that the Messiah of the New, and Jehovah of the Old Testament, is one and the same Being. The verb *they shall look*, in the original Hebrew, has an intensive signification, *they shall behold with fixed attention*, and stands connected with a Messianic prediction, that the Jews, under the influence of the spirit of grace and supplication which is to be poured out upon them, shall look upon Jesus, whom their fathers pierced, and recognize and acknowledge him as their Messiah. But that which is primarily predicted of the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, is true of every converted sinner, who in view of his sins and impenitence, feels that he has himself pierced his Redeemer, and looks to Him as one whom he has helped to crucify. Calvin takes the verb *have pierced*, in the original, in the metaphorical sense of *grieving* or *provoking*. But Henderson remarks, that this verb which occurs in ten other passages, is never used except in the literal acceptance of piercing the body, and is thus used in 13: 3 of the same book of Zechariah. The pronoun *they*, in the light of the original refers therefore to the Jews, who in their future conversion through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, will look upon and acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, and will remember with the deepest sorrow and abasement, that their fathers pierced him, as he hung upon the cross for

the sins of the world. A most remarkable prophecy which is yet to be fulfilled, the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, being a kind of first fruits, a pledge and type of the future conversion of that remarkable people to Christianity.

38. *After this.* A reference to Mark will show, that Joseph made this request, before the command was given to break the legs of the sufferers. This is indicated by the fact, that when Joseph craved the body of Jesus, "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead," and inquired of the centurion, if he had been dead for a long or considerable time. This he would not have done, had Joseph preferred his request, after the execution of his orders to put the sufferers to death by breaking their legs. John's narration, therefore, is to be chronologically conformed to that of Mark, who relates the events with more regard to their true and orderly succession. The apparent discrepancy is removed, if we affix to *after these things*, the sense of *meanwhile* or *during these things*, a meaning, which the Greek preposition here employed may have from its etymological signification *in the midst of*, *among*, &c. The order of events I take to be this. As soon as our Lord bowed his head in death (v. 30), Joseph who was either present at the cross, or was informed of the event, hastens to Pilate, as the evening was now drawing on (Matt. 27: 57), and begs that the body of Jesus may be placed at his disposal. Pilate then expresses his wonder at the sudden death of Jesus, as recorded by Mark (15: 44). Soon after the time when Joseph leaves, or perhaps while he is yet having audience with Pilate, the Jews approach and make the request spoken of in John 19: 31. As soon as the legs of the thieves are broken, and the body of Jesus who was already dead, pierced

39 And there came also ^k Nicodemus, (which at the first came

^k Ch. 3: 1, 2; & 7: 50.

with the spear (vs. 32-34), the authorities leave the body to the disposal of Joseph, who was doubtless present during the execution of the governor's orders, as recorded in the verses above cited. This harmonizes and arranges the events in their natural order, without impugning the accuracy of either of the Evangelists, Mark or John. There is one other method of harmonizing the two accounts, namely, to refer the words *after this*, to the taking down of the body by Joseph from the cross, which of course was subsequent to the piercing of his body by the spear of the soldier. But this is less natural, and therefore the other mode of reconciliation is to be preferred. *But secretly for fear of the Jews*, is found only in John. See 12: 42. With this should be contrasted the boldness with which he preferred his request to Pilate (Mark 15: 43). *Gave him leave*, after he had ascertained from the centurion who presided at the crucifixion, that Jesus was actually dead. *Therefore* in accordance with the permission given him by Pilate. *Took the body of Jesus* down from the cross. See Mark 15: 40; Luke 23: 53. That Nicodemus was his associate and helper in this pious act, is evident from the next verse. It appears quite probable, that it was preconcerted between Joseph and Nicodemus, that the one was to obtain the governor's permission to take down the body, while the other should have in readiness the myrrh and aloes in which to swathe the corpse. Tholuck thinks that the body of Jesus had been already taken down from the cross by the soldiers, and was now committed to Joseph. This can however be reconciled with Luke 23: 53, only by supposing Joseph to have superintended the removal of the body from the cross, so that in common parlance, he may be said himself to have done the act.

39. The words of the parenthesis, *which at the first* (i. e. at the beginning

to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds *weight*.

of our Lord's ministry) *came*, &c., contrast this present courageous act of Nicodemus, with the timid secrecy with which he first came to Jesus, as recorded in 3: 1. Taken in connection with the secret discipleship of Joseph spoken of in v. 38, it shows that the previous character and conduct of these two men were similar, and that in both a great and surprising change had now taken place. Luthardt, in his recent work on John's gospel, says, "the love of these two men was called out by the might of His love. His death is the power which constrains men." *Myrrh and aloes*, "not for embalming, which was not at this time a Jewish practice; nor was it so much an antiseptic preparation, as one intended to counteract as long as possible the natural effects of corruption (11: 39); and used probably with a view to the future opening of the tomb, and exposure of the remains when perfectly decayed." Webster and Wilkinson. *About a hundred pounds weight*. The Roman pound was about 12 oz. avoidupois. The weight of this mixture was therefore about 75 pounds. The largeness of the quantity is to be attributed to the fact, that it was necessary to cover the bruised and lacerated body completely with this aromatic mixture, in order to prevent decomposition in the interval between this and the first day of the week, when the corpse was to be more thoroughly prepared against corruption. Luthardt after Lange observes, that the Evangelist mentions the weight of the spices, as a proof of the greatness of their love to Jesus.

40. *Then took they the body of Jesus*, in order to swathe it in these spices, as here related. They had previously taken it down from the cross. *With the spices*. The first fold was so covered with the myrrh and aloes, as to bring the spices in contact with every part of the body. *As the manner of the Jews is to bury*. "Little is known

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 ^m There laid they Jesus

l Ac. 5: 6. *m* Is. 53: 9. *n* Ver. 31.

with any certainty, except from these passages (see 11: 44), of the Jews' ordinary manner of burying." Alford.

41. The word *place*, is not to be restricted to the immediate spot where Jesus was crucified, but to the vicinity. (See Matt. 14: 15; Mark 1: 35.) Hence it is not because they have forgotten this testimony of John, as Alford charges them, that certain persons object to the traditional site of the Holy Sepulchre, as so near to Calvary that "both are under the same roof." It is not likely that a rich man like Joseph, would have provided a tomb for himself so near the "place of the skull," that both could be enclosed in one building. The fact also that it was in a garden planted with shrubs and trees, shows conclusively that it must have been some little distance from the place of the crucifixion. It was a remarkable coincidence, that Joseph should have been the owner of a new tomb, so near to the cross, that without delay or inconvenience, the body could be thus decently and honorably interred. Hence the verse begins with the slightly adversative *but* (not *now*, as it is erroneously translated), to show that this circumstance could not have been anticipated, as one of probable occurrence. *A new sepulchre*; Matthew: *his own new tomb*, the same word being variously translated, *tomb* and *sepulchre*. *Wherein was never man yet laid*. This is recorded also by Luke (23: 53, on which see Note).

42. *Therefore* refers to the fact recorded in the previous verse, that the tomb of Joseph was of convenient access

therefore "because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

CHAPTER XX.

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.

a Mt. 28: 1; Ma. 16: 1; Lu. 24: 1.

and unoccupied. Some expositors erroneously refer this illative particle to the following clause. *Because of the Jews' preparation day* being so near at hand, when it would be unlawful to bear away and deposit the body in the tomb, in consequence of its being regarded by the Jews as labor forbidden on the sabbath. This shows why the next clause is introduced by *for*, to denote the reason of the preceding act. It was not that Joseph's tomb was chosen as the final resting place of the remains of Jesus, but as a place in which, on account of its nearness to the cross, the body could be temporarily deposited without infringing on holy time which began at sunset. But in this hasty and unpremeditated selection of the tomb of Joseph, a great prophecy was fulfilled (Isa. 53: 9), in regard to which see N. on Matt. 27: 57.

CHAPTER XX.

1, 2. MARY MAGDALENE VISITS THE SEPULCHRE AND RETURNS TO THE CITY. *Jerusalem*. First day of the Week. See Ns. on Matt. 18: 1; Mark 16: 2-4; Luke 24: 1-3. A reference to these citations will show that Mary Magdalene was one of a company of women, who, at the close of the Jewish sabbath on the preceding evening, had prepared spices to anoint the body of Jesus, and in pursuance of this design had at an early hour repaired to the sepulchre. On their arrival there they found the body missing, and supposing it to have been stolen, Mary Magdalene left her companions there, and returned to the city to apprise Peter and John of what

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the ^bother 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.

^b Ch. 13: 23; & 19: 26; & 21: 7, 20, 24.

had happened. For the arrangement and harmony of the incidents of this visit of the women to the tomb of Jesus, the reader is referred to my Notes on Matt. 28: 1, 5, 7, 9; Mark 16: 9. John makes no mention of the other women, on the principle referred to in harmonizing the accounts of the maniacs of Gadara (see N. on Matt. 8: 28), because his narrative had reference only to the visit and return of Mary Magdalene. *When it was yet dark*, i. e. so dark that objects could hardly be discerned. So Matthew: *as it began to dawn*, i. e. at the early dawn, just as the eye begins to discern surrounding objects. *Taken away*, i. e. removed from the mouth of the sepulchre. Matthew and Luke employ the words *rolled away*, in reference to the great size of the stone. *She runneth* in her excitement at the supposed abduction of the body of Jesus. *Cometh to Simon Peter*, &c. This shows that the apostles were together in some place well known to Mary, as she seems to have lost no time in finding them on her return. Webster and Wilkinson think that Peter and John lodged together apart from the rest. This would account for the fact, that none of the other apostles accompanied them in this visit to the sepulchre. *That other disciple*, &c. See Ns. on 13: 23; 18: 15. *They have taken away*. This nominative is omitted in the original, as is usual before certain verbs when a general or indefinite reference to persons or things is intended. The alarming fact that the body of Jesus was removed is thus rendered prominent; while at the same time the ignorance of the speaker in regard to the circumstances of its abduction and the persons engaged in it, is implied. Mary and the disciples no doubt referred the act to the ene-

3 ^c 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.

^c Lu. 24: 12.

mies of their Lord, whom they suspected of having taken the body from the tomb, to heap indignities upon it, or at least to secrete it from the pious service which the women were intending to perform. *We know*. The plural is used in reference to the company of women, who, as we learn from the other Evangelists, went with Mary Magdalene to the tomb. There is no necessity of supposing that Mary was accompanied on her return, as here related, by her female companions. It is quite clear from a comparison of the accounts of the visit, as given by the Synoptics, that she left them at the tomb, while, as here related, she returned to the city. See N. on Matt. 28: 5. The conjecture of Alford, that Mary uses the plural *we*, as involving all the disciples in her own feeling of ignorance and consequent sorrow, is less natural than its reference, as above said, to the women whom she had left at the tomb.

3. *Therefore* in consequence of this strange and startling intelligence. *Went forth*. The verb refers in the singular to Peter alone, who was the older and more leading disciple. The same verb is to be mentally supplied with the following subject, *the other disciple*. The construction indicates the haste with which Peter rose up and went forth, followed in the outset by John, but soon outstripped by him, as related in the next verse. *And came*. This verb is the plural, and refers to both disciples. The imperfect tense gives the sense, *proceeded on their way*.

4. *So they ran*, &c. Literally, *but the two were running together*. The slightly adversative conjunction introduces an incident, somewhat unexpected from the preceding verse, in which Peter is represented as taking the lead, and

5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw ^d the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the

^d Ch. 19: 40.

^e Ch. 11: 44.

came first to the sepulchre, as the result of his superior swiftness of foot, in consequence probably of his being the younger man.

5. *He stooping down, &c.* Although he came first to the sepulchre, yet his reverence did not permit him to enter. The tomb was probably so low as to render it necessary for one to stoop, in order to look fairly into the interior. *Linen clothes* or folds in which the body had been swathed for burial. *Lying.* The word here employed, denotes the orderly arrangement and folding up of these grave-clothes. This is brought more fully to view in the circumstantial detail in v. 7. *Yet* (although he saw that the body was missing) *went he not in.* As I have remarked above, he was restrained through a feeling of awe and reverence from entering the tomb, where had reposed the body of one whom he so revered and loved. His remaining without may also in part be attributed to the precedence, which as the older and leading disciple, he modestly yielded to Peter.

6, 7. Peter now arrives at the tomb, and with his usual prompt and resolute spirit goes directly in, and is followed by John. Who but an eye-witness could describe with such full and exact detail these circumstances? *Napkin.* See 11: 44; Luke 19: 20. *That was about his head,* when the body was entombed. The imperfect tense is very properly employed here to denote the state of the body when left in the sepulchre by Joseph and Nicodemus. See v. 12. *Not lying, &c.* The bandages in which the body had been swathed were saturated with the spices, and therefore the handkerchief bound around the head and comparatively unsoiled, was placed carefully by itself, so that it might retain its cleanliness. The order and care evinced in this arrangement

sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

7 And ^e the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

of the grave-clothes, is remarked by many writers, to have been like that of a person leaving his sleeping apartment after an ordinary night's rest. There was no indication of haste or excitement in the occupant of the tomb, when he awoke to life and rose up from his recumbent position to come forth. "One object of this orderly disposition of the vestments, was to convince the disciples, that the body had not been carried off either by enemies or friends; since in neither case would any thought or care have been bestowed upon the grave-clothes." Webster and Wilkinson. Swathed as the corpse had been in reduplicated folds, a miraculous loosening of the bandages must have taken place, before the reanimated body was capable of self-motion. It is an idle and fruitless inquiry, whether this was effected by his own immediate power, or by the instrumentality of the angelic attendants. In either case the divine dignity of the occupant of the tomb, is evinced in a most eminent degree. See further on this point, Note on v. 12. *In a place;* literally, *into one place,* the preposition being pregnantly used for *put into one place.* There is also a word in the clause, which signifies *apart, separate.* The words *one place,* should therefore be referred to the place in the tomb, which was most suitable for this handkerchief so carefully folded and laid aside.

8. It is unnecessary to suppose that any time intervened between the entrance of Peter and John. The latter disciple probably went in immediately behind him, so that he saw with his own eyes the clothes in the position here described. If however it be thought, that the description which intervenes in v. 7, shows that John did not at first enter, we may suppose that as soon as Peter reported the state of

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.

f Ps. 16: 10; Ac. 2: 25: —31; & 13: 34, 35.

things within the tomb, he joined his companion, and thus became an eyewitness of the facts here related. It must be remembered also, that he had previously looked into the tomb, and obtained a view of the condition of things, before Peter came up. *He saw* that the body was gone, and that the grave-clothes were lying in the manner here related. *And believed* that Jesus was risen from the dead. This special reference to John shows that his faith was stronger and more active than that of Peter, or else that he simply describes the state of his own mind, without any reference to his companion. This seems the more probable conjecture, in view of what is predicated of both in the following verse.

9. *For as yet*, i. e. up to this time. This clause is explanatory of the fact, that they did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, until they had ocular demonstration of the fact. Both Peter and John are included in this state of previous unbelief; and I cannot think, therefore, that they are not both to be regarded as yielding to the evidence, not simply that the body had been removed from the tomb, as Augustine, Bengel, Stier, and Ebrard, think—for belief in this fact so palpable to the senses, would have been hardly worth a formal mention, nor would it have been *belief*, but absolute *knowledge*—but that their Master had risen from the dead, according to his previous declaration which they now called to mind. If any think that what is said in Luke 24: 11 militates against this faith of Peter and John in the resurrection of Jesus, it may be replied that if these disciples were present on that occasion, it must have been before their faith was confirmed by the visit to the

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

g Ma. 16: 5.

tomb, for we find in v. 10 that they went away from the sepulchre to their own home or place of abode. We have every reason however to suppose, that Peter and John had left the city at the summons of Mary Magdalene, before the other women had returned and made their report to the apostles. See N. on Matt. 28: 9. If the reference to Luke 24: 12 would seem to indicate, that Peter's visit to the sepulchre was the result of the report of the women whose "words seemed to the apostles like idle tales," it will be seen, that grouped with these women in v. 10, is Mary Magdalene, whose report, as we learn from John, must have been made to Peter and his companion some time previous to that of the other women. *They knew not*, i. e. they comprehended not. The word *scripture*, refers to the predictions which Jesus had made in regard to his own resurrection. See Matt. 16: 21; 20: 19; Mark 10: 34; Luke 18: 31-34. *That he must rise again from the dead*. The necessity was founded upon the immutable word and promise of God (Ps. 16: 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. 15: 20).

10. *To their own homes*; 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 (24: 12, on which see Note) has the same form of expression, which is the more remarkable as being one of quite infrequent occurrence.

11-18. OUR LORD IS SEEN BY MARY

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.

13 And they say unto her,

MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE. *Jerusalem.* First day of the Week. This portion is peculiar to John, with the exception of v. 14, where the appearance of Jesus is the same as that spoken of in Mark 16: 9; and her report of having seen her Lord in v. 18, is that related in Mark 16: 10.

11. *But Mary.* The slightly adversative conjunction presents Mary's tarrying at the sepulchre, in contrast with the return of the disciples related in the preceding verse. Being unable to keep pace with Peter and John, she did not reach the sepulchre until they had left it, or were on the point of doing so. This will account for her being alone at the tomb, as here related. *Stood*; literally, *was standing*. She is represented as in a fixed and unmoved posture, like that of one overwhelmed with grief. *Without*, i. e. outside the sepulchre. *At*, i. e. in front of the door. *As she wept*; literally, *then as she wept*, i. e. while standing in her grief thus before the sepulchre. *She stooped down*, &c. Literally, *she bent forward to the sepulchre*, i. e. in order to look into it. The original clearly has this pregnant sense. It was probably in some interval of her passionate grief, that she thus cast her eyes into the tomb, where had lain the body of her Lord.

12. *And seeth two angels*, &c. This is not the same angelic appearance referred to in Matt. 28: 2-4; Mark 16: 5-7; Luke 24: 4, but one subsequent and distinct by itself. They were doubtless the same angels, whose ministry had been employed in rolling away the stone, and perhaps in placing in orderly arrangement the grave-clothes in which our Lord had been swathed for burial. That these angels had been detailed for this high service, does not at all conflict with what Alford

Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

suggests, that "it is no wonder if the heavenly hosts were variously and often visible on this great day 'when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'" That there was an angelic ministration numbered by myriads, we have no reason to doubt (see Ps. 68: 17, 18), but we have no account that any of them were revealed to mortal vision, except the two mentioned here and in the other Evangelists. *Sitting* in reverential and calm repose, as though guarding the place from every unworthy intruder. *The one at the head*, &c. The linen clothes marked the spot where the body of Jesus had lain, the napkin being at the head, and the linen clothes at the feet of the resting place of the body. Mark (16: 5) says that the angel seen by the women sat on the right side; but both he and Matthew speak of the exact place where Jesus lay, as having been pointed out by the angel on that occasion. Thus there is a correspondency in the different narrations, which at first sight would seem somewhat conflicting.

13. Nothing is here said about any fear which Mary experienced at sight of the angels, as is recorded of the other women (Mark 16: 5; Luke 24: 5). Her grief and longing desire to see the body of her Lord, overmastered every sensation of fear, which at another time she might have felt, in seeing these angels in white garments sitting thus within the sepulchre. How appropriate and natural are all these circumstances in the sacred narration. What impostor would have dared to be thus minute in recording so wonderful a transaction? *Woman.* This shows that such an address was not one of disrespect, as is by some charged upon our Lord's address to his mother at the marriage in Cana (2: 4). *Why*

14 ^a And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and ⁱ knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom

h Mt. 23: 9; Ma. 16: 9.

weepest thou? 'There is no cause of grief,' they may have been on the point of adding. But Mary promptly and fearlessly responds, that she wept because the body of Jesus had been removed, and she knew not where it had been laid. Simple and artless reply, speaking volumes of love for her dear departed Lord. The subject of the verbs *have taken* and *have laid*, are left to be supplied in the original, special stress being laid thereby upon the verbs, and Mary's ignorance of the persons who had removed the body being thus indicated. See N. on *have taken*, in v. 2. The singular *I know not*, conforms to the fact that she was now alone; the *we know not*, in v. 2, refers to the fact that in her first visit she was in company with the other women. Both here and in v. 2, the great point of Mary's grief is her ignorance of what had been done with the body. All her pious services and expressions of attachment to the wounded, broken body of her Lord, are now frustrated, and she is almost heart-broken with grief and disappointment.

14. *She turned herself back.* Whether this movement resulted from a new and passionate burst of grief, which her true womanly instinct forbade her indulging in presence of the angels; or whether a noise as of some one approaching, arrested her attention and caused her to turn around, is uncertain. The latter is, I think, the more reasonable conjecture. Stier and Ebrard think that it was done with intent to go forth and weep again, or further to seek her Lord. But we can hardly suppose that she would have turned away thus abruptly from the tomb, in which were such resplendent angelic forms, unless under some sudden and uncontrollable impulse, like that above

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.

i Lu. 24: 16, 31; ch. 21: 4.

alluded to. She might well have expected from them some answer to her words; or at least she herself, who was so prompt to ask the supposed gardener where was the body of Jesus, would have proposed some such inquiry to the angels before leaving the sepulchre. *Turned herself back*, i. e. she turned around, so as to look in the opposite direction. A very natural movement, whether designed to give freer indulgence to her grief, or to meet some person of whose approach and presence she had been made sensible. *Saw Jesus standing.* He had approached her, and was now standing, as if ready to accost her, when he had gained her attention. *And knew not*, &c. The change of visage and general appearance which prevented Jesus from being at once recognized by his most intimate friends, is referred to in Ns. on Luke 24: 16, 31. In the present instance, it may in part be accounted for, from the fact that Mary had no expectation of seeing him, and that her mental excitement was such as to impair the quick and accurate perception which otherwise she might have exercised.

15. It is probable that Jesus immediately addressed her. *Woman.* See N. on v. 13. *Why weepest thou?* Precisely the same inquiry which had been addressed to her by the angels. *Whom seekest thou?* The question was put thus directly, in order to elicit from her a direct reply, as to her object in thus visiting the tomb. *The gardener*, who had charge of the garden, in the precincts of which was the tomb. This shows that the habiliments of Jesus were those of the common order of persons. It were an idle and useless inquiry, where, or in what way, he provided himself with raiment. The stupendous miracle of his resurrection

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascend-

ed to my Father: but go to ^k my brethren, and say unto them, ⁱ I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to ^m my God, and your God.

^k Ps. 22:22; Mt. 23:10; Ro. 8:29; He. 2:11.
ⁱ Ch. 16:28. ^m Ep. 1:17.

embraced all the minor details and incidents connected with the event, and should repress all vain speculations like the one here referred to. *Sir*. This in the original is the word for *Lord*, but our English version has it correctly *Sir*, it being the word employed in the respectful intercourse of common life. *If thou have borne him hence*. Nothing is more natural than this reply of Mary. She wastes no time in useless words. She goes into no detail of the death and burial of Jesus, nor speaks of his body as being gone. She does not even pronounce the name of him whom she sought. Her whole soul is filled with this one longing desire, to find the body, and render it those marks of love and honor which her deep obligations to him impelled her to bestow. The construction of the original is such as to show, that Mary thought it quite likely, that the supposed gardener had been concerned in the removal of the body. This opinion she may have entertained the more readily from the fact, which was probably known to all the friends of Jesus, that his body was only temporarily placed in Joseph's tomb, until some other disposition could be made of the remains. *Hence from the sepulchre. I will take him away*, i. e. have him removed. Here outspeaks the loving, grateful heart. She will herself take charge of the body, and suffer it no longer to lie upon their hands, a burden or encumbrance. She does not wait to consult with the apostles or her female friends, as to what shall be done with the body, thus suddenly and unexpectedly removed from the sepulchre. She takes all the responsibility upon herself. If no one else will share her pious duty, she is ready to discharge it independent and alone. Noble woman! The church to

the end of time shall embalm thy memory, and point to thee as the most loving and faithful of that devoted band, who

"—while apostles shrunk could dangers
brave,
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave."

The repetition of the pronoun *him*, when the name of Jesus had not yet been mentioned by her, gives great tenderness to her pathetic appeal. There is also in the original, an emphatic contrast between the *thou*, in the first member, and *I*, in the third. It is as though she had said, 'if *thou* hast now the body in charge, *I* will relieve you of that office.' In the second member, the pronoun has no emphasis, being omitted in the original.

16. *Jesus saith, &c.* There was that in his tone and manner of address which caused Mary, at the sound of her name, to turn herself more fully around, so as to have a distinct view of the person who so familiarly addressed her. *She turned herself, &c.* Literally, *having turned she saith, &c.* Her recognition of Jesus was sudden and complete. She had no doubt of his personal presence. In a transport of joy, she exclaims *Rabboni, my great Master*. Only once before is Jesus recorded to have been addressed by this most honorable title, and that by Bartimeus (Mark 10:51). The form of address is well suited to the excited feelings of the speaker, who in this one word expresses her love and devotion to her crucified but now risen Lord. Luthardt remarks: "It was the former name with which he called her: His former appellation in which she replied; and now she seeks to renew the former intercourse."

17. *Touch me not, &c.* There have been many conflicting views in regard

to the nature of this prohibition, resulting not from any obscurity in the language, but from the reason given in the following clause, *for I am not yet ascended*, &c. The more common and perhaps the best founded interpretation, may be expressed in the paraphrase of Doddridge: "Do not stay here to embrace me now, either to pay thy homage to me, or to confirm thy faith, both which thou wilt have other opportunities of doing; for I am not yet withdrawn from your world, and ascended to the heavenly court of my Father, as you imagine I shall presently do, but I shall yet continue for a little while on earth, and give you further opportunities of seeing me again; let nothing therefore detain thee any longer but go immediately to my dear brethren and say unto them," &c. Such is substantially the sense given to the passage also by those sound and excellent expositors, Webster and Wilkinson. The objection urged against this sense from the verb *touch*, which should in that case have been more appropriately, *cling around*, *embrace*, *hang to one's knees*, or a verb of similar sense, is not of much weight, for the tense of the verb here made use of, is not that employed of an act only once performed—a simple touch and nothing more—but denotes continuance of action, *be not touching*, and the verb is used for the sake of imparting emphasis to the injunction: 'do not tarry even to touch me, but hasten on your way to my brethren, and report to them, that I have risen, and will soon ascend to my Father and theirs.' So far from furnishing an argument against this interpretation, the verb here made use of is the very one, which most appropriately and emphatically expresses this sentiment.

Olshausen says that this explanation must be deemed obsolete, and may therefore be dismissed at once. But what shall we say of such a summary rejection of the only common sense interpretation of the passage, and the approval of this commentator of Schleiermacher's fanciful explanation: "when the Saviour at first appeared unto Mary,

he then, as if fearful and susceptible, his glorified life being new to him, said, *touch me not*, &c., but after a few days, he presented himself to Thomas, and required him heartily to test the reality of his body, to thrust his hand into his side, &c.?" It will be a new idea to most English readers, that our Lord when he first rose from the dead, shrunk back with timidity and sensitiveness from the touch of any of his friends, until, having become used to his "glorified life," he of his own accord invited Thomas to "heartily test the reality of his body." It would be a sufficient refutation of this exposition, to refer to Matt. 28:9, where it appears that on the very morning of his resurrection, and probably prior to his appearance to Mary Magdalene, he permitted the women to whom he appeared while on their way to the disciples, to "hold him by the feet," and embrace his knees in reverential prostration. A reference also to Luke 24:39, will show that on the evening of the day in which he rose from the dead, he challenged the examination of the disciples as to the actual verity of his resurrection: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; *handle me* and see." This does not seem very consistent with a theory, which refers the prohibition of Mary to touch him, to the fact that he was in a process of glorification, which rendered him so "fearful and susceptible," that he did not permit himself to be freely touched until his interview with Thomas, eight days after his resurrection. No proof whatever is furnished in the New Testament, that in the interval of his resurrection and ascension, our Lord was undergoing a transition from the possession of a body, having all the gross corporeal elements which it had previous to its entombment in Joseph's sepulchre, to the etherialized, spiritual, glorified body with which he ascended to heaven. Whether the change took place, as we have no doubt it did, at the time of his ascension from Olivet, or when he came forth from the tomb, it was beyond all question instantaneous and complete, like that which shall pass

upon his followers who shall be alive on the earth at the time of his second appearance, when they "shall be changed at the last trump in a moment in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52), and "be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4: 17).

Alford and some others take a different view of the prohibition here given. With some minor diversities of interpretation, their expositions all agree in referring this touching to one purely spiritual, when he should have ascended to heaven in his glorified body. Thus Alford: "The sense seems to me to be connected with some gesture, indicating that she believed she had now gotten Him again, never to be parted from Him. This gesture he reproves, as unsuited to the time and nature of His present appearance. 'Do not thus—for I am not yet restored finally to you in the body—I have yet to ascend to the Father.' This implies in the back ground *another and true touching*, when He should have ascended to the Father." This same expositor after Archdeacon Wilberforce, cites approvingly Leo the Great (Serm. lxxii. 4): "I would not have you come to me in bodily-wise, nor recognize me by carnal touch; I put you off to something higher, I prepare you for something greater; when I am ascended to my Father, there you shall touch me in a more true and perfect manner, when you shall lay hold of that which you do not touch, and believe that which you do not behold."

Prof. Crosby refers it to Christ's promised spiritual presence: "Christ had declared (John 16: 16) that he would go to the Father, and then in a little while come again to his disciples, meaning that he would come by the Spirit (John 14: 16-18). Mary seems to have considered his presence after his resurrection as this coming, and runs to grasp him. Jesus gently rebukes her by saying, *Touch me not*—this is not a time for intimate communion, nor is this my promised coming, for *I am not yet ascended* to my Father, and my promised coming was to be after that." But it appears quite improbable that in the short lapse of

time which intervened between the paschal supper and the resurrection of Christ, a time too of agitation, alarm, and despondency, the body of the disciples, including Mary and her female companions, had been made acquainted with the promise of Christ's spiritual coming, made to the apostles in the guest-chamber, as detailed in 14: 16-18. Even if this promise had been reported to Mary, is it reasonable to suppose, that agitated as she was by this sudden and unexpected appearance of Jesus, she would have given a moment's thought to any thing save the sense of his actual presence? To have connected this appearance of Jesus with his promised spiritual presence, would have implied a process of calm reflection, which the circumstances of the case forbid our supposing Mary capable at this time of pursuing. I cannot therefore adopt this view of my highly valuable and learned friend, principally on the ground that it departs, like many other expositions of this disputed passage, too far from the sense which lies upon the face of the text, and which accords with the circumstances of the occasion.

Stier largely discusses this passage, citing in full the numerous expositions given of it by commentators from Augustine down to the present time. He takes our Lord's words, as a sublime and profound declaration—"No, *thus it was not designed!*" enforced from Him by the opposition between the heavenly feeling of his own mind and the earthly feeling of Mary's spirit.—Thou shalt possess me again, but not as before, it shall be from this time and forever *in the Spirit*. The time of exalted and divine relationship is come." These citations of opinions might be extended, but enough has been quoted to show, how various are the views of expositors on this much controverted passage.

For I am not yet ascended, i. e. I am not about to ascend immediately. This stands as the reason why Mary was not at this time to indulge in acts and expressions of attachment to her risen Lord. He had not yet ascended to his Father, and hence there would be ample

time and opportunity for her to evince her love and gratitude to him. No reason can be given which will stand the test of sound criticism, why Mary should have been repelled from touching our Lord, or as the tense of the verb indicates, of clinging to him, except that which refers it to the great love which he bore to the other disciples, to whom he would have her convey the joyful intelligence of his resurrection, without any delay of the nature here referred to. This is natural, simple, appropriate, and in keeping with all the surroundings of the occasion. Mary sees, and at the sound of his voice recognizes her Lord. With the ejaculation, *Rabboni*, she rushes in a transport of joyful surprise to cling to his knees in the manner of oriental homage, but is immediately checked by her Lord, as though he had said: 'Waste no time, Mary, in expressions of attachment, which you will have time and opportunity of bestowing upon me before my ascension; but go at once to my brethren, and bear this message, that I have risen from the dead, and ascend (i. e. am soon to ascend) to my Father, and their Father, and to my God and their God.' What can be more natural, and simple, than this explanation of the passage. Indeed it seems to me, that its simplicity has been a principal reason, why so many eminent interpreters have rejected it for something more profound and hidden from the common apprehension.

I am the more confirmed in this view from Matt. 28: 9, where it is expressly said, that "*the women came* (i. e. approached him), *and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.*" Would Mary of Magdala have been denied a privilege, so freely accorded to her female companions, unless for the special reason, that she was to bear his message with all haste to his disciples? It is not enough with Stier to say, that these women touched our Lord with a different spirit and meaning, and therefore were permitted to do what was denied to her. This is mere assumption destitute of all proof, and therefore inadmissible. It must be apparent to every

reader, that Mary was in as suitable a frame of mind as any one of the company of disciples, to enjoy the tokens of her Lord's favor in the way accorded to the other women, had he not required her service as a messenger to his brethren.

As our Lord had graciously styled the disciples his "brethren," he speaks of God as their common God and Father. See Heb. 2: 11, 17. At the same time, the *my* and *your*, instead of the common *our*, indicate an essential difference in the relations to the Father sustained by Christ and his followers. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "Mine in one sense, by nature; yours in another, by privilege." So Augustine: "He is my Father, by nature, and your Father, by grace." Ambrose makes the same distinction. But if the Father was such to the Son by nature, by a parity of reasoning may not the same be said of the relation expressed by *my God*? Would not the Son be thus rendered subordinate in his essential deity to the Father? Dr. Schauffler, after remarking that the great object of this passage is to set forth the divinity of Christ, and our participation of the divine nature in Him, thus paraphrases it: "Such is the connection which will for ever exist between me, the risen Saviour, and you, my believers, that the Father to whom I ascend is *your* Father, because he is *my* Father, and *my* God, because he is *your* God. My manifestation in the flesh, the uniting myself into *one* with the body of the church as her inseparable Head (Eph. 1: 22, 23), makes *me* for ever participate in *her* creature relation (compare 1 Cor. 15: 28), and *her*, in my eternal relation to the Sacred Trinity, proper allowance being made for the eternal difference between the Creator of all, and the most privileged creature of his hand, the chosen object of his tenderest and strongest affection." The verb *ascend*, is the present. *I am ascending*, as though his forty days on earth to enable his disciples to be witnesses of his resurrection, were included in the act of ascension. So Alford: "*I am ascending*, the same as *I am on*

18 " Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

19 ¶ Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were

n Mt. 28:10; Lu. 24:10.
o Ma. 16:14; Lu. 24:36; 1 Co. 15:5.

my way." Kinkel's hypothesis of the immediate ascension of our Lord, after his interview with Mary, is hardly worth refuting. Neither the language, *I am not yet ascended*, nor the context, justifies such an idea of an immediate ascension and immediate return to earth, prior to the ascension from Mount Olivet, as related in Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9. Aside from our Lord's spiritual coming after his glorification, there was to be but one other advent of his, and that was to take place at the judgment of the last day. We pass by much also that might be objected to Kinkel's hypothesis, from an æsthetical view of the events here related.

18. This verse synchronizes with Mark 16:10, on which see Note. *That she had seen*, &c. The fact that she was not permitted to touch her Lord, did not in the least shake her faith in his actual resurrection. The message to the apostles with which she was intrusted was an honor far greater than that which was forbidden her; just as the tangible demonstration of his presence given to Thomas, was a far less thing than the not seeing and yet believing (v. 29). It appears from Mark 16:11, that the disciples did not believe her report; although this may have been said of the company in general, for if Peter and John were present from their visit to the tomb, they at least could hardly have doubted the fact of his resurrection.

19-23. JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTLES. *Jerusalem.* Evening following the first day of the Week. *Then* or *therefore*, in accordance with

assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. ¶ Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

p Ch. 16:22.

the fact just related, that Jesus had arisen, and conversed with Mary Magdalene. *The same day*, i. e. on the first day of the week. 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 24:29) and they were sitting at supper, that he had made himself known to them. After this they returned to the city, found the eleven gathered together, and rehearsed to them the strange intelligence of what took place by the way, and how Jesus "was known of them in breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35). It was not until after all these things had taken place, that Jesus himself appeared to the disciples in the way here mentioned. *When the doors were shut*, &c. This whole subject as to whether there was any thing miraculous in our Lord's entrance to the room, is fully discussed in N. on Luke 24:36, 38, to which the reader is referred. Suffice it here to say, that my views there expressed in regard to the actual, tangible, bodily appearance of our Lord, are confirmed by all my subsequent investigations, and I would therefore give more emphatic expression of this opinion, rather than diminish aught of what I have written. It is the great and fundamental fact of the gospel, and any interpretation which regards the appearance of Jesus, on this or any other occasion during his forty days on earth after his resurrec-

21 Then said Jesus to them

q Mt. 23:13; ch. 17:13, 19; He. 3:1; 2 Ti. 2:2.

again, Peace *be* unto you: ⁷as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

tion, as one in a spiritual rather than a material body, should be rejected, as leading to an error which would undermine the very foundation on which Christianity reposes. See 1 Cor. 15: 14, 17. In addition to what has been said in my Notes on Luke 24: 36, 38, I will only take occasion to remark, that even if it be granted that he entered the room through a closed door, it is an objection to his possession at the time of a veritable body of flesh, bones, and blood, no more valid than his walking upon the waves of the sea of Galilee, in view of which the disciples cried out, supposing they had seen a spirit (Matt. 14: 26; Mark 6: 49). A reference to the supernatural in both instances furnishes a far more satisfactory solution of the difficulty, than a denial of his corporeality. *For fear of the Jews.* They had reason to fear that the meeting would be interrupted by their enemies. That they were at this time particularly watched by them, there can be no doubt; and this closing of the doors was therefore intended as a protection against spies and informers, rather than against any immediate violence. *Stood in the midst*, &c. See N. on Luke 24: 36. It appears from that Evangelist, that the disciples were filled with extreme terror, supposing that they were looking upon a spirit. The construction of the words *stood in the midst*, slightly varies from that made use of in Luke. In John it is *stood into the midst*, with the pregnant sense, *approached into the midst and there stood*. The same prepositional construction is found in 21: 4.

20. *He showed them*, &c. The reason is found in Luke 24: 37-40. *His hands and his side*, i. e. the wounds made by the nails and spear. The pronoun *his*, in the first instance, is unnecessarily italicized in the common version, the pronoun in the original belonging to both words. *Then* at this display of his sacred person, which dispelled all

doubt from their mind of his actual resurrection. *Were the disciples glad.* According to Luke, their joy was so great at his sudden and unexpected appearance, as to almost destroy their belief in its reality. *The Lord*, i. e. our Lord. See N. on 4: 1.

21. *Then said Jesus to them again*, &c. "He confirms the salutation which he made on appearing, in the full significance of the words, as a real promise and blessing, not as a mere form of speech; and so reminding them of his discourse, 14: 27; 16: 33." Webster and Wilkinson. *As my Father*, &c. The comparison is here founded on the relation which Jesus sustained to the Father, as His authorized messenger to man, and the relation of his apostles to him, as his accredited ambassadors to their fellow-men. Nothing beyond this is intended to be conveyed in the comparison. What ground then have Webster and Wilkinson for saying, "we cannot without presumption extend the comparison to the mission and commission of others who have not been personally, or by revelation, appointed by the Lord himself?" The promise in Matt. 28: 20, embraces in its comprehensive sweep and circuit, all Christ's ministers down to the end of time; and while it is true, that there were certain special gifts and functions bestowed only upon the apostles, yet of all things, the very last which we should think of confining to their small circle, would be the grand commission here denoted by the words, *even so I send you*. What the above-named expositors say, that no such language is used by the apostles in reference to their ordination of succeeding ministers, is no argument in favor of its restricted application to them, for it would have been the most intolerable presumption for them to have employed such language. They in their own name or self-originating authority, sent none forth as ministers of the word.

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 ;

* Mt. 10 : 19 ; & 18 : 18.

It was Christ himself who through them as his agents, commissioned all upon whom they laid hands and consecrated to the ministerial office. For them to have used language indicating that, as Christ had been sent of the Father, and they of Christ, so now they sent forth these messengers of salvation throughout the world, would have been an arrogance of authority, such as was never assumed by a true disciple of Jesus.

22, 23. These verses are peculiar to John, and are well placed by Dr. Robinson immediately after Mark 16 : 15-22. *When he had said* ; literally, *having said*, the emphasis being reserved for the following verb. *He breathed on them*. A symbolic act, denoting the conferral 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 fulness and richness. This *breathing forth* is in beautiful accordance with what is said in 15 : 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 (16 : 7). *Whosoever sins ye remit, &c.* The key to the right understanding of this promise, which must in the nature of the case be limited to the apostles, may be found in my Note on Matt. 16 : 19, this being only a varied promise given directly to all the apostles, of what was on that occasion promised to Peter, and through him as their representative to all the rest, and afterwards (Matt. 18 : 18) confirmed to all. The remission of sins in the highest and most proper sense, is the pre-

and whosoever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, * called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

* Ch. 11 : 16.

rogative of God alone. But in a declarative sense, or as the constituted expounders of the will of God, they had the right conferred upon them to shut and to open, to loose and to unloose, to remit and to retain, and from their decision there was to be no appeal. Webster and Wilkinson well say, that "the absolute power of forgiveness, or condemnation, was not vested in them, any more than the power to perform miracles, although this was conferred in similarly unqualified terms." Alford refers this in its highest and most far-reaching sense, to the power of discernment of the hearts of men possessed by all Christ's ministers and all private Christians, in proportion as any disciple shall have been filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom. This may be implied in the passage, but its special reference is to those extraordinary powers with which the apostles were invested, and which rendered their words and decisions of binding authority in the church of Christ. That in a qualified sense this power is lodged in the constituted authorities of the Christian church in all subsequent time, there can be no doubt, but not in the high and special sense in which it was given to the apostles, or in which it is blasphemously claimed by the Roman pontiff. *They are retained* ; literally, *they have been retained*, the perfect in consequent clauses having the import of the present, especially when as here employed to designate a state or condition permanent and unalterable.

24-26. JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTLES, THOMAS BEING PRESENT. *Jerusalem*. Evening following the first day of the Week next after the Resurrection. This section is found only in John, and was designed evidently to show how abundant and con-

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.

vincing were the proofs of our Lord's resurrection, enough so as to overcome the unbelief of Thomas, expressed in the strong and positive terms recorded in v. 25. Webster and Wilkinson adduce it also as an example of the "candor of the Evangelic writers, in not concealing the difficulty which men felt in believing the fact of the resurrection, however well attested."

24. *But* is here continuative with a slight adversative sense. The strong and decided adversative is not the one here employed in the Greek. An example of unbelief was to follow the dissipation of all doubt, resulting from the appearance of Jesus as recorded in vs. 19-23. It was the unbelief, however, of one who was sincerely attached to Jesus, but whose despondency was too great to yield to any evidence in regard to his Lord's resurrection, except that which was cognizable by his own senses. Hence there is no opposition of sentiment, which called for the strong adversative conjunction to introduce the narration. *Thomas*. See N. on 11: 16. *One of the twelve*. The original number is retained for the sake of reference, although the defection of Judas had left only eleven. *Was not with them*. An unfavorable inference has been drawn from this absence of Thomas from the company of the apostles. He is often referred to, as an example of one who loses the enjoyment of his Saviour's presence, by absenting himself from stated meetings for prayer and religious conversation. Perhaps this is an unwarrantable inference from the absence of Thomas on this occasion. It is certainly unsusceptible of proof, as no reason whatever is given for his absence. It may have been necessary, or otherwise; and it were useless to frame conjectures in reference thereto, especially as the writer of the Gospel makes no allusion whatever to the cause of his absence.

Alford rejects the idea, that he was absent through inadvertence or occupation in other matters. "On such a day, and in such a man, such an absence must have been *designed*. Perhaps he had abandoned all hope;—the strong evidence of his senses having finally convinced him, that the pierced side and wounded hands betokened such a death, that revivification was impossible."

25. *Therefore*, as was natural after having themselves seen Jesus. *Said unto him*, perhaps on that very night; certainly, on the first occasion of meeting him. *Except I shall see*, &c. Webster and Wilkinson think that they told Thomas, that Jesus had shown them his hands and his side. But in that case, we should have expected in the original, the emphatic pronoun *I*. The reference of Thomas to those parts of the body, is to be attributed rather to his vivid remembrance of those ghastly wounds, and the evidence thereby furnished that his Lord was actually dead, and consequently still held in the embrace of death, notwithstanding what the disciples might say to the contrary. They had doubted the fact as reported to them by the women (Luke 24: 11), but the unbelief of Thomas was less excusable, inasmuch as he had the additional testimony of the ten apostles, who had seen Jesus, and whose doubts had been all removed in the way mentioned in Luke 24: 39, 40. There is in the words of Thomas a fullness of expression, that strongly indicates the positive character of the man, and the absence in him of every thing bordering on credulity. The sudden dissipation of all doubt from such a mind, is one of the strongest proofs which can be furnished, of the overwhelming evidence which the apostles had of the resurrection of Jesus. The word *finger*, conforms to the smaller wounds in his hands, while the expres-

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.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and be-

hold my hands; and 'reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

† 1 Jo. 1: 1.

sion *thrust my hand*, has reference to the wound made by the spear. The feet of our Lord are not referred to, from the evident inconvenience of stooping so low, as to apply the test here spoken of to those parts of the body. *I will not believe* that he has risen from the dead.

26. *After eight days*, i. e. one week after the day of his resurrection. The disciples had probably assembled on each of the intermediate days. Our Lord, however, honored this meeting with his personal presence, and thus laid the foundation for the honor and sanctity with which, the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, has ever since been regarded by the Christian world. *Again*, in reference to his previous appearance related in v. 19. *Were within* doors, as on the former occasion, and *Thomas with them*. This is particularly mentioned, on account of the absence of that disciple at the previous meeting (v. 24), and because the narrative has sole reference to the removal of his unbelief. *Then came Jesus*; literally, *Jesus comes*. The asyndeton in the original imparts vivacity to the narration. Olshausen, without good reason, supposes this appearance of Jesus to have taken place in Galilee. *The doors being shut*. See Ns. on v. 19; Luke 24: 36, 38. The repetition of this circumstance is undoubtedly designed to show, that although the disciples met in privacy through fear of their enemies, yet no concealment sufficed to prevent his knowledge of the place where they assembled, nor closed doors to bar his ready access to them. *Stood in the midst*. See N. on Luke 24: 36. *Peace be unto you*. See N. on v. 21.

27. It is highly probable that the confirmation of Thomas' faith, was our Lord's first act on the occasion of this interview. The particle here translated *then*, denotes the order or series of things, and is employed by Demosthenes and some other Greek writers, of a succession of events according to the formula, *first, then, again, afterwards*. Our Lord's words, *reach hither thy finger, &c.*, conform to the expression of Thomas' unbelief in v. 25. The words *behold my hands*, have the pregnant sense, 'examine my hands both by sight and touch.' *Reach hither thy hand*. See N. on v. 25. *Thrust it into my side*; better and more literal, *bring your hand to my side*, as his finger had been previously directed to be placed upon his hands. In regard to Alford's unwarrantable conjecture, that our Lord's resurrection body was bloodless, see N. on Luke 24: 39. *Be not faithless, &c.* "Not merely, 'Do not any longer disbelieve in my resurrection,' but, 'Be not (do not become), as applied generally to the spiritual life, and the reception of God's truth, *faithless, but believing*.'" Alford. This expositor is right also in drawing the inference from *because thou hast seen me* (v. 29), that Thomas did not actually apply his finger or his hand to our Lord's body. The sight of Jesus produced instantaneous and overwhelming conviction of the reality of his resurrection.

28. *My Lord and my God*. This is not an exclamation, as the Socinians view it. No such exclamations were in vogue among the Jews. The words were addressed *to*, and not *of* or *concerning* Jesus; nor, as Alford well remarks, can *my Lord* be in any manner

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.

u 2 Co. 5:7; 1 Pe. 1:8.

referred to another than Jesus. The irrelevance of such an exclamation, in the hearing of one so much loved, and of whose presence Thomas had just been convinced, is also well urged against such a view; to which we may add, that so irreverent an exclamation could scarcely have escaped the rebuke of our Lord, whereas his only censure of Thomas is in regard to his tardiness of belief. There can then be no doubt, that this is a confession of the faith of Thomas—one of the most full and explicit utterances of belief in our Saviour's divine Messiahship, which had as yet been made by any of the apostles. This confession was the result not only of our Lord's presence in bodily and tangible form, but of the evidence of his omniscience furnished in the repetition of the very form of words, in which Thomas had on a previous occasion given utterance to his unbelief. "Thus John in the very close of his Gospel (see vs. 30, 31), iterates the testimony with which he begun it—to the Godhead of the Word who became flesh; and by this closing confession, shows how the testimony of Jesus to Himself had gradually deepened and exalted the apostles' conviction from the time when they knew him only as the son of Joseph (1:46), till now when he is acknowledged as their Lord and their God." Alford.

29. *Thomas*. Our Lord addresses him by name, in order to call his special attention to the weighty truth which he was about to utter. See N. on Luke 10:41. *Because*, &c. There is a vein of censure in these words, not because Thomas had so readily yielded to the evidence of his Master's resurrection, furnished by his personal presence, but because he had so persistently refused to receive this great fact on the testimony of his fellow-disciples. To a few only, who were to be his witnesses of this cardinal truth of Christianity, did he show himself, a risen and living

Saviour; to all others of the great family called by His name, the fact of his resurrection is a matter of faith, being received by them as true, on the testimony of those who were favored with a sight of Him, after he rose from the dead. If any are disposed to regard it as an inferior privilege, to accept this truth through *faith* rather than *sight*, this great utterance of Jesus should fully correct such an erroneous view. The words *blessed are they*, by the antithesis have the force of, *more blessed are they*. Webster and Wilkinson well express the sentiment: "Blessed above Thomas are they, in the possession of such enlightened minds, as to be able to believe on sufficient evidence like that which had been offered to him, but which he had rejected, requiring to be convinced by his own personal experience, the testimony of his bodily senses." *That have not seen*, i. e. although having not seen. "All the appearances of the forty days were mere preparations for the believing without seeing." Stier. A word of explanation in regard to the tenses of the verbs here employed, seems necessary. The perfect *hast believed*, is employed instead of the present, *thou believest*, because the reference is had to the origin of his belief, in the actual sight with which he had just been favored. The tense in *have believed*, is the aorist, and the form is participial, *blessed (are) they, not having seen and (yet) having believed*. This is a general truth proleptically spoken of all believers in every subsequent age, and the aorist indicates their present condition of belief, founded on a past and ever enduring act of faith. These tenses in the original give great life and emphasis to the assertion of our Lord.

30, 31. These verses together with 21:25, may be regarded as a kind of anticipatory conclusion of the Gospel according to John. The word rendered

30 ¶ "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 ^v But these are written, that

truly, in our common version, would be better translated *yea, indeed*, and is designed to introduce a disclaimer on the part of the Evangelist, against any inference of his readers, that he had narrated all the signs and proofs of the divine mission of Jesus. *Signs* is not to be referred, as Lucke, Olshausen, and others think, to the great miracle of his resurrection, but to his general miracles, not reported by John, but here recognized by him as having been abundantly performed in the course of our Lord's ministry. Alford includes also in the expression, the miracles performed by Jesus after his resurrection. There is no objection to this view. *In the presence of his disciples*, and of which they were therefore competent witnesses. *In this book*, i. e. in this Gospel. *But these are written*. Reference is had to those miracles which John has recorded. *That ye may believe*, &c. This clause gives the reason why the Evangelist reported certain miracles of Jesus. It furnishes the key to the principle on which he made the selection of those to be recorded in his Gospel. His object being to prove the divinity of Jesus Christ as God's Eternal Son, such miracles only were selected as would most clearly demonstrate and enforce this great truth with which his Gospel was formally commenced. *And that believing*, &c. This is the grand and glorious result of belief in Jesus' Messiahship. A living faith in Him as the Son of God and Saviour of men, is life eternal through his name and divine mediation. *In his name*. "Eternal life is obtained by believers in virtue of Him, upon the claim established by Him in whom they believe." Webster and Wilkinson.

CHAPTER XXI.

1-24. JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO SEVEN OF THE APOSTLES AT THE SEA OF TIBE-

YE might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; "and that believing ye might have life through his name.

α Ch. 21: 25. γ Lu. 1: 4.
ε Ch. 3: 15, 16; & 5: 24; 1 Pe. 1: 9.

RIAS. *Galilee*. This whole chapter is peculiar to John, and is styled by Alford the APPENDIX to his Gospel. Its authenticity has been doubted by many, who have been more rash than just in their criticisms; or whose prejudices have warped them from the true and scholarly laws of interpretation, which should be applied in test of the genuineness of the chapter. The style and cast of thought are eminently characteristic of John. It forms a portion of his Gospel, which, had it been omitted, would not only have made the conclusion abrupt and unnatural, but impressed every intelligent and pious reader with a feeling that something was lacking to give completeness to the narration. The external or historical evidence of its authenticity is strong and abundant. It is found in all the MSS. and Versions. Stier says, that no one in the whole church doubted of its genuineness until Grotius, and his objection arose mainly from the apparent conclusion of the Gospel with chap. XX. But is it not far more natural to suppose, that John, under the guidance of the Spirit, added another of the *signs* which Jesus did in confirmation of the faith of his disciples, even when he had apparently brought his work to a close, than to dis sever on grounds so trifling, a chapter which bears such striking resemblance both in matter and style to the other writings of John? Alford is so clear and discriminating on this point, that I cannot forbear to quote him in full: "I am fully convinced that this chapter was written by John. In every part of it, his hand is plain and unmistakable; in every part of it, his character and spirit is manifested in a way which none but the most biassed can fail to recognize. I believe it to have been added some years probably after the completion of the Gospel; partly

CHAPTER XXI.

AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and "Nathanael of Cana in

a Ch. 1: 45.

perhaps to record the important miracle of the second draught of fishes, so full of spiritual instruction, and the interesting account of the sayings of our Lord to Peter; but principally to meet the error which was becoming prevalent concerning himself. In order to do this, he gives a complete account, with all the minute details,—even to the number of the fish caught,—of the circumstances preceding the conversation,—and the very words of our Lord himself; not pretending to put a meaning on those words, but merely asserting that they announced no such thing as that he should not die." Luthardt regards the two last verses as added by the Ephesian church. But his argument from the "*we know*" of v. 24, is certainly counterbalanced by the "*I suppose*" of v. 25. See N. on v. 24.

1. *After these things.* See Ns. on 5: 1; 6: 1. Some expositors consider this as referring to another lapse of eight days (according to the Jewish mode of reckoning time). But the indefinite *after these things*, would in that case have hardly been substituted for the *after eight days* of v. 26. There is also reason to conjecture, that more than a week elapsed before Jesus showed himself as here related, although, as Stier suggests, it was most probably on the first day of the week, or our Sunday. This would give two weeks as the interval between the appearance in 20: 26, 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,

VOL. III.—21*

Galilee, and ^b the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

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.

b Mat. 4: 21.

from which he made his ascension. *Showed himself.* This form of expression is nowhere else found in John, and seems to be of grander import than the simple verb *appeared*. Stier remarks, that it involves the characteristic of these appearances, as dependent on the will of Jesus. *At the sea*; literally, *on the sea*, i. e. on the shore of the sea. *Tiberias.* See N. on 6: 1. *On this wise, or thus.* Luthardt remarks, that this clause points to the significance of all that is to follow.

2. It appears from this verse, that there were seven of the disciples present on the occasion here referred to. It is not singular, that while waiting for Jesus in Galilee, the disciples should have separated into small parties, and resumed, in some instances at least, the calling, which, as a means of livelihood, they had formerly pursued. We can hardly suppose, that they would quarter themselves upon their friends, without doing something for their own support, or to assist those with whom they were tarrying. The company here spoken of, seem to have been those whose former vocation was that of fishermen.

3. *I go a fishing.* The key to this proposal of Peter, is hinted at in the preceding verse. The disciples may have been under the necessity of providing in whole or part for their own support; or what is more likely, they did not wish to be burdensome to those with whom they were tarrying. Such we know was the feeling which possessed Paul, and caused him to labor with his own hands in order to administer to his necessities (Acts 20: 34;

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then ^d Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

^c Ch. 20: 14.

^d Lu. 24: 41.

18: 3). Peter and his companions did not enter upon this nightly labor for purposes of gain—much less through impatience at the dilatoriness of Jesus in making his promised appearance. They preferred to engage in useful labor rather than to remain idle, while waiting for the manifestation of their Lord, in obedience to his injunction (Matt. 28: 16). *We also go with thee.* His companions express their readiness to go with him, and share his toils. *Into a ship*; literally, *the ship*, perhaps the one they had formerly owned; or at least one which lay there with all the necessary fishing apparatus at their service. *Immediately.* They were prompt and energetic men, who would not let the hours of the night—the most advantageous time for fishing—pass away unimproved, when once they had made up their mind to spend it in the manner here spoken of. The Greek verb translated *caught*, is the one commonly employed by John, and indicates his authorship of the chapter. See 7: 30, 32, 44; 8: 20; 10: 39; 11: 57.

4. *The morning*, i. e. the morning hour between daybreak and sunrise. See Ns. on Matt. 28: 1; Mark 16: 2; Luke 24: 1. *Jesus stood on the shore.* The preposition is one which gives the pregnant construction: *came and stood upon the shore.* *But the disciples knew not*, &c. Some refer this to the imperfect light of the early dawn, or to the mist which lay upon the lake. But it is better to explain the circumstance by Luke 14: 16 (on which see Note). *That it was*; literally, *that it is*. A similar sequence of tenses is found in 1: 40.

5. *Then Jesus saith.* Alford says that this is in John's manner. Indeed

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.

^e Lu. 5: 4, 6, 7.

the chapter is fully after the style of our Evangelist. *Children.* See 1 John 2: 18; also 13: 33, where the diminutive *little children*, is employed as a term of endearment. This would have been unsuitable in calling persons at a distance, as Jesus called to his disciples from the shore. *Have ye any meat*, i. e. any thing to eat. The inquiry indicated, that the stranger who stood on the shore, wished to purchase from them his morning meal. The word rendered *meat*, is literally, *that which is eaten in addition to*, i. e. food eaten with bread. Addressed as the inquiry was to fishermen, they would readily understand it as referring to fish, and inferentially to food in general, or that which is eaten with fish.

6. This direction of the stranger to cast their net upon the right side of the ship, must have awakened in their minds the remembrance of a former command of similar import. This may account in part for their ready obedience to the counsel here given, although we cannot help saying with Lampe, that "the power of the Lord was inclining their mind" to obedience to his command. *Ye shall find fish.* The direction is brief and positive. The language admits of no doubt as to the result. *Therefore* in obedience to the stranger's direction. *Not able*; literally, *no longer able* as before, when they had drawn their empty net. The resistance gave evidence of the great haul of fish which they had made. *To draw it* into the ship. The *drag* or *draw-net*, thrown in a semi-circle and drawn to the shore or ship by each end, is the one here referred to. See N. on Matt. 13: 47. *For*; literally, *from, on account of*.

7 Therefore^f 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.

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.

^f Ch. 13 : 23 ; & 20 : 2.

7. *Therefore.* The abundant draught which followed the stranger's specific direction, reminded John of the former occasion, when at the word of Jesus they cast their net with a similar result. It flashes upon his mind with instantaneous conviction, that it is his beloved Lord. If the words *cast the net*, had awakened any presentiment of this in his breast, he is now confirmed in his conjecture, and he can no longer keep silence. It was not, as some cold and skeptical critics affirm, because that he was younger and therefore endowed with keener vision than Peter, that he first recognized Jesus. It was because his faculties were all alive to whatever pertained to the Master whom he so much loved. "The tenderest love has the first and surest instinct of the object beloved." Stier. *Saith unto Peter*, his most confidential friend. See N. on 18 : 25. *It is the Lord*, or by force of the article, *it is our Lord*. See N. on 4 : 1. *When Simon Peter* (his name is fully given on account of the remarkable manifestation of his ardent love for Jesus here related) *heard*; literally, *Simon Peter having heard* from John. The clause *that it was the Lord*, may be rendered *it is the Lord*, the very form of words made use of by John. The construction would then be: *having heard* (the words of John), *'it is the Lord.'* This imparts great vivacity to the narration, and indicates the sudden transport of affection, which prompted Peter to cast himself into the sea and swim to the shore, as here related. *He girt*, i. e. he fastened the garment tight about him with a girdle or belt, in order that it might not impede him in swimming. This shows that he was collected in his movements. *Fisher's coat.* While employed in fishing he had disrobed him-

self of all clothing, except the garment worn next to the skin. He now resumes his outer garment or tunic, but not necessarily *a fisher's coat*, i. e. a garment which fishermen alone wore. Stier, with Dräseke, notices "the reverence which observes, even at such a moment of excited feeling, the petty proprieties of clothing." *For he was naked*, not absolutely but comparatively so. He had divested himself of his upper garment, which would have impeded his movements, in casting and hauling the net, and in working the vessel. It is offensive to the laws of decency, to take this in a literal sense, of absolute nudity. Dr. Thomson (Land and Book, vol. ii. p. 81), in answer to the question, whether Peter was actually naked while engaged in fishing, replies: "Not necessarily so. In this hot climate, however, it is common to fish with nothing but a sort of shawl or napkin tied around the waist. The fisher's coat which he girt about him, was the short *abāyeh* which they now wear, and which they very often lay aside while fishing. They can doff it in a moment. When worn, it is girt about the loins with the zunnar, and Peter did this when hastening to meet the Lord." *Did cast himself into the sea.* This shows that the water was not so shallow as to permit his wading to the land. Equally opposed is the language made use of, to the belief of some, that the power to walk upon the water was vouchsafed to him, which his weak faith had on a former occasion prevented his possessing. The form of expression is always used of *into the sea*, instead of *on the sea*. See Matt. 4 : 18; Mark 9 : 32; Acts 27 : 38.

8. *Other disciples* in reference to Peter. The preposition *in*, denotes the

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.

means by which these disciples came to the shore, namely, *in the little ship*. They were in a common fishing boat. *For they were not, &c.* This parenthetical clause is introduced to show why they did not draw the net on board the ship. They were so near the land, that they could more easily and conveniently draw the net to the shore. *Two hundred cubits*, i. e. about one hundred yards. This shows that with the morning dawn, they were making for shore, when Jesus hailed them as related in v. 5. The miracle of the fish was greatly enhanced from the fact, that they had left the deeper waters of the lake (Luke 5: 4), and were now in the more shallow portion near the shore, where fish, and especially large ones, are seldom found in numbers. *With fishes*; literally, *of fishes*, a pregnant form for *full of fishes*. See v. 11. This abundant haul, is also indicated by the word *dragging*, which implies exertion to overcome great resistance.

9. It is the opinion of the soundest commentators, that this *fire of coals* was miraculously provided; although there have not been wanting some very respectable expositors who think that it may have been provided by Peter, or by other fishermen, who after having placed fish upon it, left it opportunely for the use of Jesus and his disciples. It is preposterous to suppose that Peter could have reached the shore, and kindled the fire before the other disciples came to land; and even had he been able to do this, the question would still remain, where he obtained the fish which were in the process of being cooked, and the bread. Still more absurd is the reference of this fire and the provisions, to a service performed for our Lord by other fishermen, to whom he had previously revealed Himself. There is but one rational solution, and that is to refer this fire of coals and the provisions, to the miraculous

agency of Him, who had before changed water into wine at a wedding festival, and who had supplied the wants of thousands almost famishing with hunger, from a few loaves and fishes. It is an idle inquiry, whether he provided this fire and food by his own direct, creative agency, or by the ministration of angels. As to what Stier says, that it seems "more decorous to introduce the service of the ever-ready angels," it is certainly very presumptuous for us to pretend to decide what is decorous or otherwise, in matters so far beyond the domain of human knowledge. For wise reasons, the ministry of angels may be employed at one time in the production of an effect, and at another, the result may be secured by the direct fiat of the Almighty. The law was given on Sinai through the ministry of angels (Ps. 68: 17; Gal. 3: 19); but the reason did not appear until it was revealed in Heb. 2: 2, 3. These things are above our knowledge, and where revelation stops, there we shall do well to check all presumptuous speculation and inquiry.

10. *Bring of the fish, &c.* This direction recalled the attention of the disciples to the miraculous draught of fish, which in their joy at seeing Jesus, they had temporarily forgotten. It is unnecessary to suppose, that any of the fish which they caught were placed on the fire and cooked with those already provided by Jesus. We are rather to refer this command of our Lord to an orderly securing and disposal of the fish which they had caught, before they took their morning repast. Thus an important economical lesson is taught in regard to the gifts of God's providence, which are not to be squandered or left to disuse and waste, when given as they are for the beneficent purpose of supplying the wants of His creatures. *Which ye have now caught.* He recognizes their instrumentality, as his agents

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three : and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

in casting the net and drawing it to the shore. At the same time, there is a strongly implied contrast between the fish in the net, and those which to their wondering gaze were laid upon the fire of coals. *Now* is the adverb of time, and stands opposed to the fruitless labors of the preceding night.

11. *Simon Peter went up*, i. e. he went on board the boat, which had now been brought to the shore. It had not yet been hauled up on the dry beach, as was usual with such small craft, inasmuch as the great draught of fish, enclosed in the net which was attached to the ship, would have rendered this difficult of performance. It may well be supposed also, that the disciples in their eager haste to see their Lord, would leap out upon the shore, the moment they had brought the boat to land. *Drew the net to land*. It had been left in the water, but now with the assistance of his fellow-disciples, Peter draws it to land. *An hundred fifty and three*. The count took place either at the command of Jesus, or from their own wish to preserve the remembrance of the great miracle. *Was not broken*. Reference seems to be had, in the notice taken of this fact so remarkable, when the great strain upon the meshes of the net is considered, to the giving way of the seine on the former occasion. See Luke 5:6.

12. After the disciples in obedience to the command of Jesus had drawn the net to land and taken therefrom the fish, they were graciously invited to partake of the meal now in readiness. The verb rendered *dine*, is not to be taken in the sense of a mid-day meal, for although some time must have been consumed in the labor of landing and securing their fish, yet the morning hour could hardly have passed away.

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.

q Ac. 10 : 41.

The word in its earliest use was employed of the morning repast, as may be seen in every good Greek Lexicon. *None of the disciples, &c.* In silent and wondering astonishment they partook of the food so mysteriously provided for them. They were well assured that it was none other than Jesus himself, who presided at the meal. But no one of the number, not even the ardent, impetuous Peter, or the beloved disciple, or the "Israelite in whom was no guile" (1: 47), or Thomas, remarkable alike for his courageous devotion to his Master (11: 16), and his subsequent doubt and despondency (20: 25), or the staid, sober, dignified James, durst propose any question, which would elicit from him a reply as to who he was, how or when he had come to the Lake, and what his future movements were to be. He seems to have assumed an air of majesty and command, which repressed any approach to him in the manner of former intimacy, and free interchange of thought. The God-man stood fully revealed before them; and while their hearts were surcharged with love and joy, they nevertheless looked upon Him with an awe and reverence, not unlike that which the adoring saints may be supposed to feel, as they gaze upon his glory and majesty, when seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven. It is doubtful whether our Lord himself partook of the meal, or broke the silence by a single word. Stier and others think that he omitted to pronounce the customary blessing for a prophetic reason.

Some expositors who make this a joyous and conversational meal, can find in this extreme of silence no use or meaning. But may not this appearance of Jesus and all its attending circumstances, have been designed to symbolize great prophetic truths? The

toiling all night without success, and the casting the net on the right side at the command of Jesus, may without violence be referred to the labors of Christ's ministers, who in preaching the word, are thus taught to labor on even in the midst of the most discouraging circumstances, and to rest assured, that in his own time and manner, He whose commission they bear, will give them that measure of success, which is in accordance with His sovereign will and pleasure. How could the disciples help recalling to mind the great command and promise, made on the occasion of their call to discipleship, in Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10? This was a symbolical representation of the energy, industry, perseverance, and reliance upon God for success, which were to characterize their labors with the *gospel-net*, "to catch men." The "fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread," indicate his providential supply of all their wants, while they are engaged in his service; yet not independent of their own exertion, as is evinced by his command to them to bring the net ashore, in which direction was undoubtedly included the sorting out and counting of the fish which they had taken. This twofold miracle of the draught of fishes, and the broiled fish and bread made ready for their repast when their labors were ended, symbolize the fidelity, zeal, and reliance upon Christ for success, with which the apostles and all who succeed them in the ministry of the word, were to labor in the work of saving souls, and the watchful providence with which He in whose service they are engaged, will supply all their temporal and spiritual wants. The great truth here symbolically taught, was repeated in the compendious promise, "Lo I am with you always," &c., in Matt. 28:20. To bring out in bold and striking relief this truth, was manifestly one design of the Spirit of inspiration in appending this chapter to the Gospel, seemingly brought to a close in the preceding chapter. Stier also finds in this interview of Jesus with his disciples, "a type of that nearness and fellowship, to which the Lord would in

future times condescend in His invisible relations with His people."

In regard to some of the minor features of the transaction, such as the recorded fact, that in this great draught, the net was not broken, and the throwing the net on the right side, we would observe the same general rule, which should govern us in the exposition of parables—not to seek for a spiritual significancy in features which were merely designed to give verisimilitude to the narration. It gave a more impressive view of our Lord's omniscience, to designate the very spot where they were to throw the net, than though it had been cast at random. This was heightened by the fact that they were so near the shore, where large fish in such numbers were least likely to be. Nothing but divine omniscience could have foreseen that a net thrown in that particular locality and so close to the shore, would have enclosed so many large fish. This is the evident design of this feature of the transaction. Yet Augustine thinks the casting the net on the *right* side is referable to the elect; and Grotius finds in the abundant draught *near the shore*, where it was least to be expected, the blessing of the Apostles' preaching among the heathen. As to the fact that the net was not broken, it is obviously a part of the miracle, which would have been incomplete if not in a measure defective, had the net given way under the great pressure, and its struggling prey in numbers had escaped. It is a well-known fact, that in large hauls of fish, as well as in the ensnaring of great flocks of birds beneath the springing net, the meshes frequently give way, and the captured prey in greater or less numbers escape; but in the present instance, not a strand of the net was broken, or a single fish escaped. So marked an incident was worthy of being recorded, and enhances the miracle, as being in no respect defective or imperfect. But some expositors find here a significant contrast with the breaking of the net on a former occasion (Luke 5:6), which they refer, to the schisms and rendings of the net of the gospel, by men who

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now ^a the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

^a See ch. 20 : 19, 26.

pull, some to the right and some to the left, which even begun in apostolic times (1 Cor. 1 : 11 ; 11 : 19), and the great and glorious ingathering from the sea of nations, which in the latter day shall be made to the Lord Jesus Christ, the end of which will be a *feast* of most gracious fellowship with Him, an anti-type of the Lord's supper, an *early meal* of the great resurrection morning which will be followed by a permanent day of eternal joy. (Stier.) All such expositions are fanciful, and tend to weaken the impression which would otherwise be made by the great and living features of this remarkable appearance of our Lord, to the narration of which John has seen fit to devote a whole chapter.

13. *Jesus then cometh* from the place where he was standing when he called to the disciples (v. 5). The connective *then*, logically refers to the invitation given in the preceding verse. In accordance with that invitation, he approaches the place where the food is in readiness, and as the master or head of a family, takes and distributes it among his disciples.

14. *The third time*, in reference to the previous appearances of our Lord to the disciples when collected together. He had showed himself also to the women who went to the sepulchre (Matt. 28 : 9), and to Mary of Magdala (John 20 : 14-17).

15. It is quite evident, as above remarked (N. on v. 12), that this extraordinary meal was eaten in silence. But now at its close, our Lord proposes a question to Peter, which must have brought immediately and vividly to his remembrance all the circumstances of his deplorable fall. Although Jesus

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.

had predicted this lapse of his disciple, in presence of the whole company (13 : 38 ; Matt. 26 : 34 ; Mark 14 : 30 ; Luke 22 : 34), yet he had made no allusion whatever to it, in his previous appearances to his disciples. It was meet, however, that some notice should be taken of this defection of Peter, and this our Lord proceeded now to do. "There was no formal rebuke uttered, for the matter was already forgiven ; this asking about his love was at farthest a most gentle and affectionate reproof." Stier. *Simon, son of Jonas*. This reference to his parentage, was doubtless intended to remind him of the imperfection which cleaves to all by natural descent or earthly relationship. See N. on Matt. 16 : 17. "He would remind him of his entire past from birth upwards, of his natural humanity, but especially of the lamentable fall which had originated in the Simon, and not in the Peter." Stier. *More than these*. There can be no doubt that the pronoun *these*, refers to the disciples, for a reference to the fish or to the fishing utensils, is too low and gross to suit the wants of the passage and occasion. The only question then is, whether the translation should be *more than* (thou lovest) *these*, or *more than these* do. That the latter is the true interpretation, seems very clear from the whole context, and especially from its evident correspondence to Peter's boast of superior fidelity over all others, made at the time when our Lord predicted his fall (Matt. 26 : 33 ; Mark 14 : 29). It would have been little for Peter to say, that he loved his Master better than he did his fellow-disciples. But when the question is directly put to him, whether he

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son of Jonas*,

loved his Lord with a more ardent and unchanging affection, than did John, or James, or the other disciples who stood by, the memory of his past sin prevents him from a direct reply, and he can only find heart to say, *Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.* The verb rendered *love*, in Peter's reply, is one of lower significance, than the one thus translated in our Lord's question. '*Lovest thou me* with that high and holy love, which is due to me as the Son of God and Saviour of men?' Peter through consciousness of weakness and ill desert replies, 'thou knowest that I *love* thee, as a poor weak mortal may love his best friend, although far below the pure and holy love, which is due to thy exalted character.' *Feed my lambs.* Our Lord does not here reinstate Peter in the apostolic office, for of this he had not deprived him; but he confirms and encourages him in the official duties which were before him, and which he may have felt that he had forfeited by his denial of his Master. For *lambs*, in the second and third reply of our Lord is substituted the word *sheep*. Alford's reading is *lambs, sheep, little sheep* as a turn of endearment. He finds therefore a gradation in the responses of our Lord, a higher and more spiritual setting forth of Peter's service being successively indicated. "Perhaps the feeding of the lambs was the furnishing of the apostolic testimony of the resurrection and facts of the Lord's life on earth to the first converts; the *shepherding* or ruling the *sheep*, the subsequent government of the church, as shown forth in the early part of the Acts; the feeding of the *little sheep*, the choicest, the loved of the flock, the furnishing the now mature Church of Christ with the wholesome food of the doctrine contained in his Epistles." Prof. Crosby marks the gradation thus: "1. *Feed my lambs*, i. e. help the weak; 2. *Guide and guard my sheep*, i. e. counsel the strong; 3. *Feed my sheep*, i. e. help the strong, for they too need feeding with the divine food of the word."

Webster and Wilkinson, on the other hand, find a descending gradation, the *lambs*, a term of endearment, being given first, and then in the repetition of the charge, the less emphatic term, *sheep*.

It appears to me that to seek for any special significaney in the use of these terms, *lambs* and *sheep*, is to lose sight of that upon which the main stress is to be laid, and descend to mere verbal variations simply designed to give fulness and comprehensiveness to the direction. No one needs to be informed, that *lambs* and *sheep* include the whole flock, and are here employed to show that the pastoral care of Peter and all Christ's ministers, is to be exercised over all the members of the flock, young and old, strong and infirm, rich and poor, high and low, without distinction of age or condition. The emphasis lies not so much in the words *lambs* and *sheep*, as in the reiterated question, *lovest thou me*, which pierces the heart of Peter to its inmost depths, and elicits from him each time a more earnest response, *thou knowest that I love thee.* To each asseveration of Peter, our Lord appends a direction couched in the briefest terms, but within the comprehensive sweep of which is embraced the whole duty of Christ's ministers to the flock committed to their care and supervision. The language slightly varies, as might be expected where no necessity exists for adhering to a strict verbal repetition. *Lambs* and *sheep*, as has been remarked, embrace the whole flock. In like manner, the two verbs employed, namely, *feed*, and *shepherd* or *guide as a shepherd*, include every provision for the spiritual wants of the flock, and every kind of supervision and care which may be requisite to lead them in the paths of righteousness. Such I conceive to be the simple explanation of the passage. In reaching it no violence is done to the language, or laws of grammatical interpretation. There is no straining of terms, to elicit a sense other than that which is obvious and

lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. ⁱ He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

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; ^k thou ⁱ Ac. 20:28; He. 13:20; 1 Pe. 2:25; & 5:2, 4.

natural. The duty of ministerial fidelity to *all* of Christ's flock, is that which on this occasion was enjoined upon Peter, and by inference upon all who are charged with the spiritual oversight of God's people. "Ministers ought to look upon Christ's people, as very seriously recommended to them, and therefore should very seriously mind their work about them; for therefore is this charge thrice laid on Peter, that he may mind it much." Hutcheson.

16. The repetition is designed to impart emphasis to the inquiry, and produce a deep impression on Peter's mind. The words of this verse vary only from the preceding, by the substitution of *sheep* for *lambs*, to which reference has been made in the preceding note.

17. The thrice repeated question addressed thus to Peter, corresponding as it did to the number of his denials, conveyed to his mind the idea of distrust in regard to his profession of love to his Lord. This brought so vividly to remembrance his former boast of fidelity and his awful fall, that he is filled with distress. As has been remarked in Note on v. 15, our Lord in this third question changes the verb in *lovest thou*, to the one of lower import, which the self-distrust and modesty of Peter had prompted him to use, thus pressing the question home to his conscience in the qualified sense of his reply. It is as though he had said, 'Are you assured that you love me with that personal love, that human affection, indicated in the language of your

knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 ⁱ 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.

ⁱ Ch. 2:24, 25; & 16:30.

^k Ch. 13:36; Ac. 12:3, 4.

reply? I do not ask now whether you are possessed of that highest type of love, to which my previous questions had reference. But are you sure that you have that love for me, which in reply to my question, you have now avowed yourself to have?' In answer to this solemn and searching question, Peter repeats with greater emphasis his expression of love, appealing in confirmation thereof to the omniscient eye of his Lord, before which the hearts of all men lay fully exposed. He omits the *yea*, with which he had before introduced his protestations of love. In the midst of his sorrow at the thought, that his love should be called in question, he nevertheless exhibits something of his native vehemence, and he no longer depends upon his own feeble *yea*, but upon the higher and incontrovertible *thou knowest all things*. This is rendered still more emphatic by his employment of a verb of stronger import in *thou knowest that I love thee*, than the one used in his previous replies, that signifying *to know something* of a person or thing; this, *to know* the person or thing directly. This distinction, which appears clearly in the original Greek, is not discernible in the English verb *to know*. It is evident, that Peter used it in reference to the omniscience of Jesus, to which he had just appealed. His reply therefore must be regarded as one of the strongest protestations of love, which it was possible to make, and uttered with a conscious sincerity that feared not the searching eye of his Redeemer.

19 This spake he, signifying
^m by what death he should glorify

m 2 Pe. 1: 14.

18. The *verily, verily*, indicates as usual the announcement of an important truth, to which Peter's attention is emphatically directed. On a former occasion, he had boasted of his readiness to die for his Master, sooner than to deny him (Matt 26 : 35 ; Mark 14 : 31). Now his more modest and becoming language is, *thou knowest that I love thee*. Jesus however takes occasion to remind him of his former saying, and predicts its fulfilment, but not until his official labors should be interrupted by the infirmities of age. Then when he was old, he should be bound and led away to death, and by his courageous testimony to the truth verify his protestations of fidelity and love, which on the night of his Lord's betrayal had been made with such boastful temper, and as the event showed with such imperfect self-knowledge. No one can fail to see, that the incidents and language of this interview of Jesus with his repentant follower, have retrospective reference to his awful fall; and that this is intended as a formal and public restoration of him to his Lord's favor and confidence, of which he had before been conscious in the increased joy, love, and peace of mind, which had succeeded his bitter tears of repentance (Matt. 26 : 75 ; Mark 14 : 72 ; Luke 22 : 62). *When thou wast young* ; literally, *younger*, in comparison with the time of his life referred to in, *when thou shalt be old*. "It includes his life up to the time prophesied of." Alford. *Thou girdedst thyself*, &c. Spontaneous, free, unrestricted movement is here designated, in opposition to the deprivation of personal liberty, referred to in, *'thou shalt stretch forth thy hands* (in order that they may be nailed or bound to the cross), *and another shall gird thee*, i. e. bind thee to the cross.' That this is the true exposition of these clauses, is seen by the interpretation in v. 19. There seems to be an allusion in the words *thou girdedst thyself*, to the gird-

God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

ing of his fisher's coat about him (v. 7), preparatory to his casting himself into the sea. This act was so characteristic of Peter's self-reliant and impulsive spirit, that our Lord illustrates thereby his present exemption from all restraint, compared with the compulsory force and restraint with which in his old age he should be led to death. The same may be said of his stretching forth his hands to swim to the shore, compared with the extending them to be fastened to the transverse beam of the cross. The form of expression, *thou shalt stretch forth thy hands*, corresponding as it does with *thou girdedst thyself*, indicates voluntary activity, yet at the command of the executioner. The idea is that Peter would manifest no reluctance or hesitation to die for the cause of his Lord. He would stretch out his hands, voluntarily, nay even joyfully, to testify his love and fidelity to Jesus by suffering martyrdom in his behalf. Yet it would be nevertheless true, that he would do this at the command of the executioner, and be bound to the cross and elevated thereon through physical constraint. The words *carry thee whither thou wouldest not*, in this connection, must refer to the suspension of Peter upon the cross ; unless we suppose that these clauses are inverted, and that reference is had to the previous act of carrying his cross to the place of execution. The phrase *thou wouldest not*, refers to the shrinking back of weak humanity from a violent death, but not to the unwillingness of Peter to die for Jesus.

19. *Signifying*, i. e. in order thereby to signify. *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 crucified with his head downwards, at Rome, during the reign of the emperor

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple "whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper,

n Ch. 13: 23, 25; & 20: 2.

Nero. *Follow me.* It is probable, that when Jesus addressed this command to Peter, he began to walk slowly along. This rendered the direction emphatic and impressive, but furnishes no proof whatever, that the command is to be taken in a physical sense. It was a repetition of that, which some three years previous had been given to Peter and some of his fellow-disciples on the shore of this same lake (Matt. 4: 19; Mark 1: 17). It is as though Jesus had said: 'Although martyrdom lies in your very pathway, and must inevitably be endured by you, yet what I said to you on the occasion of my calling you to be my disciple, I now repeat, and with still greater emphasis, *follow me*. As I refused not to die, in order to fulfil the great purpose of my mission, so do you in like manner, hesitate not to seal with your death, the testimony which I have chosen you to bear to the truth of my gospel.'

19. Some expositors think that both Peter and John mistook our Lord's direction to mean an actual physical following him to some other part of the lake, or perhaps to that mountain, "where Jesus had appointed them" (Matt. 28: 16). But if the act was, as we suppose, symbolical of that spiritual following of him which is enjoined upon all his disciples, we can hardly doubt that both Peter and John apprehended its full significance. No sooner was the command given, than Peter began to follow his Lord, and either having his attention arrested by the sound of footsteps behind him, or looking around from some mere impulse, he observed John also following Jesus. *The disciple whom Jesus loved, &c.* This reference of the Evangelist to himself, is designed to show the reason why John also followed Jesus in the manner here referred to. The intimacy which existed between ~~his~~ Lord and him, rendered it

and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?

morally impossible that the one should depart from the place and the other not follow him.

21. *Peter seeing him.* A repetition from *seeth the disciple*, in the preceding verse, in consequence of the intervening parenthesis. *What shall this man do?* Literally, *but this one, what?* The phrase is elliptical, and the words to be supplied must be drawn from the preceding context. Our Lord had just predicted what sort of death Peter should undergo. This inquiry therefore respecting John, according to all the laws of interpretation, must refer to the manner in which he was to depart from life. Our English version, which supplies the verb *do*, is manifestly incorrect. The rendering should be, *what shall befall or happen to this one?* The pronoun is emphatic, as though Peter pointed to John with the finger. Various motives have been assigned to Peter's question. One thing is very evident, that it arose from the purest motives of friendship; for on such an occasion, and having just been addressed in such searching and solemn terms, it is incredible that Peter should have been prompted to propose this inquiry through envy or jealousy. What then was the predominant cause? Some attribute it to a friendly concern and anxiety in regard to his future labors and trials. So Ebrard: "Peter asked with concern what should befall John." Lange: "With a feeling of sympathy which would spare to John the experience of a sharp destiny, such as he considered the lot of himself alone." Fikenscher says: "He hoped to share with John the glory of a death of martyrdom." He finds in the question, therefore, "an illustration of true love which seeketh not its own." Such conjectures as to the motive of the question might be multiplied tenfold. It appears to me that the inquiry is to be interpreted

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry ° till I come,

o Mat. 16: 27, 28: & 25: 31; 1 Co. 4: 5; & 11: 26; Ro. 2: 25; & 3: 11; & 22: 7, 20.

in the light of the evident rebuke which it called forth from Jesus. In view of the *what is that to thee?* or more literally, *what to thee?* we can hardly hesitate to attribute it, in part at least, to *curiosity* as to what should befall his friend—not idle curiosity (Tholuck)—but a desire to know the future trials, labors, and kind of death, which in the apostolic allotment should fall to John, his beloved friend and associate. In requital for a former question which he proposed to Jesus at the instance of Peter (13: 24), and thinking that he was too timid to ask it concerning himself, Peter prefers the question in his stead. This is Stier's explanation. For this curiosity and friendly officiousness, our Lord rebukes the disciple, whom he had a moment before so highly honored by revealing the glorious death which he would suffer in His behalf. As on a previous occasion, his encomium upon Peter's faith (Matt. 16-17-19), was followed by a sharp rebuke for his officious and mistaken interference in regard to the object for which Jesus came into the world; so here his ill-timed curiosity, and forwardness to speak for his friend, was met with a decided, if not a stern reproof.

22. *If I will that he tarry, &c.* This passage has received a variety of interpretations, and doubtless will always remain open to criticism and conjecture. The obscurity rests upon the phrase *till I come*, inasmuch as the word *tarry* (literally *remain*), without doubt refers to a continuance of life, an abiding on earth. In regard to this coming of Christ, there are three modes of explanation, all of which are supported by names of unquestionable authority in the domain of biblical criticism. Aside from these are many interpretations, too fanciful to merit even a passing reference. These three modes of interpretation are respectively based on our Lord's three comings; one at the hour of death; another,

what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

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. Augustine, Bede, Grotius, Müller, Lange, and Olshausen, refer the expression here made use of to our Lord's coming at the hour of death. But did He not come in this sense to Peter and the rest of the apostles? Was not this coming as referable to death by martyrdom, as the slow and gentle wasting away of life through old age? This sense is not only frigid and inapt, but absolutely without any show of reason; or as Stier after Lücke says, "it is a meaningless thought, that the disciple should live until he died." Others, as Bengel, Stier, Alford, Webster, and Wilkinson, refer it to the coming of our Lord to destroy Jerusalem. Trench and Tholuck explain it as referring to the coming of Christ to the last judgment. They regard it as a supposed case: 'if it be my pleasure, that he abide alive on earth until I come to judgment, what concern of thine is it?' Alford argues that a hypothesis of this sort would be strangely incongruous, especially in these last solemn days of his presence on earth. On the other hand, if the language is not hypothetical, the well-authenticated fact, that John actually died, shows conclusively that reference must have been had to a coming of Christ, which took place before his death and consequently before the grand event of the final judgment. In view of this and much more which might be advanced to the same effect, I cannot hesitate to adopt the second mode of explanation, which refers the phrase to our Lord's coming, to take vengeance upon the unbelieving Jews, and put an end to the old dispensation. This accords with the facts of history. John lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall of Judaism. It is highly probable

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?

24 ¶ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and

p Ch. 19:35; 3 Jo. 12.

that this chapter, if not the whole of his Gospel, was written after that catastrophe (see Preface to the Gospel). If so his language must have been fully intelligible to those of his readers, who had been made acquainted with the prediction. He had survived the coming of Jesus to destroy his enemies; and this furnished ground for an impression which extensively prevailed in the churches, that he would never die. All this seems clearly to indicate, that the exposition which refers the words to the destruction of Jerusalem, is the correct one. Inasmuch however as many believers who had personal intercourse with Jesus lived to see this event, and as there seems in this implied promise of Jesus to have been some special favor bestowed upon John, I am inclined to believe with Stier, that the revelations in Patmos, the *behold I come quickly!* which found its primary fulfilment in the coming of Christ to take vengeance upon his Jewish enemies, are included in the expression. So Luthardt supposes, that as John beheld those events [i. e. those of the Apocalypse], they must have been referred to in this expression of our Lord's coming, either directly or subordinately. The pronoun *thou*, in the reiterated command *follow thou me*, is emphatic, and contrasts Peter's own duty and obligations, with his inquisitive spirit in regard to the manner and time of John's death.

23. This saying is explained by the following clause, *that that disciple should not die*. The term *brethren*, was then as now applied to believers in Christ. The expression is one of common use

wrote these things: and ^p we know that his testimony is true.

25 ^r And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, ^r I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

q Ch. 20:30. *r* Amos 7:10.

in the Acts, and in the Epistles. *He shall not die*, i. e. be wholly exempt from death. *If I will that he tarry*, &c. It is evident that John assumes, that the coming of Jesus referred to had already taken place, and that the prediction had been fully accomplished. There was nothing, therefore, so far as the words of Jesus were concerned, to forbid his death, at any hour in which his Lord might see fit to call him to his presence. "John was earlier than the other disciples prepared for the death of martyrdom, as the most perfect sacrifice of obedience to God, and of love to God and man; but that was the very reason why he was not to taste the martyr's death. John consummated in his life and natural death what the martyrs sealed in their final sacrifice, namely, the victorious manifestation of the love of God and man," Stier. This is made by Käpflinger the reason why all endeavors to put him to a violent death were vain.

24. 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. Here some expositors make the Gospel of John to end. What follows beginning with *and we know*, they ascribe to the church, as Luthardt thinks, the one at Ephesus. "The seal of her testimony to the historical truth is first impressed in a dignified and weighty manner by *his testimony*, and in the *is true*, the seal of her higher internal assurance of truth as a matter of faith," Stier. But the *we know*—which Alford remarks is in John's style (see 1 John 5:18, 19, 20, also 4:14, 16)—followed as it is by

I suppose, furnishes no proof that a collection of persons, rather than a single individual, is referred to. See introductory remarks to this chapter. As to what is said about the indefiniteness of *I suppose*, so different from the usual positiveness of John's style, the solution is to be sought in the strong hyperbole, which seemed to require the softened form of *I think* or *suppose*. In regard to the interchange of number, the Evangelist in *we know*, refers not only to himself, but to such of his fellow Christians, as had either personally seen Christ, or had such an abundant measure of faith wrought in them by the Spirit, that the positive assertion *we know*, could as properly be predicated of them as of John. Or he may have retrospectively referred 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. But in regard to the declaration that the world itself had not sufficient capacity to contain a record of all the works and words of Jesus, it was a matter of personal and private judgment, and the writer very properly employs the singular verb. Even if this were not so, the frequent and sudden interchanges of number as well as of tense, employed by writers of the energy and vivacity of John, is too common to excite any surprise. We see therefore no necessity of attributing those two verses to the church, countersigning, as Stier expresses it,

the Gospel, or putting upon it her seal of testimony to its historical truth. The testimony of an inspired apostle stood in need of no such voucher from a church, composed of fallible men, who themselves needed the very guidance and instruction of the word, to the truth of which they are supposed to bear testimony. *That his testimony is true.* See 3 John 12.

25. John here avows that he has not pretended to write a history which embraces all the doings of Jesus, but that his Gospel is of necessity fragmentary. *Every one*; literally, *one by one*, in full detail. The expression, *even the world itself could not contain*, &c., is evidently hyperbolical. The simple idea is, that the detail would be so cumbrous and voluminous, that the usefulness of the history would be greatly abridged thereby. "Divine wisdom is as apparent in the limitation of the number and magnitude of the books that have been written by authority concerning the things which Jesus did, as it is in the plurality and variety of them. There are several, that we might have sufficiency of independent testimony; many acts and words of Jesus are recorded, that we may become thoroughly acquainted with him and his blessed will; more have not been recorded, lest the memory should be overwhelmed and confused, and lest the books should become the property of a few, or of a class, instead of being accessible and intelligible to all." Webster and Wilkinson.

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