

John 1 - 6

W. Kelly.

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Part 1 of An Exposition of the Gospel of John.

Edited with annotations, by E. E. Whitfield.

(The reference figures, relate to the notes respectively so numbered in the Appendix — john_app.doc.)

Author's Preface.

The work now before the Christian did not consist of discourses taken down in shorthand and corrected, as many books of mine have been. It was written with care from first to last, with the deep conviction how little my plummet, perhaps anyone's, can sound its revealed depths. Still, its communications are freely given by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, that we might know them through the Spirit in our measure. May the truth, and nothing but the truth, commend itself to the conscience and heart of all God's children. It is a day when many, listening to the tempter, have found a hard saying in the matchless words of life eternal, and even gone back, so as to walk no more with the Lord. May they so learn, as it were from His own lips, that the words He has spoken are spirit and are life. Of these sayings none is more eminent a witness among the inspired than the apostle, and of his inspired writings none so rich in these sayings as his Gospel. May grace use whatever help may be in this exposition to better appreciate the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. No reader is likely to feel its shortcomings so much as the writer, but he also feels that the Father delights in honour truly paid to the Son. This throughout he has sought humbly and heartily, counting on the Spirit's presence and power, Who is here to glorify Him.

London, April, 1898.

Preface to the Second Edition.

The Exposition of the Fourth Gospel issued, within the last ten years, by Mr. William Kelly happily contained his own translation of the Greek text preferred by him, with critical apparatus. Each of these is reproduced in the new edition, whilst the footnotes now record also the voice of the Syriac codex of Sinai among the ancient versions, besides the respective readings adopted for their texts by Professor B. Weiss (1901) and Professor Blass (1902). Such additions are enclosed in crotchets, which are used also for the few alternative renderings here added in harmony with the Exposition. Quotations from the Old Testament have been treated as in the recently published volume of the same writer's "Exposition of Mark." The few marginal references to parallel passages of the Synoptics, the Appendix and Indexes are likewise new features.

The expositor had before him the English works in chief repute relating to this Gospel that had appeared down to the time of the publication of his book. The outlook has been extended to the latest in particular German and American-literature noticed in the Appendix. Although, as a learned dignitary has just been saying from his pulpit, "the Gospel of St. John is the one book in the Bible which stands

in least need of the apologist," there has been a keen attack upon it in recent years, so that the Notes at the end are largely devoted to an examination of the criticism in fashion, by many regarded with deep concern.

Mr. Kelly had the happiness of being outside the ranks of those who have "to do the best they can for the side on which they are retained." Neither adhesion to ecclesiastical tradition nor academical influences hampered his independence, which was therefore no more governed by antecedent theories of the conventional "apologetic" than by those of the rigidly "critical" type. His robust religious belief was as far from being synonymous with "dogma" on the one hand as with "mysticism" on the other. In conflict with current unbelief, he did not understand any process of buttering bread on both sides: he seriously and consistently did battle for the Faith of the Gospel, as he understood that, "once for all delivered to the saints." A melancholy feature at the present day is the readiness of some without pain to write in derogation of the faith in which they were reared; with such Mr. Kelly had nothing in common.

The editor associates himself closely with the standpoint of the Exposition; his notes, as a Scottish review of the volume on *Mark* has stated of the Appendix there, are "in logical development of Mr. Kelly's views." He has endeavoured to speak plainly, yet with becoming respect towards scholars whose statements are combated. One may value the better aspects of a method, whilst questioning the application of it in the light of actual results obtained.

How a singularly precious book of Holy Scripture served William Kelly's ministry may be learned from this Exposition, which is reissued in the hope that it will continue to afford help to those at least who care for neither sentimental tradition nor traditional sentiment, but do love the Christ of God.

E. E. W. *January, 1908.*

Introduction

That the fourth Gospel is characterised by setting forth the Lord Jesus as the Word, the Only-begotten Son, God Himself, on earth can be questioned by no intelligent Christian. It is not as Messiah, Son of David and of Abraham, yet withal the Jehovah of Israel, Emmanuel; nor yet as the Son devoted to the service of God, above all in the Gospel; neither is it as the Holy Thing born of the Virgin by the miraculous agency of the Holy Ghost, and in this sense too Son of God, that He is presented, as in each of the other inspired accounts respectively by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In the Gospel of John 1 His Divine nature shines from under the veil of flesh, as He moves here and there, evermore displaying the Father in His Person and words and ways; and then, on His going above, giving and sending the Holy Ghost to be with and in His own for ever.

1 [This and all other reference figures relate to the Editor's notes respectively so numbered in the Appendix.]

Hence it is that He is here declared the giver of eternal life to the believer, who is accordingly entitled in virtue of this new life to become a child of God. For it is no question here of dispensational dealings, nor of testimony to the creature, nor yet of the moral perfections of the man Christ Jesus. All these have their fitting places elsewhere; but here the Spirit of God has in hand a deeper task—the manifestation of the Father in the Son, and this as the Word become flesh and tabernacling here below, with its immense consequences for every soul, and even for God Himself, glorified both in the exigencies of His moral being and in the intimate depths of His relationship as Father.

Further, we may take note of the Divine wisdom which wrote and gave such a Gospel at a comparatively late date,² when the enemy was seeking to corrupt and destroy, not by Pharisaic or Sadducean adversaries, nor by idolatrous Gentiles, but by apostates and antichristian teachers. These, under the highest pretensions to knowledge and power, were undermining the truth of Christ's Person, on the side both of His proper Deity and of His real humanity,³ to the ruin of man and to the most thankless and daring dishonour of God. No testimony came in more appropriately than that of John, who, like the writer of the earliest Gospel, was an eyewitness,⁴ and even above all others familiar, if one may reverently so say, with the Lord Jesus as man on earth. Yet none the less, but above all, is he the instrument of attesting His Divine glory. The bearing of both on the closing efforts of Satan, even then and thenceforward prevalent (1 John 2: 18), is also most evident and of supreme importance. The Lord, on the other hand, as ever in His grace, met the efforts of Satan by a fuller assertion of "That which was from the beginning," for Divine glory in the clearing, comfort, and consolidation of the family of God-yea, of the babes. For what greater security than to find themselves the objects of the Father's love, loved as the Son was loved, Himself in them, and they in Him, Who on departing assures them of the abiding presence of that other Paraclete, the Holy Spirit?-a blessedness so great that He declares His own deeply missed absence "expedient" for them in order to secure it.

Consequently, along with the reality and manifestation of eternal life in man, in Christ the Son, there is the careful, complete, and distinct abolishing of Jewish or any other relationships for man in the flesh with God; while it is shown clearly both in the introduction and at the end of the Gospel that the dispensations of God are not overlooked, nor Christ's relation to them, His Person, Divine yet a man, being the pivot on which all turns.

Indeed, it was a great oversight of the ancient ecclesiastical writers to regard John as the evangelist who views the Lord or His own in their heavenly connections, ill as the eagle could symbolize any such thing; though even Augustine accepted the fancy, as Victorinus seems first to have suggested it. But theologians do not at all agree; for Irenæus will have Mark to be the eagle, and Andreas follows in his wake. Williams of late-and he is not alone-revived the interpretation of Augustine, who strangely applied the man to Mark and the ox to Luke, where the converse would have been at least more plausible. Many more applications equally wild prevailed, but they are hardly worth recording.

For the "living creatures" in Rev. 4 and elsewhere have no real or intended relation to the four Gospels. These present to us the grace of God which appeared in Christ among men, and the redemption which He accomplished in the rejected Messiah. The cherubim, on the contrary, are revealed when the throne on high assumes a judicial character in chastisements, preparatory to the Lord's taking the kingdom of the world and appearing from heaven for that reign. They symbolize the Divine attributes in figures taken from the heads of creation. Ingenious but superficial analogies cannot avail against the entire moral bearing of their associations as contrasted as grace is with judgment.

But the characteristic truth which it is hard to overlook in John, with a slight exception here and there, is God manifesting Himself in His Son, yet man on earth; not man in Him the exalted Christ on high, which is the line assigned to the apostle Paul, and among the inspired accounts of the Lord to the end of Luke and even, in a measure, of Mark. Therefore we may notice that there is no Ascension scene (though abundantly supposed) in John any more than in Matthew, though for wholly different reasons. For the first Gospel shows us the Lord in His final presentation, risen indeed, but still maintaining His links of relationship with the disciples or Jewish remnant in Galilee, where He gives them their great commission, and assures them of His presence with them till the consummation of the age. The last shows us Him uniting in His person the glory not only of the risen man and Son of God, the last Adam,

but also of the Lord God, Who as the quickening spirit breathes the breath of a better life in resurrection power into His disciples, and thereon gives also a mystical view of the age to come, with the special places of both Peter and John.

It is God on earth, therefore, that appears in the account of our Lord here, not (save for exceptional purposes) man glorified in heaven, as in the writings of St. Paul.⁵ Hence in the first chapter, so remarkable for the fulness with which the titles of Christ are brought before us there, we do not read of Him either as priest or as head of the church-relations which are exclusively bound up with His exaltation above and service at the right hand of God. John presents all that is Divine in Christ's person and work on earth; and as he gives us the setting aside of the first man in his best shape, so also the absolute need of the Divine nature if man is to see or enter the kingdom of God. What is essential and abiding naturally flows from the presence of a Divine Person revealing Himself here below in grace and truth.

Again, the character of the truth before the Holy Spirit evidently excludes any genealogy such as is found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, who respectively traced our blessed Lord down from Abraham and David, or up to Adam, "which was [the son] of God." Here John gives no such birth-roll; for how trace the line of Him Who in the beginning, before a creature existed, was with God and was God? If Mark is devoted to the details of His service, especially His service in the gospel, accompanied by suited powers and signs (for He would arouse man and appeal to unbelievers in the patient goodness of God), he in the wisdom of the same Spirit was led to omit all record of His earthly parentage and early life, and at once enters on His work, only preceded by a brief notice of His herald, John the Baptist, in his work.⁶ Hence, as the Lord was the perfect Servant, so the perfect account of it says nothing here of a genealogy; for who would ask the pedigree of a servant? Thus, if His service seems to keep it out from Mark, His Deity, being the prominent truth, renders it unsuitable for the Spirit's purpose by John. It is only from all the four that we receive the truth in its various fulness:⁷ only so could even God adequately reveal to us our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospels He is given us in view not merely of our need, but of the Divine love and glory.

The contents of this Gospel may be more clearly apprehended by the summary that follows.* Chapters 1-4 precede the Galilean ministry of our Lord given by the three Synoptists. John the herald was still baptizing, and free (John 3: 23, 24); while our Lord was on His way to Galilee (John 4) through Samaria. John 1 to 2: 22 are preliminary, John 1: 1-18 being the wondrous and suited preface of His personal glory, seen in the chapter throughout. Then from verses 19-42 is John's testimony historically, not to others only about Jesus, but to Himself and its fruit. From verse 43 Christ calls individually and gathers, wherein He passes from the truth of His position as the Christ in Ps. 2 to the wider and higher glory of the Son of man in Ps. 8 Then we have in John 2: 1-22 the marriage in Cana of Galilee which manifests His glory, and His execution of judgment in purifying the temple, as risen from the dead.

* [*Cf.* subsequent "God's Inspiration of the Scriptures (Divine Design, § 31. JOHN)," pp. 347-357]

From John 2: 23 is shown the impossibility of God's trusting man as he is, and in John 3 the necessity of his being born anew to see or enter the kingdom of God, even on its earthly side. The cross of the Son of man is no less requisite; but God's Only-begotten Son is given in His love to save the world. Only faith in His name is indispensable. It is not a charge of law violated, but of light come and hated, men's works being evil. But John, the Bridegroom's friend, rejoices to be eclipsed by His glory Who comes from heaven and is above all, not only the Sent One with God's words, but the Son of His

love to Whom the Father has given all things. To believe on Him, therefore, is to have life eternal; to disobey Him in unbelief is to have the wrath of God abiding on him. Such is the introduction.

John 4 is the Son of God humbling Himself in grace to draw a reprobate Samaritan to God, in order to worship Him and as Father too in spirit and truth, Jerusalem being now gone, as her rival was nothing. For He is the Saviour of the world. Yet the courtier in Capernaum proves that his faith in the Saviour for his sick son, though in Jewish form, was not in vain. He does not despise feeble faith.

John 5 shows us Jesus the Son of God, not a healer only, but quickening the dead souls that hear Him now, and raising to a life resurrection at His coming; while those who hearken not and live wickedly He, the Son of Man, will raise to a resurrection of judgment. The grounds of faith are therefore added in the rest of the chapter.

In John 6 the sign of the bread He gave the great crowd introduces the teaching of Himself, incarnate, the true Bread from heaven, and in death His flesh truly food and His blood truly drink, followed by His ascension. He is the object of faith thus, as the Quickener in the preceding chapter.

Thence John 7 lets us into His sending down the Holy Spirit from Himself in glory before the Feast of Tabernacles is literally fulfilled. Such is the power for witness, as in John 4 for worship. In these four chapters the Lord is set as Himself the truth of which Israel had possessed forms.

In John 8 and John 9 His word and His work are rejected respectively and to the uttermost. Nevertheless the sheep, which receive both to their blessing, He not only keeps, but leads outside the fold to better still, one flock, one Shepherd. Nothing can harm. They are in the Father's hand and in the Son's (John 10).

John 11 and John 12 give us the testimony to Christ, as Son of God in resurrection power, as Son of David according to prophecy, and as Son of man bringing in through His death a new, unlimited, and everlasting glory, which His jointheirs should share with Him.

From John 13 to 17 is unfolded the Lord's position in heaven, and what He is for us then and there—an entirely new thing for the disciples who looked for the kingdom here and now. He is our Advocate (1 John 2: 1), and washes by the word our feet defiled by the way; and when Judas is gone out, opens His death as morally glorifying Himself, glorifying God in every way, and His glorification in Him as the immediate consequence. But He is coming (John 14) to receive them to Himself in the Father's house, the proper Christian hope. Meanwhile Christ promises another Advocate, or Paraclete, to dwell with them and be in them for ever, Who is the present power of Christianity, and works in the obedience of the Christian. In John 15 we have the Christian position on earth contrasted with Judaism. It is not union but communion with Christ to bear fruit, and render testimony to His glory: moral government is in question rather than sovereign grace. John 16 treats of the presence of the Spirit, what it proves to the world, and how He deals with the believers who now ask the Father in Christ's name. John 17, in Christ's outpouring to the Father, gives our place with Him, and apart from the world, in past, present, and future unity, both privilege in heaven with Him by and by, and our wondrous blessedness even now.

John 18 and John 19 characteristically sketch the closing scenes of His varied mock trials after His willing surrender, and the humiliating experience of His disciples; then the death of the cross, and its fruit, as well as the beloved disciple's witness, to whom He confided His mother. John 20 presents Him risen, His message through Mary of Magdala, and His manifestation to the gathered disciples on the Resurrection, and in eight days to Thomas, the type of Israel seeing and believing. John 21 adds the mystical picture of the millennial age, when the Gentiles become Christ's, and the net is not broken as

heretofore. As an appendix, we have Peter restored and reinstated, with the assurance that in the weakness of age grace would strengthen him to die for his Master, Whom he failed thus to glorify in the day of his more youthful self-confidence. John is left in no less mysterious guise, though it was not said that he should not die, but in suspense, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." So we know that the same pen, which God employed to set out the Son of God in His personal glory and ineffable grace, was to give us, after the translation of the heavenly on high, the Divine government which will at length invest Christ and them with the world's kingdom in the day when He will be the manifest centre of all glory, heavenly and earthly. For this and more we find in the Revelation.⁸

JOHN — THE FIRST CHAPTER*

* Cf. "Lectures Introductory to the Gospels," pp. 408-429.

John 1: 1-5.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word, the expression of the Godhead, has eternal being, distinct personality and proper Deity, not merely Θεϊότης (Rom. 1: 20), but Θεότης (Col. 2: 9). We see One Who was before time began. It is not even the beginning of creation, but before then, when the Word was with God before all things were made by Him. Look back as we may before creation, the Word was-not ἐγένετο, *existed*, as One that had commenced to be, but ἦν, *was*, the Word increase-yea, the Creator. Further, He "was with God," not exactly here with the Father as such; for Scripture never speaks with such correlation. "The Word was with God." Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were there; but the Word was with God, "and the Word was God." He was no creature, but essentially Divine, though not He alone Divine. Other Persons there were in the Godhead.⁹

"The same was in the beginning with God" (verse 2); not at a subsequent date, but "in the beginning," when no creature had commenced its existence. For this truth we are entirely indebted to God. Who could speak of such things but God? It is He Who uses John to write, and all He says is worthy of implicit faith. The Word "was in the beginning with God." His personality was eternal, no less than His nature or being. He was no mere emanation, as the Indo-Aryans dreamed in the earliest form of their thoughts known to us. For God thus was not really supreme and free, but subject to restraint necessarily incompatible with sovereignty, and ever tending to that pantheism which, making the universe to be God, denies the only true God. Thus, He was merely Tad (That), an abstract energy, yet not in self-sufficiency, but in longing for others to emanate-Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. In the Hindu system developed later, as the Divinity was thus imaginatively resolved into emanations, so is the universe itself pantheistically to be an emanation rather than a creation formed by Divine will, power, and design. All is flux and illusion. What a contrast is its Triad with the Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God! And its Avataras, even that of Krishna, late as the legend rose, how remote from the Incarnation! Thereby God and man stand for ever united in one Person, by His death the Reconciler of all creation, heavenly and earthly, and of those who by grace are to reign with Him over all things to the glory of God the Father.*

*"I cannot but regard John 1: 2 as a striking and complete setting aside of the Alexandrian and Patristic distinction of λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and λόγος προφορικός. Some of the earlier Greek fathers, who were infected with Platonism, held that the λόγος was *conceived* in God's mind from eternity, and

only *uttered*, as it were, in time. This has given a handle to Arians, who, like other unbelievers, greedily seek the traditions of men. The apostle here asserts, in the Holy Ghost, the *eternal personality* of the Word *with God*" ("Lectures on the Gospels," p. 409, note).

Then as an added and after communication we are told that "all things were made by Him, and without Him not one thing was made which hath been made" (verse 3). The Word was not made, but Himself made all.* The Word is the Creator of all that has had a derived being. He created all. No creature received being apart from Him. The Word was the agent. Had He not been God, this must have been a work impossible to Him. Had He not been "in the beginning with God," it could not have been in any special way attributed to Him, the eternal Word. But creation is here affirmed as His work, not in a positive way only, but without exception for every creature. So in Col. 1: 16, 17 we are told that "by (ἔν, in virtue of) Him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities; all things have been created through Him, and for Him; and He is before all things, and by (ἔν) Him all things consist (or, are held together)." What repeated and irrefutable proofs of Deity!†

*I think the remark not only unhappy but worthy of reprobation, wherein it is said that evil itself implicitly (and not all matter only) was made by the Word. This is false philosophy, the Hegelianism even of many who oppose Hegel. Evil has nothing to do with creation, save as it is an inconsistency with it. The question now is not of evil in the sense of physical punishment; for this is pre-eminently sent of God. But moral evil in any being is a contradiction of the relationship in which God set that being. It is therefore neither in God nor of God, being failure relative to what previously existed as the fruit of God's pleasure, Who nevertheless permits it in view of government and redemption. Thus the angels left their first estate. Satan stood (or stands) not in the truth, and Adam fell from his original innocence. This is in no way a limitation of Divine power; but, contrariwise, the error I am combating does limit His goodness or His truth. Impossible that there can be in or from God the contrary of what He is, and He is good, He only; in the creature it can easily be, and it is, where creation is not sustained by God, or delivered by His grace.

†Cf. "Notes on Colossians," pp. 19-21.

Each of these scriptures gives us precise instruction of the highest kind. Even Gen. 1, though it points in verses 1 and 2 to states of creation indefinitely anterior to Adam, only begins with John 1: 3. But of the details that followed in time no scripture gives us such complete information. What was before creation is wholly omitted by Moses. John 1: 1, 2 shows us eternity before creation, as well as creation itself (verse 3), in the most precise terms.^{9a}

But there is much more than the power of an eternal Being. For we come now to a thing higher and more intimate: not to what was brought into being 9b through Him, but to what was in Him. "This is the true God and eternal life" (John 5: 20). "In him was life."* The only life here noticed is that which, being eternal, is capable of knowing, enjoying, serving, and worshipping God, suited to His presence, and to be there for ever. Believers have life; but it is in the Son, not in them, but in Him. Here, however, it is not pursued beyond its source in Him; its communication will soon follow in due course. The Spirit is occupied with the character of His person. Only He adds at this point the deeply interesting announcement, "and the life was the light of men" (verse 4).¹¹ Not angels but men were the object. He does not say life, but light of men. The life was only for those that believe in His name: the light goes far beyond. That which makes manifest is light. So in Prov. 8, the beautiful introduction of Wisdom, Whom Jehovah possessed in the beginning of His way before His works of old, not more His delight than Wisdom's delights were with the sons of men.

*The arrangement of verses 3, 4, which Lachmann, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort ["Notes on Select Readings," p. 73 *f.*] prefer (partly because of the absence of interpunction in some very ancient MSS., partly because some copies, versions, and fathers, expressly so take it), is ὁ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωῆ ἦν . So ACpmDGpmL, Vulg. Syrcu Sahid. But with Tischendorf and others [as Weiss and Blass]¹⁰ I unqualifiedly decide for a colon or full-stop after γέγονεν , and begin a new sentence with ἐν αὐτῷ ζωῆ ἦν . [So Weiss after CcorrEGHKM Syrpesch *hcl.*] There is an intended contradistinction between what was made or brought into being *through* the Word with life *in* Him, which is lost when the new sentence begins with ὁ γέγ . Is it not false doctrine so to reduce life in the Word? Further it is not Johannean, if grammatical, to take γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ as "made by him." Again, this life, which would mean the living universe (in itself a strange, unscriptural, and senseless phrase), must then be the light of men, contrary to the express teaching, just after, that the Word exclusively was the light. On the other hand, the phrase, as it usually stands, is in the fullest harmony with the style of the evangelist elsewhere, as Dean Alford has pointed out.

But men, in fact, were in a fallen condition, and at a distance from God; and so it is intimated here that a worse darkness reigned than the gloom which covered the deep before the six days' work began. "And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended [that is, apprehended] it not" (verse 5).

Darkness is neither the mother of all, as the heathen said, nor a malignant Demiurge, the never-ceasing opponent of the good Lord of light.* It is really the moral condition of man, fallen as he is, a negation of the light, differing wholly from the physical reality, inasmuch as it is of itself unaffected by light. Grace only, as we shall see by and by, can deal effectually with the difficulty.

*See footnote on verse 16.

Here it may be noticed that John does not discourse of life absolutely, but of life in the Word, which life is affirmed to be the Light of men. It is exclusive of other objects—at least, the proposition goes not beyond men. So in Col. 1 Christ is said to be the image of the invisible God, Who is here only revealed to perfection in man and to men. He is the light of men, and there is no other: for if man has what scripture calls light, he has it only in the Word, Who is the life. Beyond controversy God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; but He dwells in unapproachable light, Whom no man has seen, nor can see. Not so with the Word of Whom we are reading. "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Observe the striking precision of the phrases. It appears in darkness—such is its nature; "it shines," not "it shone"; whereas the abstract form is changed for the historical, when we are told that the darkness apprehended it not.

Thus we have had the Spirit's statement of the Word, as related first to God, next to creation, lastly to men, with a solemn sentence on their moral state in relation to the light, and not merely to life.

John 1: 6-8.

We are next presented with John sent from God to testify of the light. "There was a man sent from God—his name John. The same came for witness that he might witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but that he might witness about the Light." God, Who is Love, was active in His goodness to draw attention to the Light; for deep was man's need. Hence there was a man sent from Him—his name John.¹² He, as we are told elsewhere, was the burning and shining lamp (ὁ λυχνος); but the Word was the Light (τὸ φῶς) concerning Whom he came to bear witness. For his mission is here viewed in relation, not to the law or any legal purpose, but to the Light (and hence its scope is far beyond Israel), that he might witness concerning the Light, that all ^{12a} might

believe through him. It is a question of personal faith in the Saviour, not merely of moral exhortation to the multitude, tax-gatherers, soldiers, or any others, as in the Gospel of Luke. Every scripture is perfect, and perfectly adapted to the Divine purpose of glorifying Jesus.

John 1: 9-13.

The Light is here the object of God's gracious purpose. John is but an instrument and witness; *he* was not the Light, but that he might witness concerning the Light. "The true Light was that (or, He was the true Light) which, coming into the world, lighteth every man," in exclusion of Philonism and Platonism, as we have seen before of eternal matter and Manicheism. The law dealt with those under it—that is, with Israel; the Light, on coming into the world—a cardinal point in the teaching of our Apostle (1 John 1: 1-4; 2: 8, 14, etc.)—casts its light on every man. Coming, or a comer, into the world is used by the Rabbis for birth as man; but for this very reason it would be the merest tautology if viewed in apposition with π. ἄνθρ. "every man."* It qualifies the relative, and affirms that as incarnate the true Light lights every man—that is, sheds light on him.

*There seems to be no force in taking ἦν with ἐρχόμενον as equivalent to an imperfect "came," even if an independent clause such as ὃ φ. π. ἄνθρ. might legitimately come between the verb and the participle; which, as far as I know, has not yet been produced, Mark 2: 18 (which Lücke advances and Alford approves) being in no way parallel. But were it so, where is the propriety of telling us in this wondrous prologue, where each brief clause—yea, word—is brimful of the profoundest truth, that the true Light which lights every man was in process of coming (*not* of manifesting Himself, which is quite another thought) into the world? On the other hand, the construction given in the Authorised Version, though vouched by ancient translations, Western and Eastern, and even by Greek fathers, seems not really admissible. It would require the article with ἐρχόμενον. The anarthrous participle does not mean "that cometh," but "as" or "on coming," which could have no proper meaning in connection with ἄνθρωπον. For how strange the doctrine resulting, that every man on coming into the world of darkness has or receives the light of Christ! With ὃ it teaches a momentous truth, and this extinguishing, not suggesting, the Quaker idea. For it is the Word in His own nature, not an inward light, Who pours it on every man. He alone coming here is the true Light for man, and sheds it on all, high or low, Jew or Greek. It is like the sun's light for all mankind, but in a spiritual way.¹³

The result, however, in itself is, and can only be, condemnation by reason of opposition of nature; for, as we are told, "He was in the world, and the world was made (or, brought into being) through Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to those that believe on His name; who were born not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's (ἄνδρὸς) will, but of God." What infinite and loving condescension that He, the eternal Word, the true Light, should be in the world 14—the world which receiveth its being from Him! How dense its ignorance that the world knew Him not, its Creator! But He had one place on earth which He was pleased to regard as His own peculiar (τὰ ἴδια) 15: there He came; and (οἱ ἴδιοι) His own people (it is not said knew Him not, but) received Him not! It was rejection, not ignorance.

This prepared the way for the manifestation of a new thing, men from out of the ruined world separated to a new and incomparably nearer relationship with God, to whom, as many as received Christ (for it is no question of "every man" here), He gave right or title to enter the place of God's children, to those that believe on His name. Nor is this a mere external position of honour, into which sovereignty might choose, so as to maintain by adoption family name and grandeur. It is a real

communication of life and nature, a living birth-tie.¹⁶ They were τέκνα Θεοῦ , God's children. It is not that they had been better than others. They had been once alienated, and enemies in mind by wicked works. They believed on Christ's name; they were born of God. It was a work of Divine grace through faith. Receiving the Word, they were begotten of God. Natural generation from either side, effort of one's own, influence of another however exalted, had no place here.

John nowhere describes believers as υἱοὶ but as τέκνα , for his point is life in Christ rather than the counsels of God by redemption. Paul, on the other hand (as in Rom. 8), calls us both υἱοὺς and τέκνα Θεοῦ , because he is setting forth alike the high place given us now in contrast with bondage under the law, and also the intimacy of our relationship as children of God. On the other hand, it is notable that Jesus is never called τέκνον (though as Messiah He is styled παῖς , or Servant), but υἱός . He is the Son, the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, but not τέκνον as if He were born of God as we are. Thus it is the name of nearest but derived relationship. This is quite confirmed by the immediately following statement of John, "who were born . . . of God." So indeed it will be seen invariably elsewhere, despite the Authorised Version, which wrongly represents τέκνα by "sons" in his First Epistle, (1 John 3). They believe on His name, after the manifestation of what the Word is.¹⁷ Every creature source is shut out, as well as all previous relationship closed and done with; a new race is brought in. They were men of course, and cease not to be men as a fact; but they are born afresh spiritually, born of God most truly, partake of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1) in this sense, as deriving their new life from God.

Life, as we may observe ever throughout the writings of John and Paul, is wholly distinct from simple existence. It is the possession of that Divine character of being, which in the Son never had a beginning, for He was the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. He is our life; because He lives, we also live. It is true in Him and in us: in Him essentially, in us derivatively through grace; yet this is not so as to be for a moment independent of Him, but in Him. Still we have the life now; nowhere is it taught that we shall be born of God, only that as believers we are. "Begotten" now, as distinct from "born," is false, absurd, and without a shadow of scripture to support it.

John 1: 14-18.

From the revelation of the Word in His own intrinsic nature, we now turn to His actual manifestation as man here below. The Incarnation is brought before us, the full revelation of God to man and in man. "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten from beside a father), full of grace and truth." Here it is not what the Word was, but what He became. He was God; He became flesh¹⁸ and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

It was no transient vision, however momentous, as on the holy mount. It was a contemplation¹⁹ of His glory vouchsafed to His witnesses, not of an earthly conqueror, nor Messianic even, but glory²⁰ as of an only-begotten from beside (παρὰ) a father.²¹ No sword girds His thigh, no riding to victory, no terrible things in righteousness: the incarnate Word dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Such is He that was in and from the beginning, and thus known. He was the King undoubtedly, but not so portrayed here. He is infinitely more than King, even God, yet God on earth, man dwelling among men, full of grace and truth. So only could God be displayed, unless in judgment which had left no hope, but only destroyed to the bitter end at once and unreservedly. For infinitely different purposes had He come, as this passage itself declares in due season, perfectly knowing and feeling the universal evil of

man. He tabernacled among us full of grace and truth. It was not a visit or a theophany, as in O.T. experiences. So He here manifested God, Who is love. But grace is more; it is love in the midst of evil, rising above it, going down under it, overcoming it with good.

And such was Jesus, sojourning on earth, full of truth withal; for otherwise grace was no more grace, but a base imitation, and most ruinous both for God and to man. Not such was Jesus, but full of grace and truth, and in this order, too. For grace brings in the truth and enables souls to receive truth and to bear it, themselves as sinners judged by it. He, and He only, was full of grace and truth. To make it known, to make God Himself thus known, He came. For as grace is the activity of Divine love in the midst of evil,²² so truth is the revelation of all things as they really are, from God Himself and His ways and counsels down to man and every thought and feeling as well as word and work of man-yea, of every invisible agency for good or evil throughout all time, and throughout all eternity.* So He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

*See further, exposition below of John 14: 6.

Nor did God fail to render testimony to Him thus. "John witnesseth about Him, and hath cried, saying, This was He of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me, for He was before me" (verse 15). Most strikingly is John introduced with his testimony in each of the great divisions of the chapter. Before it was to the abstract revelation of the Light. Here it is to His actual presentation to the world, and as it is historical, so we have what John cries, not merely a description as before. He says, "This was He of whom I said," etc. The coming of Jesus after John was no derogation from His glory, but the very contrary. No greater prophet than John the Baptist had arisen among those born of women. But Jesus is God. If He was pleased therefore to come after John in time, He had become incomparably before him in place and title; nay, He was really before him, but this only because He is Divine.

The last verse (15) appears to be a parenthesis, however full of instruction. But the direct line of truth runs, "full of grace and truth . . . and of His fulness all we received, and grace for grace" (verse 16). An astonishing truth! He is the gift and the giver-full of grace and truth; and of His fulness did we all receive.* Such is the portion of the least believer. The strongest is only the stronger, because he better appreciates Him. For there is no blessing outside Him, and consequently no lack for the soul that possesses Jesus. If the Colossian saints, if any others, seek to add any other thing to the Lord, it is a real loss, not gain. It is but to add what detracts from Him. For Christ is all (τὰ π.), and in all.

*Before our apostle died Gnosticism was sowing its baneful seeds, it would seem even before St. Paul's death. Early in the second century we know that Basileides had developed the system so far as to separate Jesus from Christ, the latter an emanation ["AEon"] from God united to Jesus at His baptism, and returning to the Fulness on high before His death on the cross.²³ Thus the Incarnation was annulled no less than the Atonement. But even Christ in this impious reverie was not the true God, but only an emanation, sent to make known the good God, and expose the Demiurge [Jehovah], who made the world, with all its evils, inseparable from matter. One readily sees how the doctrine of the apostles outs off by anticipation this irreverent and destructive falsehood by stating the simple truth of Christ's Person and work, though only the germs may have then appeared.

The expression "and grace for grace" has perplexed many, but without much reason; for an analogous phrase occurs, even in profane authors not infrequently, which ought to satisfy any inquirer that it simply means grace upon grace,²⁴ one succeeding to another without stint or failure-superabundance of grace, and not a mere literal notion of grace in us answering to grace in Him. It will be noticed, further, that scripture speaks of grace upon grace, not truth upon truth, which last would be

wholly unsuitable; for the truth is one, and cannot be so spoken of. The same apostle wrote even to the babes, not because they did not know the truth, but because they do know it, and that no lie is of the truth. The unction, which they, in fact, received from Him, teaches them as to all things, and is true, and is not a lie. But as grace brings the truth, so the truth exercises in grace. How blessed that of His fulness all we received, and grace for grace!

Wholly different was seen at Sinai, "for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (verse 17). Not that the law is sin. Far be the thought. It is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. But it is altogether impotent to deliver man or to reveal God. It has neither life to give nor object to make known. It requires from man what he ought to render both to God and to his fellows; but in vain is it required from man, already a sinner before the law was given. For sin entered the world through Adam no less surely than the law was given through Moses. Man fell and was lost; none could bring eternal life but Jesus Christ the Lord.²⁵ Even this was wholly unavailable to man without His death in expiation of sin. Here, however, we have not yet reached the work of Christ, nor the message of grace that goes out to the world grounded on it in the gospel, but His Person in the world; and to this the testimony is "grace and truth came (ἐγένετο) through Jesus Christ." There, and there only, was the Divine love superior to man's evil; there, and there only, was everything revealed, and in its due relation to God, for such is the truth. Truly Jesus is a Divine Saviour.

But there is yet more than this. God Himself must be known, not merely fulness of blessing come in Christ, or souls be brought into the blessing by redemption. Yet man as such is incapable of knowing God. How is this difficulty to be solved? "No one hath seen God at any time: the* only begotten Son† Who is in the bosom of the Father-*He* declared (Him)" (verse 18). Thus only can God be known as He is, for Christ is the truth, the revealer and revelation of God, as of everything in God's sight. Nowhere does scripture say with rationalists and, one regrets to add, with theologians, that God is the truth.^{26a} Not so: God is the "I AM," the self-subsisting One; He is light, He is love. But Christ is the truth objectively, as the Spirit is in power, working in man. And Christ has declared God, as One Who as the Son *is* in the bosom of the Father, not Who *was*, as if He had left it; as He left the glory and is now gone back into glory as man. He never left the Father's bosom. It is His constant place, and His peculiar mode of relationship with the Father. Hence we by the Holy Ghost are in grace privileged to know God, even as the Son declared Him, Who perfectly, infinitely, enjoyed love in that relationship from everlasting and to everlasting. Into what a circle of Divine association does He not introduce us! It is not the Light of men, not yet the Word acting, or becoming flesh, but the only begotten Son Who is in the Father's bosom, declaring Him according to His own competency of nature and the fulness of His own intimacy with the Father. Even John Baptist, as having his origin in the earth, was of the earth and spoke as of it.^{26b} Jesus alone of men could be said to come out of heaven and be above all, testifying what He had seen and heard, as the Holy Spirit also does. It was for Him to declare God, and this in His own proper relationship.

* ὁ omitted by KpmBCpML.

†BCpML, 33, Syrr. , *not* cu. Aeth. Rom have the strange reading θεὸς, God, which Tregelles, Westcott and Hort adopt, the latter having written a learned monograph in its defence. [So Weiss and Zahn.] As the variant seems to be out of all correlation to "Father," the weight of evidence is against it. [Blass reads "the only begotten, who," etc., with corrA, etc. See further Note 26 in Appendix.]

If the verses which precede comprise the Divine preface, the sections which follow may be viewed as an introduction. The Baptist, in answer to the inquiring deputation, gives an explicit, though

in the first place negative, testimony to the Lord Jesus. A singularly fitted vessel of witness to the Messiah, as he was himself filled by the Spirit from his mother's womb, he was sustained as scarce another had ever been in nothing but the function of making straight the way of Jehovah.²⁷

John 1: 19-28.

"And this is the witness of John when the Jews²⁸ sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites that they might ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not, and confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore to him, Who art thou, that we may give an answer to those that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I (am the) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of Jehovah, as said Isaiah the prophet. And they were sent from among the Pharisees; and they asked him and said to him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with (ἐν) water: in the midst of you standeth, Whom ye know not, He who cometh after me, of Whom I am not worthy to unloose the thong of His sandal. These things took place in Bethany,* across the Jordan where John was baptizing."

*The best reading according to ancient authorities is Βηθανία (pm ABCpm EFGHLSVXΓΛΠ pm more than a hundred and thirty cursives, and many ancient versions), not Βηθαβαρα or Βηθαραβᾶ. It was not the well-known village near Jerusalem, but another district of the same name beyond the Jordan.²⁹

Thus did God take care to rouse a general expectancy of the Messiah in the minds of His people, and to send them the fullest witness. And never was there a more strictly independent witness than John, born and brought up and kept till the fit moment to testify of the Messiah. For while the minute questions of those sent by the Jews from Jerusalem show how men's minds were then exercised, how they wished to ascertain the real character and aim of the mysterious Israelite, himself of priestly lineage, and thereby, as they ought to have known excluded from the Messianic title, there was no vagueness in the reply. John was not the Anointed. This was the main aim of their search; and our Gospel very simply and fully attests his reply.

There is somewhat of difficulty in the next answer. For when asked, "Art thou Elijah?" he says, "I am not." How is this denial from the lip of John himself to be reconciled with the Lord's own testimony to His servant in Matt. 17: 11, 12? "Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say to you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist." And they were right. The key appears to lie in Matt. 11: 14: "And if ye will receive it" (says the Lord in vindicating John at a time when, if ever, he seemed to waver in his testimony; for who but One is the Faithful Witness?) "this is Elijah which was [lit. is] to come." Such a word, however, needed ears to hear. Like the Lord (Son of man no less than Messiah), his testimony and his lot were to be in unison with an advent in shame and sorrow as well as in power and glory. The Jews naturally cared only for the latter; but, to avail not only for God, but for the true wants of man, first must Jesus suffer before He is glorified, and comes again in power. So Elijah came to faith ("if ye will receive it") in the Baptist, who testified in humiliation and with results in man's eyes scanty and evanescent. But Elijah will come in a manner consonant with the return of the Lord to deliver Israel and bless the world under His reign. To the Jew, who only looked at the external, he was not come. To point to the Baptist would have seemed mockery; for if they had no apprehension of God's secrets or His ways, if they saw no beauty in the humbled Master, what would it avail to speak of the servant?

The disciples, feeble though they might be, enter into the truths hidden from men, and are given to see beneath the surface the true style of the servant and of the Master to faith.

Nevertheless John does take his stand of witness to Jesus, to His personal and Divine glory; and to this end, when challenged who he was, applies to himself in every Gospel the prophetic oracle attached to him: "I (am the) voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of Jehovah."³⁰ Jesus was Jehovah, John no more than a voice in the desolation of the earth-yea, of Israel-to prepare the way before Him.

They further inquire why he baptized if neither the Messiah, nor Elijah (that is, the immediate precursor of the kingdom in power and glory over the earth-Mal. 4), nor the prophet (that is, according to Deut. 18, which, however, the apostle Peter in Acts 3 as clearly applies to the Lord Jesus, as the Jews seem to have then alienated it from the Messiah).³¹ This gives John the occasion to render another testimony to Christ's glory; for his answer is, that he himself baptized with water; but there stands ³² among them, yet unknown to them, One coming after, Whose sandal-thong he was not worthy to unloose.

It is evident that John's baptism had a serious import in men's minds, since, without a single sign or other miracle, it awakened the question whether the Baptist were the Christ. It intimated the close of the old state of things and a new position, instead of being the familiar practice which traditionalists would make it. On the other hand, scripture is equally plain that it is quite distinct from Christian baptism: so much so that disciples previously baptized with John's baptism had to be baptized to Christ when they received the full truth of the gospel (Acts 19). The Reformers and others are singularly unintelligent in denying this difference, which is not only important but plain and certain. Think of Calvin's calling it a foolish mistake, into which some had been led, of supposing that John's baptism was different from ours! The confession of a coming Messiah widely differs from that of His death and resurrection; and this is the root of differences which involve weighty consequences.

From verses 19 to 28 John the Baptist does not rise beyond what was Jewish and dispensational. The next paragraph brings before us the testimony which he rendered when he saw Jesus approaching. And here we have Christ's work viewed in all the extent of gracious power which might be expected in the Gospel devoted to showing out the glory of His Person.

John 1: 29-34.

"On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." There was no image more familiar to a Jew's mind than that of the lamb. It was the daily sacrifice of Israel, morning and evening. Besides, the paschal lamb was the pledge for the fundamental peace of the year; even as its first institution was coeval with the departure of the sons of Israel from the house of bondage. We can understand, therefore, what thoughts and feelings must have crowded on the heart of those who looked for a Saviour now, when Jesus was thus attested by His forerunner, "Behold the Lamb (ἄμνός) of God." In the Book of Revelation He is frequently viewed as the Lamb, but there with a pointedly different word (ἄρνίον), the holy earth-rejected Sufferer, in contrast with the ravening wild beasts, civil or religious instruments of Satan's power in the world (chapter 13). Here the idea seems to centre not so much in the slain One exalted on high as in the sacrifice: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

John does not say "that will take," still less "that has taken"; nor does the notion seem at all tenable that He was then taking sin away.³³ It is, as frequently in John and elsewhere, the abstract form of speech; and the meaning should be understood in its fullest extent, irrespective of the time of its

accomplishment. There was the Person, and this His work. Thus the testimony looks onward to the effects of the death of Christ as a whole; but these were not to appear all at once. The first result was to be the gospel, the message of remission of sins to every believer. Instead of the sin of the world only being before God, the blood of the Lamb is set; and God could therefore meet the world in grace, not in judgment. Not only was love come in Christ's Person as during His life, but now the blood also shed whereby God could cleanse the foulest; and the gospel is to every creature God's proclamation of His readiness to receive all, and of His perfectly cleansing all who do receive Christ. In fact, only those that are His now, the Church, receive Him; but the testimony is sent forth to all the creation.

When Christ comes again in His kingdom, there will be a further result; for all creation will then be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and Israel will at length look upon the Messiah Whom they pierced in their blind unbelief. The blessing resulting from the sacrifice of Christ will then be far and wide extended, but not complete. Only the new heavens and new earth (and this exceeds the limited scope of the Jewish prophets, but is the full meaning which the Christian apostles give the words) will behold the ultimate fulfilment; and then indeed it will be seen how truly Jesus was "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." For then, and not till then, will sin have disappeared absolutely and all its active consequences. The wicked having been judged and cast for ever into the lake of fire, as well as Satan and his angels, righteousness will then be the footing of God's relationship with the world, not sinlessness as at first, nor dealings in Christ in view of sin as since and now, but all things made new.

Observe, however, that the Baptist does not say the "sins" of the world. What a fatality of error haunts men when they venture to handle the truth of God after a human sort! It is not only in sermons or books that one finds this common and grave blunder. The solemn liturgies of Romanism and Protestantism are alike wrong here. They alter and unconsciously falsify the word of God when directly referring to this scripture. In speaking of believers both the apostles Paul and Peter show that the Lord Himself bore their sins upon the cross. Without this, indeed, there could be neither peace secured for the conscience nor a righteous basis for worshipping God, according to the efficacy of the work of Christ. The Christian is exhorted to come boldly into the holies by the blood of Jesus, which has, at the same time, purged his sins and brought himself nigh; but this is only true of the believer. In total contrast is the state and condition of the unbeliever, of every man in nature. He is far off, in guilt, in darkness, in death. The language of the liturgies confounds all this, according indeed to the practice of their worship; for the world is treated as the Church, and the Church as the world. Were Christ the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world, all men would stand absolved before God, and might well therefore boldly approach and worship; but it is not so. The blood is now shed for the sin of the world, so that the evangelist can go forth and preach the gospel and assure all who believe of pardon from God; but all who refuse must die in their sins, and only the more terribly be judged because they refused the message of grace.

But God never forgets the personal dignity of the Lord Jesus here. Hence John the Baptist adds, "This is He of Whom I said, After me cometh a Man who is become before (or, hath taken precedence of) me, for He was before me.* And I knew Him not, but that He might be manifested to Israel, therefore came I baptizing with (ἐν) water" (verses 30, 31). There is no reference here to His Messianic judgment, as in other Gospels, which, on the other hand, are silent as regards a testimony like this to His glory. Undoubtedly also John did call souls in Israel to repent in view of the kingdom as at hand; but here the one object is the manifestation of Jesus to Israel. It is an absorbing topic of this Gospel indeed. The previous unacquaintance of the Baptist 34 with Jesus made his testimony so much the more solemn and emphatically of God; and whatever the inward conviction he had as the Lord came

for baptism, it did not hinder the external sign nor the witness he bears to His Person and His work as he had borne before it.

*It is interesting and instructive to note that to the Pharisees John is silent (verse 27) as to Christ's pre-existent eternity as the ground of His taking precedence of himself, though born after him. Compare verses 15, 30.

Hence we read, "And John bore witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with (ἐν) water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, this is He that baptizeth with (ἐν, the) Holy Spirit. And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God."35

Such was the suited sign for the Saviour. Ravens might have been employed in God's wisdom to feed the famished prophet at another dark day; but not such was the appearance of the Spirit descending from heaven to abide on Jesus. The dove only could be the proper form, emblematic of the spotless purity of Him on Whom He came. Yet did He come upon Him as man, but Jesus was man without sin; as truly man as any other, but how different from all before or after! He was the second Man in bright contrast with the first. And He is the last Adam: in vain does unbelief look for a higher development, overlooking Him in Whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Observe, again, the Spirit came before the death of the Lord Jesus. If Christ died, He died for others. If He suffered and became a sacrifice, it was not for Himself. Jesus needed no blood in order that He might subsequently be anointed with the holy oil. He was Himself the Holy One of God in that very nature which in every other case had dishonoured God.

But if the Spirit abode on Him as man, this is He that baptizes with the Holy Spirit. None could so baptize but God. It were blasphemy to say otherwise. It is the fullest prerogative of a Divine Person so to act; and hence John the Baptist utterly disclaimed it, and in every Gospel points to Jesus only as the Baptizer by (ἐν) the Holy Ghost, as himself had come baptizing with water. It is the mighty work of Jesus from heaven, as He was the Lamb of God on the cross.

Thus, though the immediate aim of John's mission with baptism attached to it was for the manifestation of Jesus to Israel, he testifies to Him as the Lamb of God in relation to the world, the Eternal at whatever time He came (and surely it was the right moment, "the fulness of the time," as the great apostle assures us-Gal. 4: 4), not merely as the object of the Holy Ghost's descent to abide on Him, but as baptizing with the Holy Ghost. "And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son* of God." Such was His everlasting relationship: not the Son of man Who must be lifted up if we are to have life eternal, but the Lamb of God and the Son of God. On the other hand, it is not here the Father declared by, or revealing Himself in, His only begotten Son, but *God* in view of the broad fact of the world's sin, and Jesus His Lamb to take its sin away. So the baptism of the Holy Ghost is not quickening, but that power of the Spirit which acts on the life already possessed by the believer, separates from all that is of flesh and world, and sets in communion with God's nature and glory as revealed in Christ. He was as man on earth, not only Son of God, but always conscious of it; we becoming so by faith in Him are rendered conscious of our relationship through the Holy Ghost given to us. Nevertheless even Him, as the Gospels show, the descent of the Spirit Who anointed Him placed in a new position here below. All here is public announcement and reaches the world in result.

* pm Syrsin have "chosen," followed by Blass.

John 1: 35-39.

We have had before us John's testimony reaching out far beyond the Messiah in Israel; we see now the effect of his ministry. "Again, on the morrow, stood John and two of his disciples; and looking at Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! and the two disciples heard him speak, and followed Jesus. But Jesus, having turned and beheld them following, saith to them, What seek ye? And they said to Him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest Thou? He saith to them, Come and see. They went therefore† and saw where He abode, and abode with Him that day. It was about the tenth hour." It is not the fullest or clearest statement of the truth which most acts on others. Nothing tells so powerfully as the expression of the heart's joy and delight in an object that is worthy. So it was now. "Looking at Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!" The greatest of woman born acknowledges the Saviour with unaffected homage, and His own disciples that heard Him speak follow Jesus. "He must increase, but I must decrease." And so it ought to be. Not John, but Jesus, is the centre: a man, but God, for none other could be a centre without derogation from the Divine glory. Jesus maintains that place, but this as man too. Wonderful truth, and for man how precious and cheering! John was the servant of God's purpose, and his mission was thus best executed when his disciples followed Jesus. The Spirit of God supplants human and earthly motives. How, indeed, could it be otherwise if one really believed that He in His Person was God on earth? He must be the one exclusive and attractive centre for all that know Him; and John's work was to prepare the way before Him. So here his ministry gathers to Jesus, sending from himself to the Lord.

†ABCLTbXA, 33, Memph. read οὐ̅ν, which inferior witnesses omit.

But if in the Gospel of Matthew the Lord has a city if not a home, which we can name, here in that of John it is unnoticed where He abode. The disciples heard His voice, came and saw where He abode, and abode with Him that day; but for others it is unnamed and unknown. We can understand that so it should be with One Who was not only God in man on earth, but this wholly rejected of the world. And so Divine life effects in those that are His: "therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John 3: 1).

John 1: 40-42.

Nor does the work stop there or then. "Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter,³⁶ was one of the two that heard (it) from John and followed Him. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messiah (which is interpreted Christ),³⁷ and he led him to Jesus. Jesus, looking at him, said, Thou art Simon,³⁸ the son of Jonah (or John);* thou shalt be called Kephas, which is interpreted Peter (or, Stone)."³⁹ Deeply interesting are the glimpses at the first introduction to Jesus of those souls who receiving Him found life eternal in Him, and were called afterwards to be foundations of that new building which would supersede the old, God's habitation in the Spirit. But all here concentrates in the Person of Jesus, to Whom Simon is brought by his brother, one of the first two whose souls were drawn to Him, however little yet they appreciated His glory. Yet was it a Divine work, and Simon's coming was answered with a knowledge of past and present and future that told out Who and What He was, Who now spoke to man on earth in grace.

*So Edd. as BpmL., 33, several Latt. Memph. Æth. "Jonah" is read in ABconXΓΛΛII. Syrpesch pcl and Armen. ÆthH., and Epiph. Chrys. Cyr. Alex.

Here the same principle reappears. Jesus, the image of the invisible God, the only perfect manifestation of God, is the acknowledged centre beyond all rivalry. He was to die, as this Gospel

relates (John 11), to gather in one the scattered children of God; as He will by and by gather all things in heaven and all things on earth under His headship (Eph. 1: 10). But then His Person could not but be the one centre of attraction to every one who saw by faith what He is entitled to be for every creature. Only He was come not only to declare God and show us the Father in Himself the Son, but to take all on the ground of His death and resurrection, having perfectly glorified God in respect of the sin which had ruined all; and thereon to take His place in heaven, the glorified Head over all things to the Church His body on earth, as we know now. On this, however, as involving the revelation of God's counsels and of the mystery hidden from ages and from generations, we do not enter, as it would carry us rather to the Epistles of the apostle Paul, the vessel chosen for disclosing these heavenly wonders.

Our business now is with John, who lets us see the Lord on earth, a man but very God, and so drawing to Himself the hearts of all taught of God. Had He not been God, it would have been robbery not only from God but sometimes also from man. But not so: all the fulness dwelt in Him-dwelt in Him bodily. He was therefore from the beginning the Divine centre for saints on earth, as afterwards when the exalted Man the centre on high, to Whom as Head the Spirit united them as members of His body. This last could not be till redemption made it possible according to grace, but on the basis of righteousness. What we see in John attaches to the glory of His Divine Person: otherwise to bring to Jesus would have been to separate from God, not to Him, as it is. But, in truth, He was and is the sole revealed centre, as He was and is the only full revealer of God, and this because He is the true God and life eternal, though He Who was manifested in flesh, and so meeting and winning man to God by His death.

John 1: 43-51.

"On the morrow He* would go forth into Galilee, and Jesus findeth Philip and saith to him, Follow me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida,⁴⁰ of the city of Andrew and Peter." It is an immense thing to be delivered by Jesus from the waste of one's own will or from the attachment of the heart to the will of a man stronger than ourselves; an immense thing to know that we have found in Him, not the Messiah merely, but the centre of all God's revelations, plans, and counsels, so that we are gathering with Him because we are gathering to Him. All else, whatever the plea or pretension, is but scattering, and therefore labour in vain, or worse.

*The best copies do not read "Jesus" here, but in the next clause.

But we need more, and find more in Jesus, Who deigns to be not only our centre, but our "way," on earth indeed, but not of the world, as He is not. For such He is, no less than the truth and the life. What a blessing in such a world! It is now a wilderness where is no way. He is the way. Do we fear where to walk, what step to take? Here are snares to seduce, there dangers to affright. Above them says the voice of Jesus, "Follow Me." None other is safe. The best of His servants may err, as all have. But even were it not so, *He* says "Follow Me." Christian, hesitate no more. Follow Jesus. You will find a deeper and better fellowship with those that are His; but this by following Him Whom they follow. Only look well to it that it be according to the word, not your own thoughts and feelings; for are they better than those of others? Search your motives according to the light where you walk. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." (Matt. 6: 22.) But singleness is secured by looking to Jesus, not to ourselves or others. We have seen enough of ourselves when we have judged ourselves before God. Let us follow Jesus: to Him only and absolutely, a Divine Person on earth, it is due. It is the true dignity of a saint; it is the only security for him who has still to watch against the sin that is in him; it is the path of genuine humility, and of real love, and of faith. In this shall we be sure of the

guidance of the Spirit Who is here to glorify Him, taking of His and showing them to us.

He that has found and follows Christ soon seeks and finds others. But they are not always prepared to follow at once. So Philip proves here with the son of Talmi, here called not Bartholomew, but Nathanael.⁴¹ And hence, too, we learn that a man otherwise excellent may be hindered by not a little prejudice. It is a wholesome lesson neither to be hasty in our expectations nor to be cast down if a good man be slow to listen, as we may often prove.

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus from Nazareth, the Son of Joseph" (verse 46). Nathanael was not at all prepared for this. Most surely did his heart look for Him of Whom Moses and the prophets wrote; but that the Christ was Jesus from Nazareth, the Son of Joseph, he had yet to learn. He believed in the glory of Messiah's Person, as far as the Old Testament had revealed it beforehand: it had never occurred to him how Messiah could be "from Nazareth," not to speak of "the Son of Joseph." For that village was despicable in the eyes even of a despised Galilean, who doubtless felt the more its miserably low moral repute because of his own practical godliness. Had Philip said "from Bethlehem, the Son of David," no such shock could have been given to the expecting Jew. But in truth, the Lord is here viewed as wholly above all earthly associations, and therefore He could come down to the lowest. For He was the Son of God Who came to Nazareth, and only so could be said to be "from Nazareth" any more than "the son of Joseph."

However this may be, Nathanael does not withhold his expression of hesitation. "And Nathanael said to him, Can there be any good thing out of Nazareth? Philip saith to him, Come and see" (verse 46). But there was another also to see. For Jesus, Who saw Nathanael coming to Him, gave him to hear words of grace about himself which might well surprise him in His greeting, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (verse 47). If the Spirit of prophecy wrought according to Ps. 32, soon was he to know the Spirit of adoption and the liberty wherewith the Son makes free.

"Nathanael saith to Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee" (verse 48). He is God always and everywhere in this Gospel. Unseen, Jesus had seen Nathanael. He had seen him where evidently he thought himself seen by none; but He who heard the musings of his heart in that spot "under the fig-tree" saw him: the irresistible evidence of His own glory, of omniscience, and omnipresence. Yet was He Who saw him evidently a man in flesh and blood. He could be none other than the promised Messiah-Emmanuel, Jehovah's fellow, "Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5: 2.) His prejudice instantly vanished away as mist before the sun in its strength. He might not be able to explain the connection with Nazareth, or with Joseph;⁴² but a good man would not, none but a bad one could, resist the positive light of One Who thus knew all things, and told it out in grace to win the heart of Nathanael and of every one who hears His word and fears God since that day to this.

But there is more conveyed here. Surely the fig-tree is not a fact only, or an isolated circumstance, but clothed with the significance usually found in it, at least, in Scripture. In the great prophecy of our Lord, the fig-tree is employed as the symbol of the nation, and so one cannot doubt it is here. If Nathanael were there musing in his heart before God on the expected Messiah and the hopes of the elect people, as many, indeed all men, were at that time through the impulse of John the Baptist, nay, even whether *he* were the Christ or not (Luke 3: 15), we may conceive the better with what amazing force the words of Jesus must have appealed to the heart and conscience of the guileless Israelite. This appears to be powerfully confirmed by the character of his own confession. "Nathanael

answered (and saith to)* him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel" (verse 49). It was a confession precisely of the Messiah according to Ps. 2 He might be Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph; but He could be, He was, none other than "My (Jehovah's) king," "the Son" (verses 6, 12), though not yet anointed on Zion, the hill of Jehovah's holiness.⁴³ Nathanael was prompt and distinct now, as slow and cautious before.

*There is not a little variation here in the copies, even the more ancient.

Nor did the Lord check the flow of grace and truth, and Nathanael must borrow vessels not a few, till there was not one more to receive the blessing that would still overflow. "Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith to him, Verily, verily,⁴⁴ I say to you, (Henceforth)* ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (verses 50, 51). Was Messianic glory the horizon of that which Nathanael's soul saw and confessed in Jesus? Not "hereafter," but if any word here, "from the present," should the disciples see, if earthly power were still delayed, the opened heaven, and the homage of its glorious denizens to the rejected Messiah, the Son of man.⁴⁵ Him all peoples, nations, and languages should serve, when He should enter on His everlasting dominion which should not pass away, and His kingdom which should not be destroyed. Truly these are "greater things"; the pledge of which Nathanael saw thenceforth in the attendance of God's angels on Him Whom man despised and the nation abhorred to their own shame and ruin, but to the working out of heavenly counsels and an incomparably larger sphere of blessing and glory than in Israel or the land. These the reader may see in Ps. 8, especially if he consult the use made of it in 1 Cor. 15, Eph. 1, and Heb. 2.

*The oldest copies [BL and versions [some Latt. Memph., etc.] omit ἄπ' ἄρτι, which, if read, must be rendered "from now" or "henceforth," not "hereafter." [The words are rejected by Weiss and Blass.]

JOHN — THE SECOND CHAPTER*

* Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 429-431.

John 2: 1-11.

The second chapter opens with a striking miracle—the water turned into wine. It is only given here. Jesus is God, the God of creation. He had shown His omniscience to Nathanael, now His omnipotence to others. It was "the third day," possibly the third since He had first seen Nathanael.⁴⁶ But the passage is so significant that one does not feel disposed to question the thought that the Spirit may here have meant figuratively the type of a day yet future when glory will appear, as distinguished from the day of John the Baptist's testimony, and that of the Lord and His disciples. For as the light shone in despised Galilee when He came in humiliation, so will it shine on the poor in spirit when He appears in glory; and judgment fall on the proud and lofty, on Jerusalem in its religious pretensions, so big and so hollow, till grace makes even her lowly before Him.

"And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee,⁴⁷ and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited and His disciples unto the marriage." It is the figure of things on earth: there is no picture of the heavens opened here. Hence we find the mother of Jesus⁴⁸ brought forward prominently as one at home in the scene. "And when the wine fell short, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine." The first Adam always fails, and fails most where most is wanted. But Jesus

will meet all wants, though His time is not yet come. Faith, however, never looks to Him⁴⁹ in vain, and "Jesus saith to her, What have I to do with thee, woman? mine hour is not yet come." It is a remarkable answer, which Romanist theologians find very difficult to square with their doctrine and practice. He does not say, Mother. It is no longer a question of the first Adam: not that there was disrespect, but that Mariolatry is unfounded and sinful. Jesus was here to do the will of God. Blessing, He would show, comes down from the Father through the Son. Flesh and its relationships have nothing to do in the matter. All must be of grace.

"His mother saith to the servants, Whatever He shall say to you, do. Now there were six waterpots of stone set there according to the purification of the Jews, holding each two or three measures." The Jewish system was a witness of defilement; and its ordinances could do no more than sanctify to the purifying of the flesh.⁵⁰ This was human. Jesus was here for Divine purposes, then in testimony, by and by in power. "Jesus saith to them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith to them, Draw now and carry to the master of the feast. And they carried. But when the master of the feast tasted the water that had become wine (and he knew not whence it was, but the servants that had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and saith to him, Every man at first setteth on the good wine, and when they have drunk freely, then the worse; thou hast kept the good wine until now."⁵¹

So will Jesus do on the richest scale in the day that is coming. He will reverse the sorrowful history of man. The wine will not fail when He reigns. There will be joy for God and man in happy communion together. Jesus will furnish all to the glory of God the Father. In that day, too, He will be the Bridegroom and the Master of the feast; and the joy of that day will find its root not only in the glory of His Person, but in the depth of that work of humiliation already wrought on the cross. There will be no secrets then. It will not be the servants only who will then know, but all, from the least to the greatest. "This beginning of signs⁵² did Jesus at Cana of Galilee, and He manifested His glory, and His disciples believed on Him." Faith grows where real (2 Thess. 1: 3).

It will be noticed that our Gospel gives us most important particulars, unnoticed by all the others, which took place before His Galilean ministry commenced when John was cast into prison.⁵³ Thus we have John's testimony suited to the Lord's personal glory, about His earthly work for the universe even to eternity, and His heavenly work in baptizing with the Holy Spirit. We have had Christ's testimony "on the next day" after John's; and here "the third day."

The hour of Jesus is not yet come. The marriage at Cana was but a shadow, not the very image. For the true bridals here below, as well as on high, we must yet wait. The mother of Jesus, of the true male Son, will be there when the feast arrives. What has been is but a testimony, a beginning of signs, to manifest His glory. Jehovah's day for Israel will come.

John 2: 12.

"After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brethren and His disciples; and there they abode not many days." It may be noted that Joseph does not appear anywhere since the end of Luke 2 when the Lord was twelve years old. Doubtless he had fallen asleep meanwhile. Mary is again seen with Him. His absolute separation to the will and work of His Father in no way interferes with the earthly relations He had graciously taken. And so will it be with that which He represents.

But the marriage is only part of the display of His glory in the kingdom by and by; and of the judgment to be executed, He gives a token in the scene that follows, and this at the first Passover noted since that of His childhood. Our evangelist is careful to mention this feast throughout our Lord's course

(John 6: 4; John 11: 55). Alas! how little the Jews entered into its meaning.

John 2: 13-22.

"And the passover of the Jews⁵⁴ was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple the sellers of oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers sitting; and having made a scourge of cords (or ropes), He drove them all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the change of the money-changers, and overthrew their tables;⁵⁵ and to the sellers of the doves He said, Take these things hence; make not my Father's⁵⁰ house a house of merchandise. (And)* His disciples remembered that it is written, The zeal of thine house will eat me up."†

*BLTX Memph. [Syrsin] omit δὲ, which AEPΔ with some cursives and versions insert.

†[καταφάγεται: so W. H., and Weiss and Blass, after Syrpesch hier, etc. Srsin has "hath eaten," as Ps. 69: 9 in Heb. LXX, κατέφαγεν.]

Not only is this clearing of the temple distinct from that which the Synoptic Gospels relate on His last visit to Jerusalem, but it is instructive to remark that, as they only give the last, John gives only the first. It is a striking witness by a significant fact, as we have already seen doctrinally in his introduction, that he begins where they end, not in a barely literal way, but in all the depth of what Jesus is, says, and does. The state of the temple, the selfishness which reigned there, the indifference to the true fear and honour and holiness of God while there was the utmost punctiliousness in a ritual show of their own invention, were characteristic of the ruined state of a people called to the highest earthly privilege by God's favour.

Solomon had acted at the beginning with a vigour which drove out the unworthy high-priest in his day; when the kingdom was divided, Hezekiah and Josiah, sons of David, had each sought to vindicate the glory of Jehovah. Nehemiah, alas! under the protection of the Gentiles, had not been lacking, when the returned remnant so quickly manifested that the captivity on the one hand and God's mercy on the other had failed to lead them to repentance. Now the Son gives a sign as solemn for proud religious Jerusalem, as the miracle of the water changed into wine was full of bright hope for despised Galilee.

He does act as the Lord with Divine rights, yet as the lowly sent One and servant. Nevertheless He does not withhold the testimony to the glory of His Person in the very command not to make His Father's house a house of merchandise. He was the Son of God, announced as such, even as Nathanael had already owned Him, judicially dealing not merely on moral grounds, such as might be open to any godly Israelite, but openly as the One Who identified Himself with His Father's interests; and this was His house. So too, the Spirit of prophecy spoke of the rejected Messiah, as the disciples remembered at a later day.

"The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, What sign showest Thou to us that Thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple (ναὸν), and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, In forty and six years was this temple built,⁵⁷ and wilt Thou raise it up in three days? But *He* spoke of the temple of His body. When, therefore, He was raised from among (the) dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus said " (verses 18-22)

The sign that He would give was His own Resurrection-power, raising not others merely but His own Body, the true Temple in which alone God was (for the Word was God).⁵⁸ That of which they boasted had but a name without God, soon to be formally pronounced "their" house (Matt. 23), and

given up to destruction (Matt. 24). It is resurrection that defines Him Son of God in power; and when He was raised, the disciples remembered His saying, as they yet more found the strongest confirmation of their faith in both Scripture^{58a} and His word. His Resurrection is the fundamental truth both of the Gospel and of our distinctive place as Christians. No wonder that the Jews were jealous of it, and that Gentiles mock or evade it. May we ever remember it, and Him Who thus gives Scripture all its grace and power.

We arrive now at a new division of the Gospel introduced by the prefatory verses as to man and his state, which conclude John 2. The coming and the inquiry of Nicodemus give rise to our Lord's testimony to the necessity of birth anew for the kingdom of God, to the cross, eternal life, the love of God, and the world's condemnation, closing with the Baptist's testimony to the glory of His Person.

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, at the Feast,* many believed on His name, beholding His signs which He did. But Jesus Himself did not trust Himself to them,⁵⁹ inasmuch as He knew all (men), and because He needed not that any should testify of man, for Himself knew what was in man."⁶⁰

*Syrsin has "in the days of the feast of unleavened bread."

It was at the city of solemnities; it was a feast of Jehovah, nay, the most fundamental of the sacred feasts; and the Messiah was there, the object of faith, working in power, and manifesting His glory in appropriate signs. And many believed on His name accordingly. It was man doing and feeling his best under circumstances the most favourable.⁶¹ Yet did not Jesus Himself trust Himself to them. Certainly it was from no lack of love or pity in Him; for whoever did or could love as He? And the reason, calmly given, is truly overwhelming: "inasmuch as He knew all men, and because He needed not that any should testify of man, for Himself knew what was in man."⁶² What a sentence; from Whom; and on what grounds! We do well to weigh it gravely: who is not concerned in it? It is the ordained Judge of quick and dead Who thus pronounces. Is it not all over with man?

One great fact, one truth, accounts for it; the total evil, the irremediable ruin, of man as such. The ways of the Lord are in the strictest accord with the words of the Spirit by the apostle Paul: "the mind of the flesh"-and this is all that is in man-"is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither, indeed, can it be." (Rom 8: 7.) Hence, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Its doings and its sufferings are selfish and worthless Godward. Its faith as here is no better; for it is not the soul subject to God's testimony, but mind judging on evidence satisfactory to itself. It is a conclusion that Jesus must be Messiah; not submission to, nor reception of, Divine testimony. For in this case the mind sits on the throne of judgment, and pronounces for or against, according to its estimate of reasons favouring or adverse, instead of the soul setting to its seal (in the face of all appearances it may be, yea, of the most real difficulties) that God is true. For what ground to expect the love of the Holy One to the vile and rebellious? Christ received according to God's testimony, Christ in grace to the lost dying for the ungodly and the powerless, He it is accounts for, as He displays, all; miracles or signs not in the least. They arrest the eye; they exercise the mind; they may touch and win the affections. But nothing short of God's word judges the man, or reveals what He is in Christ to man thus judged; and this only, as we shall see, is of the Spirit, for He only, not man, has before Him the true object, the Son of God's love given in grace to a ruined and guilty world.

The truth is that our judgments flow from our affections. What we love we easily believe; what makes nothing of us we naturally resist and reject. As long as Jesus was deemed an ameliorator of humanity, there seemed to be the readiest, warmest welcome. Man would accredit Jesus if he thought Jesus accredited man. But how could he receive what makes nothing of himself, what condemns him

morally, what keeps before him the solemn warning of eternal judgment and the lake of fire? No, he hates the testimony and the Person Who is the central object of it, and truth connected with it and Him. When broken down before God and made willing to own one's utter and inexcusable sins and sinfulness, it is a wholly different matter; and He Who was dreaded and repugnant is turned to as the only hope from God, even Jesus the Deliverer from the wrath to come. This is indeed conversion, and grace by quickening power alone effects it.

So it is when Christian doctrine is made to suit the world by being emasculated and changed to build up what in truth it judges. Then indeed it is no longer a seed that takes root and grows and bears fruit, but a mere leaven that spreads and may assimilate largely to itself. Such is Christendom, when human will was engaged on its side, and the religion became traditional.

But here it is the holy and awful witness of Jesus to man at his best estate, when no enmity had appeared, but all looked full of human promise. Here, again, we see John beginning where the other Gospels close. It is not Messiah rejected, but Jesus the Son of God, Who knows the end from the beginning, treating man as altogether vanity and sin, and this, because God is in none of his thoughts, but self without real sorrow or shame about his opposition to God, without any due sense of sin or consequently a serious care about it. He gathered from the evidence of the signs before him that none but Messiah could have wrought them; but such an inference did not affect his moral state either with God or with man. He was just as he had been with any other object for his busy mind to work on, but his nature unjudged, God no better known, and the enemy with just the same power over him as ever. As yet, it was man and not God; for there is no work of God till the word is received as it is in truth His, revealing His grace to man consciously needing it. Here was nothing of the sort, but a simple process of man's own mind and feelings, without a question of his sins or state before God, without the smallest felt need of a Saviour. Jesus knew what it was worth and trusted not Himself to man, even when he thus believed on Him. It was human faith of which we have instances not infrequently in this Gospel as elsewhere, whilst as clearly we have the divinely given faith which has eternal life: this having to do with God, as that, being of man, rises not above its source. "Beware of men," said He to His apostles at a later day, Himself about to prove in the cross how truly from the first He Himself knew what was in man.

JOHN — THE THIRD CHAPTER*62a

* Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 431-440.

John 3: 1-21.

The worthlessness of believing on Christ because of evidence we have seen. But in the crowd of such there might be souls who had the sense of wants awakened which led them to Jesus personally. And in Him was life: not merely all things brought into being through Him, and signs wrought and things done by Jesus, which, if written one by one in books, would be beyond the world's power to contain, but, beyond all, life in the Son for the believer. And such is the fact which is here recorded in detail.

"But there was a man of the Pharisees, his name Nicodemus,62b a ruler of the Jews. He came to Him by night,63 and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God, for none can do these signs which Thou doest, unless God be with him. Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I say to thee, Except one be born anew,64 he cannot see the kingdom of God."65 It was a chief

man from among the most orthodox in the chosen people; sufficiently in earnest to seek Jesus for truth, and still valuing the world enough to fear its condemnation and scorn. So he came by night to Jesus; yet did he take the ground of a persuasion he shared in common with his fellows because of the signs wrought by the Lord. He knew not that a deeper work was going on within, which drew him, not them, to Jesus. He, the teacher of Israel, recognised in Jesus One come a teacher from God, and God with Him: for any others born of woman a signal honour; for Jesus the proof that His true glory was unknown. As yet then Nicodemus was astray as to himself, as to the Jews, and as to Jesus. In short, the true God was unknown.

The Lord accordingly stops him at once with the declaration that man, any one, needs to be born from the outset and origin. Not teaching is wanted but a new nature, a new source of being spiritually, in order to see the kingdom of God. No inference, however logical, is faith. It is not even a conviction of conscience. It may be a conclusion fairly drawn from sound premisses, from sensible facts of the weightiest kind before the mind; but neither God is known nor itself yet judged. The new character of life which suits the kingdom of God does not yet exist for the soul. In such a state teaching would but aggravate the danger or expose to fresh evil. The Word of God has never penetrated the heart of Nicodemus. He knew not himself utterly defiled, spiritually dead in sins. What he wanted was to be quickened, not to have fresh aliment for the exercise of his mind. And Jesus, instead of commenting on his words, answered his true need, which he too would have sought himself, had he but known it.

If Nicodemus then took for granted his own capacity, as he then stood, to profit by the truth and serve God and inherit His kingdom, the Lord, with incomparable solemnity, assures him that the new birth is indispensable to seeing the kingdom. For God is not teaching or improving human nature. He had already tried it patiently; and the trial would ere long be absolutely complete.

The kingdom of God is in question, and not anything in fallen man. It was not yet established or displayed in power over the earth, as it will be at the appearance of Jesus. It was not yet preached to the Gentiles as it was after the cross. But it was come for faith in the Person of Christ, the pledge that it will be set up by and by in all its extent, its "earthly" and its "heavenly things." The kingdom of God was among them in Christ, Who demonstrated its power, the enemies themselves seen or unseen being judges. Why, then, did not Nicodemus see it? From no defect in the object of faith or in His testimony, by general conviction and confession, from no lack of signs attesting the presence and power of God. Alas! the defect is in man, and to man it is incurable, for who can change his nature? In fact, if it were possible, it could avail nothing. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." God only can give a new nature, and a nature suited to His kingdom. Without this none can as much as see it.

"Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into the womb of his mother and be born?" (verse 4). We learn hence that the intimation was the birth, not from above, but again; else the difficulty expressed in reply could have had no place. The truth is, however, that even if the fabled conversion of an old man into youth again could be true-yea, if the strange case suggested by the astonished Pharisee could have been turned by miracle into fact (as Jonah came forth alive from the great fish that swallowed him)-it would fail to meet the requirements of the kingdom of God, as we shall see expressly in the further explanation of our Lord. For it would be human nature still, let it be renewed in its youth or repeated in its birth ever so far or so often. A clean thing cannot come out of an unclean; and such is man's nature since the fall. Nor is aught God's way of renewal, but by giving a nature wholly fresh from its source; for the believer is born of God, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the living and abiding word of God.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say to thee, Except one be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (verses 5, 6). Words of incalculable moment to man, of deep blessing where grace gives him ear to hear, and heart to receive and keep. Yet I scarce know a Scripture more widely perverted than this has been to baptism, nor one where tradition is more dangerously false, though *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* be as true of this as of any interpretation of Scripture that could be named. A double result would follow, that not a soul could enter the kingdom of God save such as are baptized; and, secondly, as the context would prove, that, the new nature being identified with eternal life, none of the baptized could perish—a statement which all but the most grossly ignorant or prejudiced must confess to be in both its parts opposed to other and clear Scriptures, and to notorious fact.

*[So most Edd., with majority of copies. Blass: "heaven," as in pm. The Syrr. support "God," for which internal evidence is decisive. As to the "kingdom" here, cf. "Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew": "He appears to speak of a kingdom which we do enter now" (chapter 17, p. 366.)]

Christian baptism (and this is what it is traditionally conceived to mean, not that of John or of the disciples) was not instituted, nor did the facts exist which it symbolizes, till the Lord died and rose. How, then, could Nicodemus by any possibility anticipate them or understand what the Lord gives as the clearing up of his difficulty as to being born anew? Yet the Lord reproaches him as "the teacher of Israel" with his slowness of intelligence. That is, he should (even as teaching Jews) have known these things, which he could not possibly know if the Lord alluded to a Christian institution as yet undivulged.⁶⁶

The reasoning of Hooker* ("Works," ii. 262, etc., Keble's ed. 5), as of others before and since, is beside the mark, and simply proves inattention to Scripture, and superficial acquaintance with the truth. It is not true that "born of water and Spirit," if literally construed, means baptism. Never is that rite set out as figuring life, but death, as in Rom. 6, Col. 2, and 1 Peter 3 "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?" It is never the sign of quickening, but rather of identifying those quickened with the death of Christ; that they in virtue of Him might take the place of men dead to sin, but alive to God, and so reckon themselves by grace, for under this we are, not under law. Such is the apostolic doctrine. The words of our Lord do not, and cannot, teach otherwise, as they must if John 3: 5 be applied to baptism. Take water here as figurative of the word which the Spirit uses to quicken, and all is clear, consistent, and true. Were it said in the Scripture that we are born of the Spirit by means of water, we should have some approach to what the Fathers drew from it, and what is necessary to bear the construction put on it in the Anglican and other formularies that apply it to baptism. Their dealing with it seems to be really "licentious," "deluding," and "dangerous," at issue with what our Lord says even in verse 5, still more with His omission of "water" in verse 6, most of all if it be possible with the place of baptism everywhere else given in Scripture. Baptism may be the formal expression of washing away sins, never of communicating life, which is unequivocally false teaching.

*Cartwright had said that irregular baptism had grown out of a false interpretation of John 3: 5, "where certain do interpret the word water for (of) the material and elemental water, when as (whereas) our Saviour Christ taketh water there by a borrowed speech for the Spirit." This the reader will see to be imperfect; for water here is the figure of the word bringing the sentence of death on the flesh; and so is sinful man cleansed by Him out of Whose side flowed blood and water, as John testifies. On the general point says Hooker, "I hold it for a most infallible truth in exposition of sacred scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as

alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, making of anything what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing.... To hide the general course of antiquity agreeing in the literal interpretation' they cunningly affirm that 'certain' have taken those words as meant of material water, when they know that of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place than as implying external baptism" (E. P., V. lix. 2, 3). Antiquity was perhaps as unanimous in applying John 6 to the Lord's Supper with as little solid reason. In neither case is it a literal construction, but a mere catching at a superficial resemblance; and in both cases the consequence is heterodoxy most perilous to souls, which has enormously helped on the ruin of Christendom as well as of deluded individuals. To deny that the Lord often elsewhere employed water figuratively is impossible; to maintain that He meant it literally here is to lower the sense immensely and to involve the worst consequences, as of an ordinance saving *ex opere operato*. It is remarkable, I would add, that the Gospel of John omits even the institution of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, dwelling beyond all others on life and the Spirit.

So it is in John 13 and John 15, not to speak of John 4 and John 7. Compare for the figure Eph. 5: 26, for the truth couched under it 1 Cor. 4: 15, James 1: 18, 1 Peter 1: 23. It is not a rite giving honour to an official class, but the word of God applied by His Spirit, bringing death on nature that we might live to God in Christ.

For Christ came by water and blood; He purifies and expiates (1 John 5). He is the truth, which the word of God applies in the power of the Spirit, judging the old nature and introducing the new. "I live, no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2: 20). One is the same person, but a life is communicated which he had not before, not of Adam, but of Christ, the Second Man. He is begotten of God, made a partaker of the Divine nature through the greatest and precious promises, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Such is it to be born of water and of Spirit-an incomparably deeper thing than any form of truth, however it be prized in its place and for the object the Lord Who instituted it had in view. Baptism was the formal admission; it was the confession of Christ on the ground of His death and resurrection, not of quickening, which was true of all saints before Christ, when there was no Christian baptism. If baptism were really the sign and means of quickening, consistency would deny life to the Old Testament saints, or they ought to have been so baptized, which they were not. But this is clearly false ground. There is no reason to infer that the twelve were baptized with Christian baptism; they baptized others, but, it would seem, were not themselves. Were they not, then, born again? Nor did circumcision mean life, and so we know that souls were born anew even before it was imposed on Abraham already justified by faith.

Hence, too, it is important to observe that he who is thus born again is said to be born of the Spirit, omitting water, in verse 6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The word (or water, emblematically) can do nothing toward quickening without the Spirit, Who is the efficient agent in communicating the life of Christ. Water cleanses, but of itself it is not capable of quickening; it is death to the flesh. There had been only flesh before; now, as believing in Christ, the man is born of God (1 John 5); and each nature retains its own characteristic. As flesh never becomes spirit, so spirit never degenerates into flesh. The natures abide distinct, and the practical business of the believer is to hold himself for dead to the one that he may live in the other by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved him and gave Himself for him.

Nor was Nicodemus to wonder that he and other Jews (not pagans merely, to which they would have assented at once) needed to be born afresh. "Wonder not that I said to thee, Ye must be born anew" (verse 7). But if sovereign grace met that need, could it, would it, stop there? Certainly not. It would breathe the blessing as widely as the ravages of sin, according to the choice of God. "The wind

bloweth where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh, and where it goeth: so is every one that is born* of the Spirit" (verse 8). Thus "every one" leaves room for any fallen man, a Gentile no less than a Jew. Whatever might be their distinction after the flesh, the Spirit thus freely flowing can bless those who are most distant, while the nearest is nothing without Him.

*[, Syrch sin have, as some Old Lat., "of water and of the Spirit."]

It has been already remarked, moreover, that in all this was no such special privilege as should have been beyond the ken of an intelligent Jew. Hence when "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said to him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (verses 9, 10). Had he never read the promise to Israel in one prophet?-"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." (Isa. 44: 3.) Had he forgotten the words of another prophet?-"Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your uncleanness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and keep Mine ordinances, and ye shall do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God." (Ezek. 36: 25-28.)

There can be no mistake that Israel will require the new birth in order to receive and enjoy aright even the earthly blessings of God's kingdom by and by, and that God will of His grace impart it to them for this end. Nicodemus, then, need not be surprised at the universal need of the new birth, even for the Jew, proclaimed by the Lord; but as the blessing is not of flesh, but of Spirit, grace will not restrain it from any on grounds that give weight to man. The Gentile will not be left out of such rich mercy, indispensable to the kingdom of God, which is of grace, not of law or flesh, as the Jew was apt to assume. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55: 1.) Is not this grace, and so expressed as to open the door to any of the nations, to sense of need, resourceless need, wherever found? Yet who did, who could, draw it out from the prophets and give the principle its absolute shape, as here, to Nicodemus, but the One Who spoke? Others inspired of the Spirit were soon to follow; and of them all none more distinctly than the Apostle Paul.

Thus far, then, Nicodemus as a Jew, as the teacher of Israel, should have known the nature as well as the necessity of the new birth. The ancient prophets were not silent about its application to Israel, even for the days when blessings shall be shed abundantly on them from God according to His promise. Not the heathen only, but His people (whatever might be their present self-complacency and the pride which wraps itself up in ignorance), are described as unclean, till He sprinkle clean water upon them, and put His Spirit within them. Undoubtedly, the Lord, as was due to His personal glory, presents the truth with incomparably greater clearness and depth, as well as with an all-embracing comprehensiveness; but what was presented ought not to have been strange to Nicodemus on his own ground. The new thing follows the cross, whether in statement or in fact, as we see it implied in chapter 4.

But even here the Lord intimates a knowledge to be communicated, as, in fact, it was, first by Himself in Person, then by the Holy Ghost through chosen witnesses, transcending that of the prophets and of a character, not measure only, quite different. "Verily, verily, I say to thee, We speak that we know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our testimony" (verse 11). It is no vision of things out of the ordinary sphere of him who was inspired to be a prophet, nor a message founded on

the authority of Him Who sent His servant with a "Thus saith Jehovah." Jesus only, true man among men, could none the less say, because He was none the less God, We speak that which We know, and bear witness of that which We have seen.⁶⁷ He knew what was in man, needing no testimony about man (John 2); He knew what was in God, and alone of men could testify of Him without testimony about Him (John 3). I have known Thee, says Himself to the Father later on in this Gospel (John 17: 25). But the world knew not the Father; least of all were the Father and the Son known by those who, in persecuting the disciples, thought to do God's service. But, blessed be His name, if none knew the Father but the Son, there were not lacking those to whom the Son reveals Him; and so the Holy Ghost, Who searches all things-yea, the depths of God-reveals what was previously hidden even from prophets, and gives to Christians the mind, or intelligence, of Christ.

For a Divine Person knows in Himself all things in themselves; not as the prophets-from One without and above, Who gives the commission, vision, and message. These, therefore, might often speak that which they knew not, and learn on searching that "not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported by those that have preached the Gospel by (ἐν) the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." (1 Peter 1: 12.) But Jesus spoke what He knew. Coming from God, and being Himself God, He knew the Divine nature perfectly, and was here a man to reveal it to men. If none had seen God at any time, the Only-begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father has declared Him; He alone of woman born had this competency, both as Son and as the image of the invisible God, in a sense not only pre-eminent, but exclusive, as the Epistles to the Colossians (Col. 1: 18.) and the Hebrews (Heb. 1: 3.) formally teach. And this He spoke in ineffable grace, expressing the grace and truth of Him Who is God and Father through a man's heart to the hearts of men. Of the glory, too, familiar to Him with the Father before the world was, He testified. For what was Divine love keeping back from those about to share with Him the glory in which both will be displayed to the world, and to behold His glory as none else will see it? In heaven-yea, in its brightest glory-He was at home; and as He was about to prepare a place in the Father's house for His own, so He bears witness of what He alone had seen to those whom sovereign grace would call and fit to be with Him there.

And what a testimony is this twofold knowledge, to the Person of Jesus, absolute yet in relation! He is, indeed, the true God, but withal eternal life. It was not empirical, but intrinsic. As a Divine Person alone could, He knew both man and God; and, after He has urged the indispensable need of being born anew, He speaks of God known above in nature and glory, as before it we had His knowledge of what was in man. How blessed to have such a knowledge communicated to us as now in Christ and Christianity! Would not man, needy, ignorant, blind, welcome such a boon? Alas! no: not even when grace brings it down and tells all out in the tones of human speech. "And ye receive not our testimony." It declares God, and reveals the Father. It leaves no room for receiving glory one of another. It condemns man as he is, self-willed and proud, not only without heart for God, but unwilling to believe what is in His heart for man expressed in every word and way of Jesus. As the Apostle tells us, "The things of God knoweth no one but the Spirit of God. The natural man is far from receiving them, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2: 11, 14.)

There is a natural repugnance in man's mind to Divine testimony. The judgment depends on the affections, and the affections of man are estranged from God. Privileges do not alter this, nor the responsibility which flows from the relation in which one may stand to God. He must be born again. A Divine nature cleaves to God; the life which comes from Him as its source goes up to Him in desire, if not always (till redemption is known) in confidence of heart.

Yet the Lord had not in this solemn declaration gone beyond the universal necessity of man for

the kingdom of God, and therefore it was inexcusable in the Jewish teacher so to have overlooked its truth as to feel amazement at the Lord's assertion of it. He ought to have known from the ancient Scriptures, from the Psalms and Prophets especially, that Israel must be renewed in order to enter and enjoy their promised portion on the earth. "Truly God is good to Israel," as the Messiah's kingdom will manifest; but the assurance is restricted. It is "to such as are of a clean heart" (Ps. 73). So far will the mass of the Jews be from fitness for the kingdom, that the Spirit of Christ in the pious remnant does not hesitate to ask God's judgment and pleading of their cause against an ungodly or unmerciful nation (Ps. 43). They were no better, but guiltier, than the Gentiles. There were enemies within as well as without. "And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away, and be at rest. Behold, I would flee afar off; I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the stormy wind, from the tempest. Swallow [them] up, Lord; divide their tongue: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof, and iniquity and mischief are in the midst of it. Perversities are in the midst thereof, and oppression and deceit depart not from its streets. For it is not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither is it he that hateth me that hath magnified (himself) against me; then I would have hidden myself from him. But it was thou, a man, mine equal, mine intimate, my familiar friend. We who held sweet intercourse together. To the house of God we walked amid the throng" (Ps. 55: 6-14). Thus to the saint's mind the city (the holy city in title-in fact, most unholy) is worse than the wilderness, dreary as it may be. Not Gentiles only, but Jews, need to be born afresh, otherwise the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through them, as it is written (Rom. 2: 24).

But it is striking to notice that the chapter of Ezekiel, already cited in part, which is naturally brought to illustrate these words of the Apostle Paul, declares in the plainest and most unconditional terms that God will sanctify His great name which was blasphemed among the heathen, "Which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I (am) Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be hallowed in you before their eyes. And I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and keep Mine ordinances, and ye shall do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God. And I will save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn and will multiply it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field, so that ye may receive no more the reproach of famine among the nations. And ye shall remember your evil ways, and your doings which were not good, and shall loathe yourselves for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, In the day that I shall cleanse you from all your iniquities I will also cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it was a desolation in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities (are) fortified (and) inhabited. And the nations that shall be left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places (and) plant that which was desolate; I Jehovah have spoken, and I will do (it)." (Ezek. 36: 23-36.)

Further, these words of the prophet illustrate "the earthly things" in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus. "If I told you the earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you the heavenly things?" (verse 12). In speaking as He had of the necessity to be born afresh- born of water

and of Spirit-the Lord had not gone beyond " the earthly things." The kingdom of God could not be entered or seen without that new birth. Of course, it is indispensable for heaven; but the Lord goes farther, and insists on it as essential even for the lower province of God's kingdom. Even the Jew must be born again, and for millennial blessings, too, as well as for eternity. So true is it that they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.

We shall see, too, when our Lord proceeds in His discourse to touch on His cross and the love of God in giving His Son, that to be born anew does not adequately describe what is given to the believer, but life eternal. Substantially, no doubt, it is the same new nature which every saint has, and must have; but, now that the glory and work of Christ are revealed, its full character shines out. There is yet more, as we know, and the next chapter shows-the Spirit given, and the relationship of children of God enjoyed, and the results of the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ our portion even now. But I enlarge no more on this as yet. Only we here learn that the kingdom of God has its "heavenly things," no less than "the earthly things" of which the prophets spoke. Jesus the Son could have opened the heavenly things, but the condition of such as Nicodemus did not admit of it for the present. The Spirit revealed all these and other depths of God amply after the shed blood vindicated God and purged their consciences. Then were the disciples free to learn all in the power of Christ's resurrection and in the light of heaven. Such is Christian knowledge.

But even while Christ was here He intimated distinctly the Father's kingdom as a heavenly sphere where the risen saints are to shine as the sun, contra-distinguished from the Son of man's kingdom, which is clearly the world, out of which at His coming the angels shall be sent to clear away all offences and those that practise lawlessness (Matt. 13: 41-43). Nay, in the prayer given to the disciples we may recognise a similar distinction, though not so sharply drawn out, for He bade them pray for their Father's kingdom to come, where they and all the risen saints would be glorified; and then, that His will be done as in heaven so on earth, which will only be secured at the completion of the age, when the Son of man comes in His kingdom (Matt. 6: 10). These together constitute the kingdom of God, which comprises, therefore, as the Lord here assumes, "the heavenly things" and "the earthly things." The reader will find abundant confirmation in Eph. 1: 10, Col. 1: 20, and Heb. 12: 22-24.

We are next given to learn Who it is that could speak with competent knowledge and authority of heavenly things. It is the Son of man, the same Person, doubtless, Who deigned to be born of the virgin, the Son of David, the Messiah. But as Messiah He is to judge Jehovah's people in righteousness, and to reign with a power which cannot be disputed, save to the ruin of every rebel. For "the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And His delight will be in the fear of Jehovah; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth." (Isa. 11: 2-4.) As such He presented Himself to Israel, but was rejected; and, as we know, they reject Him to this day. For man, being lost, proves himself wholly blind, and of men none more than Israel against their truest glory and best treasure- Christ the Lord. And thus we have seen it from the first in the Gospel of John, who was given to treat things as they are, and as they are in presence of grace and truth in His Person Who reveals the Father.

Here, accordingly, it is not a prophet revealing the future of the kingdom of Jehovah over the earth, or of the judgments which will introduce it, or of the evils which must be judged before the establishment of blessing in that day. It is more than a prophet who gives out what he receives responsibly to communicate from God to man. Jesus knows not merely what is in man on earth as none ever knew, as the Word made flesh alone did know, but what is in God above as only a Divine Person

could, yet now as man also. No prophet ever did, ever could, so speak as He; none but He so knew and so testified. He, therefore, could speak of things heavenly, as well as of the earthly, not as one inspired to tell of what was before unknown, but of that which He knew and saw in the communion of the Godhead. His becoming man in no way detracted from His Divine capacity or rights; it was unspeakable grace to those for whose sakes He was come from God and went to God, not only the truth and witness of it, as He alone could be, but about to die atoningly, as we shall see shortly in this very context, that the believer might live eternally and righteously.

What could man, angel, or any other creature avail? It was His glory, His work. The man, Adam, whom Jehovah Elohim formed, He put in Eden, chief of all creatures around him which God had pronounced very good. But the heaven is Jehovah's throne, though neither it nor the heaven of heavens can contain Him. "And no one hath gone up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, the Son of man that is* in heaven." Men have been, and will be, caught up to heaven; angels have been sent down from heaven. To Jesus only it belonged to go up,⁶⁸ as He only came down. For He was a Divine Person, and He came in love; and love is ever free as well as holy. "Lo! I am come to do Thy will, O God." In the volume of the Book it was written of Him alone. And He Who was thus pleased to be found in fashion as a man, taking the body God prepared Him, rejoiced ever to speak of Himself as the Sent One, the man Christ Jesus, Who came down from heaven to do, not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He became servant, but did not, could not, cease to be God. But He is man withal, as truly as Adam; yea, He is what Adam was not-Son of man, come of woman.

*The Alexandrian (pr. m.) and a cursive of the Gospels (4949 in the Br. Museum) omit ὧν. Still more serious is the omission ὁ ὧν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ in the Sinai, Vatican, two other uncials [L,T.], a valuable Paris cursive [33], etc. There need be no hesitation, however, in accepting the mass of authorities [including Latt. and Syrr.] against these testimonies; which illustrate the danger of being carried away by a few favourites, be they ever so venerable and in general trustworthy. I am glad to see that Dr. Tregelles [as Tischendorf] inserts the clause; but it is hard to understand with what consistency it is done in his system of recension. [See W. and H., "Select Readings," p. 75. Weiss and Blass omit the words; but Syrsin has "the S. of M. who is from heaven."]

And so it is that in the form of the expression used He is stamped as having ascended to heaven, He only that descended from heaven: ἀναβέβηκεν * . . . ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς. For, as the Apostle asks, "That He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." "Only, as the Apostle Paul tells us, it is in connection with His work and the counsels of God, so John presents it in our Lord's words as connected with the truth of His Person-"the Son of man that is in heaven." And an astonishing truth it is. To have said the Son of God that was in heaven would have been true; but what an infinite truth is that which is said, "the Son of man that is in heaven!" Impossible to be said if He had not been God, the Son of the Father, yet, what was of the deepest moment, said of Him as man, the rejected Messiah, "the Son of man that is in heaven." The Incarnation was no mere emanation of divinity, neither was it a Person once Divine Who ceased to be so by becoming man (in itself an impossible absurdity), but One Who, to glorify the Father, and in accomplishment of the purposes of grace to the glory of God, took humanity into union with Godhead in His Person. Therefore it is that He could say, and of Him alone could it be said, "the Son of man that is in heaven," even as He is the Only-begotten Son that is (not merely that was†) in the bosom of the Father. He it is Who met, and more than met, the challenge of Agur (Prov. 30), speaking prophetically to Ithiel and Ucal, "Who hath ascended up into the heavens and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a mantle? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is

His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou knowest?" It is God, not man, Who can take up the challenge; but it is God become man-yea, the Son of man. How suited as well as competent is He to unfold all things, heavenly, earthly, human, and Divine! He is, indeed, the Truth.

*We are not to suppose ἀναβήσεται here. The futurity of the ascension is perfectly right in John 6. But here it is a proleptic character attached to the Person of the Lord; and hence to express this no tense was so proper as the perfect, the present continuance of a past act. The seeming anomalies of Scripture are most instructive when understood.

†It is surprising that Bengel should follow Raphelius in preferring "*qui erat*" to "*qui est*," as almost all the ancients, Greeks and Latins rightly insist.

We saw that the ascension of the Lord is grounded on His descent from heaven, and that both flow from and belong to His Person as the Son of man that is in heaven. But the Lord follows this up by setting out the mighty work He came to do for sinners, that they might have life eternal-by grace, indeed, but on the footing of Divine righteousness.

"And even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that every one that believeth on* Him should (not perish, but†) have life eternal.69 For God so loved the world that He gave His‡ Only-begotten Son, that every one that believeth on Him should not perish but have life eternal" (verses 14-16).

*The Sinai MS. and the great mass of the uncials and cursives have εἰς here, as in verse 16; but the Vatican (B) and the St. Petersburg uncial of the sixth century (T) read ἐν αὐτῷ, supported by many Latin copies [besides Syrsin, and followed by Edd.]; as the Paris L has here in verse 16 ἐπ' αὐτῷ the Alexandrian ἐπ' αὐτὸν here only, though Tb reads it in verse 16. A Bodleian cursive (47) omits the phrase in both cases.

†The clause μὴ ἀπόληται ἄλλ here is wanting in four uncials of the highest character, seven cursives, and many versions, etc. [not Syrsin]; but almost all read it in verse 16.

‡The Sinai and the Vatican (B) omit αὐτοῦ, "his."

The new birth had been already insisted on for man to see or enter the kingdom of God. But so is the cross also a necessity, if guilty man was to receive pardon from God whilst living to Him. They are alike indispensable. Compare 1 John 4: 9, 10. And Christ as He alone could be, so was He sent a propitiation for our sins. The Lord here illustrates the latter truth by the well-known scene in the wilderness, where God directed Moses, in his distress for the guilty Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents and dying in all quarters, to set a serpent of brass on a pole, that whoever looked might live. It was the figure of Himself, Who knew no sin, for us made sin, identified in Divine dealing with the consequences of our evil in judgment on the cross. Impossible that sin could otherwise be expiated adequately. It must be by God's judging it in One capable of bearing what it deserved at His hands, and it must be in man, in the Son of man, to be available for man. Yet, had it been any other than Jesus, it had been offensive to God, and not efficacious for man, for He only was the Holy One, and in no offering was there more jealous care that it should be without blemish. "It is most holy," says the law of the sin-offering. Adam fell, and all other men were shapen in iniquity, and in sin conceived.

In Him only of woman-born was no sin, not only no sins committed, but no sin in Him. Therefore was a body prepared for Him as for no one else when the Holy Ghost came on the Virgin Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. Therefore also that Holy thing which was born was called the Son of God; not only the Son of God before He was sent of the Father, but, when in grace the Word thus became flesh, perfect man, yet not the less truly God. For there was none other way, if the

desperate case of man was to be remedied before God. It could only be righteously through atonement, and the Son of man was the only fitting victim. For blood of bulls and goats is incapable of taking away sins, however such sacrifices might be beforehand instructive of man's need and of God's way.

"Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare Me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I am come (in the volume of the Book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. 10: 5-7, quoting Ps. 40: 6f.)

Thus did the man Christ Jesus, Son of God withal, yea, God over all blessed for ever, deign to suffer once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God. Only so could it be, for God could not make light of sin, however surely He can and does pardon sinners; but even He could not pardon consistently with Himself or His Word, or the creature's real blessing, but through the blood of the cross. And therefore did the Lord say here to Nicodemus, who knew the law, if he had little known the Prophets, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Thus did He redeem out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. It is not a living Messiah reigning over His people on earth, but He, rejected by them, sinners and lost as they were now proved to be; it is Jesus Christ and He crucified, in that character or title which connects Him with the one object for a sinful man: or, as He says Himself here, "that every one that believeth on Him may not perish, but have life eternal." By Him only thus presented one comes to God, all his sins being judged and borne in His cross. Hence it is by *believing* on Him that one has life eternal. The believer looks out of himself to the Lord Jesus.

But this alone might leave the soul, though looking to Christ by faith, without liberty or peace, however truly blessed thus far. Hence the Lord reveals another truth. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that every one that believeth on Him should not perish but have life eternal."⁷⁰ It is no longer the abject and absolute need of guilty man, be he Jew or any other. There is now revealed the sovereign love of God, which confines not itself to any limits such as the law, or man under it, had contemplated, but goes out freely and fully to the world, where He was unknown and hated, and this, not in creation or providential mercies, but in such sort as to give His Son, His Only-begotten, "that every one that believeth on Him may not perish but have eternal life." It is grace to the uttermost. It is no question here of a needs be. There was no moral necessity that God should *give* His Son; it was His love, not obligation on His part, nor claim on man's. Whatever need there was in man's state was amply met in the cross of the Son of man, and therein was accomplished the atonement or propitiation for the sins of those who believe. But there is incomparably more in the Only-begotten Son given by the God of love, not to the elect nation, but to the world. Thus Divine love is manifested as perfectly as His just and holy requirement in judging sin; and this in Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, the suffering but now glorified Son of man, both too displayed in and enjoyed by that life eternal which the believer has in Him.

The great truth has been cleared: not only that man, sinful man, needed an adequate atonement as well as new birth, but that God loved the world, the guilty, lost world of Gentiles no less than Jews, and loved it so that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that every one who believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. It is in the Son of God that both lines of the truth meet, for He is incarnate and crucified. Accordingly the true light shines, life eternal is given, God's love is known, redemption is accomplished, salvation is come. There is more in and by Him now than if the kingdom were set up in power, for which those waited whose expectations were formed and bounded by the Old Testament. "Loving kindness and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"; and, though one could not say perhaps till "that day" that "truth shall spring out of the earth, and

righteousness shall look down from the heavens," (Ps. 85: 10 *f.*) yet one knows assuredly that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and that righteousness is established and displayed in Him exalted on the throne and glorified in God Himself above. In the bright days of heaven upon the earth He is to judge His people and the world righteously, and will early cut off the wicked; for the quick must be judged by Him at His coming, as well as the dead at last, ere He gives up the kingdom to God.

But deeper purposes were in hand now that the Messiah is viewed as rejected by the Jews: eternal life in, and salvation by, the Son of God, Who dies atoningly on the cross. "For God sent not His* Son into the world that He should judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (verse 17). And as a work beyond comparison deeper and with everlasting consequences was before God, so the objects of His grace are no longer within the circumscribed limits of the land of Israel. If He is to manifest Himself now as a Saviour God in His Son, it suits His love to send out the good news to the world as a whole. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. Granted that Christ thus present was rejected; but the errand of love was in no way abandoned; rather did it enter on a new ground whence it could go forth in the power of the Spirit. For Him Who knew no sin God made sin for us (that is, in the cross), that we might become God's righteousness in Him.

*The word αὐτοῦ ("his") is omitted by BLTb, five cursives and some Fathers, but read by all other authorities [rejected by Edd.].

Thus Christ as Saviour, not as Judge, expresses the characteristic testimony of God now made known to man and here declared by our Lord, in contradistinction from His predicted glory as Messiah and Son of man, ruling as He will over the earth by and by in the age to come. This is followed up by the result for him who receives Christ now. "He that believeth on Him is not judged; but* he that believeth not hath been already judged, because he hath not believed on the name of the Only-begotten Son of God" (verse 18). Not only is the believer not condemned, but he is not an object of judgment. He will give account, but is never put on his trial. This is explicitly taught in John 5, where the twofold issue is connected with the mystery of Christ's Person. As He is Son of God and Son of man, so He gives life and will exercise judgment, the one for the blessing of believers as owning His glory, the other for His vindication on such as have dishonoured Him.

* B, etc., omit δέ ("but"), which all else read [rejected by Edd.].

Thus, as His stooping to become man exposed Him to unbelief, it is as Son of man that He will judge His despisers, which clearly does not apply to the believer, whose joy is even now and ever to honour Him as the Father. And as in this later chapter of John the believer is declared to have life eternal, and not to come into judgment, but to have passed out of death into life, so here "He that believeth not hath been already judged, because he hath not believed on the name of the Only-begotten Son of God." For John presents the Lord as declaring all decided by the test of His own Person received in faith or unbelievingly rejected. Good or evil in all other respects turns on this, as He shows soon after. There is no such touchstone, not even the law of God, weighty and incisive as it is. Hence we see the fallacy of the older divines, who drag in the law here as everywhere, and thus make it only a question of moral condemnation; whereas the very point of instruction is that it is Christ Himself believed or disbelieved, though no doubt conduct follows accordingly.

But here it is not death for not doing God's commandments, but the unbeliever already judged by Him Who sees the end from the beginning, and pronounces on all persons and things as they are before God. Only One can avail him who is dead in trespasses and sins; in nowise the law, which can simply condemn him whose walk is opposed to itself, but the Son, Who is life and gives life to the believer.

But the unbeliever refuses the Son of God: carelessly or deliberately, in haughty pride or in cowardly clinging to other trusts, pleasures, or interests, it is only a difference of form or degree. For he has not believed on the name of the Only-begotten Son of God, Whose name is not hidden but preached. There is the fullest declaration of what He is, and is to sinners: so that all excuse is vain and can only add sin to sin. His very name implies, yea asserts, that He is the Saviour, a Divine Saviour, yet a Man, and so for men. Nor can it be truthfully urged that there is any doubt as to God's feeling and mind; for it had just been said that God sent Him into the world to this end, whatever must be the character of His coming another day, when He will reckon with those who would have none of Him. But what is it to God that wretched, guilty, ruined sinners should despise and reject Him Who is at once the only Saviour of man, and the Only-begotten Son of God! When those who most need mercy least feel it, when they in their utter degradation refuse the Highest, Who comes down to them in the fullest love to bless, what remains but judgment for those who thus render God's grace null as to themselves, heightened as it is by the glory of Him Who in love came for their sakes, and deepened by the humiliation in which He deigned to come?

I am aware that the Puritan divines drag in the law even here, and will have it that Christ, in illustrating the certainty of salvation for those that believe in Him, shows on the contrary the condemnation of unbelievers to be twofold, one by the law and the other by the Gospel. Their idea is that the unbelievers are here declared to be condemned already by the sentence of the law, which they still lie under, and have it confirmed by the Gospel, since they do not by faith lay hold on the offered and only remedy in Christ.

But there is no trace of such a scheme either here or anywhere else in Scripture, which teaches expressly that "as many as sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as sinned in the law shall be judged by the law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2: 12-16). St. Paul's doctrine therefore excludes the assumption that every unbeliever is already under the law, which would intelligibly involve his being condemned by it, law affecting only those under it, whilst those who have it not are dealt with on their own ground. With this entirely agrees the language of our Gospel, which does not say a word about the law, even where a teacher of it was before the Lord inquiring into life eternal and salvation. It is solely a question of Christ. "And this is the judgment, that the light hath come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not unto the light lest his works should be convicted; but he that practiseth the truth cometh unto the light, that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God" (verses 19-21).

Inasmuch as the true light now shines-no longer the law in Israel, but the light come into the world, a criterion is in force which decides for every man. There is a far deeper question than a man's own state or conduct. Indeed, this, too, is already decided; man is no longer under probation, as the Jew was under law. He is lost: be he Jew or Gentile, he is alike lost. It is, therefore, a question of believing on Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, Who (as we saw before) has been sent of God, not as He will be shortly to judge the quick and the dead, but that the world (not the elect nation now, but the world, spite of its ruin, in His grace) may be saved through Him. This tests to the core. All thus depends on believing on Him. If one believes not, one has been already judged. It is not merely to fail in duty, but to fight against the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ. It is to reject life eternal, and the perfect love of God, in the Only-begotten Son of God, Whose name one disbelieves or makes light of.

It is wholly vain to complain of lack of light. The very reverse is true. "This is the judgment, that the light hath come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil." Terrible revelation of their state! Alas! it was our state, our affections so utterly corrupt as

to prefer the darkness to the light, and this from the guiltiest reason, and a bad conscience. For our deeds were evil. Assuredly the trumpet gives no uncertain sound. Have we heard its clear warning above, beneath, the din of this world? Have we submitted to the sentence of Him Who knows what is in man, no less than what is in God? Or are we unbroken still in self-righteousness and self-conceit? Do we dare to dispute the words of the Lord, solemn and plain-too plain to be mistaken? Would we put off the decision till the great white throne? And what will He then judge of the unbelief which thus virtually gives Him the lie? For no man that believed these words of His now would put off till then, but surely cast his soul on Him Who, if the Judge then, is Saviour, and nothing but a Saviour, to the lost one that now believes on His name.

But when eternal judgment does come, it is not true that then it is a question simply of man's unbelief. From the Divine account given to us, we learn that the dead are judged according to their works. There is no such thing at any time as salvation according to our works; for all who reject Christ there will be judgment according to their works. They had refused the Saviour, they had despised the grace of God through religiousness or irreligiousness, through opposition or indifference. They are not found written in the book of life, they are judged out of the things written in the book according to their works. They are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire, the end of all who loved⁷¹ the darkness rather than the light. For their works were evil: is not their judgment just? What is the Lord's moral analysis? "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not unto the light, lest his works should be convicted." How could such a one suit the portion of the saints in light? He hates the light which has come here: would he suit it or love it better on high? He is inwardly false and dishonest, deliberately and decidedly preferring to go on in his sins, instead of submitting to their complete detection by the light, that they might be blotted out and forgiven by the faith of Christ's blood. Is this truth in the inner man? Does it not rather prove that such as refuse Christ are of the devil as their father, and desire to do their lusts, instead of hearing the word of God and being subject to His Son?

On the other hand, "he that practiseth the truth cometh unto the light, that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God." For the faith that is of God's elect is never powerless but living, not only productive of results seen among men, but such as savour of their Divine source and sphere. None makes more of the truth or of knowing God than John; none has a deeper horror of Gnosticism. It is life, life eternal, that one should know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He sent; but His commandment is life everlasting, as our Lord could say of Him Who gave to Himself what He should say and what He should speak.

If we know these things, we are blessed if we do them. Unblessed is the forgetful hearer, who does not practise the truth nor come unto the light, but is rather gone away after considering himself, and straightway loses all remembrance of what he was like. Is it not too plain that his works are at best impulsive and natural? But he that practises the truth comes unto the light; walking therein he seeks to walk according to the light, trying by it his inward thoughts and feelings, motives and objects, words and ways. The realised presence of God imparts its colour to his works. They were manifestly wrought in God. They bear His image and superscription. Hence when all that are in the tombs hear the Lord's voice and go forth, it is for those that have practised good to a life-resurrection, for those that have done evil to a judgment-resurrection.⁷² There was life in the one case, not in the other. He that heard the Saviour's word and believed the God Who sent Him has life eternal, and hence practises good. He who rejects the Son of God has no ground but man, and can have no power but Satan's; he has refused Him Who is God's wisdom and God's power. He might not like to be lost and judged; but he despises the only way of salvation open to any, the crucified Son of man, the life-giving Son of God. He will not

be able to refuse or despise His judgment by and by.

John 3: 22-34.

The next paragraph has for its object the homage rendered by the Baptist to the Lord. This the Spirit of God introduces by telling us the occasion of it.⁷³ The conversation with Nicodemus was in Jerusalem, and in this was unfolded the absolute need of both the new birth and the cross. Only that when the Lord speaks of these things, He could not but let us know that it is life eternal which the believer receives, and that He Himself was not more surely the Son of man Who must be lifted up for man's desperate case than He is the Only-begotten Son of God given to the world in Divine love. Salvation was in His mind, not judgment, though the unbeliever in Him must be, yea is, judged already; and this on the deepest of all grounds, the preference of darkness, that they might do their wicked works at ease, to the Light come into the world in Christ. The case, then, of every rejector of Him is thus solemnly decided.

It is evident that the Person of Christ is the key to all, and shines out more and more in the secret scene with Nicodemus. Still it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, Who gave a yet fuller witness to His glory by John at a critical moment, to reproduce this permanently for us with the circumstances which led to it. The thought might enter some minds that the Lord only used His predecessor to continue the work and outdo it. It was fitting, therefore, that John the Baptist should give a final testimony to Him where human nature is apt to be most grudging.

"After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa, and there he was tarrying with them and baptizing.⁷⁴ And John also was baptizing at Ænon near Salim, because much water was there; and they were coming there and being baptized: for John was not yet cast into prison." We have thus a view of what was going on previous to the public Galilean ministry of our Lord in the three Synoptic Gospels. They do not touch on any work of His before John's imprisonment, whilst the early chapters of the fourth Gospel are devoted to this, after the revelation of His Person and glories at the beginning.⁷⁵

"There arose then a dispute on the part of the disciples of John with a Jew* about purification. And they came unto John and said to him, Rabbi, He who was with thee across the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, He is baptizing and all come unto Him" (verses 25, 26). A Jew's reasoning did not ruffle them, for their souls could not but feel the moral superiority of John's call and baptism to repentance in the faith of the coming Messiah; but the nearness of Jesus and the fact of His attractive power, veiled as it then might be, was a fact that disconcerted them, though the appeal to their master took the shape of zeal for one who had been prompt to own the dignity of Jesus when He came to John for baptism. But now He was baptizing, and all were flocking to Him: so complained John's disciples.⁷⁶

*There is equally good evidence from the most ancient and excellent witnesses for the plural form (pmG A2 II2 1. 13. 69. 124. etc. It. Vulg. Syrcu. Cop. Armusc Æth. Goth. Orig.) in the common text as for the singular (corr ABEFHKLMSUV ΓΔΛpmΠpm, many cursives, Syrsin pesch et phil. and Armzoh Chrys. Nonn.) preferred by most critics, partly as being the less common of the two, and so more likely to be changed.

Let us well weigh the reply. "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing unless it have been given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me* witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him" (verses 27, 28). It was lowly yet wise withal; it put, as truth always does, both God and ourselves in the right place, thus securing a like recognition of His sovereign disposal of all

and the contentedness of each with his own lot, and, it may be added, quiet firmness in the discharge of the duty which flows from it. For there is no greater error than the thought that our own will is really strong. Be it ever so, obedience is stronger still. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2: 17.) Out of this spirit of dependence and happy submission to God did John answer his disciples. If he were eclipsed as the morning star by the dawn of day, it was to fulfil, not to fail in, his mission. He, the servant and forerunner, had never set up to be the Master, as they could all attest, if they would.

*The witnesses for omitting $\mu\omicron\iota$ include EFHMVT, many cursives, etc., and are scarcely inferior, therefore, to those [including Syrsin] in favour of the ordinary text.

Then John applies to himself a figure taken from the circumstance of a bridal feast to illustrate his relation to the Lord, in beautiful harmony with the Lord's own use of it elsewhere. Here, of course, all is connected with Israel, though, when the church took the place of that nation, the Holy Spirit applies it freely to the new relationship constantly before us in the Epistles and the Revelation. "He that hath the bride is (the) Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom that standeth and heareth Him rejoiceth with joy because of the voice of the bridegroom: this my joy then is fulfilled. He must increase, but I decrease" (verses 29, 30). John was indeed the most favoured servant-yea, "the friend" of the Bridegroom. It was his joy, therefore, that the bride should be Christ's, not his, whose highest distinction was to be His immediate herald, seeing those days which king and prophets had so ardently desired to see, seeing Him Who gave those days their brightness. It was his chiefest joy to hear His voice of love and satisfaction in those He deigned to love as His bride. His own mission was closed. If Simeon could depart in peace, John could say that his joy was fulfilled. It was right, it was necessary, that He should increase and himself decrease, though no greater was born of woman. Instead of feeling a pang, his heart bowed and delighted in it. By and by when Christ comes in power and glory, and sits on the throne of David as well as of the yet larger dominion of the Son of man, "there will be no end of the increase of His government," as the prophet declares. (Isa. 9: 7.) But John could say it now in the days of His humiliation, as his soul rests on the glory of His Person, and the Spirit leads him on in the sense of what was due to Him.

The glory of the Person of Christ shines with rich lustre here. It is not merely His nearness of relation to His people as distinguished from John, nor His increase while the greatest of woman-born decreases. He is superior to all comparison. "He that cometh from above is above all" (verse 31). Neither Adam nor Abraham, Enoch nor Elijah, could take such a ground. They, like John, did not come from above, nor could any one of them be said to be above all. Nor could our blessed Lord Himself be so described, as born of Mary, and heir of David, had He not been God-the great theme of our Gospel. But this it has been the grand aim to show He is: a truth of the deepest moment, we can say boldly, not only to us the children, but to God the Father. For thus and now are to be solved all the questions that had ever risen between God and man, insoluble till He appeared, and appeared a true man, Who is no less truly God, and thus both "from above" and "above all."

And it was fitting that John the Baptist's own lips⁷⁷ should give utterance to the incontestable supremacy of the Lord Jesus in presence of his own disciples, jealous of their leader's honour. Hence follows the explanation: "he that is of the earth is of the earth, and speaketh (as) of the earth; He that cometh of the heaven is above all" (verse 31).* The Lord may vindicate John; but John asserts the glory of Jesus, Who had lost none of His intrinsic and supreme dignity by deigning in Divine love to become man. Like all other men, John could not claim to have any other origin naturally than the earth. Jesus alone is out of heaven; for such is the virtue of His Person that He raises up humanity into union with His Divine nature, instead of being dragged down by humanity into its degradation by sin as some have

vainly and evilly dreamt.

*[Lachm., Treg., W. and H., Weiss: "is above all," from corr. ΑΒΛΓΔΑΠ, etc., Vulg. Syrsin pesch hcl hier Memph. Æth. Goth. Chrys. Cyr. Alex-Tischendorf, followed by Blass, omits the words according to pmD and a few cursives, some old Latt. Syrcu Arm., Tertullian.]

Nor is it of His person only that we are here taught. His testimony is invested with kindred value. "And what He hath seen and heard, this He testifieth; and no one receiveth His testimony" (verse 32). His is the perfection of testimony; for what was there of God, of the Father, and this in heaven, that the Son had not seen and heard? There could be no conceivable defect here in the glory whence He came, and in the grace with which He made all known to man. How withering, therefore, the sad result! For surely beforehand it must have been universally anticipated that all but the most besotted would eagerly welcome such a witness of things Divine, heavenly, and eternal. But such is man's estate through sin, not only the savage and the brutal, not only the idolater or the sceptic, but those who pique themselves on their religion, whether it be theory or practice, ordinances or tradition, effort, ecstasy, or experience—"no one receiveth His testimony." How solemn the sentence! and the more so as being the unimpassioned utterance of holiness. Doubtless they knew not what they did in their dislike of, or indifference to, His testimony; but what a state man must be in, to have the heavenly and Divine Saviour thus bearing witness of things most deeply needed by himself in relation to God and heaven end forever, without ever finding out the worth of the Testifier or of the testimony! It is not that grace did not open some hearts, here and there, now and then; but the point here noted is the rejection of His testimony by man, not the reserve of sovereign mercy when all was lost in sin and ruin.

Faith is in no way a growth natural to the heart of sinful man. Without faith it is impossible to please God; and without His grace faith is impossible, such faith at least as pleases Him. For they that are in flesh cannot please God; but who are not in flesh till brought to God? Man conscious of sin and shrinking from Divine judgment dislikes the God Whose punishment he dreads. His grace he sees no reason, as far as he is concerned, for believing; and no wonder he sees none, for it would not be God's grace if there were a ground for it in himself. Grace excludes the desert of him to whom it is shown, and this is as offensive to his own self-sufficiency as it supposes love in Him Whose displeasure he knows he deserves. Thus there is no disposition in his heart to believe in God's grace, ample to make him doubt; and the more, as he reasons on what God must be, and on what he himself has been toward God. Christ is not seen to change all, as the manifestation of love, and His death the ground of the righteousness of God which justifies the believer, spite of past sins and ungodliness.

His testimony therefore puts the heart thoroughly to the test; for it tells the truth of the sinner as decidedly as it announces the grace of God, and the heart resists the one and distrusts the other. The last thing submitted to is to think ill of oneself, and well of God. But this is just the effect of receiving the testimony of Christ. We then begin to take God's side against ourselves; for if there be genuine faith, there is genuine repentance, without which, indeed, the faith is human and worthless, as in John 2, where men believed beholding the signs wrought, and Jesus did not trust Himself to them. Such faith is not of God's Spirit, but merely of the mind drawing a conclusion from the probabilities of the case.⁷⁸ In it man judges, which pleases him, instead of his being morally judged, which is humbling and offensive. He sees no sufficient reason to reject the evidence, and, his will going along with it, he believes accordingly. As this was the case with many in Jerusalem at the Passover, so it is with multitudes throughout Christendom now and ever since. The vague creed which prevails generally awakens enough neither of interest nor of opposition to put men to the test. But when any great truth, even of that creed, is pressed on the conscience or comes distinctly before the heart, it will then be seen how little men believe what they in words accredit, only because they never seriously apply it to their

souls before God.

Take the simple truth, for instance, of our Gospel, the Word, Who was God become flesh and dwelling among us; or, again, remission of sins in His name, the message to every soul, the possession of every believer: who doubts either as long as they are preached abstractedly in the pulpit? But the moment a man receives them for his own soul, and, though feeling and owning his sins more than ever, blesses God for forgiveness and rejoices in Christ-while he worships God and the Lamb, others shrink back and cry presumption! As if such truths were never intended for the heart and life and lips of every day, but only as a religious service, or, rather, a form for the multitude keeping holiday.

The fact is, however, that the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ (being perfect in themselves and in Him Whose glory is adequate to display and make them good, as well as perfectly adapted to man, sinful and lost as he is) test him absolutely, "and no one receiveth His testimony." Where the quickening power of the Spirit acts, it is far otherwise. So proper is it to win the heart, that he who is not won shows that his will is against God and His grace and truth in Christ, hatred naturally and soon following. He who bows, being begotten by the word of truth, judges himself. He has received not man's word, but, as it truly is, God's word, which effectually works in the believer; or, as it is put here, "he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (verse 33).

This is the essential character of real, living faith. His testimony is received because He gives it: nothing more simple, but we are not simple; nothing more right and due to Him, but we have been all wrong, and, most wrong to Him. It is received because He says it, not because it seems reasonable, or wise, or good, or for evidence of any kind; though one need not say there are the fullest evidences, and the testimony is that which alone could suit God or man, if one be a sinner, the other a Saviour where His testimony is received. A Divine faith is due to a Divine testimony; but the faith which is grounded on human motives is not Divine: only that which is founded on God's word truly searches heart and conscience. When a man is broken down to feel his own state of sin, as well as what he has done against such a God, the heart desires that the good news of the Gospel should be the truth, instead of yielding to the indifference or active repugnance natural to it; and this is to believe with the heart (Rom. 10: 9, 10).

Further, the ground of confidence is laid plainly and expressed fully. We are not left to inference. "For He Whom God sent speaketh the words of God; for God* giveth not the Spirit by measure" (verse 34). To receive the words of Jesus, then, is to receive those of God. What possible ground is there for hesitation? To faith alone belongs absolute certainty. And of this the Spirit is the power, as in Him perfectly, so in and by us as far as flesh is judged. He was the holy vessel of the Spirit, so that the testimony was poured out as pure as it was poured in, or, rather, as it is in Him Who is Himself the truth. As for what inspired men have written, it is just the same. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14: 37). In all others, whatever the power, there is no such guarantee against infirmity or mistake, though one may be perfectly kept and guided, where only and simply dependent, so real is the connection between the truth and the Spirit.

*["God": so Lachm., Treg., after ACcorrDFAPI, etc., Vulg. Syrpesch hcl Memph. Æth., Orig. Chrys. Tisch., W. and H., and Weiss omit, as Bcorr CpmLT, 1, 33, Cyr. Alex.-Blass: "the Father," omitting "the Spirit," as Bpm Syrsin.]

John 35 f. We have had the supremacy of Jesus, and His testimony, so thoroughly marking Him off from all others. But there is more. He is "the Son," and the especial object of Divine affection and

honour. This follows; and here, accordingly, we rise far above His position either as the Messiah, the Bridegroom on the one hand, or the heavenly prophet on the other, Whose testimony absolutely detected every child of Adam, while it brought him that received it to the knowledge of God and His mind with Divine certainty. Hence we hear of the Father and the Son. "The Father* loveth the Son, and hath put (lit. 'given') all things in His hand" (verse 35). Jesus is the Heir of all, as the Son of the Father in a sense peculiar to Himself, the true Isaac Who abides ever, the beloved Son Who has all that He Himself has, and has all given to be in His (the Son's) hand.

*[Syrin has "But He," followed by Blass.]

Consequently it is no question here of blessing for any measured time or for glory on earth under His reign as King. All things come to the point at once and for ever before Him, Who is the object of testimony, and not the testifier merely. "He that believeth on the Son hath life eternal." One need not thus wait for the blessing in the days of the kingdom. Then, no doubt, Jehovah will command blessing, even life for evermore. But he that believes in the Son has eternal life now. For the same reason it is of all things the most fatal to refuse subjection to His Person now. Therefore is it added, "and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (verse 36). If disobedience is intended, it is to Himself as well as to His words, as, indeed, by the obedience of faith the Apostle Paul meant not practical obedience, however important in its place and season, but subjection⁷⁹ to Himself-to the truth revealed in Him. He that refuses Him in unbelief abides in unremoved death and under the wrath of God, Who cannot but resent such insult of heart to His Son.

JOHN — THE FOURTH CHAPTER*

*[Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 440-446.]⁸⁰

We find ourselves still in that part of our Gospel which precedes the Galilean ministry of our Lord presented in the three Synoptic Gospels, though this journey through Samaria is conducting the Lord to their starting-point. In John 3: 24 it will have been noticed that John was *not yet* cast into prison. When he was put in prison (Mark 1: 14), and Jesus heard it (Matt. 4: 12), He came into Galilee, preaching. Our chapter speaks of a previous moment, and, as usual, lets us into a deeper view of all that was at work.

John 4: 1-4.

"When, therefore, the Lord knew that the Pharisees heard that Jesus maketh and baptizeth more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judaea and went away (again)* into Galilee."

*AB[pm]EΔ, etc. [as Weiss and Blass], omit; CDLMT, 1, 33, 69, and many ancient versions [including Syrin] insert [as W. and H.].

Little did the disciples know the depth of the glory that was in Him or the consequent blessing for man, though they zealously baptized and thus exposed their Master to the spleen of those who could ill-brook His increase and honour. It will be noticed that not He, but His disciples, did baptize. He knew the end from the beginning; and this finds its appropriate statement here. They might baptize to Him as Messiah; but He, the Son of God, knew from the first that He must suffer and die as the Son of man: so, indeed, He had already declared to Nicodemus with its blessed results for the believer. The baptism He instituted was, therefore, after and to His death and Resurrection. The Son of God knew what was in

man, even when he was disposed to pay Him homage because of the signs which He wrought. So did He know the effect of His disciples' activity on the religious men of that day.⁸¹

It was the jealousy of the Pharisees, then, which in reality drove the Lord from Judæa. What was that land longer? What without Him, above all, when it rejected Him and He abandoned it? They might boast of the law, but they had not kept it; they might claim the promises, but He-the promised One and Accomplisher of all the promises-had been there, and they knew Him not, loved Him not, but were more and more proving their heart-estrangement from Him, their Messiah. What could the first covenant avail now? It must ensure their condemnation; it could work no deliverance. The Jew was to reap only ruin and death under its terms. We shall presently see more; yet here at the beginning of the chapter is the Son of God, through the ill-feeling of those who ought most to have appreciated His presence, forced out, we may say, from the people of God and the scene of His institutions, but in the power of life eternal, whatever the humiliation which the haughty religionists put on Him, who saw in Him a man only, little suspecting that He was the Word become flesh.

John 4: 4-6.

"And He must pass through Samaria. He cometh, therefore, to a city of Samaria called Sychar,⁸² near the land which Jacob gave to Joseph his son. Now a fountain of Jacob was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with the journeying, sat thus⁸³ at the fountain. It was about the sixth hour."⁸⁴ He is as truly man as God, but the Holy One always and only. Weary and rejected, He sits there in unwearied love. The false pretensions before Him can no more hinder now than the proud iniquity He had just left behind. Jerusalem and Samaria alike vanish. What could either do for a wretched heart, a guilty sinner? And such a one approaches.

John 4: 7-10.

"There cometh a woman out of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her, Give Me to drink (for His disciples had gone away into the city to buy provisions).⁸⁵ The Samaritan woman therefore saith to Him, How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask to drink of Me, being a Samaritan woman? for Jews⁸⁶ have no intercourse with Samaritans.* Jesus answered and said to her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

*["For . . . Samaritans," attested by \aleph CorrABCL, etc., Orig. Chrys. Cyr. Alex., and read by Lachm., Treg., W. and H. (t), Weiss, but discredited by Tisch., who follows corr D. The words are bracketed by Blass⁸⁷.]

He that made the heart perfectly knows the avenue to its affections. And what grace can He not show Who came to give a new and Divine nature, as well as to reveal God in love, where there was nothing but sin, self, and unrest? God in the lowliness of man asks a favour, a drink of water, of the Samaritan woman; but it was to open her heart to her wants, and give her life eternal in the power of the Holy Ghost, communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

"Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God cometh." So said the Spirit of prophecy by Isaiah of old (52: 7); and so it will be fulfilled in its fulness by and by, as even now it is in principle. But what a sight to God, and, indeed, to faith, the Son of God, when driven out by the jealous hatred and contempt of man, of His own people who received Him not,

thus occupying Himself with an unhappy Samaritan who had exhausted her life in quest of happiness never thus found! Surprised, she inquires how a Jew could ask aught of one like her: what had she felt, had she then conceived Who He was, and that He knew to the full what she was? And how reassuring to her afterwards when she looked back on the path by which God had in gracious wisdom led her that day that she might know Himself for evermore!

Alone He spoke to her alone, beginning in her soul His work for heaven, for eternity, for God. No miracle of an external sort is wrought before the eyes, no sign is needed without. The Son of God speaks in Divine love, though (as we shall see) intelligence is not till the conscience is reached and exercised. The law is good if one use it lawfully, knowing that its application is not to a righteous person, but to lawless and insubordinate, to impious and sinful, and, in short, to all that is opposed to sound teaching. But Christ is the best of all as the revelation of God in grace, giving all that is wanted, producing (not seeking) what should be, not to dispense with the absolutely needed lesson of what we are, but enabling us to bear it, now that we know how truly God Himself cares for us in perfect love, spite of all that we are.

This is grace, the true grace of God. No error is more complete or perilous than the notion that grace makes light of sin. Was it a slight dealing with our sins when Christ bore them in His own body on the tree? Did law ever strike such a blow at any sinner, as God when He, sending His own Son in likeness of flesh of sin and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, and thus brought "no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus"? (Rom. 8: 1-3.) Nay, it was expressly what the law could not do. The law could condemn the sinner with his sins; but God has thus in Christ condemned not only the sins, but the root of evil-sin in the flesh-and this in a sacrifice for sin, so that those who otherwise had nothing but condemnation inwardly and outwardly, past and present, in nature as well as ways, have now by grace "no condemnation." All that could be condemned has been condemned; and they are in Christ, and they walk not according to flesh, but according to the Spirit. This is now the law of liberty.

Here, doubtless, there was no such standing yet existing, or, consequently, possible to any. But the Son was here acting and speaking in the fulness of grace which was soon to accomplish all for the believer and give all to him. Yet He lets the Samaritan know that she knew nothing. For, whatever His goodness (and it has no limits), grace does not spare man's assumption; and the revelation it brings from God and of God never really enters till self is judged. Samaria and Jerusalem are alike ignorant of grace; and only Christ by the Spirit can open the heart to bow and receive it. If thou knewest the gift of God"-such is the reality and the aspect of God in the Gospel. He is not an exacter, but a giver. He is not commanding man to love Him, but proclaiming His love to man-yea, to the most wretched of sinners. He is not requiring the creature's righteousness, but revealing His own. But man is slow to believe, and religious man the slowest to understand, what makes nothing of himself and all of God. But such is the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation; such the freegiving of God, which the Lord was then manifesting as well as declaring to the woman of Samaria.

But there was, and is, more. The knowledge of the gift of God, in contradistinction from the law on the one hand, or from blank ignorance of His active love on the other, is inseparable from faith in the personal dignity of the Son of God. Therefore does the Saviour, all-lowly as He was, add: "And Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink." For without this nothing is known aright. Jesus is the Truth, and abides ever the test for the soul, which owns with so much the more decision and adoring thankfulness the glory of Him Who, true God, became man in infinite love that we might have life eternal in Him. For otherwise, we may boldly say, it could not be. The truth is exclusive and immutable; it is not only the revelation of what is, but of what alone can and must be, consistently with the real nature of God and the state of man. Yet is God acting in His own liberty, for His love is always

free and always holy; and the truth can only be what it is; for it is He Who has brought down that love in man to men in all their sin and death and darkness.

It is the revelation of God to man in Him Who, though the Son of God, stooped so low to bless the most needy and defiled and distant from God as to ask a drink of water, that He might in this find the occasion to give even to such a one living water. For this, too, He does not fail to say, as a consequence, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." For grace, truly known in Christ, produces confidence in grace, and draws out the heart to ask the greatest boon of Him Who will never be below, but above, the highest position that can be conferred on Him. Never can it be that the faith of man equals, still less surpasses, the riches of the grace of God. If men, spite of their evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more should the Father Who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him? (Luke 11: 13.) If a guilty Samaritan woman is assured by the Son of God that she, knowing the gift of God and Who He is that asked of her to drink when weary by the fountain, had but to ask of Him in order to receive living water, still none that so asked and received had anything like an adequate sense of that infinite blessing-the Holy Ghost given to be in the believer.

Such is the living water that Christ here speaks of-not power in gift, nor yet simply eternal life, but the Spirit given⁸⁸ of the Son to be in the believer as the spring of communion with Himself and the Father.

It is not, then, quite correct, as some have said, that Christ is here alluded to as meant by "the gift of God," the next clause being viewed as explanatory. Undoubtedly, He was the means of displaying it; but the first of the clauses in this rich word of our Lord sets forth the thought, so strange to man, of the free-giving of God. Nature, as such, never understands it; law alone makes it still less intelligible. Faith only solves the difficulty in the Person, mission, and work of Christ, Who is the witness, proof, and substance of it; but it is the gratuitous grace of God that is meant. Hence, the second clause, instead of being merely exegetic of the first, directs attention to Him Who was there in the utmost humiliation (weary with His journeying, and asking a drink of water from one whom He knew to be the most worthless of Samaritans), yet the Son of the Father in unshorn fulness of Divine glory and of grace to the most wretched. And this was so true that she who was as yet blind to all this had but to ask Him, and have the best and greatest gift the believer can receive-living water, not life only, but the Holy Ghost. Thus, while Christ is the way of it, the Trinity was really involved in making good these words of our Lord to the Samaritan woman, all the Godhead engaged in the proffered blessing.

JOHN 4: 11 *f.*

"The woman saith to Him, Sir, Thou hast no bucket, and the well is deep: whence, then, hast Thou the living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" She comprehends none of the gracious words she had heard; they were not mixed with faith in her heart. She, therefore, reasons against them. If the water was to be drawn from Jacob's well, where was the bucket to let down, for the well was deep? Did He pretend to be greater than Jacob, or was His a better well than that which of old supplied him and his house-a well which was now theirs? Thus the mind argues against the Lord, according to the senses or tradition, so fatal is ignorance of His Person and of the truth. Circumstances are the trial of faith and the swamp of unbelief, which gladly avails itself (with or without any just title) of a great name and its gifts, alas! to slight a greater-yea, the greatest.

John 4: 13f.

Mark now the Saviour's grace. He develops with the utmost fulness to this dark soul the unspeakable gift of God, in contrast with her own thoughts, and with those of man generally. "Jesus answered and said to her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall in no way thirst for ever,* but the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life eternal."

*It is not merely οὐ μή, nor οὐ μή . . . πώποτε, but οὐ μή . εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, the strongest possible exclusion of what is in question for eternity.

Water of whatever spring nature boasts may refresh, but thirst will come again; and God has ordered for the creature that so it should and must be. But it is not so when one is given to drink into the Spirit. Christ gives the Holy Ghost to the believer to be in him a fresh fountain of Divine enjoyment, not only life eternal from the Father in the Person of the Son, but the communion of the Holy Ghost, and hence the power of worship, as we shall see later in this very conversation. Thus it is not only deliverance from hankering after pleasure, vanity, sin, but a living spring of exhaustless and Divine joy, joying in God through our Lord Jesus, and this in the power of the Spirit. It supposes the possession of life eternal in the Son, but also the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who was given to us.

John 4: 15-19.

Even then the Samaritan remains as insensible as ever. "The woman saith to Him, Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here* to draw. He saith to her, Go, call thy husband, and come here. The woman answered and said, I have not a husband. Jesus saith to her, Thou saidst well, I have not a husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this thou hast spoken truly. The woman saith to Him, Sir, I see that Thou art a Prophet." She would gladly learn how she might be relieved of her wants and of her labour for this world. As yet not a ray of heavenly light had entered her. Not to thirst nor to come here to draw formed the boundary of her desires from the Saviour not yet known to be a Saviour, still less the Only-begotten Son.

*In pmB and Origen the reading is διέρχωμαι, which Tischendorf and W. and H. [Weiss and Blass] adopt; but the MSS. differ, many giving the indicative, many the subjunctive.

This closes the first part of our Lord's dealings with her. It was useless to say more as before. Jesus had already set before her the principle on which God is acting, and His own gracious competence to give her, on her asking, living water; He had also shown the incomparable superiority of His gift as being Divine over any or every boon left by Jacob. But her heart did not rise above the sphere of her daily wants and earthly wishes. She was deaf to His words, albeit spirit and life, which disclosed what is eternal.

Had it been in vain, then, to have so spoken to her as He did in the fulness of God's love? Far from it. It was all-important, when a door was once opened within, to reflect and find that such riches of grace had been brought to her absolutely unsought. But it was useless to add more till then. Hence the Lord's abrupt and seemingly unconnected appeal, "Go, call thy husband, and come here." But was the digression apart from the question of her salvation? Not so. It was the second and necessary way with a soul, if it is to be blessed Divinely. It is through an awakened conscience that grace and truth enter, and it was because her conscience hitherto was unreached that the grace and truth were not at all understood.

On the one hand, it was of all consequence that she and we and all should have the clearest proof that the testimony of the Saviour's grace goes out before there is any fitness to receive it; for this, as it magnifies God and His free-giving, so it abases and exposes the wholly evil and frightfully dangerous state of man.

On the other hand, it was equally momentous that she should be brought to feel her need of that free and wondrous grace of which the Saviour had assured her, in all its depths and amplitude and everlasting continuance, before she had judged herself as a sinner before God. To this point He now conducts her; for if it is impossible to please God without faith, without repentance faith is intellectual and worthless. It is man discerning evidence and accepting what he in his wisdom judges best; not a sinner who, met by sovereign grace, is judged, owning himself in his sins, but too glad to find the Saviour, the only Saviour, in Jesus Christ the Lord.

Yet the Lord still holds to grace. He does not say, "Go, call thy husband," without adding, "and come here." He does not repent of His goodness because she was dull; on the contrary, He was using the fresh and necessary means to have the need of such goodness felt. How painstaking is grace, working in the soul that it may enter and abide, now that it had been testified of in all its fulness, and without any preparation for it any more than desert in man!

The woman answering, "I have not a husband," is astounded to hear the withering reply, "Thou saidst well, I have not a husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this thou hast spoken truly." She was convicted. It was in demonstration of the Spirit and power. Yet were the words few and simple, not one of them harsh or strong. It was the truth of her state and of her life brought home most unexpectedly, as God knows how to do, and does in one form or another in every converted soul. It was the truth which spared her not and laid her sins bare before God and her own conscience. She did not doubt for a moment what it was that made everything manifest. She recognised it to be the light of God. She owns His words to be not man's wisdom, but God's power. She falls under the conviction, and at once confesses, "Sir, I see that Thou art a Prophet." It was not the fact only, but the truth from God.

It is plain hence that "prophet" does not mean one only who predicted the future, for this was not in question, but one who told out the mind of God—one who spoke by the evident guidance of the Spirit what could not be known naturally, yet what therefore so much the more put the soul before God and His light. So Abraham is a prophet (Gen. 20: 7), and the fathers generally (Ps. 105: 15), and the O.T. prophets in all their ministry and writing, not merely in what was prediction. The same thing is emphatically true of New Testament prophesying, as we may see in 1 Cor. 14: 24, 25. That is communicated from God, which judges the life, yea, the secrets of the heart before Him.

Recognising the Divine power of His words, the Samaritan seizes the opportunity to have light from God on that which had not been without perplexity. and interest even to her— the religious difference between her race and the chosen nation, and this not merely in homage to God, but in formal or express public worship. She wants to have the question, old as it was, settled for her now. The Samaritan, like many another in grievous error, could talk of great antiquity. Happy the soul that has recourse for it to Jesus! He alone is the Truth. Others may deceive, themselves deceived.

To this end was Jesus born, and for this cause came He into the world that He should bear witness to the truth. What is more: "Every one that is of the truth heareth His voice." Alas! how different has it been with Christendom, corrupted first, then rent hopelessly, most haughty when it has most reason to be ashamed. Be it ours in such a state of ruin to keep His word and not deny His name.

A time of declension beyond all things tests the soul, for it seems proud to differ from the

excellent of the earth, especially if they are many, and those who cleave to God's Word are few, and have nothing to boast. For this very reason it is precious in God's eyes, and no small testimony to the absent Master. Still, it becomes all who differ from the mass to be sure of their ground, as this woman sought when she appealed to Jesus, and the Christian need seek no other-yea, is guilty and infatuated if, where men's uncertainty is so great and grave, he heed aught other-than Jesus speaking by His Word and Spirit.

John 4: 20-26.

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship. Jesus saith to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship what ye know not: we worship what we know, for salvation⁸⁹ is of the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for also the Father seeketh such as His worshippers. God is a Spirit, and His worshippers must worship⁹⁰ (Him) in spirit and truth. The woman saith to Him, I know that Messiah is coming, that is called Christ:⁹¹ when *He* shall come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am (He)."

The Lord more than meets every desire of the Samaritan's heart. For here we have, not merely the vindication of Israelitish worship as compared with its Samaritan rival but the first unfolding of Christian worship ever given by God to man, and this as superseding not Samaritanism only but Judaism also—a change withal then at hand. Yet is all conveyed in language that was plain enough even to the soul thus addressed, while there is depth of truth which no saint has ever fathomed, however deeply he may have drawn on it and enjoyed it.

"The Father" was to be worshipped henceforth: of itself, what a revelation! It is no longer a question of the Jehovah God of Israel, nor even of the Almighty as was the name by which He was made known to the fathers. There is a richer display of God, and far more intimate. It is not as the Eternal Who put Himself in covenant and government, Who will surely yet make good His ways with Israel, as He has chastised them for theirs. Nor is it the God Who shielded His poor pilgrims that hung on His promises in their wanderings among hostile strangers before their children formed a nation and received His law. It was God as the Son knew Him, and was making Him known in the fulness of love and fellowship, Who would accordingly bring His own that were in the world into the conscious relationship of children as born of Him. (Compare John 1: 12, 13, 18; John 14: 4-10, 20; John 16: 23-27; John 20: 17-23.)

No wonder that, in presence of such nearness and the worship that befits it, the mountain of Gerizim melts, and the sanctuary of Jerusalem fades away. For the one was but the effort of self-will, the other but the test and proof of the first man's inability to meet God and live. Christian worship is found on the possession of life eternal in the Son, and on the gift of the Spirit as the power of worship.

In verse 22 the Lord leaves it impossible for the Samaritan to draw the inference that, if Christian worship was about to be alone acceptable to God, independently of place or race, Samaritan had been just as good as Jewish. Not so. The Samaritans worshipped what they did not know, the Jews knew what they worshipped; "for salvation," as He added, "is of the Jews." They had "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, the law-giving, and the service, and the promises, whose were the fathers, and of whom as pertaining to flesh was the Christ Who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 9: 5.) The Samaritans were mere imitators, Gentiles jealous of Israel and hostile to them, without fear of God, else had they submitted to His ways and Word.

Thus God's privileges to Israel are vindicated; but none the less was the Lord at that time driven out by Pharisaic jealousy, and none the less had He set aside all pretension to traditional and successional blessing. He was there to communicate from God, not to accredit man, and, He being rejected, Jerusalem and Samaria alike vanish away. Old things are judged; all things must become new. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, now that those who had the institutions of God are rejecting His counsel against themselves. And if that unbelief went to the uttermost in hatred of the Father and the Son, it would only bring out the fulness of Divine grace and righteousness, leaving His love absolutely free to act supremely above all evil for His own glory, as we know is the fact in a crucified but risen Christ.

It is remarkable accordingly that the Lord does not say "Who," but "What." For in Judaism God dwelt in thick darkness, and the testimony rendered by the whole Levitical system (with its sacrifices and priests, door, veil, incense, everything in short), was that the way into the holiest had not yet been made manifest. When Christ died it was: the veil was rent from top to bottom, and eternal redemption found; the worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins, and are invited to draw near. Such is Christianity, God having revealed Himself as the Father in the Son through the Spirit. To know Him, the only true God, and Him Whom He had sent to reveal Him, even Jesus, is life eternal. And the mighty work which was done on the cross has dealt with all our evil, so that we are free to enjoy Himself. We know therefore *Whom* we worship, and not merely "what." When God was hidden in the thick darkness, and only the unity of His nature proclaimed, the Godhead remained vague. When the Father is revealed as now in the Son by the Spirit, what a difference!

Hence this exceeding blessedness is opened in its positive character in verses 24, 25. For it is an hour when form is repudiated, as it could not be in Judaism. Reality alone is endorsed. National worship therefore is now an evident delusion, being but an effort to resuscitate what has vanished away as far as regards any recognition on God's part. It was owned in Israel under law for its own purpose; it will be so on the largest scale in the millennium; but it is not, if we believe the Saviour, during the hour which, then coming, now is. It is an hour now when the true worshippers worship the Father. Who and what are they? The doctrinal utterances of the Apostles answer with one voice that they are God's children, born of Him through the faith of Christ, and sealed by the Spirit consequently as resting on His redemption. So the Apostle says (Phil. 3: 3) that we (in contrast with mere Jews or Judaizers) are the true circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh. But we must cite the New Testament as a whole to give the full proof, if one asks more evidence than the Lord affords in this context, though I feel assured that he who bows not to such a witness would not be won by ten thousand. A single word from God is more to the believer than every other evidence: how many would convince the unbeliever?

Further, what is said of the worship excludes all but true believers. For they are to worship in spirit and truth. How can any who have not the Spirit and know not the truth? Granted that the article is wanting. But this in such a case as the one before us adds to the strength of the statement, for it predicates a spiritual and truthful character of the worship. That is to say, the Lord's words express more than the necessity of having the Holy Ghost or of acquaintance with the truth, though this would suppose the Christian with his distinguishing privileges. But He says that they worship in that character, not merely that they have the Spirit and the truth in order to worship. Now, plainly, a real Christian might act unspiritually and not according to the truth. Even Peter and Barnabas failed at a grave crisis to walk according to the truth of the Gospel. However true the worshipper then, if he were grieving the Spirit or dishonouring the Lord, this would not be to worship in spirit and truth. But it remains still more manifest that none but "the true worshippers" could so worship, though on a given

occasion or in a given state they might not, in fact, as they ought.

Moreover, "also the Father seeketh such as his worshippers." Let us weigh it. Time was when every Jew went up to Jerusalem to seek Jehovah; time will be when all nations shall flow to the same centre when the Son of man comes in power and reigns in glory. But the characteristic working of grace is that the Father seeks the true worshippers. Undoubtedly when sought they gather unto the name of the Lord, and enjoy His presence by the Spirit. It is not enough that they are washed, and not by water only but by water and blood, and thus are every whit clean; it is not only that they have the Spirit as the witness of the one efficacious sacrifice, and the spring of praise and power of continual thanksgiving; "also the Father seeketh such as His worshippers." What confidence for them! What grace in Him! Yet is His seeking such true of every Christian. May they answer His grace by eschewing all that is unworthy of it in this evil day!

But there are other words of profound import. "God is a Spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and truth." It is the nature of God which is here in question, not the relationship of grace which He now reveals in and by Christ. And this is not without the greatest importance for us. For He must be worshipped correspondingly, and He most fully provided for this, seeing that the new life we enjoy is by the Spirit and is spirit, not flesh (John 3: 6), as, indeed, He begot us of His own will by the word of truth (James 1), and we are thus born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by God's living and abiding word (1 Peter 1: 23). Assuredly we should walk and worship in the Spirit, if we live in the Spirit. He is given to us that we should judge and reject the first Adam, glorifying only the Second man, our Lord Jesus. Nay, more, as God is a Spirit, spiritual worship is all He accepts. His worshippers "*must* worship in spirit and truth." It is a moral necessity flowing from His nature—a nature fully revealed in Him Who is the image of the invisible God, and we should not be ignorant of it and its character who are born of Him as believers in Christ.

The woman, struck by words plain, indeed, but no doubt far beyond her (for they reach up to God as surely as they come down to man), at once thinks of the Messiah, owns her confidence in His coming, and is sure that when He is come He will tell us all things (verse 25). Would that all who believe on Him believed this of Him! Would that, when He has spoken peace to them, they turned not again to folly! And what folly greater than to turn from His words on this very theme, and in this very chapter, for instance, to follow the traditions of men and the ways of the world in the worship of God?

And now break on her ear and heart the last words needed to clinch all the rest and ensure her blessing evermore: "Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am (He)" (verse 26). It might be the lowest form of presenting the only One Who can avail the sinner, yet it remains ever true from first to last that every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God. And this the Samaritan did. Her heart was touched, her conscience searched, and now the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ was all to her. All the blessing was hers in His person Who was then present and received by her in faith.

What a moment, a present Messiah,⁹² and He speaking to a Samaritan woman, yea, on Christian worship!

John 4: 27.

"And upon this came His disciples, and wondered* that he was speaking with a woman: none, however, said, What seekest Thou? or why speakest Thou with her?" Their wonder was that He spoke† with a woman:^{92a} what was hers who knew that every secret of her heart was naked and open before Him with Whom she had to do? His grace, however, had fully prepared the way. He Who searched all

the recesses of her soul had already encouraged her by revealing the richest grace of God the Father, Himself the only true Revealer of it, about to give the Holy Spirit that even she might receive and enjoy it truly. It was no question of seeking on her part at any rate: the Father was seeking such; nor was it of talking with her, but of revealing to her. The disciples had much to learn. Had they known the subject-matter of converse they might well have wondered incomparably more.

*The imperfect εθαύμαζον is better than the common ἐθαύμασαν, and rests on far better authority; but it is needless to express its continuity in English in such a case as this.

†[Syrsin: "was standing and talking," as Blass, ἐστηκώς ἐλάλει.]

John 4: 28-30.

"The woman then left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a Man who told me all things that* ever I did: is not this the Christ?93 They went out of the city, and were coming unto Him." The moral change was immense. A new world opened to her which eclipsed the present with new affections, new duties, the power of which asserted itself in lifting her entirely above the things that are seen, whatever might be the effect ordinarily, in strengthening to a better fulfilment of present earthly toil. But the revelation of Christ to her soul was both all-absorbing and the most powerful stimulus to make Him known to others. Where the eye is single, the body is full of light. She felt who needed Him most, and she acted on it forthwith. She left her waterpot, went off to the town, and told the men of Jesus. How well she understood Him! He had not formally sent her, yet she went boldly with the invitation. Nor was it merely that she bade them go: "Come, see a Man." She would go along with them. Her heart was in the current of His grace, and counted upon the same welcome for others, unwarranted though it might appear, as for herself. Such is the power of Divine love even from the very first.

*There is a question between ἄ [Edd.] on the authority of BCpm and some other ancient witnesses, and ὅσα with far more numerous copies, here and in verse 39, the difference in English being that the latter adds "ever."

Yet there was no enfeebling of the truth because of His grace. They, too, must prepare for what had searched her. "Come, see a Man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not He the Christ?" Well they knew what she had been; and if He had so dealt with her, might not they also see and hear Him? Such a personal experience has great power, and it is safe, too, where it is not merely an appeal to the affections, but conscience is searched along with it.

John 4: 31-34.

*"Meanwhile the disciples were asking Him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But He said to them, I have food to eat which ye do not know. Then the disciples said to one another, Hath any one brought Him to eat? Jesus saith to them, It is My food that I should do† the will of Him that sent Me, and finish His work." How humbling to find His disciples at such a time occupied with the body and its wants. And this the Lord makes them feel by His answer. They knew not as yet such food, disciples though they were.94 It is not as men often quote it, "His meat and His drink," for there was an inner spring of loving and delighting in His Father beyond doing His will and completing His work. But this was His food. He came to do His will. In this He was never wearied, nor should we be even now, whatever might be the fatigue of the body. For "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Without Him even the "youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail. But they that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles,

they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." Jesus knew this Himself in perfection, and here is a sample of it.

*The great majority of witnesses [including Syrsin] add δὲ, "and" or "but"; the most ancient omit.

†The best reading [that of Weiss and Blass] and most forcible sense is ποιῶ (AEGHMSUVΓΔΛ, etc.), not ποιήσω, read by Lachmann, Treg. W. and H., though a manifest assimilation to τελειώσω.

John 4: 35-38.

"Do not ye say that there are yet four months and the harvest cometh? Lo, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and behold the fields, for they are white unto harvest already.* He† that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both‡ he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true,§ It is one that soweth and another that reapeth. I sent you to reap that on which ye have not toiled: others have toiled, and ye have entered into their toil." Whatever might be the times and seasons of the natural harvest, the fields spiritually were ripe for the reaper. Man, the world, undoubtedly deserved judgment; but the very same state of sin which calls for judgment God uses for His call of grace. The Gospel comes expressly on the ground of man's total ruin, and therefore levels all distinctions. Jew, Samaritan, Gentile-what are any now but sinners? The Jew had been under probation, but he was now rejecting the Messiah, the Son of God. All was lost; but the rejected Christ is the Saviour, and now there is salvation for any, and grace carries it among such as these Samaritans.

*Tischendorf, etc., sever ἤδη from verse 35 and make it begin verse 36, following some ancient authorities; but the most ancient (pmBMΠpm, etc.) leave it open, and most [as Weiss] give as is here done, which seems to be alone in keeping with the context [Blass omits, as Syrsin Chrys. Hil.].

†The common text prefixes καὶ on ample authority [including Syrsin], but the most ancient uncials, and some good cursives, etc., are adverse [so Blass].

‡Some good and ancient authorities omit καὶ [as Weiss, but Blass retains it].

§The article before ἄληθινός is not read by BCpmKLTbΔΠpm, many good cursives, and some of the Greek fathers [so W. and H., Weiss]. In one passage of Chrysostom which has the article, he has ἄληθής after it, and so have a few cursives.

Not that grace had failed to work during the past times of probation. Man had broken down utterly; but God was preparing the way when it should be no longer experimental dealings and man's righteousness sought, but God's righteousness revealed in virtue of the work of Christ. His witnesses had not wrought in vain, however little seen the effects meanwhile.⁹⁵ But the true light was now shining, and things appeared as they are to the eye of grace. What a sight to Christ the Samaritans coming to Him-coming to hear One Who tells us whatever we did! The fields were white indeed.

It is remarkable that the Lord speaks about reaping now rather than sowing, though sowing, of course, goes on, and has its place elsewhere, as in Matthew 13. Of old it was rather sowing than reaping; now in this day of grace there is a characteristic reaping-fruit not only of God's past dealings, but of His coming and mighty work Who thus speaks to the disciples: "The reaper receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both the sower and the reaper may rejoice together." So shall it be in the day of glory, as the spirit of it is even now true in the Church and the Christian heart. "For in this is the saying true, The sower is one, and the reaper another." But while there are these differences still, it remains that the apostles are characterised by reaping rather than by sowing, and so, of course, are

other labourers also. "I sent (or, have sent) you to reap that on which ye have not toiled: others have toiled, and ye have entered into their toil." How emphatically this was verified at Pentecost and afterwards all know.

John 4: 39-42.

"But out of that city many of the Samaritans believed on Him because of the word of the woman as she bore witness, He told me all things that (ever) I did. When, therefore, the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to abide with them. And He abode there two days; and many more believed because of His word. And they said to the woman, No longer on account of thy saying do we believe, for we have ourselves heard and know that this is indeed the* Saviour of the world." It is cheering to see how God honoured the simple testimony of the woman. Many out of that town believed on Him because of her word. Here again she bears witness to the searching of her conscience by His word: "He told me all that ever I did." It is a good guarantee that the work is Divine when there is no shrinking from such a scrutiny, otherwise grace is apt to be misused as a cover for sin or a slight dealing with a sinner, instead of judging all in God's light. But faith, whenever it is real, rises from the instrument to Him Who deigns to use it, and God loves to put honour upon the word of Jesus Himself. Hence we are told that, when He graciously acceded to the desire of the Samaritans and abode there two days, "more by a great deal believed because of His word." How sweet to the woman when they said to her, "No longer because of thy saying do we believe, for we have ourselves heard and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." God led them, too, in dropping His Messiahship, and the copyists have inserted it without due reason. Ancient authority seems conclusive that the words "the Christ" should disappear. Their confession is much more simple and emphatic when so put. They now knew and confessed the truth—the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. (Compare 1 John 4: 14.)

*The Sinai, Vat., Palimpsest of Paris [Cpm], and an old St. Petersburg uncial (Tb), with almost all the most ancient versions, etc., do not read ὁ Χριστός. [It is in ACCorrDLTΔΛΠ, etc., Syrpesch hcl hier (corr) Chrys. Cyr. Alex.]

Thus without a miracle the Lord has been owned, as we see, in Samaria, first as a prophet by one, finally as Saviour of the world by all who believed on Him there. There the fullest confession of His grace was found where one might have looked for least intelligence; but faith gives new wisdom so different from the old that those who are wise must become fools if they would be wise according to God. How blessed for those who have no wisdom to boast, whom grace forms with all simplicity according to its own power! Such were the Samaritans among whom the Lord abode for this little while.

John 4: 43-46.

Matt. 4: 12-17; Mark 1: 14-16; Luke 4: 14-16.

"And after the two days He went forth thence* into Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country." He resumes His place among the despised and lowly. The first Gospel points out that this sphere of His ministry was according to prophecy, for Isaiah, in setting forth the sins and judgment of Israel from first to last, had spoken of the light shining in Galilee when darkness enveloped the favoured seats in the land. All the evangelists, indeed, for one reason or another, dwell upon His ministry in Galilee, John alone bringing into prominence some characteristic incidents in Jerusalem. Mark speaks much of Galilee, because his office was to describe the Lord's ministry, and there, in fact, we must follow Him if we would trace its details. Luke, again, gives it as

illustrating the moral ways of God in the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the activities of One Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. John, on the other hand, as usual, lays it on a ground that pertains more strictly to His Person.

*The Received Text, with most uncials and cursives, etc., has also καὶ ἀπῆλθεν, contrary to BCDTb, 13, 69, and some other excellent authorities.

It was His own testimony that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. He had come down not to seek His own honour, but that of Him Who sent Him. He had riches of grace and truth to dispense; He was sent, He was come, to do His Father's will; content to be nothing, have nothing from men, He goes away into Galilee. But if the Galileans paid Him no honour when He was in their midst,⁹⁰ they were not unmoved by the fame that had gone out, specially by the impression made in the capital. "When, therefore, He came into Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all that* He did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they, too, went unto the feast." Galilee was not only the place where He had spent the greater part of His earthly life in humiliation and obedience, but there He had begun to make Himself known to the disciples, and there He had first wrought a sign in witness of His glory. "He† came, therefore, again into Cana of Galilee where He made the water wine." That first sign held out the promise, pledge, and earnest of Israel's future joy and blessedness; and He Himself, in the day that is coming, will be there in the land, no longer the guest nor the master of the feast alone, but the Bridegroom. And the barren one shall know her Maker as her husband, Jehovah of hosts His name, and her Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The God not merely of the land, but of the whole earth, shall He be called.

*There is good authority for ὅσα [Edd.] as well as ἅ, the more widespread, if not ancient, copies inclining to the latter.

†The best witnesses do not read ὁ Ἰ., as do the Received Text and Scholz (though with a slight difference of position), following many MSS.

But it is not yet the day for singing, but of sadness; not yet for enlarging the place of Israel's tent, nor of stretching the curtains of their habitation, nor of strengthening the stakes: no breaking forth yet on the right hand or on the left, no inheriting the Gentiles, or making the desolate cities to be inhabited. Contrariwise, did not Messiah come to His own things, and His own people received Him not? Nay, they were about to consummate their sin in His cross, and to seal their unbelief in their rejection of the Gospel, forbidding His servants to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost, however grace may turn their fall to the salvation and the riches of the Gentiles. Nevertheless, grace is yet to make good every sign which is hung out to Israel, and the Lord adds on this occasion a fresh and suited display of His power for their actual circumstances and present need.

John 4: 46-48.

"And there was a certain courtier whose son was sick at Capernaum. He, having heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, went away unto Him, and asked that He would go down and heal his son, for he was about to die. Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in nowise believe." How strikingly in contrast with the simpler souls in Samaria! There was faith in the power of Jesus, but it was of a Jewish sort.⁹⁷ The courtier had heard, no doubt, of miracles wrought by Him personally present. His faith rose no higher, yet evidently, if it were the power of God, there could be no limits. Absence or presence could account for nothing—they were but circumstances, and the very essence of a miracle is God rising above all circumstances. It is irrational, as well as unbelieving, to

measure a miracle by one's experience. It is solely a question of God's will, power, and glory, and therefore the Lord justly rebukes the unbelief of all such thoughts.

How finely, too, the grace which wrought in the Gentile centurion whose servant was sick contrasts with the limited expectations of this Jewish courtier! There, just to exercise and manifest the power of his faith, the Lord proposed to go with the elders of the Jews who begged Him to come and save his bondman. But even though He was not far from the house, the centurion sent to Him friends expressly not to trouble Him, for he was not worthy that He should come under his roof, any more than he counted himself worthy to come to Him. He had only to say by a word, and his servant should be healed. This accordingly drew out the strong approbation of the Lord, not His censure as here. "Not even in Israel" had He found such great faith.

John 4: 49 f.

Nevertheless, the grace of the Lord never fails, and little faith receives its blessing as surely as greater faith its larger answer. "The courtier said unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die." Here again how scanty the faith, if urgent the appeal! Still faith must have a gracious assurance. "Jesus saith to him, Go, thy son liveth" (verse 50). It was better for the courtier's soul in every way, and more to the glory of God, that Jesus should bid *him* go, instead of going with him. If it crossed the man's thoughts and words, it was meant to exercise his faith so much the more. "(And)* the man believed the word which Jesus had said unto him, and went his way" (verse 50). He had not long to wait before he knew the blessing.

* BD and a few other authorities omit καὶ, "and."

John 4: 51-54.

"But as he was now going down, his* servants met him, and brought (him) word, saying, Thy child liveth. He inquired, therefore, from them the hour at which he got better. They said to him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father, therefore, knew that (it was) at that hour in which Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed and his whole house." Thus God took care to arrest the servants, who were all the more interested and responsible because of their master's absence. They would watch the case, they would mark the changes in the malady of the patient, and they, therefore, were the first to see when he began to amend. They could tell the master the precise hour when the fever left the child—the very hour, as he could tell them, when Jesus spoke the word of healing power. "This second sign again did Jesus on coming out of Judæa into Galilee."⁹⁸ Is it not a sign of what He is to do in the day when, reanimating the dead daughter of Zion, He will also change the water of purification into the wine of joy for God and man? Meanwhile He relieves the one ready to perish in Israel, where there was the faith, however feeble, to seek it from the Christ. It was true even then of His ministry in all its meaning and force. In the chapter which follows we have the rights of His Person asserted still more mightily in effects present and future. Here it is rather arresting the power of death than giving life. Even that He only could do, and did where there was faith.⁹⁹

*DgrL., etc., omit αὐτοῦ, "his."

JOHN — THE FIFTH CHAPTER*

*[Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 446-454.]

It is one of the peculiarities of our Gospel that in it we see the Lord frequently in Jerusalem, while the Synoptic Gospels are occupied with His Galilean ministry. The miracle at the pool of Bethesda is an instance: only John records it. Both the fact and the discourse which follows eminently bring out His Person. This alone abides, and it is all to the believer, with the infinite work which owes its infiniteness to it. In the other Gospels the process of probation is viewed as still going on; by John all is seen from the first to be closed before God. Hence His moral judgment of Jerusalem is shown us at the beginning by John, as its rejection of Him also. This, to my mind, accounts for the record of the Lord's work there, as well as in Galilee, in the Gospel of John. If all be regarded as a scene of wreck and ruin morally, it was of no consequence where He wrought. As to trial, all was over; grace could and would work equally anywhere: Galilee and Jerusalem were thus alike. Sin levels all: life from God in the Son was needed by one as much as another. This our Gospel develops.

John 5: 1-9.

"After these things was the feast* of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Here authority is pretty equally divided for and against the insertion of the article. Ten uncials (CEFHILMΔΠ) insert it, ten (ABDGKSUVΓΛ) omit it. About fifty cursives and the Memph. and Theb. versions are with the former; still more with the latter. If the article be received, it can scarcely be any other feast than the passover, the first and foundation feast of the Jewish holy year. Some have thought that it might be the feast of Purim, but this would not account for Jesus going up to Jerusalem. It had no such Divine claim.¹⁰⁰

*["The f.": so CEFHL, etc., Egypt. Cyr. Alex., followed by Tischendorf; "a f." is read by Lachm., Treg., W. and H., Weiss, Blass, as in ABDG, etc., Chrys. Epiph.]

"Now there is¹⁰¹ in Jerusalem at the sheep-gate* a pool that is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a†multitude of the sick, blind, lame, withered (awaiting the moving of the water. For an angel descended from time to time in the pool and troubled the water. He, therefore, that first went in after the troubling of the water, became well, whatever disease he was affected by). But a certain man was there, for thirty-and-eight years suffering under his‡ infirmity. Jesus, seeing him lying down, and knowing that he was (so) now a long time, saith to him, Desirest thou to become well?"

*There is a good deal of confusion in the MSS., even where the text is certain here. Thus, while ἐπὶ τη προβατικῇ (at the sheep-gate, Neh. 3 LXX.) is read by the Vatican, Rescript of Paris, and thirteen more uncials and the great body of cursives, confirmed by most ancient versions [W. and H., Weiss], corr-ADGL, etc., have ἐν τη π. probably in the sense of the Authorised Version-"sheep-market"; whilst pm and a few other inferior authorities omit ἐπὶ (or ἐν) τη, and hence seem to construe προβατικὴ κοιλ. a "sheep-pool": so Jerome's Onomast. (ed. Lars. et Parth. p. 112), Theod. Mops. p. 26, and the Jerusalem Itin., not to speak of the Vulg. Æth. and Slav. Again, for ἡ ἐπιλεγ [W. and H., Weiss]. pm gives τὸ λεγόμενον (adopted by Tisch. in his eighth ed.), and corr ἡ ἐπιλεγ. ; while DV, eight cursives, etc., read λεγ [so Blass]. In the same ed. Tisch. exhibits Βηθζαθᾶ with L, etc. (D Βελζεθᾶ, B, etc. Βηθσαιδᾶ, etc., A, etc., Βιθεσθᾶ).

†In verses 3, 4 there are more serious differences. High, if not large, authorities (BCDL, 33, 68, many of the ante-Hier. Latin versions, Theb. Memph. Syrcu. et hier., etc.) do not read πολλὸν, nor (except Dh) παραλυτικῶν, which last is not in T. R. But the great omission is of the clause ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with pmBCpmL, 18, 157, 314 Syrcu. Theb. Memphdz. and all verse 4 as in the common text, here strengthened by D (an ancient though erratic copy), but deserted by Apm. It is certain that the narrative as ordinarily given must have been read by Tertullian (de Bapt. 5);

and the answer of the sick man in the critical text, verse 7, implies, if it does not demand, such an explanation. The fact may have been too startling for the copyists to believe, not about themselves or Christian times, but about the days before and up to Christ's ministry. The Romanists found it hard to credit any evidence of God's goodness to the Jews as such, and in the time alleged. Even Lachmann retained the passage. I do not think there is real weight in Alford's argument against its genuineness grounded on the plea that there are seven words used here only, or here only in this sense; for so remarkable and singular a fact would naturally call for words suited to it. There are variations among the MSS. that contain the omitted passage, but not more, perhaps, than usual. [See Westcott, "Additional Note on Chapter V," and Hort's "Note on Select Readings," p. 77. Weiss and Blass give up the verse.]

‡In verse 5 T.R. omits καὶ (so BKSVTΛ., etc.) contrary to ACDE FGHILMUΔ and the mass of cursives, versions, etc.; also αὐτοῦ against BCpmDLΠcorr., etc., with most ancient versions.

"The infirm (man) answered, Sir,* I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him, Arise, take up thy couch, and walk. And immediately† the man became well, and took up his couch and walked. And on that day was Sabbath."

*Several uncials (Ccorr.EFGH, with many cursives, etc.) add ναὶ before κύριε, a few omitting κ. The received reading βᾶλλῃ is incorrect, and rests on few if any copies.

†pmD, the Lat. Cod. Rhedig., and Arm. omit εὐθέως, but all other authorities insert it.

A striking picture that scene was of man, of the Jews under law. There they lay without strength, and though the grace of God might interfere at intervals, the greater the need, the less could souls take advantage of His mercy. It was "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." (Rom. 8: 3.) The impotent man was himself the witness of it till Jesus came, and, unsought, sought him. No angel's moving of the water could avail a man unable to step down and without help to plunge him into the pool. He that was stronger could always anticipate the helpless. But now grace, in Jesus the Son of God, looks, at him who had been suffering so long; grace speaks to him; grace works for him, in a word, without further delay; for the word was with power. "And immediately the man became well, and took up his couch,¹⁰² and walked. And on that day was Sabbath."

But how could Sabbath be kept or enjoined on that day of man's misery? Jesus had come to work, not to rest; whatever Pharisees might urge, He would not seal up man in a rest broken before God by sin and ruin.

Thus the sign wrought on that Sabbath carries out further what the Lord is seen doing throughout these chapters of the Gospel—substituting Himself for every object of trust or means of blessing, of old or in that day, without Israel and within. Even angels bow to the Son; yet was He incarnate, working in humiliation, going on straight to the cross. The law could not deliver from the guilt or power or effects of sin; no extraordinary intervention of God by the highest of creatures could adequately meet the need; nothing and no one but Jesus the Son of God. Yet have we also the clearest proof that the Jews were so self-satisfied in their misery by a misuse of the law, which blinded them to their sin as well as to the Son, that they were content to go on with such a Sabbath, incensed with Him Who wrought a sign that proclaimed not more surely His grace than their ruin. Hopeless, too, it was because of their rejection of the remedy and their self-complacency in their own righteousness.

Observe, however, that the Lord made the infirm feel his powerlessness more than ever before He spoke the word that raised him up. He did awaken the desire to be made whole, as He looked with

infinite compassion and knew the case in all its fulness; but the desire then felt expressed itself in the man's conviction of his own wretchedness. It was like the soul's saying, in Rom. 7, "O wretched man that I am! *who shall deliver me,*" etc. How little he knew Who had deigned to be his "neighbour," and do the part of the good Samaritan-yea, incomparably more here where need is sounded more deeply. The Quickener of the dead is here. "He spake, and it was done," Sabbath as it might be; but what Sabbath acceptable to God can sin and misery keep? Thank God! Jesus wrought; but they felt that if He was right, it was all over with them. Hence they judged Him, not themselves, as we shall see, to God's dishonour and their own perdition.

Undoubtedly to see a man carrying his couch on the Sabbath was a strange thing in Judæa, and especially in Jerusalem. But it was, of course, by a deliberate injunction on the Lord's part. He was raising a question with the Jews which He knew would bring about a breach with their incredulity. It was a blow purposely struck at their self-complacent observance of the Sabbath, when they were blinded, not merely by self-will to violate the law, but by unbelief against their own Messiah, spite of the fullest proofs of His mission and Person. Could God accept the Sabbath-keeping of the people in such a state? Here, then, the Lord commanded an act expressly public on the Sabbath Day in Jerusalem.

John 5: 10-18.

"The Jews therefore said to him that was cured, It is Sabbath, and* it is not allowed thee to take up thy† couch. He answered them, He that made me well, the same said to me, Take up thy couch and walk." The healed man was simple, and his answer bears the stamp of right and truth. The Divine power that had wrought beyond even an angel's compass or commission, and without it, was his warrant to act upon the Word. "They asked him (therefore),‡ Who is the Man that said to thee, Take up (thy couch)‡ and walk? But he that was healed§ knew not who He was, for Jesus withdrew, a crowd being in the place." The Jews spoke with malice and contempt, "Who is the *man*?" They can scarcely be conceived ignorant that there was more in their midst, and Who He was. They knew His works, if they knew not Himself; and His works as well as ways proclaimed a mission more than human. The very work before them, and they could not deny it, was beyond an angel; yet they asked the healed person, "Who is the Man that said to thee, Take up thy couch and walk?" The Lord had ordered things so that the healed man should know no more; He had passed away unnoticed, 103 a crowd being there.

*Καὶ is omitted in T. R. with at least ten uncials, very many cursives Vulg., Syrr., etc., but read by ABCpmDGLVT, forty cursives, most ancient versions and fathers.

†A B and some eleven or twelve other uncials, and most cursives, omit σου, reading "the" [Edd.]. But CpmDLΔΠ, thirteen cursives, and the body of ancient versions, etc., read the pronoun "thy."

‡T. R. with most copies, etc., reads οὖν, "therefore"; but it is not found in BD and several other good authorities. So τὸν κρ. σου is not read by pm et corr BCpmLSah. Two uncials and six cursives omit the verse, evidently by ὁμοιοτέλευτον. (Cf. end of verse 11.)

§For ἰαθεὶς, "healed" (with ABCLΓΔΛΠ, and almost all the rest of the copies and versions and fathers), Tischendorf reads ἄσθενῶν with D and two or three Latin copies-a strange judgment and on light grounds. [Blass accepts neither.]

"After these things Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said to him, Behold, thou art made well. Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee. The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had made him well" (verses 14, 15). It was a gracious, but withal a solemn word. To live now, to enjoy the life that is now, is not the great matter. No cure, however bespeaking the power and

goodness of God, could meet man's underlying need, for sin still remained. A cure was only provisional. The man that was cured, though it was Jesus Who cured him, had to be warned, "Sin no more,¹⁰⁴ lest some worse thing happen to thee." He does not appear to have then adequately judged the malice of the Jews. They probably concealed their real feelings. It is often so with men toward Jesus, especially men who have a reputation for religion. They do not believe on Him, neither do they love Him. So the healed man in his simplicity fathomed not their object, but seems rather to have assumed that they were anxious to know his wondrous benefactor. Hence he went off, and brought them word that it was Jesus Who had made him well. There is no ground, I think, to suppose that he shared the feelings of the Jews, or wished to betray Jesus to those who hated Him.

But now they knew, as a fact, what they had, no doubt, suspected from the first, that the sick man had to do with Jesus. I do not say that their informant should not have known better, for they had asked, "Who is the Man that said to thee, Take up thy couch and walk?" He told them now that it was Jesus Who had made him well. His heart dwelt on the good and mighty deed that was done; theirs on the Word which touched their Sabbath-keeping. "And for this the Jews persecuted Jesus,* because He did these things on a Sabbath" (verse 16). It was the blindness of men, who, lost in forms, knew not the reality of God, and consequently knew not themselves in His presence. Sooner or later such men find themselves in collision with Jesus; what will they feel by and by?

*T.R. adds καὶ ἐζήτησαν αὐτὸν ἀποκτεῖναι with fourteen uncials, most cursives and some versions, contrary to BCDL, 1, 22, 33, 69, 249, some old Latin, Vulg. Syrcu. [sin] Memph. Arm., and early Greeks.

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (verse 17). It was an overwhelming answer. They knew nothing of fellowship with the Father. He (Jesus), not they, could call God "My Father," and loved to say that He "worketh hitherto." For the Father could not rest in sin, He would not rest in misery. It is not yet God judging. Therefore was He working as Father, and until now, though only now declaring Himself Father in and by the Son. Even before this, however, He had not left Himself without witness in Jerusalem itself, as the crowd of expectant sick round the pool of Bethesda attested. But this was only partial and transient. The Son was here to make Him fully known, and known as One Who could not keep His Sabbath yet, whatever the Jews ignorant of Him might wish to say or do. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Jesus, the Son, had fellowship, unbroken and perfect, with His Father.

Yet the words were still more offensive than the work they had just seen; and the way in which Jesus had openly caused it to be done and seen clashed with all their prejudices and stirred the depths of their unbelief. For in so speaking His personal glory could not but shine forth.

Both the Father and the Son were working, not resting "For this, therefore,* the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only broke¹⁰⁵ the Sabbath, but also said that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (verse 18). Nor were they mistaken, in this inference at least. For as He did expressly charge the healed man to do what He knew would bring things to a rupture, so He did not deny, but confess, that God was His own Father in a sense that was true of none but Himself. This is the truth; and the truth of all truths most due to God, and the turning-point of all blessing to man. By it the believer knows God, and has life everlasting; without it one is an enemy of God, as the Jews showed themselves that day and ever since. Hardened men, perversely, fatally blinded, who, in presumed zeal for His honour, sought the more to kill Jesus, His own Son, come in infinite love to make the Father known, and to reconcile man to God. But God is wise and infinitely good in His work; for in letting them prove their malice to the uttermost, when the due time was come,

in killing Jesus, He proved His own love to the full in atonement, making Christ, "Who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him." (2 Cor. 5: 21.)

*D and other authorities, followed by Tischendorf [and Blass] omit οὐν, contrary to the rest [as W. and H., Weiss].

John 5: 19-30.

The Lord takes up the unbelieving rejection of His Person, and brings out the truth which puts all in its place. " Jesus then answered and said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself unless He sees the Father doing something; for whatever things He doeth, these also the Son doeth in like manner." It is the expression of the entire exclusion of a Will separate from God the Father. He speaks of Himself as man on earth, yet God withal: the especial topic of our Gospel. He was here displaying God, Whom otherwise no man had seen or could see; and He displayed Him as Father, however dull even disciples might be to discern it till redemption removed the veil from their eyes and sense of guilt from the conscience, till the love that gave Him to effect it was apprehended by the heart. But He had deigned to take the place of man, without forfeiting far a moment His Divine nature and rights; and as such He disclaims the least shade of self-exaltation, or independence of His Father. This flesh cannot understand now more than then; and as then it led the Jews to repudiate the Son, so now in Christendom largely to the open denial of His Divine glory or to the practical humanising of Him. Hence the effort of so many to get rid of such a symbol as the Athanasian Creed, and the otiose acquiescence of far more who believe on Him no more than they. The truth is that Scripture goes beyond any creed that ever was framed in the maintenance of His honour; and this not only in the doctrine of His inspired servants, but in their report of His own words as here.

Besides, however, being the Eternal, God all over, blessed for ever, He speaks of Himself as in this world a man, yet the Son, and as such only doing what He sees the Father do: anything else would not be to declare Him. And for this He was here. Yet so truly is He Divine that whatever things the Father does, these also does the Son likewise. He is the image of the invisible God, and alone competent to show the Father. How perfect the conjoint working of the Father and the Son! So we learn here, as in John 10, their unity. It is not only that the Son does whatever the Father may, but in like manner. How blessed their communion!

But the ground the Lord lays is also to be considered. "For the Father loveth (φιλεῖ) the Son, and showeth Him all things which He Himself doeth; and He will show Him greater works than these that ye may wonder" (verse 20). Truly the Persons in the Godhead are real, if anything is; and as the Divine nature is morally perfect, the affections that reign are not less. The joint working of the Father and the Son our Blessed Lord explains by the Father loving the Son and showing Him all that He Himself does; nay, He lets them know, as He knew Himself, that greater works would be shown Him by the Father, as the latter part of this Gospel testifies, "that ye may wonder"-He does not say believe. For He speaks, not of grace, but of power displayed in testimony to the Jews, the effect of which would be, not the faith which honours God, but the amazement which is the frequent and stupid companion of incredulity.

The Lord next singles out the immense miracle of resurrection. "For even as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth, so the Son also quickeneth whom He will; for not even the Father judgeth any one, but hath given all the judgment to the Son; that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent Him" (verses 21-23). There can be no doubt that giving life to the dead befits and characterises God; but if the Father does so, no

less does the Son, and this not as an instrument, but sovereignly: "the Son also quickeneth whom He will." He is a Divine Person as truly as the Father, in full right and power. But more: He alone judges.^{105a} Judgment as a whole, and in all its forms, is committed to the Son by the Father, Who in this sense judges none, with the express aim that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. And so it really is; for they honour not the Father, but do Him despite who honour not His sent One, the Son. It is the Son on Whom, by the Father's pleasure, it devolves to judge; but we shall find that there is a moral reason for this which appears afterward. As it is, we learn that the Son quickens in communion with the Father, and that only He judges. Thus is His honour secured from all men, who are either quickened if they believe, or judged if they do not.

For how can a soul know that he is quickened and shall not be judged? He who reveals the portion that belongs to some and awaits the rest has not left in obscurity or doubt that which is so all-important; He has told out what so deeply concerns every child of man. Only unbelief need or can be uncertain, though it indeed should not be, for its sorrowful end is too plain to others if not to itself. Defying God, it must be judged by Him Whom it can no longer dishonour. What, on the other hand, can be more graciously distinct than the portion our Lord warrants to faith? "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that heareth My Word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life eternal, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life"* (verse 24). It was no question of the law, but of hearing Christ's word, of believing (not *in* God in any sense, as the Authorised Version conveys, but) Him that sent Christ, believing His testimony. For this had He sent His Son, that He might give life eternal. He, therefore, that believeth Him "hath life eternal." It is a present gift of God and possession of the believer, to be enjoyed perfectly in heaven doubtless, but none the less truly given now and exercised here where Christ then was.†

*The contrast of life and judgment here, as of salvation and judgment in Heb. 9: 27, 28, is so distinctly revealed, and on ground so solemn as the honour or dishonour of the Son, that one may wonder at the prejudice of the late able Knightsbridge Professor in the University of Cambridge, who opposes Dr. Gr. Guinness where he is as right as he himself was wrong on the judgment in Rev. 20. For the faithful never coming into judgment at all, Mr. T. R. Birks saw "no ground but Alford's altered translation of John 5: 24, which I believe to be a mistake" ("Thoughts on the Times and Seasons of Sacred Prophecy," p. 65, 1880): an astounding utterance, not only in its philological aspect, since the Greek admits of no other sense, but no less certainly as a question of Divine grace and truth, and of Divine righteousness. It is nothing less than a heterodox or unbelieving offence against the Gospel, even against what an O.T. saint could say before the Saviour came, as in Ps. 143: 2. If the manifestation of all absolutely before the judgment-seat of Christ were enfeebled, there had been reason for the gravest warning. But it is agreed, that each of us shall give account of himself to God, and receive the things done through the body accordingly, whether good or evil. This, however, gives no title to deny Christ's word, or the believer's distinctive privilege that he comes not into judgment or needs "acquittal" in that day, after having been already justified. Doctrinally it dishonours the Lord and His work, yet more than the faith of the saint; it replunges into doubt and darkness those whom grace has saved through believing; it would bring back the distress on exercised hearts, which the misrendering of John 5 and of 1 Cor. 11 introduced. This misrendering in the A.V. is corrected beyond just hesitation by the R.V. AB to "Alford's altered translation," be it remarked that the A.V. of John 5: 22 and 27 corrects the error in 24 and 29. It is the same word κρίσις all through, which indisputably means "judgment," not damnation or "condemnation" like κατάκριμα, as the verb (22, 30) mean "to judge." Nor is it unimportant to notice the ignorance of talking thus of Dean Alford, seeing that the most influential perhaps of all versions, Jerome's Vulgate, is quite right in both John 5 and 1 Cor. 11, where the A.V. was lamentably and inexcusably wrong. In the Gospel the old Latin MSS., Vercell. Veron.

Brix., etc., were right. Many of the Oriental versions are correct; some waver like the A.V., to the ruin of definite truth on what is of great moment. But where the doctrine on everlasting punishment was unsound, it is not surprising to learn that there was lack of faith as to life eternal and its exemption from judgment.

†[Cf. "Exposition of Epistles," p. 375.]

But there is more than the actual communication of a new life by faith, a life of which Christ, not Adam, is the Source and Character; he who has life does not come into judgment (κρίσιν). The Authorised English Version has "condemnation"; but the Lord says more than this: the believer "cometh not into judgment." He will be manifested before Christ's tribunal; he will give account of all done in the body, but he does not, if Christ is to be believed, come into judgment. He will never be put on his trial to see whether he is to be lost or not. Strange notion! after it may be in the separate state departing "to be with Christ, which is far better," certainly after being changed into the likeness of His glory, to be judged. Think of the "beloved disciple," when glorified, put on so awful a trial! It is equally inconsistent for every other believer; for life eternal is the same for all. Salvation does not vary for any, more than Christ does. No! such an idea is theology, the too common doctrine of Christendom, Protestant or Popish, Arminian or Calvinist; but it is directly in collision with the plain and sure words of Christ.

All the great English translations are wrong here, Wiclif, Tyndal, Cranmer, and Geneva, with the Authorised Version. Singular to say, the Rhemish Version alone is right, in this following the Vulgate: a mere accident undoubtedly, for none are so distant from the truth conveyed by their own translation, from the apprehension of exemption from judgment, as Romish doctors. And none are so unfaithful in the next clause, for they actually make the Lord seem to say "shall pass from death into life."* He really said ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τ. θ. εἰς τ. ζ., "but is (or, hath) passed (the present result of a past act) out of death into life." Here the Protestant versions are right, Wiclif feeble, the Rhemish false. And there is not even the excuse of the Vulgate, which reads "transiit." Possibly they read "transiet"; but if so, it was an error which some copies of the Latin would have corrected, if they ignored the inspired original.

*In Nonnus' "Paraphrase of our Gospel" (fifth century, ed. by Passow and Bach, 1834) there is the similar error of rendering ἵξεται ἐκ θάάτοιο. So in the Amiatine and other ancient Vulgate MSS. we have "*transiet*," and in a Munich old Latin copy of the sixth century "*transibit*"

However this be, the truth set forth by our Saviour is of all moment: would that every believer knew it and rejoiced in it with simplicity and in its fulness, as this one verse presents it! It is Christ's Word that is heard in divinely given faith, and this quickens the soul: no thought here or anywhere else of any such virtue in an administered ordinance. But faith does not slight His judgment; on the contrary, the believer now bows to it morally in His Word, receives God's testimony to His Son, and is passed from death into life.

The Lord has thus answered the question which His solemn words would raise in every soul that fears God. He had shown it to be no question of law or of ordinance, but of hearing His Word and believing the Father that sent Him. Such only have eternal life; but he who so believes has it now. How blessed and secure his portion in Christ!

Next He turns to the more general state of things. "Verily, verily, I say to you, An hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have heard shall live" (verse 25). It is indeed the sad truth: men in all the activities of the world are here "the dead." Nor is it a question of a stricter morality or of a holier religion. Either one or other or both they may acquire, and

yet want life. Dogma cannot give it any more than practice. It flows from the Son of God, Who quickens whom He will; yet is it by faith, and so through the word which the Spirit applies livingly.

Here it is that Evangelicalism is feeble and Sacramentalism is false. If the latter superstitiously gives to a creature ordinance the honour which belongs to a divine Person alone, the former ignores and lowers the truth by talking of a converted character and of devoting to God what was once abandoned to self and sin; but neither has any adequate estimate of the total ruin of man, nor consequently of the absolute need and real power of Divine grace. "The dead" are men universally now till born of God. It is no picture of the future resurrection, whether of just or unjust, which follows in verses 28, 29, but of the present hour, as the Lord Himself intimates; for it "now is," "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God."¹⁰⁶ His voice goes forth "to every creature" in the Gospel; "and those that heard shall live." Such are the means and condition of life. It is of faith that it might be by grace. Man's utter powerlessness is as manifest and certain as His glorious energy.

Those, then, that heard shall live. Alas! the mass of mankind have ears but they hear not; even as to the Jews, when they saw Him, there was no beauty that they should desire Him. Whether it be superstitious or sceptical man, he submits not to the sentence of God on his own estate, nor consequently feels the need of sovereign mercy in Christ, Who alone can give the life man wants for God now or through eternity. But whatever the mercy of God, He will have His Son honoured, and this now by hearing His Word and believing the testimony of Him Who sent Him. This tests man thoroughly, which the law only did partially. For never does the sinner trust God for life eternal till grace makes him see his sins and distrust himself utterly. Then how glad is he to learn that the goodness of God gives life eternal in Christ, and has sent Him that he might know it! How willingly he owns himself one of "the dead," which no man does really till he lives of the new life which is in Christ! How heartily he bows to the Son of God, and blesses the God Who sent Him in love and compassion, willing not the death of the sinner, but rather that he might have life through His name!

But the same unbelief, which of old in the Jews violated the law and lusted after idols, now in the Gentiles trusts an ordinance for it, to the exaltation of those that arrogate to themselves its valid and exclusive administration, or openly distrusts God and slights His Son, confiding in themselves without Him. They are the religiously or the profanely infidel. They are "the dead," and have never heard the voice of the Son of God, but only of their priests or of their philosophers. Whatever their boastings, they shall not live, for they have not Christ, but only ideas, imaginative or rational; not the truth which is inseparable from Christ received by faith to the glory of God and the annihilation of human pretensions.

It is all-important to see that all truth centres in the Person of Christ, Who, being God from everlasting to everlasting, deigned to become man, without the least forfeiture of Divine glory, yet loyally accepting the position proper to humanity. Hence the language of the Lord in what follows, the misapprehension of which has led not a few theologians of eminence to the brink, if not into the pit, of fundamental heterodoxy.¹⁰⁷ "For even as the Father hath life in Himself, so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and gave Him authority to execute judgment (also),* because he is Son of man" (verses 26, 27). The Lord evidently speaks here as come below, a man, the Sent of God and Servant of the Divine purposes, not as the One Who is over all, God blessed for ever, though both be true of Him in His Person. As the eternal Son, He quickens whom He will; as come in humiliation, it is given Him of the Father to have life in Himself. Born of a woman, He is still Son of God (Luke 1: 35). But men despise the man Christ Jesus. Some trust in themselves that they are righteous, all disliking Him Who did not His own wit, but the wit of Him that sent Him. He Who lived on account of the Father is irksome to all that live to themselves, and odious to such as seek honour one of another. They misuse

His humanity to deny His deity. They have no life, for they have no faith. But they cannot escape judgment, and a judgment executed in that very nature of man for which they rejected the Son of God.

*The majority read καὶ , "also," but not A B L, etc., Memph.

It is as Son of man that the Lord Jesus will sit on the throne. Doubtless He will show His Divine knowledge in judging; but, as He says expressly, authority is given Him of the Father to execute judgment, because He is Son of man. As Son of God He quickens; as Son of man He will judge. How solemn! Had He been only Son of God, who would have dared to despise Him? The light of His glory had consumed instantly every proud adversary from before Him. It was His grace, then, in becoming man to save men which exposed Him to contempt in His path of lowly obedience and suffering in love. The archangel is a servant; He stooped to become one (Phil. 2: 6, 7). But the god of this world blinded them, so that they counted as only man Him Who never more proved Himself God to such as by grace had eyes to see. If they insulted Him in His work of grace, how will it be when He executes judgment, and this as Son of man? Such is the award of God.

"Wonder not at this; for an hour is coming, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His Voice, and shall go forth, those that practised good unto a resurrection of life, and those that did evil unto a resurrection of judgment " (verses 28, 29).

Thus another hour is announced distinct from what "now is," and only "coming," an hour not of quickening such of the dead as hear the voice of Christ, but of "all that are in the tombs" rising. It is the hour of proper resurrection; and the Lord carefully negatives the popular thought of one general resurrection. Not so; here, as elsewhere, we learn of two resurrections wholly and distinctly contrasted in character, as we find in Revelation 20 they are in time, with the millennium and more between them.

It did not enter into the scope of the Lord's discourse, any more than of the Spirit's design in the Gospel, to reveal in detail the order of events chronologically. This has its suited place in the great prophecy of the New Testament. But the far deeper difference of their relation to Christ Himself, viewed as Son of God and Son of man, is laid before us in a few words of the profoundest interest—a difference which would be true if no more than ten minutes intervened, but which is rendered far more distinct and impressive, inasmuch as the Revelation lets us see an interval of more than a thousand years. How great the confusion in the theology of the schools and pulpits, which supposes a single promiscuous rising of just and unjust, and this mainly on an exegesis so absurd as that which applies Matt. 25: 31-46 to the resurrection! For it is certainly a judgment of the quick, of "all the nations," before the Son of man when He comes again in glory; not the judgment of the wicked dead and their works before the great white Throne after heaven and earth are fled away, and all question of coming again is closed. There is the further mischief resulting from this interpretation that it tends to insinuate that just and unjust come into judgment, to the destruction of the capital truth of the Gospel, which contrasts life and judgment, as we have seen in our Saviour's words, and may find elsewhere also.

There is this essential difference in the two "hours," that, while in the first some only by grace hear His voice and have life, in the second *all* that are in the tombs shall hear it and shall go forth. But there is no confusion of just and unjust longer. In the world they had been more or less mixed together. In the field where the good seed was sown the enemy sowed darnel; and, spite of the servants, the Lord ruled that both were to grow together until the harvest. But in the coming hour there is no mingling more: the solemn severing of all takes place, "those that practised good unto a resurrection of life, and those that did evil unto a resurrection of judgment." For life eternal in Christ is never inoperative, and the Holy Ghost, Who is given to the believer consequent on the accomplishment of redemption and the ascension of Christ, works in that life, that there may be the fruit of righteousness by Jesus Christ to

God's glory and praise. Hence, such as believed are here characterised as those that practised good, and as this had its root in life, so its issue is a resurrection of life; while those who had no life, being rejecters of Him Who is its source, are described as "those that did evil," and their end a resurrection of judgment. In the hour that now is they would not have the Son of God in all His grace; they must be judged by the Son of man in the hour that is coming. The two resurrections are as distinct as the characters of those who rise in each. But Jesus is Lord of all and raises all, though on a different principle, of a different class, and to a different end.¹⁰⁸

Nothing can be more definite than the Son's claim of the powers most characteristic of God the Father, quickening and raising the dead; nothing more decided than the Father's resolve to maintain the honour of His incarnate Son. For every tittle and form of judging is committed to the Son of man, and with the express purpose, which shall surely stand, that all are to honour the Son as they honour the Father. But the giving life is the action of grace in its fullest character, as judgment is the vindication of the Son's honour on those who slighted Him and never had life eternal any more than salvation. To confound the two is the unintelligence of man and his tradition, and is wholly opposed to plain revelation. It is an error of great magnitude.

The Lord still speaks as Son, but as man on earth, and in verse 30 binds together what He had already unfolded with the various witnesses to His glory in what follows. He was equal to the task of judging, though the lowliest of men; and this just because He was in none of His ways or thoughts independent of the Father. It is the perfection of man; He alone was so, Who counted it no object of robbery to be on equality with God. But being God, He had become man for God's glory; and so He says, "I cannot do anything of myself; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I seek not My will, but the will of Him* that sent me" (verse 30). He saw, He heard, as the perfectly dependent and obedient man, though none could have taken in such a range unless a Divine Person. He had a will, but it was used in entire subjection to the Father. He saw whatever the Father does to do the same likewise; He heard with an ear opened and wakened, morning by morning, to hear as the learned, and so He judged; and His judgment was just. There was nothing to distract or mislead, though there was one who sought it with all subtlety. But he was foiled, and failed utterly, for here he was assailing not the first man, but the Second, Who had come to do the will of God. Such a purpose of heart maintains both singleness of eye and unswerving fidelity. Thus did the sent One ever walk. Who so competent and suited to judge, and this as Man, mankind?¹⁰⁹

*The received text adds *πατρός*, "Father," with many authorities, but not the most ancient.

John 5: 31-47.

Next we are introduced to the witnesses who testify to Him. "If I bear witness about Myself, My witness is not true. It is another that beareth witness about Me, and I know* that the witness which he beareth about Me is true. Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness to the truth. But I do not receive the witness from man; but these things I say that ye may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light."

*The Sinaiticpm and the Cambridge MS. of Beza, with a few other good authorities, read *οἴδατε*, "ye know" [so Blass], but almost all the rest support the common reading [as Weiss].

John the Baptist, then, is the first witness, whom the Lord summons in the ready and everlasting love which said nothing of His own testimony, if by any means they might be convinced and believe the truth. For this had He been born, and for this come into the world. He lived on account of the Father, Who testified about Him. Never was His an interested or an isolated testimony; but He would

waive it, and points to His forerunner. For this purpose had John been raised up beyond denial, and no testimony from among men could be conceived more unimpeachable. His birth, his life, his preaching, his death, all bore the stamp of truthfulness; and never had one pointed to another as he to the Lord Jesus. The Jews, too, had sought his death solemnly, and he had not flinched. Who else had ever so testified before and after the coming of the object of testimony? He was not the Christ, as he confessed and denied not, when men were ready to give him the glory due to the Master. Nor, on the other hand, did Christ seek testimony from man; yet to what did He not stoop that souls might be saved? If a man, however, was to be used at all, none greater than John had arisen among those born of women, as the Lord says. The burning and shining lamp had been a source of joy for a while; but men are inconstant, and the testimony of him, who was truly "a voice in the wilderness," was refused.

The second and greater witness we see in the works of Christ. "But I have the witness greater¹¹⁰ than of John; for the works which the Father hath given Me that I should complete them, the works themselves which I do bear witness about Me that the Father hath sent Me" (verse 36). In every way Christ's works testify not so much of the power displayed as of their character.^{110a} What grace and truth shine through them as in Him!

The third witness is the Father's voice. "And the Father Who sent Me Himself* hath borne witness about Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His shape; and His Word ye have not abiding in you, because Him whom He sent ye do not believe" (verses 37, 38). This attestation to the relation and glory of the Son rises still higher—we might have thought to the highest, had not our Lord added another¹¹¹ and crowning testimony in that which degenerate Christendom is now learning to abandon with contempt, to its own ruin and speedy judgment.

* B L have ἑκεῖνος [Weiss, Blass], D ἑκεῖνος αὐτὸς, for αὐτὸς in the great mass of the authorities, as in Text. Rec.

The fourth and crowning witness is that of the Scriptures. "Search" (or "Ye search") "the Scriptures, for ye think that ye have in them life eternal; and it is they that bear witness about Me. And ye are not willing to come unto Me that ye may have life" (verses 39, 40). The practical difference between the indicative and the imperative is not great, because the context decides that it is an appeal, as it has been well remarked, rather than a command. They were not so infatuated as to suppose that they had life eternal in themselves; they looked for it in the Scriptures, and so were in the habit of searching them, as they do, more or less, to this day.¹¹² But though the Scriptures testify about the Lord Jesus, they have no willingness to come unto Him that they may have the life He alone can give. For the Scriptures cannot give life apart from Him, nor will the Father; yet are the Scriptures the standing witness of Christ, continually holding Him forth as the revealed resource for man and triumph for God, and this in goodness, not merely in judgment, to the utter confusion of the enemy and of all who take their part with him against God. The presence of Christ put to the test, not merely man in his misery and universal departure from God but those who were entrusted with those oracles of God and the Saviour Son, despised by the Jews, has but to pronounce the sentence on them thus wilfully slighting their own best witnesses to Him, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life."

Was it, then, that the Lord Jesus sought present honour? His whole life, from His birth to His death, declared the contrary with a plainness which none could mistake. How was it with His adversaries? "Glory from men I do not receive; but I know you that ye have not the love of God in yourselves. I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another come in His own name, Him ye will receive" (verses 41-43). "Glory from men" is the moving spring of the world: Jesus not only sought it not, but did not receive it. He always did the things that pleased the Father, Who gave

Him commandment what He should say, and what He should speak. He kept His Father's commandments, and abode in His love. In no sense had the Jews the love of God in them: ambitious of human glory, and self-complacent, their soul abhorred Jesus, as His soul was straitened for them. His coming had put them to a fresh and far fuller test. He had brought God too close to them-yea, the Father; but they knew neither Christ nor the Father: if they had known the one, they should have known the other.

But there should be another test yet: not His coming in the Father's name with the simple aim of doing His will and glorifying Him, but *another to come in His own name*. This would suit the Jew-man. Self-exaltation is his bane, and Satan's bait, and therein utterly irremediable ruin under Divine judgment. It is the man of sin in contrast with the Son of God, the Man of obedience and righteousness; and, according as we have heard that Antichrist comes, even now there have come many antichrists. But the presence of Antichrist will be according to the working of Satan, in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in every deceit of unrighteousness, to those that perish, because they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. They would not have the true God and eternal life in the Son become man and suffering in love for man; they will receive Satan's man when he sets up to be God. This is the great lie of the end, and they will be lost in it who rejected the truth in Christ.

Nor is there anything strange in such a close for those who know the ways of man from the beginning. "How can ye believe who receive glory one of another, and seek not the glory which (is) from the only God?" (verse 41). Such is the world, the scene where man walks in a vain show, blessing his soul while he lives, and praised by his fellows when he did well to himself; but such shall never see light. This their way is their folly, let posterity ever so much delight in their mouth. "Like sheep they are laid in Sheol; death feedeth on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning." (Ps. 49: 14.) If God's "children" are told to keep themselves from idols, one cannot wonder that the idolatry of man-of-self-should be the death of faith. Any object is welcome rather than the true and only God, "Who shall render to each according to his works; to those who in patience of good work seek for glory, honour, and incorruption, life eternal; but to those that are contentious, and are disobedient to the truth, and obey unrighteousness, (there shall be) wrath and indignation, tribulation and distress." (Rom. 2: 6-9.)

Does the Lord, then, take the place of accusing the Jews? Not so: they boasted of Moses, but will find in him testimony fatal to themselves. "Think not that I will accuse you unto the Father: there is one that accuseth you, Moses, on whom ye trust [have yet your hope]; for if ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (verses 45-47). Never was such honour put on the written word. Jesus had, if any one, God's word abiding in Him. Nobody ever had the Father's words and His word as He; no one gave them out invariably, and at all times, as He; yet does He set the writings of the Bible above His own sayings, as a testimony to Jewish conscience. It was no question of superior claim in themselves, or in the character of truth conveyed; for none of old could compare with the words of Christ. The Father on the holy mount had Himself answered the foolish words of Peter, who would have put Moses, Elias, and the Lord in three tabernacles and co-ordinate glory. Not so. "This is My beloved Son: hear *Him*." (Mark 9: 7.) The lawgiver, the prophet, must bow to Jesus. They had their place as servants: He is Son and Lord of all. They retire, leaving Him the one object of the Father's good pleasure, and of our communion with the Father through hearing the Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Nevertheless, it is the Son Himself Who here gives to the writings of Moses a place in testimony beyond His own words; not because the servant approached the Master, or the Decalogue the Sermon

on the Mount, but because the Scripture, as such, has a character of permanence in testimony which can attach only to the written word. And Moses wrote of Christ-necessarily, therefore, by Divine power-as a prophet of "the prophet which should come into the world," of the Prophet incomparably more than prophet, the Son of God, Who quickens every believer, and shall judge every despiser, raising from the grave these for a resurrection of judgment, as those for one of life. Had the Jews, then, believed Moses, they would have believed Christ: words which teach us that faith is no such otiose exercise as some would make it; for the Jews in no way questioned, but received his writings as Divine. But not to doubt is far from believing; and they saw not in any of his books the great object of testimony in all, Jesus the Messiah, a man, yet far more than man, a Divine Saviour of sinners and Sacrifice for sins, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. If they believed Moses, they would have believed Him, for he wrote of Him. But if they believed not his writings, the Saviour did not expect them to believe His own words.

What an estimate of the authority of those very Scriptures which self-sufficient men have assailed as untrustworthy! They dare to tell us that they are neither Mosaic in origin, nor Messianic in testimony, but a mass of legends which do not even cohere in their poor and human reports of early days. On the other hand, the Judge of quick and dead declares that the Scriptures testify of Him, and that Moses wrote of Him, setting the written word in point of authority above even His words. As the Saviour and Rationalism are thus in direct antagonism, the Christian has no hesitation which to receive and which to reject, for one cannot serve both masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. So it is, and must be, and ought to be; for Christ and Rationalism are irreconcilable. Those who pretend to serve both have no principle as to either, and are the most corrupting dogmatically of all men. They not only do not possess the truth, but they make the love of it impossible, enemies alike of God and man.¹¹⁵

JOHN — THE SIXTH CHAPTER*

*[Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 454-456.]

John 6: 1-15.

Matt. 14: 13-21; Matt. 15: 32-39; Mark 6: 32-44; Mark 8: 1-10; Luke 9: 10-17.

Our Gospel now gives us the great miracle, or sign rather, common to all the four; and this, as ever here, introductorily to the discourse that follows—Christ, incarnate and in death, the food of eternal life for those who believe on His name. Here it is the Son of man humbled and ascended, as in chapter 5 the Son of God quickening those that hear, and by and by as Son of man about to judge those that believe not.

"After these things Jesus went away beyond the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias, and a great crowd followed Him because they saw the* signs which he wrought on the sick. But Jesus went up into the mountain, and there sat with His disciples; and the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. Jesus then, lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great crowd cometh unto Him, saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat? But this He said, trying him, for He Himself knew what He was about to do. Philip answered Him, Loaves for two hundred pence are not sufficient for them, that each of them† may have some little. One of His disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to Him, There is a little boy¹¹⁶ here that hath five barley-loaves and two fishes; but these, what are they for so many?"

*Without ἀὐτοῦ ABDKLSΔII, many cursives, and almost all the ancient versions; with it

EFGHMUVΓΔ, etc.

† ABLΠ, six cursives, and most versions reject αὐτῶν.

The scene is wholly changed from Jerusalem. We see the Lord in Galilee, and in that part of the lake called from the city of Tiberias, as well as from the province bordering on its western side. A great crowd follow Him because of the signs He wrought on the sick. The Lord withdraws to the high land, where He sits with His disciples, the Passover being then at hand. None of the motives mentioned in the Synoptic accounts do we find here: neither the beheading of John Baptist, nor the Apostles' return from their mission, nor the need of rest after toils in teaching or other work. Jesus fills the picture: all is in His hand. It is He Who takes the initiative; not that the disciples may not have previously been perplexed, nor as if John did not know this as well as Matthew and the rest, but because it pleased the Holy Spirit to give us Christ Himself alone master of the situation, as always in his Gospel. The nearness of the Passover is noted as repeatedly in this Gospel. Here, too, there was the reason for it, that the discourse that follows, as well as the sign wrought, is grounded on eating and drinking as the token of communion.

"Jesus, then, lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great crowd cometh unto Him, saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat?" The evangelist, however, is careful of His glory, and loses no time in letting us know that it was out of no uncertainty in His own mind, but in order to test Philip: He knew what He was going to do. Nevertheless, He awaits the despairing words of Philip's fellow-townsmen, Andrew, and would teach all now what His gracious power loves to do with the little and despised, were it for the greatest need. The brother of Simon Peter, who was even before his brother in seeing the Messiah, could think of a little boy with five barley-loaves and two fishes, not of Jesus. And where was Peter? Where John, the disciple that He loved? Nowhere in faith. Truly flesh cannot glory in His presence.

Let us turn to the One we may and ought to glory in, honouring the Father in honouring Him. "Jesus said, Make the people (ἄνθρώπους) sit (or lie) down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men (ἄνδρες) then sat down in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves, and, having given thanks,* distributed† to those that were set down, and likewise also of the fishes, as much as they would.¹¹⁷ But when they were filled, He saith to His disciples, Gather the fragments that are over, that nothing be lost. They gathered (them) then, and filled twelve baskets with fragments^{117a} of the five barley-loaves which were over to those that had eaten. The people (οἱ ἄνθρωποι) then, having seen the sign which Jesus‡ did, said, This is truly the Prophet that is coming into the world. Jesus then, knowing that they would come and seize Him that they might make (Him) king, withdrew (again)§ to the mountain Himself alone" (verses 10-15).

*D, etc., read εὐχαρίστησεν καὶ, "gave thanks and."

†It will be noticed that the vulgar text interpolates the disciples, τοῖς μαθηταῖς, οἱ δὲ μαθηταί, while the true text makes it only a question of the Lord. One may add too that DΓ, nine cursive MSS., and other authorities have ἔδωκεν (eight others δέδωκεν), "gave," while ABLΔΛII, and most others give διέδοκεν, "distributed" [Edd.].

‡ Ὁ Ἰησοῦς, the reading of most MSS., is not in BD and some other good authorities [as Syrsin].

§ πάλιν is supported by ABDKΛ, many cursives, and some versions. It is omitted by EFGHMSUVΓΔ, more than one hundred cursives, besides versions.

One is afraid that, poor as was the intelligence of the Galilean crowd, they understood the import of this great sign better than the Christendom of the last seventeen hundred years. They were, no doubt,

dull enough as to their deepest need, and they had no appreciation of the Saviour's grace in humiliation and redemption, afterwards fully set forth by Him in the discourse that ensues; but they had some thoughts not wholly untrue, though human and short enough, of the kingdom God is going to set up here below. Now and for many centuries theology indulges in a sort of mystic dream that the Gospel or Church is the kingdom of Christ, His kingdom of grace, to be at the end His kingdom of glory. But they have no thought of His coming in the kingdom He will have received, that not Israel only, but all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; and this too an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. A two-fold error, which lets slip the oneness of the body of Christ, the Church, with its glorified Head on high, and denies the mercy and faithfulness of God to Israel, who are the destined centre of Jehovah's earthly plans for the kingdom, when we, changed into the likeness of Christ's glory, shall reign together with Him.

The crowd were struck with the fulfilment of this fresh and crowning sign. They had not abandoned as yet their hopes. They knew that Jehovah has chosen Zion; that He has desired it for His habitation; that He will abundantly bless her provision and satisfy her poor with bread (Ps. 132). Was not He Who now displayed this power of Jehovah the promised Son of David Whom Jehovah will set on His throne? Such was their conclusion. "This is truly the prophet that is coming into the world." They thus bound up the law, 118 Psalms and prophets in their testimony to the Messiah; and so far they were quite right. But not so in their desire, which the Lord knew, to forge Him to be king. 118a For this would be in no way the kingdom of God, but of man, nor of heaven, but of earth. Not so: as He Himself taught afterwards, He was to go into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. Not till then shall the kingdom of God appear.

Till then it is a question for us of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the kingdom is not in word, but in power which is known to faith, not displayed yet. But it will not be always hidden as now, nor the domain of purely spiritual energy. Christ will come in His kingdom and reign till He has put all enemies under His feet, after asking from Jehovah, Who will give Him the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. It will be no question then, as now, of patiently working by the Gospel, but of breaking the nations with a rod of iron and of dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Unbelief either antedates the kingdom, striving to set it up now by man's will, or abandons it for the delusion of human progress, without a thought of God's purpose to establish it by Christ the second Man when the first is judged. Faith patiently waits for it meanwhile. So the Lord declined then, and went up on high—this time Himself alone. 119 It was the figure of what is actually true. Owned as Prophet, He refuses to be man's king, and goes above to exercise His intercession, as He is now doing, the great Priest in the presence of God.

But the Lord vouchsafes another sign to the very people who soon after ask for a sign that they might see and believe (verse 30). So blind is man even when grace is multiplying these helps for those who discern it! Submission to God was the true want. not more signs.

John 6: 16-21.

Matt. 14: 22-33; Mark 6: 45-52.

"But when evening was come, His disciples went down unto the sea, and, having gone on board ship,* were crossing the sea unto Capernaum. 120 And darkness had already come on, and Jesus had not yet† come to them, and the sea was rough, as a strong wind was blowing. Having rowed, then, about twenty-five or thirty stadia, they behold Jesus walking on the sea 120a and coming near the ship,

and they were affrighted. But He saith to them, It is I: be not afraid. They were willing therefore to receive Him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they were going" (verses 16-21).

*The article is not in BLΔ, a few cursives, etc., but is in more than a dozen uncials, and most cursives.

† οὐ̅πω is read by BDL, some cursives, and most ancient versions.

How striking the contrast with another storm on the same lake, where the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full, and He was on board, but asleep, and the disciples awoke Him with the selfish and unbelieving cry, Master, carest Thou not that we perish? And He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace, and both obeyed the Creator of all, Whom man alone despised because His love made Him the servant of all to God's glory.

Here it is the picture of the Lord's people while Himself is on high, exposed to the storms which the enemy knows how to excite, and after much toil making little progress. So it will be also for those who follow us at the end of the age. They will experience untold trials of the sharpest kind, with scanty comfort or even intelligence, save as compared with "the wicked," who shall not understand, least of all (we may perhaps add) in that day. Darkness will have already set in; but in the midst of their increasing troubles Jesus will appear, though they will not even then be delivered from their fears, for the glorious light will rather augment them, till they hear His voice and know that He is indeed their Saviour, long absent, now come back. Received into the ship, He causes it to reach immediately the desired haven. So it will be with the righteous remnant by and by. Whether for them or for ourselves, all turns on Christ; and this it is the peculiar office of our Gospel to illustrate.

Matthew, who alone specifically names the Church as taking the place now of the disowned people after the rejection of the Messiah, alone shows us Peter quitting the ship to walk over the water toward Jesus, to walk where nothing but faith could sustain, and where, therefore, we see him soon sinking through unbelief, as the Church has done still more deplorably: but the Lord, faithful in His care, keeps spite of all. It is only when the ship is entered (the Jewish position properly) that the wind ceases, and He is welcomed with all His beneficent power in the land whence once they had besought Him to depart out of their borders (Matt. 14).

Our evangelist, however, does not trace these earthly blessings which await "that day," but turns to the circumstances and questions which the Lord makes the occasion of the wonderful discourse that follows. He adheres to his task of unfolding the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

John 6: 22-51.

"On the morrow the crowd that was standing on the other side of the sea, having seen that there was no other boat but one,* and that Jesus went not with His disciples into the ship,** but that His disciples went off alone-yet† (other) boats‡ came from Tiberias near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks-when the crowd then saw that Jesus was not there nor His disciples, *they* went themselves on board the ships and came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus; and having found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say to you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food§ that abideth unto life eternal which the Son of man shall give|| you; for him the Father sealed, (even) God. They said therefore to Him, What must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus

answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom *He* sent."

* cABL, some cursives, and excellent versions, support εἰ μὴ ἔν, but the common text, following at least a dozen uncials, most cursives, etc., has ἐκεῖο εἰς ὃ ἐνέβησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, "that one whereinto His disciples were entered."

** πλοῖον, ABDKOθg, twenty-five cursives, etc.; πλοῖαριον, "boat," eleven uncials, most cursives, etc.

† δὲ is omitted by BLθg, etc. It is also a question between ἄλλα, "other," or ἄλλὰ. "but."

‡ πλοῖα, "ships," in a few MSS.

§ The second τὴν βρωσιν is omitted by EFGH, etc.

|| δίδωσιν, "doth give," is the reading of D, etc. [Blass]; δώσει, "shall give," of ABIEFGHKL, etc [Syrstin, followed by W. and H., Weiss].

The particulars related serve to show how the crowd was struck by the mysterious disappearance of the Lord. They knew that He had not accompanied the disciples in their ship, and that there was no other in which He could have crossed the lake when He must have left the mountain. They put forward their curiosity as to His mode of passage as a cover for their desire to profit, as they had done already, by His miraculous supply of their wants. The Lord in reply strips them of their disguise and confronts them with their selfishness. It was this which prompted their search after Him, not the* interest in the signs which He had just wrought. He prefaces their exposure with the formula of unusual solemnity which He reserved for the enunciation of great truths. "Rabbi" (said they), "when camest Thou hither?" They had sought after Jesus; they had taken trouble to find Him; when found, they address Him with honour; but they manifest by their inquiry that it was not Himself, nor yet the signs which He had wrought, which attracted them. Faith was not in their hearts, but curiosity about the time and mode of His coming, and at the bottom desire after present ease through Him. Was the Son of God here to gratify all this?

"Verily, verily, I say to you, Ye seek Me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate and were filled." Here the Lord searches those who had been in quest of Him, and searches them thoroughly, for a single act that looks fair may prove a character hollow and base. And He looked on and listened, and did not trust Himself to them because He knew all men, and needed none to testify of man, for Himself knew what was in man. To make Him a king in order to enjoy His promised earthly favours was nothing in His eyes-nay, called for His most grave detection of them to themselves. It was no question of the Messiah for Israel now, but of a Saviour for sinners. He was rejected as the Christ by those who ought most to have hailed Him with joy, but did not because His coming as He did made nothing of them and their religiousness-that is, of all they valued. And if this poor hungry crowd seemed to feel quite differently and wished to give Him the honour that was due, it was needful to demonstrate that they were not a whit better, but sought their own things, not God's glory in Him. He was really come, into a world of death over which judgment hung, that the poorest of sinners might feed on Him and live for ever: what did they think of or care for His love? They thought only of themselves in their way, just as their rulers and teachers in theirs. God was in none of their thoughts. High or low, they had no sense of their sins or ruin, no knowledge of God or His grace. A Messiah for temporal good was what they wanted, not a Jesus to save His people from their sins. But the Messiah as a Divine Person could not but lay bare their alienation and distance from God; and thus He became increasingly odious, till their hatred ended in His Cross. This made plain the deep purpose of grace in sending Him into the world, not for Israel only, but, if now rejected by them, that we might live by Him

and He be a propitiation for our sins.

Hence He adds, "Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth unto life eternal, which the Son of man shall give you; for Him the Father sealed, (even) God." It is no question of Messianic honour or blessing, but of what the Son of man has to give; and as He gives the food that abides to life eternal, so man needs no less than this. It is as such that God the Father sealed Him. Toil will not suffice, nor any seeming sincerity. The humbled Messiah, the Son of man, is no less God's object in sealing with the Holy Ghost than He is the Giver of the only food that abides to life everlasting; and nothing less can supply the need of lost man, be he Jew or Gentile.¹²²

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Hence they misapply the Lord's exhortation, "Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth unto life eternal," and infer their own capacity to do something acceptable to God. "They said therefore to Him, What should we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom *He* sent." Jesus is the object of faith. To believe on Him is the only work for a sinful man, if it is to be called a work. It is truly God's work, for man trusts it not, and refuses to confide in Him for eternal life. He would rather trust to his own wretched performance, or his own miserable experience—anything rather than to Jesus only. But God will not allow men to mix up self with Jesus, whether it be a fancied good self or a confessedly evil self. It is the Son of man Whom the Father sealed, and Him only can He accept as the ground of the sinner's approach to God, Him only does He command as the food that abides to life eternal. For this He sent Him, not for man to make Him a king over a people with their sins unremoved, but to be the true Passover, and the only food that He warrants. Faith, however, is the sole way in which one can feed on Him; not of works, else it must be by the law, and thus be for Jews only. On the contrary; it is by faith that it might be according to grace, and thus be open to Gentile as freely as to Jew. Truly it is not the way of man, but the work of God, that we believe on Him Whom He sent.

The crowd was not so ignorant as not to know that the Lord claimed no insignificant place when He spoke of Himself as the Son of man. The Psalms and the prophets had spoken of such a One, and of His wide and exalted glory. Besides, apart and different from the Old Testament testimony, He had just told them that the Son of man is the Giver of the food that abides unto eternal life, and that the Father, even God, sealed Him. "They said therefore to Him, What should we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He sent." Thus, as He spoke clearly, they manifest afresh the inveterate assumption of men in every state and age and country that fallen man is capable of working the works of God. They ignore their own sin, His holiness and majesty. It was the way of Cain; and professing Christendom is as infected with it as Judaism or heathenism. It is the universal lie of man, till the Holy Spirit brings him to repentance. Then in the new life he feels and judges the old, and finds, as we see in Rom. 7, that it is a question not of works, but of what he is, and that there is no help for him but deliverance from all, and that in Christ by faith.

So the Lord here answers that the work of God is that they should believe on Him Whom He sent. Similarly the Apostle reasons in Rom. 4, that if Abraham were justified by works, he would have had matter for boast, but not before God, from Whom it would detract. Scripture guards against any such misunderstanding, and says plainly that he believed God, which was reckoned to him as righteousness. The principle is thus evident: to him that works the reward is reckoned as not of grace, but of debt; while to him that does not work, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. Man may be fully and securely blest, but it is only of grace, and so by faith,

which gives the glory to God, as itself His gift. Faith is thus the work of God, and excludes man's working, not as its effect (for it produces works, and good works abundantly), but as antecedent to it or co-ordinate with it; and justly so, unless it would suit God to be partner with man, and this the believer would be the first to eschew. The Sent One of the Father is the object of faith.

It was at once felt that this was to claim more and more on God's part, although He refused to be made a king by man. "They said therefore to Him, What sign doest Thou, then, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, according as it is written, Bread out of heaven He gave them to eat. Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Not Moses hath given* you the bread out of heaven, but my Father giveth you the True Bread out of heaven. For the Bread of God is He that descendeth out of heaven, and giveth life to the world" (verses 30-33). Such is unbelief, ever dissatisfied with the admirably suited and magnificent signs of God, refusing perhaps to ask a sign when God offers, despising those He does give. They did not on this occasion say outright what they meant, but it seems to have been some such thought as this: "You ask us to believe; yet, after all, what was the miracle of the loaves to that of the manna? Give us food from heaven, as Moses did, for forty years; and then it will be time enough to speak of believing. Do a work to match his, if you cannot surpass it." The Lord answers that it was not Moses that had given the bread out of heaven, but His Father was giving them the True Bread out of heaven. The Bread of God is Jesus Himself, and these two great characteristics are His alone of all men; He comes down out of heaven, and He gives life to the world. He is a Divine Person, yet a man here below, the Bread of God for every one that needs Him. It is no mere question of Israel in the desert: He gives life to the world. Less is not the truth, nor would it suit God.

*So the majority of uncials with A [Weiss], etc. But BDL, etc., have ἔδωκεν, "gave" [Blass, as W. and H. (text)].

"They said therefore to Him, Lord, evermore give us this Bread. And (or, Then)* Jesus said to them, I am the Bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall in nowise hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall in nowise ever thirst. But I said to you, that ye have even seen Me, and do not believe" (verses 34-36). This is their last effort to get what they sought-bread for this world, bread evermore, if not through them in any way, at least from Him. But unbelief is every way wrong. It is life that God is giving, and nothing less meets the true need of man; and this life is in Christ, not from Him. Apart from Him, given out of Him, and thus, so as to be independent of Him, it exists not. In Him was life; in Him only is life found. He is the Bread of life.¹²³ He is not here viewed as the Son of God, quickening whom He will, even as the Father. Here He is the Son of man sealed, and the object of faith. "I am the Bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall in nowise hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall in nowise ever thirst." Alas! the crowd that saw Him had no faith in Him. Their privilege in seeing Him but added to their guilty unbelief; and, one must add, that now that the atoning work is done, and He is dead, risen, and glorified, and preached among Gentiles, it is a greater sin still where He is not believed on in the world. Yet men no more believe on Him than those who then followed Him, nor are their motives purer who profess and preach Him than theirs who would have crowned Him in Galilee.

*The witnesses differ, some giving neither.

The Lord proceeds to explain what was behind and above this in the words that follow. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out. For I am descended from* heaven not to do My will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (verses 37, 38). This then is the key, and it is twofold; and only in this largeness do we know the truth. If either side be taken to the exclusion of the other, the teaching is imperfect, and the consequences are apt to be error on this

hand or on that. The reprobationist presses the first clause; the Arminian the second. Neither gives its due weight to the clause they respectively omit. The theologian who sees only the Divine decrees pays little heed to the encouragement given by the Lord to the individual that comes unto Him. The advocate of what he calls free-will seeks to neutralise, if he does not absolutely ignore, the declaration that all the Father gives to Christ shall come unto Him; and no wonder, for it is an assertion of His sovereignty, which is inexplicable on his own theory. But the hard lines of reprobationism can as little admit cordially the Lord's assurance of a welcome to him that comes unto Him.

* ἄπὸ ABLT with cursives, ἐκ DEΔ, etc.

The purpose of the Father is as sure as the Son's reception of all that come to Him. The unbelief of Israel, favoured as they were, did not enfeeble the counsels of the Father: and the Son would not refuse the vilest or most hostile that came to Him. The reason given also is most touching. He was thoroughly the servant of God in this. Come to Him who might, He had come down from heaven to serve, not to do His own will. It was for the Father to choose and give. He had descended to serve, and would in nowise cast out even the man who had reviled Himself most. He was the Father's servant in salvation as in all else. The servant would not choose, but receive him that came to Him, as all the Father gives should come. He is come down from heaven to do the Father's will Who sent Him, not His own will.

This is carried out still more fully in verses 39, 40, where the Lord says, "And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that every one who beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have life eternal, and I will raise him up at the last day." Thus, on the one hand, He Who sent Christ, and gave Him in His sovereign grace, fails in nothing of His will, for Christ loses nothing of it; on the other hand, Christ abides the test for every soul of man who receives life eternal in Him by faith alone; while in both cases, whether for the whole or for each individual, Christ raises up when man's day is ended for ever. All hope of present deliverance under the Messiah, which they fondly dreamt for men in the flesh or dead as they were, was vain. The Father's will, whether for His children as a whole or individually, shall stand: the whole that He has given to the Son shall be kept, and every believer in Him has life everlasting, as Christ's raising will prove for both when the last day comes.

The Lord is thus contrasting His glory as Messiah on the earth with His raising up the believer at the last day. Unbelief was even then using the former to overlook the latter; but the Lord here brings what was unseen and eternal into prominence, and this, because He had (to God's glory and in love) taken the place of a servant to accomplish purposes yet deeper. Had He sought His own will or His own name, His reign as Messiah would have been still nearer to Him than to the Jews. But no! He sought the glory and the will of His Father, and, as He gave Himself up to suffer, so He should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day. To the individual all turns on beholding the Son and believing on Him: every one who does should have life eternal, and Christ should raise him up at the last day. Those who look for nothing but the reign of the Messiah inevitably perish. They acknowledge not their sins, they feel not for the violated majesty and holiness of God, they believe not on the Saviour, and, not so believing, have not life. He that believes knows Him to be more than the Messiah, even the Son of the Father; he knows that only in Him has he life eternal, and that he will have his portion with Christ in resurrection at the last day. It is no question of man or the world as they now are, but of Christ then.

This was peculiarly strange to the people of Judea and Jerusalem, resting as they did in tradition, and so we see next, "The Jews therefore murmured about Him, because He said, I am the Bread that came down out of heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother

we know? How then* doth He say, I am come down out of heaven?" (verses 41, 42). Thus they set the circumstances as they knew them (and they knew them ill) against the truth of Christ. It was judging according to appearances, and consequently unrighteous judgment. He was the son of Mary-truly and properly man; else His work had not availed for man. He was not son of Joseph save legally; but this He was, in order that He should be Messiah according to the law. Had He been really son of Joseph, as of Mary, He had not been Son of God, or a Divine Person; but this was the foundation of all, and without it the Incarnation were a falsehood, and the Atonement a nullity. He was really Son, the Only-begotten Son of the Father, Who deigned to become son of Mary, and by law consequently son of Joseph, who had espoused her (a point of all moment for His Messianic title, for Messiah He could not properly have been unless He were heir of Joseph's rights).¹²⁴ But as Son of God, the incarnate Word, He was the Bread which came down out of heaven: thus only could man feed on Him by faith and be blessed for ever.

* νῦν, "now" [W. and H., Weiss], is the reading of B C T, the Memph. Goth. and Arm. Syr.hiers., etc.; οὖν ADL and eleven other uncials, all known cursives (Æth. = οὖν νῦν), Theb., etc. Many versions [as Syrcu sin; so Blass] omit both.

"Jesus* therefore† answered and said to them, Murmur not among yourselves. No one can come unto Me except the Father Who sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. (Isa. 54: 13.) Every one that heard‡ from the Father and learned cometh unto Me. Not that any one hath seen the Father, except He Who is of God, *He* hath seen the Father" (verses 43, 44). Unbelief can only destroy and trouble; it cannot give life or comfort. Man under Satan is the source of unbelief, which ever leads from Christ, not to Him. But as the Father sent Christ, so He draws the believer to Christ, Who raises Him up at the last day. It is not man's worth or work or will, therefore, but the Father's grace, by which one comes to Christ. The whole blessing, in short, is of sovereign mercy, and so the prophets have written. All true teaching comes from God, and all are taught of God, Who never forgets what is due to Christ. "Every one that heard from the Father and learned" comes to Christ. Not that the Father has been seen by man. He is known in the Son. "He who is of God, He hath seen the Father"; it is Christ only Who has.

* Ἰησοῦς, omitted by most [so Blass], is read by BLT, etc.

† οὖν, "therefore," is read by AD and ten uncials more, most cursives, etc.; but omitted by BCKLTII, ten cursives, and several ancient versions [Blass simply, "He said to them"].

‡ The aorist participle has the preponderance of witnesses in age and number.

The Lord then solemnly reiterates, "Verily, verily,¹²⁵ I say to you, He that believeth (on Me.*) hath life eternal. I am the Bread of life" (verses 47, 48). In truth, as the promised One, He was always the object of faith, even as being the eternal Son He had ever quickened the believer. But now He was the Word made flesh; He was the Son of God, and this as man in the world, and, as rejected by Israel, He announces that He is the giver of life eternal. This is the grand point: not the kingdom merely by and by, but life eternal now in the Son, and inseparable from Him, but in Him now a man.

* BLT, etc. [so Edd.], omit εἰς ἑμὲ, though given by ACDEA, etc., cursives, etc. [Syrsin, "on God"].

Hence the Lord says, following this up, "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. This is the Bread that cometh down out of heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the Living Bread that came down out of heaven. If one shall have eaten of this* bread, he shall live for ever. Yea, and the bread that I will give is my flesh† for the life of the world" (verses 49-51). Thus, if the Lord

was typified by the manna, He went incomparably beyond its virtue. The fathers of the Jews ate the manna in the wilderness; but it could not ward off death, for they died like others. Christ is the Bread that comes down out of heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. Eternal life is in the Son of God, and none the less because He was then the Son of man. Rather was the grace of God more manifest in Him thus; for, if He were a man, was it not for men to eat thereof and not die? He was the Living Bread that came down out of heaven. If one ate of this Bread, he should live for ever.¹²⁶

*Instead of τοῦτου τοῦ, as given by BCLT and twelve other uncials, all cursives, and versions, τοῦ ἐμοῦ, "my," is read by , some old Latin copies, etc.

†So BCDLT, several cursives [33], ancient versions, and fathers [most Edd., and] so , etc., putting ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν last [Tisch.]; but twelve inferior uncials [ΓΔΛΠ, etc.] and a mass of other authorities add ἦν ἐγὼ δώσω.

This, we shall see, involves another truth besides the Incarnation, even His death in Atonement; for the bread that He would give is His flesh for the life of the world. Here He hints at what He would open out somewhat further-His atoning death. When His life is given, it is not for the life of Israel only, but of the world. The grace of God which was about to descend so low could not be circumscribed to the Jews alone. "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have life eternal." On this, however, He enlarges more fully afterwards. Did they strive against His words in unbelief? He puts forward the truth, so as still more to offend man's pride and opposition to God, but to feed and strengthen faith in His elect.

John 6: 52-59.

Such words from our Lord, His flesh given for the life of the world, were startling enough to those who heard them, but statements yet plainer follow. He insists on the necessity of drinking His blood." The Jews therefore contended among themselves, saying, How can *He* (οὗτος) give us His* flesh to eat? Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man and drunk His blood, ye have† no life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath life eternal; and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is truly‡ food, and My blood is truly‡ drink. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live by reason of the Father, he also that eateth Me, even he shall live by reason of Me. This is the bread that came down out of heaven. Not as the§ fathers ate and died: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever. These things said He in (the) synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum."

*BT (and the ancient versions apparently) add αὐτοῦ.

†The Latins read "habebitis," "ye shall have," contrary to all authority.

‡ ἀληθῆς cBCFaKLTII, many cursives and versions [W. H. Weiss]; ἀληθῶς and eleven other uncials, most cursives, etc. [Blass].

§ A dozen uncials and most cursives and versions [including Syrsin] add ὑμῶν, which is not in BCLT, etc.

Thus, as the Lord set forth Himself incarnate under the bread that came down out of heaven to be eaten in faith, so here we have His death under the figure of the flesh* to be eaten, and the blood to be drunk. It is the life given up, the blood drunk as a separate thing, the most emphatic sign of death. Of this faith partakes, and finds in it atonement and communion. Without it there is no life. It was the more important, as some professed to receive Him as the Christ, but stumbled at His death. The Lord shows

that such is not the faith of God's elect; for he who welcomed Him as come down from heaven would glory in His cross; and though none could anticipate His death, all who truly believe would rejoice, once it is made known, and its object and efficacy opened. Those who receive the Incarnation in faith do also with like faith receive His death; and these only have eternal life. For such as accept the former after a human sort are apt to cavil at the latter. Both are objects and tests of faith; and the more decisive of the two is His death.

*Dean Alford's notions, that the flesh here is in His resurrection form only, and the world here all the creation form, as said to be held together in Col. 1: 17, are groundless in themselves and contrary to the context.

It may be observed that, as there are two figures in the central part of the chapter, so under the last there are two forms of expression which we distinguish: the act of having eaten [φάγητε] His flesh and drunk [πίητε] His blood, as in verse 53; and the continuous eating [τρώγων] and drinking [πίων], as in verse 54. This is of moment, as cutting off all occasion from such as either argue for or object against severing eternal life from its source. Scripture leaves no room for the thought. The believer has eternal life, but it is *in* the Son, not apart from Him. The believer eats His flesh and drinks His blood. He is not content that he ate so once: if thus content, can such a one be supposed to have life in him? Assuredly not. If his faith were real, he would be ever eating His flesh and drinking His blood; and he who so does has eternal life, and the Lord will raise him up at the last day. The love that came down from heaven is precious, and the heart receives Christ thus humbled thankfully, not doubting but desiring that it should be the truth. And if that love goes farther, even down to death itself, the death of the cross, the heart is enlarged and well-nigh overwhelmed; but it counts nothing too great, nothing too good, for the Son of God and Son of man. It bows and blesses God for Christ's dying to accomplish redemption. For the same reason, if it has tasted that the Lord is thus gracious, it perseveres, it can never tire, it feeds on Him again and again. For it is felt that His flesh is truly meat, and His blood is truly drink.

Hence it is added, "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him." This abiding in Christ and Christ in him is one of the characteristic privileges of the Christian in John. It is not merely security for the Christian, but Christ the home of the soul as it is of Christ. How unspeakable the nearness! And as the life of fellowship is thus blessed, so is the effect in motive and object which accompanies it. "As the living Father sent Me and I live by reason (or, on account of) the Father, he also that eateth Me, even he shall live by reason of Me." As the Father's will and glory were ever before the Lord here below, so is He Himself before the believer. Otherwise one lives to self or the world. "To me to live is Christ," (Phil. 1: 21.) said the Apostle Paul; and this is proper Christian experience. When Christ is the motive, such is the result.

It is well known that many have laboured to prove that the eating the flesh and drinking the blood, on which last our Lord insists as distinct from eating the bread, means His supper. This is groundless, not merely because the Eucharist was not even instituted till long after, but far more because what is affirmed of eating the flesh and drinking the blood here is wholly irreconcilable with participation in the Lord's supper; and this both positively and negatively. For it would follow that the Lord lays down with His most impressive formula of truth, on the one hand the impossibility of life save for those who have so partaken; on the other, the certainty of eternal life now and of blissful resurrection at the last day for him who habitually so partakes-yea, the highest privilege of Christianity necessarily attached to the constant celebration of it. Doctrine so absolute as this must be repudiated by all Romanists or Protestants save by such as are utterly blinded by superstition. But it is not a whit too strong when applied to, as it really was spoken of, feeding by faith on Christ's death.¹²⁷

It is not correct to say that the same topic is continued before and after verse 51. There is eating both before and after; and it is conceded on all hands that eating "the bread that came down from heaven" is to be understood of faith. It is harsh in the extreme, therefore, to contend that eating the flesh and drinking the blood means something else than partaking by faith—that it is figurative in the one, and literal in the other. It is at least consistent that, as the eating in the former part of the discourse unquestionably means communion by faith, so it should continue in the latter part. The discourse in both parts clearly refers to what was literal—the eating of the bread miraculously provided for the multitude. But the doctrine, though vitally akin, is not the same in the two parts, for the Lord's Incarnation is the topic and object of faith in the former, His death in the latter. It is the way of John on outward facts or miracles to hang some essential truth of Christ's Person or operation; and so it is here. He begins with Himself as the incarnate bread, more immediately answering to the divinely supplied loaves; He goes on, when unbelief cavilled, to bring out the truth of Himself dying, still more repulsive to nature, especially to a Jew.

Thus all hangs simply yet profoundly together. Christ lets the Jews know (for the discourse is to them, not to the disciples)^{127a} that He had not come to be a king after the flesh, but to be fed on in humiliation—yea, also in death: the only food of eternal life issuing in resurrection at the last day, not in temporal power and present glory, as the people fondly hoped who wished to crown Him now. To bring in the Eucharist here is to import a foreign element which neither suits the scope of the chapter as a whole, nor a single section of the discourse. And it is the more absurd, when we see that another topic follows the main argument as its fitting conclusion, the ascension of the same Son of man Whose Incarnation and death had been previously presented as the food of faith, and this as a climax for faith when unbelief had stumbled first at His coming down from heaven, and yet more at His death. As was said afterwards: "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is *this* Son of man?" (John 12: 34). "Doth this offend you?" said the Lord to the disciples when they too murmured. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" It is not an institution which the Lord hints at establishing. Throughout it is Himself the object of faith as the Son of man incarnate, dead, and ascended.

I am aware that a celebrated controversialist¹²⁸ strove to persuade people that the first part closes with verse 47. But this is to the last degree arbitrary. Verse 51 is the true transition where the bread is declared to be Christ's flesh which He should give for the life of the world. This, in answer to their incredulous query in verse 52, the Lord expands in verses 53-58. For the bread as such is still continued in verses 48-50, which ought not to be the case if we had really passed into the second part. The eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood begins properly with verse 53. This is plain and positive in the chapter; and, indeed, it is bold to state differently; but, if so, eating the bread pertains as clearly and certainly to the first part as eating the flesh and drinking the blood to the second. In fact, it is assumed from the beginning (verses 32-35), but definitely affirmed before the end (verses 48-50). Undoubtedly the language is stronger when the necessity of faith in His death is pressed in verse 53 and what follows. But this proves nothing more certainly than the exclusion of the Eucharist, except to such as can conceive our Lord's making His supper more momentous than His work and faith in it. That He would speak more strongly of the giving up of His life than of His coming down from heaven to become man, no Christian could doubt, as well as of the graver danger to man of despising His death, and of the deeper blessing for the believer of communion with it.

Nor, let me add, is it absolutely true that in the first part the Father alone is said to give, in the second the Son of man; for in the beginning of the first part (verse 33) the bread of God is said to be He that comes down from heaven and *gives* life to the world, not merely to be given. But so far as it is

said, it entirely falls in with the real difference in these two parts. The Father gave the Son to be incarnate; the Son gives Himself to die, and consequently His flesh to be eaten and His blood to be drunk. Further, it is not true that the consequences stand in contrast; for as in the first part eternal life results with resurrection at the last day, so this is carefully repeated in the second part (verse 54).

It is true, as we may readily observe, that more is attached to one's eating His flesh and drinking His blood—namely, his dwelling in Christ and Christ in him (verse 56); but this is as certainly a result of faith in Christ's death, as it is nowhere in Scripture attributed to the Eucharist. John 15, where Christ speaks of Himself, and 1 John 4: 13-16, where the Apostle speaks of God, approach nearest; neither of these alludes to the Lord's supper, but one sets forth Christ as the only source of fruit-bearing by continual dependence on Him; the other predicates God's dwelling in him and his in God of every soul that confesses Jesus to be the Son of God. These, then, so far confirm the conviction that the Lord is, in John 6: 56, describing the privilege enjoyed by him who feeds on his own death by faith. No doubt he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him; but all flows from a new life, which comes only through faith in Christ; for without faith it is impossible to please God. This, therefore, shows an advance, not a new and different theme, but the same Christ viewed not in His life but in His death, with its deepening consequences to the believer. 129

Himself the life eternal which was with the Father before all worlds, He took flesh that He might not only show the Father and be the perfect pattern of obedience as man, but that He might die in grace for us and settle the question of sin for ever, glorifying God absolutely and at all cost in the cross. Except the corn of wheat (as He Himself taught us) fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; dying it brings forth much fruit. His death is not here regarded as an offering to God as elsewhere often, but the appropriation of it by the believer into his own being. Hence, what was comparatively vague in speaking of the bread given from above becomes most precise when He alludes to His death. For this was in the Father's purpose and the Son of man's heart, not reigning over Israel now, but giving His flesh for the life of the world: for, Jew or Gentile, all are here seen as reprobate, lost, and dead. He only is life, yet this not in living but in dying for us, that we might have it in and with Him, the fruit of His redemption, life eternal as a present thing, but only fully seen in resurrection power, already verified and seen in Him ascended up as man where He was before as God, by and by to be seen in us at the last day manifested with Him in glory.

Hence the believer is here said to eat His flesh and drink His blood, and this not once only, when we believed in Him and the efficacy of His death, but continuously taking in its depth and force, as death to the world and man's estate, estranged as they are from God. Drinking His blood gives the more emphasis to the expression of the full reception of His dying by the believer. Had He simply left the world as One ever a stranger to it, we had been left behind for ever, objects of the judgment of God. But, dying to it and for us by the grace of God, He gave us who believe what separated us to God as well as cleansed us from our sins. Had it been simply our death, it had been our judgment and no honour to God, but rather the triumph of the enemy. Blessed be God, it is of His death, and of our entrance by faith into His death in all its reality and value, that He here speaks. It is not His supper; but His supper points as the sign to Christ's death, and these verses speak of the same death. They, however, speak of the efficacious reality, not of its symbol, which, when confounded with the truth, becomes no better than an idolatrous vanity, and when most stripped of truth even as a sign is then made openly an object of worship. So we see in Romanism, where the votaries are sentenced not to drink the blood. Christ is contained whole and entire, as they say, under the species of bread: so that all is there together, flesh and blood, soul and divinity; but if so, the blood is not shed, and the mass is to the Romanist who communicates a too true witness of the non-remission of his sins. Such is the

showing of their own formal doctrine and most trusted theologians.

It may be added that, after the rich testimony to His death as the object of faith, which should follow with its consequences, the Lord seems to me in verse 57 to shut out all excuse for overlooking His intention. It was Himself, not a symbolic act, which He here meant, as should be plain from the words "he that eateth *me*." Further, He unites the two parts of the discourse by the following verse which closes the part about His flesh and His blood by again using the figure of "the bread that came down out of heaven," and "he that eateth this bread shall live for ever": a declaration as true when applied to faith in Himself as it is false of the Eucharist, taken in whatever sense men please.

John 6: 60-65.

The Lord had now in the synagogue at Capernaum concluded His discourse, the main topics of which were His Incarnation and Atonement, as the indispensable food of faith, let men despise them as they might; and let them cry up the manna or aught else, which had neither such a Divine and heavenly source nor such an everlasting effect, but must leave men to die after all; for in Him, and none else, was life. "Many therefore of His disciples on having heard said, This word is hard: who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmur concerning this, said to them, Doth this offend you? If, then, ye behold the Son of man ascending where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I have spoken* to you are spirit and are life; but there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from (the) beginning which were they that should believe not, and which was he that should betray Him. And He said, On this account have I said that no one can come unto Me unless it hath been given him from the† Father."

* $\lambda\epsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\kappa\alpha$ BCDKLTUPI, many cursives, and most ancient versions but $\lambda\alpha\lambda\tilde{\omega}$ in the Text. Rec. with ten uncials and most cursives [with Syrsin].

†Text. Rec. adds $\mu\omicron\tilde{\upsilon}$, with more than a dozen uncials, etc.

A most serious form of unbelief now betrayed itself, not among those of Judæa or elsewhere only, but the disciples, many of whom murmur, stumbling at His words. If they found hard His descent from heaven or His dying, what if they beheld the Son of man going up where He was before? It was implied in Ps. 8, Ps. 80, Ps. 110, as well as Dan. 7. But Jewish will had long turned only to Israel's hopes in their land, and liked not a higher aspect, any more than a lower. The cross and heaven were equally out of their field of vision. Hence the Lord here confronts them with His Own ascension as a most unpalatable truth. Yet is it one which fitly follows His death, as it falls in with His coming down to be a man in incarnation. He is gone up a Saviour in righteousness, having glorified God to the uttermost about sin, as surely as He came down to serve in love. All hang together here, as, in fact, it is while He is thus ascended on high, that faith feeds on Him in life and death here below.¹³⁰ But disciples murmuring at His words of humiliation He told of His exaltation, sad to say to still deeper offence. Had they been true, had they known and loved the truth, it had been their joy; but they valued the first man rather than the Second, and were more and more offended.

Such is the flesh even in disciples. It profits nothing. It is the Spirit that quickens, and this by and in Christ, never apart from Him, still less to His dishonour. Hence His words have a character essentially Divine and Divine efficacy; they are spirit and life, as He says Himself of what He had just spoken in His discourses, stumble as men might; and few words have been more disastrously perverted to this day, idolising the sign to the shame of Him Who was signified to have thus come and died in supreme love, Who blesses faith accordingly. But, alas! "there are some of you who do not believe." Not to believe is fatal to any, most inconsistent withal in a disciple. Christ must be all or nothing. If all, His words are to the believer no reproach but a delight, and have power all through-yea, increasingly as

He is thereby better known. Jesus knew their unbelief, not by observation or experience, but from the first. He is God, and none the less because He became man; and this is our evangelist's constant thesis. Yet did He distinguish between such as did not believe and him who should betray Him; but who ever gathered it save now from His own words? Who had ever seen grace in Him falter in His ways with all? How solemn is the patience of Divine love! On the other hand, those who believed had no ground of boasting, for though they did cleave to Jesus, none could come unto Him, except it had been given to him from the Father. It was sovereign grace in God.

John 6: 66-71.

"From that (time) many of* His disciples went away back and walked no more with Him. Jesus therefore said to the twelve,¹³¹ Do ye also wish to go away? Simon Peter† answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go away? Thou hast words of life eternal; and we have believed and known that Thou art the Holy One‡ of God. (Jesus)§ answered them, Did I not choose you the twelve? And one of you is a devil.^{131a} Now He was speaking of Judas (son) of Simon Iscariot;|| for *he*, one¶ of the twelve, was about to betray Him" (verses 66-71). Thus the warnings of the Lord precipitate the departure of unbelievers, while they knit the faithful more closely to Himself, and bring out their sense of what He is to their souls.¹³² The cause lay in their own will, which gave Satan power. Yet the Lord does not hesitate to let the twelve know that, while one confessed for all that He was the Holy One of God, one of themselves should betray Him. What a contrast with all but Himself, unless it be with such as have learned of Him! How different those who seek to draw the disciples after them! Still, His words would confirm His own, even all that were real. The more free, the more are they bound. He only is worthy, He is the Holy One of God.¹³³

* BGT, seven cursives, etc., read ἕκ, but the weight of authority is against it.

† The οὗν of the Text. Rec. is not in BCGKLUAI, many cursives, and the oldest versions.

‡ So BCpmDL, etc., against the great majority of inferior authorities which support the received reading, ὁ ἄγιος ὁ υἱός, many also adding τοῦ ζῶντος. There are varieties in copies and versions which point to the most ancient reading, but mixed up with the later ones in different measures and forms. [Synsin, with several Old Latt., has "Christ, the Son of God." Syrcu omits Christ, whilst Syr pesch hier add "living" before "God."]

§ Many omit ὁ Ἰησοῦς [so Syrsin].

|| The Text. Rec. reads Ἰσκα — v, with some good MSS.; but the best have Ἰσκα - υ.

¶ ὄν, "being," is not read by BCpmDL Syrr. cu. [sin] et pesch. Aeth. (Edd.), but is found in the great majority.

I am aware that a learned but self-confident German pronounces the "Holy One" not Johannan.^{133a} But this was a rash and ignorant judgment. It is a title given to our Lord once in his first Epistle as here once in his Gospel. He is the only writer in the New Testament who ever uses it of the Lord in relation to the saints. It is therefore more characteristic of John than of any other Apostle. Mark and Luke tell us of evil spirits tremblingly owning Him thus. Well might they quail before the Holy One Who is destined to deal with them in judgment. How blessed to hear one saint confess for all their faith in Him in this very character, cleaving to Him and His words of eternal life with confidence! How gracious to hear another comforting the babes of God's family with the reflection that they had received unction from the Holy One and knew all things! Antichrists might go out from among those who bore Christ's name, but they were not of the family of God:¹³⁴ if they had been, they would surely

have remained as Peter did here, as Judas135 did not when the last crisis came. First or last, they went out that they might be made manifest that none are "of us"-of the family. For God's children the Holy One is the spring of every joy and of all peace, of repulsion for unbelievers, of terror for demons. The babes rebuke the pride of mere unbelieving human intelligence which denies the Father and the Son, yea, that Jesus is the Christ, and perishes away from Him Who alone has life and gives it to every believer. So it is in the Gospel as in the Epistle.

But we see here also the vast moment of walking with Him, of open identification with Him in this way before men as well as God, the danger and ruin of going away. Faith, however weighty, is not all: one has to walk with Him here below. Where else are words of life eternal? Without may be religion, philosophy, present ease, or honour and power. With Him are those who think of the Father's appreciation of the Son, and act for eternity.

Yet even the apostolate, as the Lord here shows, gives no sure ground to build on-nothing but Himself. So His most honoured servant lets the Corinthians (too enamoured of gifts) know, that he might preach to others, yet, if he kept not his body in subjection, himself must be a reprobate. (1 Cor. 9: 27.) The Son of man, in life and death appropriated by faith, alone secures life eternal now and resurrection at the last day.