

# John 18 - 21

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Part 4 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.)

## JOHN — THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER\*

\* [Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 558-560.]

The Lord had concluded His words to the disciples and to His Father. His work on earth, now about to close, had been before Him, as well as His departure on high, and contingent on both the approaching mission of the Holy Spirit to abide with His own apart from the world. That rejection of the Saviour which has been in view throughout our Gospel was now to reach its extreme in the cross; but its dark shadow, far from obscuring, only serves to bring out the True Light more distinctly. He is man, but a Divine Person, the Son throughout wherever He moves.

### John 18: 1-11.

Cf. Matt. 26: 36, 47-56 Mark 14: 32, 43-52; Luke 22: 39, 47-53.

"Having said these things, Jesus went out with His disciples beyond the torrent-bed of Kedron,\* where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and His disciples. And Judas also that was

delivering Him up knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples.<sup>323</sup> Judas then, having received the band and officials from the high-priests and from (the) Pharisees, cometh there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus then, knowing all things that were coming on Him, went out and saith to them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus the Nazarean. Jesus† saith to them, I am (He). And Judas that was delivering Him up was standing with them. When then He said to them, I am (He), they went away backward and fell to the ground. Again then He asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus the Nazarean. Jesus answered, I told you that I am (He): if then ye seek Me, leave these to go away; that the Word might be fulfilled which He said, Of those whom Thou hast given Me, I have lost not one of them. Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it, and smote the bondman of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. Now the bondman's name was Malchus. Jesus said then to Peter, Put the‡ sword into the scabbard: the cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (verses 1-11). Cf. Matt. 26: 39.

\* The variations are strange: τῶν κέδρων corrBCL, etc. [Treg., W. and H.], the most uncials and cursives, τοῦ κέδρου pmD, etc. [Tisch.], τοῦ κεδρῶν ASD, etc. [Lachm., Weiss, Blass]; others κένδρων, or even δένδρων.

† A few witnesses [BD, etc.] omit [as W. and H., Blass], but the most and best read ὁ Ἰησοῦς [so Tisch., Weiss: "He . . . I am Jesus "].

‡ The best MSS. and versions omit σοῦ, "thy."

It was the same orchard or garden which in the other Gospels is called Gethsemane (a word formed from the Hebrew words meaning "a winepress" and "oil"), but giving no real ground to say,\* as some after the patristic and mediaeval style, that here emphatically were fulfilled those dark words, "I have trodden the winepress alone," as Isaiah 63: 3 has foretold, and as the name imports. For the treading of the winefat is when the Lord comes to judge, not to suffer, as the connected text (Rev. 14: 20) ought to have made plain. Indeed, no reader save one perverted by theological tradition could mistake the earlier prophet any more than the latest. For what is described in these prophecies is not agony but vengeance, not His bloody sweat with strong crying and tears, but His treading the peoples in His anger and their blood sprinkled on His garments.

\* So Mr. Ffoulkes in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," i. 684.

But an intelligent and thoughtful reader would remark the striking absence of that wondrous scene where even those who loved the Lord-yea, Peter, James, and John-could not watch with Him one hour. For His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and though He asked them to tarry and watch whilst He went a little farther to pray, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and this repeatedly. It is notorious that some left out of their copies of Luke (Luke 22: 43 *f.*) the verses which record the angel which appeared from heaven strengthening Him, and the conflict such that His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down on the earth; as if the Lord were lowered by such an expression of real humanity and unspeakable grief, instead of seeing how characteristic the facts are of that evangelist, and of adoring Himself Who could so love and suffer as there portrayed. Yet John, who alone of all four writers of the Gospels was near the Lord, nearer than Matthew-John is the only one who does not describe that conflict at all: and this, not because it was not infinitely precious to his spirit nor because the others had given it to us, but because what he gave, as they also, was by inspiration, and in no way a question of human judgment or feeling. John records, no less than Matthew and Mark and Luke, the miracle of the five barley loaves; and this because it was as essential to the work given him to do as for the others in theirs. For the same reason he, led by the Holy Spirit, does not give the agony in the garden, as not falling within his assigned province. He knew it, of course, and must have often dwelt on

it in his spirit deeply meditative beyond all the others, yet he is silent.<sup>235</sup>

Can anything more attest the overruling wisdom and power of the inspiring Spirit? Yes, in every part and every detail, one as much as another, and almost as self-evident were we not so dull of hearing; nor only in what is omitted, but in what is inserted by infinite grace. Witness what our evangelist tells us next. He brings before us the no doubt appalling spectacle of Judas availing himself of his intimate knowledge of the Saviour's habit and haunt to guide those who wished to take and slay Him. With the band and officers from His enemies, Judas guides them to the spot of the nightly prayer, with lanterns and torches and weapons to make sure of their prey, though full moon shone and He had never struck a blow in self-defence. But Judas really knew not Him any more than his companions did. How terrible the sight of a soul blinded to the deadly malice at work, no less than to the Saviour's glory and His love! How surely Satan had entered when we look at him as he stood with them to betray Him!

Jesus, knowing all that was coming on Him, goes out to them, saying, Whom seek ye? And at His confession of Himself in reply to their answer of Jesus the Nazarean,\* they went backward and fell to the ground. How manifest the proof of His intrinsic Divine glory! A Man sent and come in love, yet the true God, this was the constant and special testimony of John, the true key to what he does not say no less than to what he does say. Yet is there no effort, but the most charming simplicity along with this deep and Divine undercurrent. Not all the treachery of Judas, not all the hatred and enmity of the Jews, not all the power of Rome, could have seized the Lord had not the time arrived to give Himself up. His hour was now come. He could have destroyed the company which sought to apprehend Him as easily as He caused them to fall prostrate before His Name; as by-and-by in virtue of His name every knee shall bow, of beings in heaven and beings on earth and beings under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2: 10, 11).<sup>324</sup>

\* It seems desirable to note that the term "Nazarean" in verses 5, 7, and in John 19: 19, is Ναζωραῖος. So it is in Matt. 2: 23, Matt. 26: 71; Mark 10: 47; and Luke 18: 37 (though both questioned); and in Acts 2: 22, Acts 3: 6, Acts 4: 10, Acts 6: 14, Acts 9: 5 (though the best omit), Acts 22: 8, Acts 24: 5, and Acts 26: 9. It is the name of shame and scorn. Ναζαρηνός, like ἔκ Ναζαρέτ, is an inhabitant of Nazareth, reproached or not, and occurs in Mark 1: 24; Mark 14: 67; Mark 16: 6; Luke 4: 34; and our Lord we have characterised as τὸν ἄπὸ Ν in John 1: 46 and in Acts 10: 38.

But when He asked them again, Whom seek ye? and they said, Jesus the Nazarean, grace shone out, not power: the former now, as the latter before, expressing the true God Who was now manifesting Himself on earth in His own Person. "If then ye seek Me, leave these to go away; that the word might be fulfilled which He said, Of those whom Thou hast given Me, I have lost not one of them." Like the ark in Jordan, He would go alone into the waters of death, and His own pass over dry-shod. He gives Himself up freely for them<sup>325</sup>. The great salvation which is infallible includes every lesser one which suits and serves the glory of God meanwhile. And blessed it is to trace to the same spring of gracious power in Christ all the passing mercies we experience where His hand shields us from the enemy's malice. He puts Himself forward to endure all. His people go free; His word is fulfilled in every way. Where the Father gives, the Son loses none. What comfort and assurance before a hostile world!

But even His most honoured servants fail, and are apt to fail most where they push forward in natural zeal and their own wisdom, too self-confident to watch His ways and heed His word and thus learn of Him. So Simon Peter then displays his haste in total discord with the grace of Christ; for, having a sword, he drew it, and struck Malchus,<sup>326</sup> the servitor of the high-priest, maiming him of his right ear. Had Peter watched and prayed instead of sleeping, it might have been otherwise; when we fail to pray, we enter into temptation.

Luke alone, true to his testimony to God's grace, tells us of the Lord's answer, "Suffer ye thus far," and of His touching the ear to heal the wounded man. Matthew alone, in harmony with the rejected Messiah but true King of Israel, gives the reproof which warned His servant of what it is for saints to resist carnally. Mark mentions the fact, but no more. John, agreeably to the purpose of God in his province, presents the Lord in unfaltering obedience to His Father, as before in Divine power and grace. Nothing more calm than His correction of Peter's energy; nothing more distinct than His submission to the Father's will, whatever it cost. "The cup which the Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

It is the same Jesus as in Luke and the other Gospels, yet what a difference! Everywhere worthy, never a word or way beneath the Holy One of God, but here above all the Son with perfect dignity and withal entire subjection of heart in suffering as in work. May we think it was His drink now in enduring His will, as before His meat in doing it? Certainly the inward trial, to say nothing of all the outward suffering, was far deeper; yet His heart bowed to all, where to bow in obedience was infinite perfection. As the living Father sent Him, and He lived on account of the Father, so He lays down His life that He may take it again; but if He says, I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again, He adds, This commandment I received of my Father. Never was such deep and holy conflict as the Second Man knew in the garden; but none of this appears in John.<sup>327</sup> Here it is all the power and grace and calm of the Son with no motive but the Father's will. Never was there an approach to such glorifying of God the Father.

The believer will note the bearing of our Lord throughout these closing scenes, His lowliness and dignity, His infinite superiority to all who surrounded Him, friends or foes, His entire submission and withal His power intact. He is a man, the sent One but Son of God throughout. It is He Who shelters and secures the disciples; it is He who offers Himself freely. The traitor and the band, the torches and the weapons, had all failed, if He had not been pleased in letting His own go to give Himself up. For this indeed had He entered the world, and His hour was now come. But it was His own doing and according to the Will of His Father, whatever man's wickedness and Satan's malicious wiles. Not more surely was it the power of His Name which overwhelmed the armed crowd of His would-be captors than that His grace alone accounts for His subsequent subjection to their will.

## **John 18: 12-27.**

Matt. 26: 57-75; Mark 14: 53-72, Luke 22: 54-71.

"The band therefore and the commander (chiliarch), and the officials of the Jews, took Jesus and bound Him and led (Him away)\* unto Annas first;<sup>328</sup> for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high-priest of that year.<sup>329</sup> But it was Caiaphas who counselled the Jews that it was expedient (or, profitable) that one man should die† for the people. Now Simon Peter was following Jesus, and the‡ other disciple. And that disciple was known to the high-priest,<sup>330</sup> and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. The other disciple therefore, that was known to the high-priest, went out and spoke to the porteress and brought in Peter. The maid therefore, the porteress, saith to Peter, Art thou also of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. But the bondmen and the officials were standing, having made a coal-fire because it was cold, and were warming themselves; and there was§ with them Peter standing and warming himself. The high-priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and about His doctrine. Jesus answered, I have openly spoken in the world, I always taught in (the)|| synagogue and in the temple, where all|| the Jews assemble, and in secret I spoke nothing: why askest thou Me? Ask those that have heard what I spoke to them: behold,

these know what I said. But when He said these things, one of the officials as he stood by gave Jesus a slap on the face, saying, Thus answerest Thou the high-priest? Jesus answered him, If I spoke ill, testify of the ill; but if well, why smitest thou Me? Annas (therefore)¶ sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him, Art thou also of His disciples? He denied and said, I am not. One of the bondmen of the high-priest, being kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with Him? Peter therefore denied again, and immediately a cock crew."

\* The oldest authorities omit.

† The bulk of MSS. support ἀπόλεσθαι, "to perish" (Text. Rec.), but the best ἀποθανεῖν [Edd.].

‡ The article is omitted by some of the best witnesses [ pmAB, so Tisch., W. and H., Weiss].

§ BCLX, several cursives; Theb. Memph. Syrr.pesch et hcl Arm. Æeth add "also" [as W. and H., Weiss, Blass], which the rest omit.

|| The article, added in Text. Rec., with many, is omitted by the best and most; also πάντοτε, "always," the more common reading (πάντοθεν, Elz.) is inferior to πάντες, "all."

¶ οὐ̃ν, Elz., with BCpmL, etc. [1. 33], δὲ , etc. Steph. omits, following most [ACcorr, etc.].

Our evangelist notices the fact that the band led off our Lord, not only to Caiaphas the high-priest, but before that to Annas, his father-in-law, who had preceded him in that office, but was succeeded by Caiaphas before his death. All things were out of course, and in nothing was this more evident than in the closing scenes of the Saviour. And therefore does the Gospel recall what was already recorded in John 11, where the highest religious office blended with the lowest expediency, and the prophetic Spirit wrought in the wicked high-priest, as of old in the unprincipled prophet of Pethor. As a rule the Holy Spirit actuated holy men for God's will and glory; but exceptionally He could and did use for that glory those whom Satan was employing to thwart it as much as possible. Nothing can be more striking in Caiaphas' case than the way in which his heartless sentiment is turned by grace into the expression of a great truth wholly outside his ken.

Again we see Simon Peter following the Lord, but not in the Spirit, nor was the other disciple there to his own honour, still less to the Lord's. For he finds access to the high-priest's palace, as known to that functionary, and in no way as a follower of Jesus. And how he must have soon grieved over the kindly influence he exerted to get Peter let in, who had been obliged to stay without! Little did he think that his word to the portress would give occasion to the terrible and repeated fall of his beloved fellow-servant! But every word of the Lord must be fulfilled. It would seem that the maid who kept the door was not ignorant of John's discipleship, for she says to Peter, "Art thou also of this Man's disciples?" But the trying question was put not to John, but to Peter; and Peter, in the garden so bold, now utterly quails before this woman. Such is man, though a saint: what is he to be accounted of? Nor is fleshly energy better really in Christ's eyes than fleshly weakness, which not only lied but denied his Master in denying his relationship to Him as a disciple. And this was warm-hearted, fervent, courageous Peter! Yes, but it was Peter tried under the shadow of the coming cross. Death is an overwhelming trial to the disciple till he knows what it is to have died with Christ to sin and law, crucified to the world which crucified Him, and able therefore to glory in the cross. It was not so yet with Peter, and he fell; nor can we say more of John and the rest than that they were not so tried. That they would have stood the test better is more than any can accept who believe what God says of them and of man in general.

The high-priest pursues his investigation; Peter renews his sin. And no wonder. For he had slept

when he ought to have watched and prayed, and he had ventured into the scene of temptation instead of heeding the warning of the Lord. "But the bondmen and the officials were standing, having made a coal-fire, for it was cold, and were warming themselves; and there was with them Peter standing and warming himself." Evil communications corrupt good manners; and the confession of Jesus before friends is very different from confession before bloodthirsty enemies; and Peter must learn by painful experience what he was too unspiritual to realise from the words of Christ. It is blessed to learn our nothingness and worse in His presence Who keeps from falling; but every saint, and especially every servant, must learn himself, if not there, in the bitter humiliation of what we are when we forget Him. May we abide in Him, and have His words abiding in us, and so ask what we will and have it done unto us! Peter had not thus failed before men if he had not failed before with his Master. Doubtless it is by power of God we are kept, but this is through faith.

"The high-priest<sup>331</sup> then asked Jesus about His disciples and about His doctrine." He desired grounds against the Lord. Was this the procedure of-one will not ask the grace which should characterise a priest, but-ordinary painstaking righteousness? It was not to screen Himself that the Lord points to His open and constant testimony. Others unlike Him might cultivate private coteries and secret instructions, not to speak of darker counsels inciting to deeds that shunned all light of day. "Jesus answered, I have openly spoken in the world, I always taught in synagogue,\* and in the temple, where all the Jews assemble; and in secret I spoke nothing:<sup>332</sup> why askest thou Me? Ask those that have heard what I spoke to them: behold, these know what I said." It was unanswerably true and right. The only reply was a brutal insult from a Jewish underling who would thus, as he could not otherwise, sustain the high-priest.<sup>333</sup> But the Lord answered the low as the high with a righteous dignity immeasurably above them all: "If I spoke ill, testify of the ill; but if well, why smitest thou Me?"

\* "In synagogue," without the article, for there were many; "in the temple," with the article, for there was but one.

So fared the Lord with the high-priest: how painful the contrast of the disciple warming himself with the slaves! More than one assailed him with the crucial question, "Art thou also of His disciples?" Again the fear of man prevailed, and he who truly believed on Him did not confess, but denied and said, I am not. But this was not all. For "one of the bondmen of the high- priest, being kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did I not see thee in the garden with Him? Peter therefore denied again, and immediately a cock crew." Oh, what fear of man bringing a snare! What blinding power of the enemy thus to involve a saint in direct and daring falsehood, and this to shame Him Who was his life and salvation! But of what is not the heart capable when the Lord is not before it, but fear or lust or aught else by which Satan beguiles? God, however, took care that the dread of man to His dishonour should cover the guilty disciple with self-reproach and contempt and utter humiliation when an eye-witness could brand him before all with his reiterated lying in denial of his Master.

It will be noticed that we have in this Gospel neither the Lord's antecedent praying for Peter and assurance of restoration, nor His turning and looking on Peter after his last denial, when he, remembering the Word of the Lord, went out and wept bitterly. These are given explicitly in the only Gospel whose character they suit and sustain (see Luke 22: 31, 32, and 61, 62). Here all turns, not on the discovery of what man's heart is, and the grace of the Lord, but on the Person of Christ as the one central object, not so much the Second Man despised by man, and the energy of His love acting on a disciple spite of utter failure in himself, but the Son of God glorifying the Father in the midst of complete and universal ruin, with friends or foes.

The Lord has been before the religious authority;<sup>334</sup> He is now to appear before the civil power.

It was a mockery everywhere; and so it must be shown out against His Person Who will one day cut off him that privily slanders his neighbour, and will not suffer the man that has a high look and a proud heart, any more than the liar and deceiver, early destroying all the wicked of the land, and especially from the city of Jehovah. Yet His glory they wist not, nor consequently His grace; yet they should not have been blind to His holy and righteous ways; but man, religious or profane, was filling up the cup of his iniquity, and the more so because of God's longsuffering.

## **John18: 28-40.**

Matt. 27: 2, 11-30; Mark 15: 1-19; Luke 23: 1 -25.

"They led then Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium;<sup>335</sup> and it was early; and they entered not into the praetorium that they might not be defiled but eat the Passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and saith,\* What accusation do ye bring against this man? They answered and said to him, If this (man) were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered Him up to thee. Pilate therefore said to them, Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews said to him, It is not allowed to us to put anyone to death; that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He said signifying by what death He should die. Pilate then again entered into the praetorium, and called Jesus and said to Him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, Of thyself sayest thou this, or did others say (it) to thee about Me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thy nation and the chief priests delivered Thee up to me: what didst Thou? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, My servants (ὄμηρ.) would fight that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from hence. Pilate then said to Him, Art Thou then a King? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith to Him, What is truth? And having said this, he again went out unto the Jews, and saith to them, I find no fault in him; but ye have a custom that I should release one to you at the Passover: will ye therefore that I release to you the King of the Jews? They all cried then again, saying, Not this (man) but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber" (verses 28-40).

\* BCpmLX, cursives, Cyr., for the Text. Rec., "said" with most.

The activity of hostile will marked the Jews, whose zeal was as great as their punctiliousness and their lack of conscience. Late and early were they at work, from one high-priest to another, pushing on to the Roman governor. Bent on the blood of the Messiah, they scrupled to enter the praetorium; they must not be defiled, as they would eat the Passover and had not yet done so (verse 28).<sup>336</sup> Little thought they that they were but bringing about the death of the true Paschal Lamb, and so in guilty unbelief fulfilling the voice of the law to their own destruction, whatever God's purpose in His death. The hard-hearted pagan seems at first fair and just compared with the chosen nation: we shall see how at last Satan found the way to excite his unrighteousness and fix him, as them, in hopeless evil through rejecting Christ. Pilate felt that there was no proper case for him, and asks a tangible accusation (verse 29). The want of this they evade by an affected or real affront at his question, as if they could not be unjust (verse 30). The governor would gladly have thrown the responsibility on the Jews, who betray their own foregone conclusion: Jesus must die; and as death could not be lawfully at their hands, it must be by the hand of lawless men. He must die the death of the cross.

Thus was the word of Jesus to be fulfilled, signifying by what death He should die (verse 32). Compare John 3: 15, John 8: 28, John 12: 32, 33 (for Peter, John 21: 18, 19); also Matthew 16: 21, Matthew 17: 12, 22, 23. Stephen might be stoned by the Jews in an outburst of religious fury, James be

slain with the sword by Herod; but the Son of man must be condemned by the Jewish chief priests and scribes, and be crucified by the Gentiles.<sup>337</sup> "For in truth against Thy holy servant Jesus Whom thou anointedst, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the nations and people of Israel were gathered together in this city to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel pre-determined should come to pass" (Acts 4: 27, 28). *Man* universally must prove his guilt to the last degree and the Divine Word be fulfilled to the letter, God Himself (we may say in the Person of His Son) being cast out in shame from His own earth; for all this and more was involved in the deliberate and fatal act. Yet was it the deepest moral glory. Now was the Son of man glorified, and God was glorified in Him. Obedience unto death, absolute devotedness, suffering beyond measure both for righteousness and for sin, met there on the one hand; and on the other the truth, the justice, the grace and the majesty of God, were not vindicated only but glorified. Therein too Satan's power and claims were for ever annulled, and a perfect everlasting basis to God's glory was laid for the blessing of man and creation in general. Such were the fruits of Christ's death on the cross. How dense the blindness of its instruments! how dim the intelligence even of its favoured objects! How blessed the Father and the Son in love and holiness, spite of all accomplishing all!

Again the Roman (whose characteristic common sense saw through the envy and malice of the Jews, and repudiated all anxiety as to the honour or security of Caesar) entered into the praetorium, called the Lord, and said, Art Thou the King of the Jews? He Who was silent before the high-priest till adjured by the living God answered Pilate by the question, Of thyself sayest thou this; or did others say it to thee about Me? (verses 33, 34). This was the turning-point. If the governor were uneasy as to the rights and interests of Caesar, the Lord could have pointed to His uniform life as in John 6: 15, and to His invariable teaching as in Luke 20: 25, for a perfect disproof and reassurance. But if the question originated, as it really did, with the Jews (Luke 23: 2), the Lord had nothing to say but the truth in the face of Israel's unbelief and gainsaying, nothing to do but witness the "good confession" before Pontius Pilate; (1 Tim. 6: 13.) and this He does with all simplicity.

The governor's answer made plain what was already sure, that the true Son of David was rejected by the Jew definitively false to the one Divine hope of the nation. "Am I a Jew?" said he. "Thy nation and the chief priests delivered Thee up to me: what. didst Thou?" Not one thing against which there is any law: every word, every way, testified of God. He spoke, He was, the truth, which not only detected man, but presented the Father; and both were intolerable. They would have none of Him; not because He did not give every possible proof of His Messiahship, but because He put them in presence of God and of their sins, from which testimony there was no escape, but the rejection of Himself. Hence the all-importance of what was in question. People and priests alike refused their own Messiah; and He bowed to it. Deeper things were meanwhile in accomplishment; and the infinite glory of His Person, already confessed by the disciples, as well as His work of eternal redemption, were about to be proclaimed in the Gospel and to supersede Jewish hopes. For the gathering together in one of the scattered children of God should replace the disowned nation, till at the end of the age they shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. Then shall the long-rejected Jesus once more and for ever recall them as His own, and bless them unchangingly, and make them a blessing to all the families of the earth.

Hence Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from hence" (verse 36). When the Jews repent, and the Lord returns in power and glory, not only will He be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance, (2 Thess. 1: 8.) but Jerusalem be made a burdensome stone for all peoples, as He bends Judah for Him, and fills the bow with Ephraim. (Zech.

9: 13.) But here we have Christianity, which has come in before that day with His kingdom not of this world, nor from hence, but from above, where all savours of the rejected but glorified Christ, and according to the revealed knowledge of the Father, the Jews being as such outside and manifest enemies.

The governor, while satisfied that there was nothing to fear politically, could not but perceive a claim incomprehensible to his mind. "Art thou then a king!" This the Lord could not deny. It was the truth, and He confessed it, whatever it might cost. But having done so, He set forth that which applies now. "Thou sayest I am a king. I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."<sup>338</sup> The law was given by Moses, and Jesus was the born King of the Jews. But He was conscious of another and higher glory bound up with His Person as Son of God: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." How solemn and unwavering the testimony! The Jews were zealous for the law, not because it was of God, but because it was theirs; the Romans sought this world and its power. They were both blind to the eternal and unseen. Jesus was the Truth, as well as the Faithful and True Witness to it.

It may help some to remark here that "King of His Church," the favourite idea of Puritan theology, is not only unfounded, but opposed to all the testimony of Scripture. Even "King of saints," as in the Text. Rec. of Rev. 15: 3, must be abandoned by all who know the best reading. It should be "of the nations," though "of the ages" has excellent authority. Whichever of these may be adopted, it is certain that "of the saints" has scarce any support, as it is also foreign to Scripture and to the mind of Christ in it. "Of the nations" seems plainly drawn from, or in full accordance with, Jer. 10: 7. Christ is King of Israel in Zion; as Son of man all the peoples and nations and languages shall serve Him; and as Jehovah He shall be King over all the earth. But even as Head, it is written that He is so given "to the Church," His body, "and *over* all things"; never over the Church, as men have said, who misunderstood His revealed relationships.

He adds, strange to the ears of man, not least to Roman ears: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." If a man did not hear Him, he was not of the truth. How could it be otherwise if He was the Only-begotten Son, yet man on earth? What could such a One come for but for this, if He came in grace, not in judgment? And Pilate, with a "What is truth?" returns to the Jews. He did not seriously seek an answer: an awakened conscience alone does; and grace, as it produces the desire in the sinner, gives the answer of good from God. Not so Pilate, who having said this, went out again to the Jews, saying: "I find no fault in him";<sup>339</sup> and suggesting as a solution of the difficulty the customary release of a prisoner at the feast, he offers to let go their King. But this only draws out the depth of their hatred, and they all cry out: . . . "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now, Barabbas, as the Evangelist adds, was a robber. So the Jews chose Satan's "son of the father" (for so the word means). How evident that man rejecting Jesus is Satan's slave!<sup>339a</sup>

But the Jews in their unbelief are more daringly evil than the dark heathen procurator. He, like the rest of the world, did not know anything of "truth"; they had abundant speculations, one as little satisfactory as another, no certain truth, least of all about God. The Jews knew better; and the Lord compelled them to hear what they could not deny, but would not receive. Therefore, all ended for the present in their hatred of Him up to the cross, and their avowed preference of a robber and a murderer. No flesh shall glory in His presence.

## JOHN — THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER\*

\* [Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 561-563.]

Hard-heartedness and insult took their course, for His hour was come. Pilate took and scourged Jesus the Lord of glory; the soldiers treated their meek prisoner with the unfeeling scorn, natural in such towards One Who resisted not; yet we must look to the Jews for extreme and unrelenting hatred.

### **John 19: 1-15.**

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged (Him). And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put (it) on His head, and clothed Him with a purple garment,<sup>340</sup> and were coming to Him† and saying, Hail, King of the Jews! and gave Him slaps on the face. And Pilate went out again and saith to them, Behold, I bring Him out to you, that ye may know that I find no fault (in Him). Jesus therefore came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and he saith to them, Behold the man!" (verses 1-5).<sup>341</sup>

† Such is the reading of BLUXAPI, more than twenty cursives, and nearly all the ancient versions, followed by the chief editors. The clause [through homoeoteleuton] is omitted in Text. Rec., with most uncials and cursives.

The Roman saw through the baseness of the people, through the craft and deadly malice of the religious chiefs; and he seems to have resorted to the unjust policy of scourging the Lord, followed up by the allowed, if not prescribed, derision of the soldiers, as a means of satisfying the Jews and letting Jesus go. Contrary to truth and righteousness, he would humour their feelings against Jesus, but he would save an innocent man, if possible, without loss to himself. Such is man in authority here below—at least, where Christ is concerned, or even those that are Christ's. It was the place of judgment, but wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, but iniquity was there. There was not one spark of conscience in the judge, any more than in the accusers, or the crowd now quite carried away. There was man deceived by Satan; and God was in none of their thoughts. Pilate probably hoped that the uncomplaining endurance of such cruel mockery and scourging in their sight might perchance move the multitude and its leaders to compassion, whilst the exposed futility of the royal claims of Jesus would naturally awaken their contempt, and so in both ways further his own desire to dismiss the captive, in Whom he avowedly saw no guilt whatever. But, no! all must come out in their true colours—priests and people, learned and unlearned, civilians and soldiers, judge and prisoner. It was their hour and the power of darkness. But if man and Satan were there, so was God morally judging them all by the One they misjudged.

Still in that blind and hardened throng the Roman, unjust as he was, shines in comparison with the Jews of all ranks, and as the difficulty grew of delivering the Guiltless from their will set on destruction, we see a man in spite of himself growingly impressed with the unaccountable dignity of Him Who appeared to be at his mercy. Elsewhere, indeed, we read of his wife's dream sent to warn him on the judgment-seat; but here it is His Person, with His silence and His words alike, which increased the desire to extricate Him from unscrupulous and murderous adversaries, always despised in Pilate's eyes, never so despicable as now.

Pilate's effort, however, was vain. "Behold the man!" had for its effect neither the pity nor the contempt intended to divert the crowd from their fell purpose, but rather to whet their rage afresh in clamouring for the Lord's death. In the ways of God He will not allow iniquity to prosper, least of all where Christ is in question. The unjust judge might abuse and insult the Lord, hoping to gratify the Jews thus far, and to turn them from an aim from which even his stern and callous mind revolted as useless crime. But God, Who abhorred the horrible iniquity of them all, lets Satan ensnare them all in the consequences of their utter unbelief, and their habitually evil state—deaf to every warning and blind

to the fullest testimony of moral goodness, and Divine glory, and perfect grace in the holy Sufferer before them. As the judge acknowledged His innocence, yet would risk nothing on His behalf, so all commit and condemn themselves to their own ruin, stumbling over the precious Corner-stone and sure foundation as a stone disallowed by the builders. (Ps. 118: 22.)

"When, then, the chief priests and the officials saw Him, they cried, Crucify, crucify!<sup>342</sup> Pilate saith to them, Take ye him, and crucify; for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered, We have a law, and according to the\* law he ought to die, because he made himself Son of God.<sup>343</sup> When Pilate, therefore, heard this word, he was the more afraid, and entered into the prætorium again, and saith to Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate saith to Him, Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have authority to release thee, and I have authority to crucify thee? Jesus answered, Thou hadst† no authority at all against Me except it were given thee from above: on this account he<sup>344</sup> that delivered Me up to thee hath greater sin" (verses 6-11).

\* B<sup>D</sup>supplL<sup>Δ</sup>, most It. Vulg., etc., omit ἡμῶν, which the rest give.

† So in B<sup>ΓΔ</sup>, and six more uncials, most cursives, etc. [most Edd.]. But ἔχεις, "hast" [Tisch.], in A<sup>D</sup>supplL<sup>XY</sup>Λ<sup>Π</sup>, a dozen cursives, etc.

The charge failing against the Lord as hostile to the powers of the world, His accusers now betake themselves to the still more solemn cry, He ought to die, because He made Himself Son of God. And Pilate was the more afraid, but not more ready to fall in with their design, though he were a heathen and they the blasphemers of the Hope of Israel, the Holy One of God! Yes, He is going to die, but not for the lies some swore falsely against Him, but for the truth of God, the capital truth for man, the object of faith, and the one source of eternal life. Having emptied Himself, He humbled Himself; but Son of God He was and is, from all eternity to all eternity. Not more sure is it that man is a sinner dead to God than that Jesus is His Son; and eternal life is in Him only, yet for every soul to have that believes on Him. "He that believeth hath everlasting life." Neither is there salvation in any but Jesus, nor another name under heaven which is given among men whereby we must be saved. But those who ought most to have welcomed Him, and most to have set forth His glory, were those who feared not to say, According to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself Son of God! Oh, how real, how darkening, the power of Satan, when Jews blasphemed Him boldly, and the heathen procurator "was afraid" before Him!

Fear, however, is not faith; and in Pilate it was not more than undefined dread of the mysterious Man on His trial, and a strong sense that the enmity to Him was without a cause, save in their ravenous will. So, entering his palace again, he inquires, Whence art thou? and, mortified at receiving no answer, he vaunts his authority to release or to crucify Him. The Lord did not answer the one query, which had no better motive than curiosity, apart from the fear of God or His love; but He replied to the second in terms worthy of His Person, in fulness of grace and truth. Truly the hour was come that the Son of man should be glorified, and God be glorified in Him. What was the authority of a Roman governor without the will of God to sanction it? His ways, His nature, must be made good; the words were now, for the deepest of purposes, just about to be accomplished to His own glory for ever; and Jesus bowed absolutely to all.

Nevertheless, the accomplishing of Divine counsels in Christ does not consecrate the will of man that cast Him out and slew Him; and God is righteous in judging the evil. "On this account he that delivered Me up to thee hath greater sin." The Gentile was wicked, the Jew worse; if Pontius Pilate were inexcusably unrighteous, how much more awful the position of Caiaphas or Judas Iscariot and of all they represented that day? If God sent His Son in infinite grace, He did not fail to present adequate

proofs of Who and what He is, to leave all inexcusable for not perceiving and receiving Him; not only those who had God's outward authority in this world, but yet more those who had His living oracles that testified of His Son, Who was the centre and object of them all. Were they not witnesses of such works and words and ways as never had been known on earth, proportionately measuring the guilt of those who after such grace rejected One so glorious?

"From this (time) Pilate sought to release Him; but the Jews kept crying, saying, If thou wilt release this (man), thou art not a friend of Caesar: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. Pilate then, having heard these words, led Jesus out and sat down on (the) judgment-seat<sup>345</sup> at a place called Pavement,\* but in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was (the) preparation<sup>†</sup> of the Passover; it was about sixth<sup>‡</sup> hour. And he saith to the Jews, Behold your King. They cried therefore, Away with (him), away with (him); crucify him. Pilate saith to them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (verses 12-15).<sup>346</sup>

\* In later Greek τὸ λιθόστρωτον was said for tessellated work or mosaic used for the floors of buildings, public or domestic, and very particularly for the tribunal of a Roman in the execution of his office. So Julius Caesar, on his military expeditions, regularly carried such a mosaic with him, as Suetonius tells us (gap. 46). The word seems to be from a Hebrew root, < "to be high" (cf. Geba, Gibeah, Gibeon, etc.). The one apparently refers to the flooring, the other to the elevated platform unless Lightfoot's idea be well founded, who derives G. from "a surface," and hence regards the Greek and Hebrew words as equivalents.

† No matter of fact in the Gospel has been debated more keenly or with wider differences among men of piety and learning than this of παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα in connection with John 18: 28, which doubtless disposes a modern or Gentile reader at first sight to conceive that the Lord must have observed the Passover and instituted His own Supper on the day before the time followed by the Jews. On the other hand, it is no less plain that, according to the three Synoptic Gospels, the Lord partook of the Passover with the disciples at the regular season, 14th Nisan. Hence there have not been wanting those who have dared to reject the narrative of John, whilst a still greater number have fallen into the opposite error, and treated the earlier Evangelists as confounding the meal with the Passover. Not a few, like Dean Alford, give up the question in despair as to us insoluble. The truth is, that all these contending parties start with the error of forgetting the obvious and certain fact that the Jews reckon the day from evening to evening, and that hence *it is all a mistake to suppose that the Lord took the Passover with the disciples on one day and suffered the next* [Neander, Meyer, Godet, Weiss, Ellicott, Westcott, Sanday]. So it would be to our Western habit of thought, but not so according to the Jews, nurtured in the law. It was on our Thursday they ate, and on our Friday He suffered; but to the Jews it was one and the same day. Hence there was still time for such Jews as had been too much occupied with the mock trial and condemnation of our Lord to eat the Passover if they did not legally defile themselves meanwhile. The preparation of the Passover does not mean the 13th, but the 14th Nisan. It was the day before the Paschal Sabbath, which was, on this occasion, a double one, and so of peculiar sanctity. Hence Matthew, speaking of this Sabbath, says, ἥτις ἐστὶν μετὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν, as Mark explains, παρασκευὴ ἧ ἑστὶν προσάββατον, or Sabbath eve. This seems conclusive in reconciling the statements of the fourth Gospel with those of the other three. The painful fact is the unbelief that exposed so many persons eminent for erudition and even for godliness to such hasty and careless discussion of Scripture. Had they held firmly the inspired character of the holy writings, they would at least have avoided error and irreverence if they could not clear up the difficulty.

‡ It is well known that not Nonnus only in his poetical paraphrase of our Gospel gives "third" hour, but also five uncials and four cursives, either in the original text or in a correction, not to speak of

less direct authorities. Still, the weight of witnesses is overwhelming for ἕκτη, "sixth." It would seem that *our Evangelist adopted a different reckoning of hours, from midnight to noon, as we do*. Certainly the Romans did for their civil day (see Plin., "N. Hist.," ii. 79; Censorinus de "Die. Nat.," xxiii; Aul. Gell., "N. Att.," iii. 2; and Macrob., "Sat.," i. 3). And it suits all the mentions of hours in the Gospel of John excellently, besides falling in with Mark's third, sixth, and ninth hours of the natural day from the sun. This serves to explain the otherwise singular message of Pilate's wife (Matt. 27: 19), in which she spoke of suffering much "today in a dream because of Him." To Procula, as a Roman, the day was reckoned from midnight, as the hours appear to be throughout our Gospel, but not in the Synoptists.

It is singular, as showing the perplexity in minds of old as now, that Jerome says in his breviary on Ps. 77: "Sic scriptum est in Matthaeo et Ioanne quod Dominus noster hora sexta crucifixus sit. Rursus scriptum est in Marco: quid hora tertia crucifixus sit. Error scriptorum fuit; sed multi episcopus Graecum g "putaverunt esse g g: sicut et ibi error fuit scrip. forum: ut pro Asaph, Isaiam scriberent" (Hier. Opp., vii., 1046, ed. Migne). Jerome's remedy was thus to correct the text, not of John [as Wesley, into "third"], but of Mark—a correction of but one known cursive manuscript of the eleventh century, the margin of the later Syriac, and the Æth., on which last says Bode (Pseudocrit. Millio-Beng., 265): " Habet omnino Æth. *sexta hora*, idque ex Io. 19, 14. Nimirum Interpres Ioanni contradicere noluit." But it is the just retribution of these tamperings with Scripture that they do *not* satisfy the desired aim; for John connects *his* sixth hour with what was before—possibly hours before—the hours specified by Mark, be it sixth or even third. Thus the violence done to the surest authority in Mark would no more reconcile the statements than the similar violence offered to the witnesses of John 19: 14; for Mark specifies the time when our Lord was crucified as the *third* hour, John speaks of the time when Pilate took his seat on the tribunal to give sentence as *about the sixth* hour. To change the latter to the third, or the former to the sixth, if admissible in the face of the gravest adverse evidence, would not clear the truth, but only give birth to fresh confusion. [Cf. Westcott and Hort's "Select Readings," p. 90.]

The true state of the readings also thoroughly overthrows the efforts of some eminent Greeks and Latins, who try to explain the earlier hour as applicable to the Jewish outcry for the crucifixion, the later hour as the actual moment when the soldiers carried it into effect. But this is only neglect of Scripture, for John predicates "about the sixth hour" of the outcry, Mark "the third hour" of the actual crucifixion.. As there is no sufficient reason to doubt the accuracy of the seemingly conflicting texts of the second and fourth Gospels (in itself no mean evidence that the apparent discrepancy exhibits the genuine readings of both), and as the very slight variation of readings is easily accounted for by the desire thus to reduce them to harmony, the natural solution is that John's reckoning of time differs from that of the other Evangelists. It will be found by comparing the various hours named in John 1: 39, 4: 6, 52, that the hours of the civil day suit as well after all as those of the natural (the last occasion apparently better), so as to confirm the different computation of John throughout. John 11: 9 in no way opposes this, as being a general way of describing a working day, whatever the mode of computation—as, for instance, we can say so, who follow the style of the civil day from midnight. [Cf. Edersheim, "The Temple," etc., p. 245, and note appended below, No. 346.]

How powerless is the struggle to do right, where the world is loved, one's sins are unjudged, and grace unknown! The Jews saw through Pilate as he through them. How wretched not to have Christ for eternal life! Pilate preferred the friendship of the world to the Son of God, as the Jews saw no beauty in Him that they should admire Him; and both played their part in crucifying Him. Pilate may seek to release Jesus, may go in and out, may speak to Jesus and pour scorn on the Jews. But the last word of apostate unbelief passes their lips and closes Pilate's mouth, who will not be behind the Jews in

allegiance to Caesar. All is over now. The prince of the world comes, and though he has nothing in Christ, Christ dies rejected of man, forsaken of God, the Righteous One for our sins; never such hatred and unrighteousness as on the world's part toward Him; never such love and unrighteousness as on God's part toward the world in virtue of Him.

The Christ-rejecting word was passed. Their allegiance to the Roman was a lie, their mad guilt manifest in getting rid of Messiah and God Himself and all their faith and hope. The Jews abhorred subjection to Caesar; they owned neither his right nor their own sin, which was the occasion of his supremacy. But they abhorred the Messiah more,\* not their idea, but the reality according to God. They had not a thought nor a feeling, not a word nor a way nor a purpose, in common with Jesus; and this because He brought God near to them in grace, because He manifested man in perfect dependence and obedience to God, and their will with a bad conscience rejected both. Hence the cross was to them most repulsive. "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?" Yet was the law plain enough that the Messiah should be rejected by man, especially by the Jew, and die that death of curse, the terrible sin of man, yet God's atoning sacrifice for sin. But will, governed by Satan to serve a present purpose in pursuance of man's lusts and passions, blinded them to His word and to their own suicidal wickedness; as ere long they were about to prove their rebelliousness to Caesar, and have the Romans come and take away their place and nation, but not before they had filled Jerusalem with the spectacle of their own penalty till there was no room left for more crosses, and wood failed to make them: so Josephus.

\* "Jesum negant usque eo ut omnino Christum regent." Beng. Gn. *in loco*.

## **John 19: 16-30.**

Matt. 27: 31 -50; Mark 15: 20-37; Luke 23: 26-46.

"Then, therefore, he delivered Him up to them that He might be crucified. They took then Jesus\* [and led (Him) away]; and bearing for Himself the cross, He went outer out<sup>348</sup> unto the place called of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, on this side and on that, and Jesus in the middle. And also Pilate wrote a title and put (it) on the cross; and there was written, Jesus the Nazarean, the king of the Jews.<sup>349</sup> This title, therefore, many of the Jews read, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, in Latin. Therefore said the high priest of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews, but that he said, I am king of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written."

\* Thus end BLX, etc. [Edd. in general]. But most with DE, etc., add "and led." [Blass brackets the words.] A, etc., support Text. Rec. supports the same sense in a peculiar form.

Faith alone preserves from the power and wiles of the devil. Pilate and the Jews were wholly opposed in their thoughts and wishes; but God was not in the thoughts of the one more than of the others. They had each his own way, but all astray; and now they show themselves the open enemies of righteousness as well as of grace, incapable of discerning the clearest ways, marks, and proofs of God present in love to man, no matter how low He might come down. The cross of Christ makes all and every one manifest. Pilate under pressure of fear for his own worldly interests gave up Jesus to their malice, though knowing Him innocent; and He bearing His cross went forth to the place of a Skull, Golgotha, in Latin "Calvary." There was He crucified with peculiar indignity, a robber also on either hand, as a robber had been preferred to Him. Yet God took care that even there a fitting testimony, from whatever motive in Pilate's breast, should be rendered to Him in the inscription on the cross; the despised man of Nazareth was the Messiah. Where were the Jews if He was their King? The keenest

adversaries of the true God, blindly fulfilling His terrible prophecies of their unbelief and wickedness under a self-complacent zeal for His name and law. There stood His title, read by many; for the place was near the city, written in the tongues not of the officials only, nor of the polite world, but of the Jews too; and all the efforts of their high priests but riveted it to the cross under the pertinacious and irritated and scornful spirit of the procurator.

But the lowest played their part at the cross as well as the highest, men used to arms no less than the ministers of the sanctuary; and every class, every man, showed out there what each was in selfish indifference to the grace and glory of the Son of God, Who suffered Himself to be numbered with the transgressors.

"The soldiers, therefore, when they crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and the vest; but the vest was seamless from the top, woven through the whole.<sup>350</sup> They said therefore unto one another, Let us not rend it, but let us draw lots for it whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled that saith, They parted My garments for themselves, and for My vesture they cast lots. The soldiers therefore did these things" (verses 23, 24). Little thought the soldiers who had charge of the execution beyond their poor perquisites. But God's eye was now as ever on His Son, and He had taken care in His word to mark it. For in one of the most manifestly Messianic psalms (Ps. 22: 18) stands written, a thousand years beforehand, the minute prediction of the soldiers' appropriating the garments of the Saviour in a way unmistakably applicable to Him. He is the object of Scripture, though unbelief sees it not, and has a will against it, because His Person is as unknown as our own need of Divine mercy in the cross. With what interest the Holy Spirit contemplated, as we should, every detail of His suffering, and of man's behaviour at that hour! God counted Him not less worthy because He was made the object of such indignities. To make them known beforehand was of all moment. The very minuteness of what is mentioned bears witness to the accurate reality of the prophecy. He is the demonstrated as well as rejected Messiah. His glory made it due to Him to name the particulars, which also bear witness to the depth of His grace in humiliation, that God and man might be fully shown out, and that the words of the Psalmist be proved His word in the face of every gainsayer.

But faith and love gathered near the dying Saviour some of very different mind. "Now by the cross of Jesus stood His mother, and the sister of His mother, Mary the (wife) of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.<sup>351</sup> Jesus, therefore, seeing His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved, saith to His mother, Woman, behold thy Son. Next He saith to the disciple, Behold thy mother; and from that hour the disciple took her unto his own (home)" (verses 25-27). These were among the women who had followed Him in His ministry and had ministered to Him in life. There they stood in His rejection by the cross, where the Lord shows how little asceticism rises to the truth. He had been absorbed in the work for which He was sent by the Father; no honey mingled with the offering, any more than leaven: salt was never absent, nor the unction of the Holy Ghost. All had been in the consecrating power of the word and Spirit of God, and to God. But perfect human affections were there, though the work undertaken in communion with the Father had filled heart and lips and hands with the higher object to the glory of God. Yet eternal interests, when thus taken up, do not efface or dishonour Nature or its relationships according to God; and the Lord here marks this by commending in the most solemn and touching way John to His mother as son, and Mary to John as mother: a loving trust honoured from that hour. How sweet for the loved disciple to remember and record! And how strong the contrast with superstition, no less than as we have seen with asceticism! And what a testimony in all to His own entire superiority to overwhelming circumstances!

## John 19: 28-30,

"After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. (Ps. 69: 21.) A vessel (therefore) was standing there full of vinegar; and they, having filled a sponge with vinegar and put hyssop round (it), put (it) up to His mouth. When, therefore, Jesus received the vinegar, He said, It is finished, and, bowing His head, delivered up His spirit." It is not only that in human tenderness He provides for all left behind in that supreme moment, but He thinks of Scripture in spirit or in terms not yet fulfilled. No doubt there is the distressing physical effect expressed of all that mind and heart and body had endured till then; but His last request is here bound up, not with His want only, but with His undying zeal for the word if only a single thing lacked to make it honourable. Every word that proceeds through God's mouth must be fulfilled; and had He not said of Messiah, "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws," and "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink"? Then, having drunk, the Saviour says, "It is finished," with a Divine calm as perfect here as His expression is given elsewhere of His unfathomable suffering.

Of none but Jesus is it or could it be said that He gave up (παρέδωκεν) the spirit, which is wholly distinct from the "expired" (ἔξέπνευσεν) of Mark and Luke, confounded with the former by our translators. To expire could apply to anyone's death, the blessed Lord being man as truly as any other; to give the spirit up, as said in John, expresses His Divine glory though a dying man, as the One Who had title to lay down His life no less than to take it again. So Matthew implies Who the dying Messiah was in "He dismissed the spirit" (ἄφῆκε τὸ πν.). Nor can words be more characteristic of Luke than "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit," nor of John than "It is finished." He was man, though God; He was God though man; and both in one Person.

The reader will remark how perfectly the account of the Lord's death suits the general character and special design of John's Gospel and of no other. Here Jesus is the conscious Son, the Divine Person Who made all things, but became flesh that He might not only give eternal life, but die as a propitiation for our sins. And here, therefore, here only, He said, "It is finished, and bowing His head, delivered up His spirit." There are witnesses, as we shall see, but they are of God, not of man or the creature, and they intimately flow from His own Person. No darkness is mentioned, no cry that His God had forsaken Him, no rending of the veil, no earthquake, no centurion's confession; all of which meet to proclaim the rejected Messiah (Matt. 27). So substantially, save the earthquake, the Servant Son of God obedient to death in Mark 15. Luke 23 adds the testimony to His grace in the crucified robber, His firstfruits in Paradise, and the centurion's witness to "Jesus Christ the righteous," after He had committed His spirit into His Father's hands. It was reserved for John to set forth His death Who was God not less surely than man, and as such. The Creator but man lifted up from the earth could say, in dying for sin to God's glory, "It is finished." The work, the infinite work, was done for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice. Thereon hangs not only the blessing of every soul that is to be justified by faith, but of new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. "It is finished," τετέλεσται: one word! yet what word ever contained so much?

But no heathen were more blinded and obdurate than God's ancient people who take the lead against Jesus in an unbelieving religiousness without true fear of God, and who, consequently, saw not that they were but accomplishing His word in their guilty rejection of His and their Messiah.

## John 19: 31-37.

"The Jews, therefore, since it was the preparation, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for the day of that Sabbath\* was great),<sup>352</sup> asked of Pilate that their legs might be

broken, and they be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came and broke the legs of the first and of the other that was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they broke not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear thrust His side, and there came out immediately blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true, and he knoweth<sup>353</sup> that he saith true, that ye also<sup>†</sup> may believe. For these things came to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be crushed; and again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him<sup>354</sup> Whom they pierced."

\* ἑκείνου Stephens, ABDsupplLXY, nine more uncials, the great bulk of cursives, etc.; ἐκείνη Elz. with a late uncial (H) and a few cursives, Vulg., etc.

† The oldest read καὶ, which Text. Rec. [as Blass] omits, with seven uncials and most cursives.

In the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets the Spirit of God had Christ before Him, and in the sufferings to come on Him, as well as in the glories that should follow. But the fleshly mind, as it shrinks from sufferings, is disposed to overlook and get rid of testimony; especially so if the sufferings be the effect and the proof of man's evil estate, for this is of all things most unpalatable. Thus was the Jew dull to see what condemned himself and levelled him morally to the condition of any other sinner; and rejecting the fullest evidences and Christ's own presence in Divine grace and truth and the Gospel at last, he was given over to judicial hardening when wrath came on them to the uttermost. Christ alone gives the key to the paschal lamb; Christ is the main object in the Psalms. No reasoning of sceptics, even if theologians, can efface the truth, though it exposes their own unbelief; and assuredly if the heart were made right by grace, it would desire that to be true which is the truth, instead of stumbling at the word being disobedient, or neglecting it because of indifference. In vain, then, do the Rosenmüllers and the like hesitate or avow their dislike of the type and the allusion. To faith it is food and strength and joy; for if God's word is instinct with His delight in Christ giving Himself to die, He also expresses it in every sort of form beforehand that the very facts of His atoning death, the great stumbling-block, might render the most irrefragable testimony to its truth and His glory, when thus manifested here below in shame, to man's shame and everlasting contempt.

How marvellously meet in Christ's cross the proud enmity of the Jew, the lawless hand of the Gentiles, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and this in perfect grace to the guiltiest of Jews and Gentiles! For out of Christ's pierced side came forthwith blood and water.\* And John was not so preoccupied with the Saviour's dying charge concerning Mary as not to mark the sight. In the strongest form he lets us know that what we saw and testified was no mere transient fact, but before the mind as present, of permanent interest and importance. In his First Epistle (1 John 5: 6) he characterises the Lord accordingly. "This is He that came through (διὰ) water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in (ἐν) the power of water only, but in the power of water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Moral purification, however needed and precious, is not enough; there must be expiation of sins also; and both are found by faith in the death of Christ, not otherwise nor elsewhere. As a fact, in the Gospel the order is blood and water; as applied to us in the Epistle it is the water and the blood, and the Spirit as One personally given follows.\*\* Nothing but death flows to man from Adam: Christ, the second Man Who died for sin and sinners, is the source alike of purification and of atonement to the believer, who needs both and is dead before God without both. For though the Son of God with life in Himself, He stands alone till He dies; dying He bears much fruit. He quickens, purifies, and expiates; and the Holy Ghost consequently given brings us into the import of His death as well as blessing resulting from it. For it is judgment pronounced and executed by God in His cross on the flesh, but in our favour, because in Him Who was a sin-offering.

\* Euthymius Zigabenus (Comm. in. quat. Evv. III. 619, ed. C. F. Matthaei) thus writes; Ὑπερφυε̄ς τὸ πρᾶγμα, καὶ τρανω̄ς διδάσκον, ὅτι ὑπερ̄ ἄνθρωπον ὁ νυγε̄ις, ἐκ νεκροῦ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου, κᾶν μυριάκις νύξη τίς, οὐκ ἐξελεύσεται αἷμα. "The fact was supernatural, and clearly teaches that He Who was pierced was more than man. For from a dead man, if one should pierce him ten thousand times, no blood would come out." What follows is a poor effort to connect with it Genesis 2, or even false doctrine when he speaks of two baptisms: one by blood, martyrdom; the other by water, regeneration, by whose stream the stream of sin is overwhelmed. How constant is one's disappointment in these Greek and Latin ecclesiastics! Like the Galatians, if they begin by the Spirit, how quickly they pass into a vain effort after perfection by flesh! Not one even of the ablest and most orthodox adheres simply and thoroughly to the delivering Gospel of God's grace, though many of them loved the Lord and hated known error. But the full efficacy of redemption was unknown to anyone, so far as I can speak.

It is curious, by the way, that a modern work of reputation like Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography" should continue to repeat that "the Greek original (? of this work on the four Gospels) has never been printed" (vol. ii. 125, col. 1). So one understands the writer. Matthaei's work appeared at Leipzig in 1792, and is familiar to students.

\*\* [Cf. "Exposition of Epistles," p. 62.]

No wonder, then, that John was inspired to record the fact, not more wondrous in itself than in its consequences now made known to the believer. The salvation must be suited to and worthy of the Saviour. If He was eternal, it was everlasting; if Divine judgment fell on such a Victim, it was that they believing Him should not come into judgment, but have life, being forgiven all their offences and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Such is the declared standing of every true Christian, but it is in virtue of Christ, Who is all and in all. Creeds and theological systems enfeeble and hinder its enjoyment; but all this, and more than one could here develop, is clearly and plainly revealed to faith in Scripture, as it is, indeed, due to Christ's glory in Person and work.

Hence the care with which the word of God is cited and shown to be punctually fulfilled. "For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be crushed; and, again, another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."\* (Ex. 12: 46, Zech. 12: 10.) The natural circumstances of the Crucifixion, more especially on a Friday, and that Friday the eve of Sabbath in the paschal week, would have called for the breaking of the legs as a *coup de grace*. And, in fact, such was the portion of the two malefactors. But Jesus, as He had proved Himself in the preceding chapter the willing Captive, was now the willing Victim; and this was made manifest in His dying as and when He did die. For it surprised not only the Jews and the soldiers, but Pilate, as we learn elsewhere; and it superseded all need of the *crurifragium* in His case. But it marked the separated Lamb of God, the Righteous One, all Whose bones Jehovah keeps, not one of them broken.

\*Dr. Thomas Randolph, in his little work on the Prophecies and other texts cited in the New Testament and compared with the Hebrew Original and the Septuagint Version (4to., Oxford, 1782), remarks (p. 32) that "the evangelist here plainly reads ׀ל instead of ׀ל in the Hebrew; but so also read forty Hebrew MSS. And that this is the true reading appears by what follows-'and they shall mourn for Him.' The Syriac renders it, 'they shall look on Me through Him, whom they have pierced.' The Sept. I cannot make sense of."

Now there is really no serious doubt that the true reading is the latter ("to Me"), not the former ("to Him"), and that the best and most MSS. and versions are justified. It was in fact originally nothing but a marginal correction, due to the desire partly of eliminating so strong a testimony to the deity or

Jehovah title of the Lord Jesus, partly of easing the flow of the context from the concurrence of "Me" and "Him." Even the Targum and the Talmud, like the more ancient MSS., and all the Greek early versions, refute the idea. So even most of the better Jewish expositors, notwithstanding their controversy with Christians and in the course of it. De Rossi suggests that "to Him" may have entered by accident through the scribe having Psalm 34: 6 in mind. Much better and wiser, therefore, would it have been to have adhered to ancient and good authority, spite of seeming difficulty, than to have adopted this Jewish *keri* like Newcome and Boothroyd, and so to help on such a humaniser as Ewald. Even R. Isaac, in his "Chizzuk Emunah," when controverting those whom he calls the Narazines, admits the reading אֵל, though he tries to weaken its force by interpreting אֵל אֵל as "because of Him whom they pierced" and applying it to the war of Gog and Magog. Now it is true that אֵל אֵל may and does sometimes mean "because" (and so the LXX took the words, probably also confounding אֵל אֵל with אֵל אֵל which might originate καταρχήσαντο); but the meaning cannot possibly be "because of Him whom," for this would leave the verb without an object contrary to invariable Hebrew idiom. Hence also Radak's (or R. D. Kimchi's) translation fails, "because they have pierced," though less objectionable, perhaps, as not foisting in an expressly false object. But they both divert from the true object; and therefore Abarbanel, Aben Ezra, Alshech, etc., condemn it, and so far confirm our Authorised Version. Rashi (i.e. R. Solomon) is no bad proof of the perplexity the clause presents to the Jewish mind; for he inconsistently applies it to Messiah ben-Joseph in his comment on the Talmud, whereas in his "Commentary on the Bible" he gets rid of this, applying it to some of the Jews pierced and killed by the Gentiles. It is the more surprising in the face of all, that these exploded mistakes should be reproduced in modern Jewish versions; as when Dr. A. Benisch, like D. Kimchi, omits the object in his "School and Family Bible," and Mr. J. Leeser, in his "Holy Scriptures," supplies "every one," to the manifest falsification of the sense like R. Isaac. There is really an emphatic object in the Hebrew text, which accounts for (if it does not require) the change of construction in the foregoing clause. The conclusion! then, is that the evangelist read no otherwise than we do in the ordinary Hebrew, and that the Holy Spirit in the Gospel and the Revelation does not cite but suppose that text, which is distinctly applied to the fact carefully recorded in the history, and doctrinally employed in John's First Epistle.

Yet this very exemption led as a fact, doubtless, to the deed of the soldier, whose lance pierced, not the malefactors, but only the dead body of the Saviour, wholly ignorant that so it must be, for God had said it by His prophet. All was ordered and measured; even these minute differences were revealed beforehand; yet were men and Satan indulging freely their enmity against the Son of God. And in the face of such love and light men combine their ignorance\* with their learning to escape from the truth into the dark once more. But we need not here dwell on such things. It is the same spirit that surrounded the cross:

"Thy love, by man so sorely tried,  
 Proved stronger than the grave;  
 The very spear that pierced Thy side  
 Drew forth the blood to save."

\* It may be worth mentioning as a singular instance of the importance of knowing the original that Euthymius Zigabenus, in his comment on verse 37, speaks of the Scripture as probably got rid of by the Jews since the Gospel. "For nowhere is it found now; or he means another Scripture of the books called Apocryphal" (vol. iii., 621). This sounds strong with Zechariah 12: 10 in view. How is it to be accounted for? This Greek monk read the prophet in the Septuagint, where the clause as to the piercing

is miserably mistaken, ἀνθ' ὧν κατωρχήσαντο, "because they insulted (Me)," while the later Jewish rendering of Aquila evades the truth by giving σὺν ᾧ up. Theodotion has rendered the passage rightly on the whole. Hence the Spirit of God (both in John's Gospel and in the Revelation) does not cite the Septuagint, but alludes to it in terms which accurately represent the clause.

## John 19: 38-42.

Matt. 27: 57-61; Mark 15: 42-47; Luke 23: 50-56.

"And after these things Joseph from Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus,<sup>354a</sup> but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave leave. He\* came, therefore, and took His body away. And there came also Nicodemus, that came at first to Him\* by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pound (weight). They took, therefore, the body of Jesus and bound it in linen swathes with the spices, as it is the Jews' custom to prepare for burial.† Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one was ever yet laid.<sup>354b</sup> There, then, on account of the preparation of the Jews, because the tomb was near, they put Jesus.

\* Tischendorf now [followed by Blass] adopts the plural "they" with pm, etc.; also αὐτὸν, "him," instead of τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ as in corr. BLXΛ, ten cursives, etc. [Treg., W. and H., Weiss], or τ. σ. τοῦ Ἰ. with a dozen uncials and most cursives, etc., and in Text. Rec.; so in verse 39, the best give "to him," the majority "to Jesus."

† The word is not θάπτειν but ἐνταφιάζειν, which is used for embalming, or at least preparing for burial as in the case before us.

God uses a perilous time to call forth His own hidden ones. Joseph of Arimathea can be a secret disciple no longer. He was a rich man (Matt. 27) and an honourable counsellor (Mark 15); but wealth and position make the confession of Christ only the harder. Fear of the Jews had hitherto prevailed. The death of Jesus, which caused others to fear, made Joseph bold. He had not consented, indeed, to the counsel and deed of the Jews. Now he goes to Pilate and besought the Lord's body. Nor was he alone: Nicodemus, longer known, but with no happy reputation for moral courage at the first, though afterwards venturing a remonstrance to the haughty yet unjust Pharisees, joins in the last offices of love with an abundant offering of myrrh and aloes. The cross of Christ, so stumbling to unbelief, exercises and manifests his faith; and the twain waxing valiant by grace, fulfil the lack of service of the twelve. They take the body of Jesus and bind it in linen swathes with the spices, in the manner of the Jews to prepare for burial. Egypt had its custom of embalming; so in a measure had the Jews in hope of the resurrection of the just. No prophecy is cited here; but who can forget Isaiah's words: "He made His grave with the wicked (men) and with the rich (man) in His death"? He was "appointed His grave with the lawless, and was with the rich man in His death" (Isa. 53: 9.)-that is, after being slain: a strange combination, yet verified in Him; and who could wonder, seeing that He had done no violence and no deceit was in His mouth? And now we see in Joseph's garden, hard by the fatal scene, a new tomb which had never known an inmate. So had God provided, in honour for the body of His Son and in jealous wisdom for the truth, hewn out in the rock (as Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us). There the Lord was put meanwhile in view of more formal burial when the Sabbath should pass. So little did the disciples anticipate what the glory of the Father had at heart, though the Lord had so often plainly revealed it, till the Resurrection was a fact in its own predicted time.

## JOHN — THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER\*

\* [Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 563-566.]

As no created eye beheld what was deepest in the cross of Christ, so it was not for man to look on the Lord rising from among the dead. This was as it should be. Darkness veiled Him giving Himself for us in atonement. Man saw not that infinite work in His death; yet was it not only to glorify God thereby, but that our sins might be borne away righteously. We have seen the activity of the world, and especially of the Jew, in crucifying Him; high and low, religious and profane, all played their part; even one Apostle denied Him, as another betrayed Him, to the murderous priests and elders. But Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all; Jehovah bruised and put Him to grief; Jehovah made His soul an offering for sin; (Isa. 53: 10.) and as this was Godward, so was it invisible to human eyes, and God alone could rightly bear witness, by whom He would, of the eternal redemption thus obtained, which left Divine love free to act even in a lost and ungodly world.

So with the Resurrection of Christ. He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; God raised up Jesus, Whom the Jews slew and hanged on a tree; He had laid down His life that He might take it again, in three days raising the temple of His body which they destroyed. But if no man was given to see the act of His rising from the dead, it was to be testified in all the world as well as His atoning death. "Preach the Gospel," said He risen, "to every creature." (Mark 16: 15.) And assuredly he who withholds His resurrection maims the glad tidings of its triumphant proof and character, and compromises the believer's liberty and introduction into the new creation, as he immensely clouds the Lord's glory: even as the denial of resurrection virtually charges God's witnesses with falsehood, and makes faith vain. So the Apostle insists in 1 Cor. 15. Had death held the Saviour fast, all were lost; had it been only His Spirit winning its way into the presence of God, would it be even a half-deliverance? His Resurrection is, in truth, a complete deliverance, of which the Holy Spirit is to us the seal.

Hence we find it is the grand foundation truth of the Gospel. To be a witness of His Resurrection was the main requirement for an Apostle (Acts 1); and that God had raised up Jesus Whom the Jews had crucified was the truth most pressed by Peter (Acts 2). So it was urged by him in Solomon's porch subsequently (Acts 3), and before the Jewish council once and again (Acts 4, 5). Just so it was in preaching to the Gentiles (Acts 10); and by Paul yet more than by Peter (Acts 13). This witness especially grieved the Sadducean chiefs (Acts 4); this is what rouses the undying scorn or opposition of unbelief all the world over. And no wonder; for if the Resurrection be the spring of joy and ground of assured salvation to the believer, if it be the secret of his holy walk as the expression of the life he has in Christ risen, and the power of a living hope, it is also the measure of the real estate of man as dead in sins; as it is the present, fixed, and constant pledge that judgment hangs over the habitable earth, for God has raised from among the dead as its appointed Judge the Man Whom the world slew. (Acts 17: 31.) The Resurrection, therefore, is as repulsive to man as it is apt to be slighted by the fleshly mind even of Christians who seek earthly things.

As the Resurrection is thus manifestly a truth of capital moment, the Spirit of God has taken care that the testimony to it should be as precise as it is full. Hence Matthew, who from the design of his Gospel omits the Ascension, does not fail to bring out the proof of Christ's Resurrection most clearly; and so does Mark; and Luke, with more detail than either, shows us the Lord in resurrection with all His loving interest in His own. He is a man as truly as ever, with flesh and bones, capable of eating with them, but risen. John, as usual, presents the conscious Son of God, the Word become flesh, but now in resurrection. Here the proofs are characteristically inward and personal, where the others as fittingly present what was outward, but no less necessary.

As a bulwark against philosophic scepticism the Resurrection stands firm and impregnable; for it resists and refutes unanswerably the sophistry which ignores God and reduces the idea of causes to an invariable antecedence of constantly observed phenomena as in sequence—a theory quietly assumed and diligently instilled, so as to set aside the very possibility of Divine intervention whether in grace or judgment, in miracles or prophecy, or in any relationship beyond nature with God. With God did I say? Why, according to this system logically carried out, He is, and must be, unknown; but if unknown, who can tell if He exist? or, if all do not end in a mere deification of Nature? Now, the Resurrection of Christ rests, as has been often shown, on far fuller evidence and surer and better grounds than any event in history; and this because it was sifted at the time by friends and foes as nothing else ever was, and because God Himself gave a multiplicity of testimony, proportioned to its incalculable moment, not to us merely, but to His own glory. Now, as a fact without argumentation, it overthrows of itself and instantly every opposition to the truth of science or knowledge falsely so called; for it would be the depth of absurdity to suppose that the death of Jesus was the cause of His resurrection. What, then, was its cause? Of what antecedent was it the sequence? If anything points to the power of God, it is resurrection no less than creation.

The truth is that the effort to reduce cause and effect to a mere antecedent and consequent springs from the desire to get rid of God altogether; for cause really implies will, design, and power in activity, though we must distinguish between the *causa causans* and the *causae causatae*. These causes are in nature by God's constitution, but He lives, wills, acts. Hence the Resurrection of Christ stands in the midst of this world's history to judge all unbelief, viewed now as a simple fact most fully proved. We may see its consequences, as far as our chapter presents them, later on. The Lord had distinctly and often spoken of His death and resurrection during His life. He had died and was buried; and here we learn that no power or precaution prevailed against His word. The grave had lost its inmate; and this was all Mary's heart took in—the loss of the dead body of the Lord. Deplorable forgetfulness, but of a heart absorbed in that one sad treasure here below, and it was gone!

Thus, even here the proof was in the wisdom of God gradual, and the growth of the Apostles themselves slow in the truth. There was afforded the most evident demonstration that, as the power in itself was of Him only and immediately, above the entire course of Nature and human experience, so those who were afterwards its most competent, strenuous, and suffering witnesses only yielded to its certainty by such degrees as let us see that no men were more surprised than the Apostles. Even the enemies of the Lord had an undefined dread or uneasiness, which led to Pilate's allowance of a military guard with the seal of the great stone to make the sepulchre sure. Not a disciple, so far as we know, looked for His rising.

Nevertheless, Christ did rise the third day according to the Scriptures. In this very thing—the teaching of God's word—were the disciples weak; not the uninstructed Magdalene only, but all, as we shall see, senseless and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets spoke; all as quick to forget the plain words in which the Lord Himself repeatedly announced not only His death, but His resurrection, on the third day.

Accordingly, the opening verses have for their object to show us how the truth first began to dawn on any heart. Not only was there no collusion in feigning the Resurrection of their Master, there was not so much as a hopeful anticipation in a single heart of which one can speak. The gloom of the cross had shrouded every heart; the fear of man pressed on the men yet more than on the women. Even where the fact should have been patent, she who saw the fact misunderstood its import, and was more distressed than ever.<sup>356</sup>

## John 20: 1-18.

Matt. 28: 1-10; Mark 16: 1-11 Luke 24: 1 -12.

"Now, on the first (day) of the week Mary of Magdala cometh early while it was yet dark unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.<sup>357</sup> She runneth, therefore, and cometh unto Simon Peter and unto the other disciple whom Jesus dearly loved (ἔφ.), and saith to them, They took away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they laid Him" (verses 1, 2).

Mary of Magdala seems to be alone on the first day; certainly, if other women were with or near her, as other testimonies may imply<sup>358</sup> (not to speak of the plural form here, "we know," which may be merely general), she alone attracts the notice of the Spirit of God. He portrays a heart, first attracted irresistibly to a scene so overwhelming and withal sacred by her love to Him Whose body had been laid in the tomb; then at length met and blessed by the Lord when the best resources among the saints had failed, as will come before us in due time.

Before His death Mary, the sister of Lazarus, had anointed the Lord, His head and His feet, out of the fulness of her affection, which lavished what she had most precious on Him, just at that time when she instinctively felt danger impending, and hears, in answer to heartless indifference only thence hurrying on to the deadliest ungodliness, the vindication of His love which gave a meaning to her act beyond her thoughts. Oh, how satisfying to her heart till with Himself! It was a deep and true affection met by the affection of Jesus, not perfect only, but Divine.

And here, too, it was not in vain that Mary of Magdala was drawn thus early, dark as it was, to the grave, the empty grave, of Jesus. She had been there, though not alone, after Sabbath had closed, when it was growing dark (not "dawning," though the word applies to either) toward the first day of the week, for this is the true meaning of Matt. 28. With this compare Mark 16; as Luke 23: 54 shows they had been on the preceding evening when Friday was closing and Sabbath was drawing on.

It is remarkable that this Mary runs to tell the fact of the stone's removal, and what she inferred as to the Lord's body, not to John only, but to Peter also. The latter had notoriously and grievously dishonoured the Lord just before His death; but doubtless his repentance was well known to the saints at least. Still, there is the record of her unhesitating appeal. Mary's heart judged who among the disciples would most heartily answer to the anxious inquiry which filled her own soul. For assuredly it was not lack of love but of self-judgment which had exposed that ardent disciple to deny his Master. On the contrary, it was confidence in his own love for Him with utter ignorance of himself, and without due dependence on God, in the face of a hostile world with the shadow of death before his eyes. And the Master in the next chapter manifests His own grace toward His servant to the utmost, even while laying bare the sinful root which had betrayed him to such shameful failure. In fact, Mary was far more justified in reckoning on the sympathy of Peter and John in that which troubled her than in the ignorance which concluded that men had carried off the Lord's body on the resurrection-day. Even the warmest love cannot without the word conceive a right thought of Him Who died for us. Her notion was wholly unworthy of Christ or of God's care for Him. But unbelief in the saint is no better than in the sinner; and the very strength of her love to the Lord only brings out the more into evidence how faith is needed in order rightly to understand in Divine things. He, however, "giveth more grace."

As to the accounts of the Resurrection, let none believe that it is fruitless to compare them, any more than to accept the perfect accuracy of each one. Whether one attempt or despise a harmony, the result must be utterly wrong if he start with interpreting Matt. 28 of the dawn of Sunday morning instead of the dusk of Sabbath evening, which last to the Jew (and Matthew, above all, has the Jews in

view) was, and is, the true beginning of the first day, however Western prejudice may incline to the Gentile sense of the day. This error must vitiate all right understanding for the student as much as for the harmonist. Let us read as believers.

It has been said to be impossible that so astounding an event coming upon various portions of the body of disciples from various quarters and in various forms, should not have been related, by four independent witnesses, in the "scattered and fragmentary" way in which we now find it. Certainly it would be impossible if there were no God securing perfect truth by all His chosen witnesses, and in each of their accounts. The remark is, therefore, mere unbelief, and quite unworthy of any intelligent Christian. "Scattered and fragmentary" is not the way of the Holy Ghost, Who does not employ the four like men giving evidence in a court of justice, each of what he saw and heard. Not only is this inapplicable to Mark and Luke, but it does not fall in with the facts in John and Matthew For He leads each of them to omit what both saw and heard, and to insert only such a selection as illustrates the scope and design of each particular Gospel. Was not Matthew a riveted spectator of the Lord in the midst of the disciples at Jerusalem on the evening of the day He rose from the dead? Was not John with the rest at the appointed mountain in Galilee?

It is not merely true, then, that in the depth beneath their varied surface of narrative the great central fact of the Resurrection itself rests unmoved and immovable (for this might be in merely human accounts of facts), but that every one of the four had a special object or aim in the mind of the inspiring Spirit, which is carried out unerringly in general plan and in minute detail. The objection admits the honesty of the Christian witnesses, but leaves God out of their writing, which is the essence of infidelity: the more painful, as the objector [Alford, "Prolegomena," Sect. v.] is really a believer, but with a wholly inadequate and dangerous theory of inspiration. The fact is that no man, who had the material, or knew what each Evangelist had before him, would ever have written as any one of them did; and that nothing accounts for their peculiar form but God giving a testimony in perfect keeping with each Gospel, so as by them all to furnish a complete whole. Where men of God only are seen, with nothing more than such guidance of the Spirit as in ordinary preaching or the like, what a blight such unbelief entails! Calling it inspiration only adds to the delusion. Are they *God's* word?

Confessedly the Resurrection was that, above all other things, to which the Apostles bore their testimony; but it is, as we have seen, and might show yet more fully, neglect of the evidence to suppose that each elaborated faithfully into narrative those particular facts which came under his own eye, or were reported to himself by those concerned. This is a poor and misleading *à priori* hypothesis. Their diversity springs not from human infirmity, but from Divine wisdom.

But we turn for a few moments more to the effect of the empty tomb on those who first noticed it. And certainly one cannot speak of spiritual intelligence in Mary of Magdala; but she clung in deep affection to the Lord's Person; and He was not unmindful of it. She was the first, as we shall see, to have joy in Him, and He puts honour on her. Yet what could be less worthy of Christ than her hasty conclusion from the empty tomb! "They took away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they laid Him." She can think of Him only as under the power of death. She judges by the sight of her eyes; and to her mind as yet man has the upper hand. His assurance of resurrection had left no trace, as if on the barren sand. Who can glory in man thus overwhelmed before the undiscerned yet glorious power of God which had already raised Him from among the dead? Nevertheless, her heart was true to Him, and she shows it, if only now by her visit to such a scene while it was yet dark, and by her extreme agitation when she saw the stone taken away, and the body gone from the tomb. What can she do but run with the news to break it to congenial hearts?

"Peter, therefore, went forth, and the other disciple, and were coming unto the tomb. And the two were running together, and the other disciple ran forward more quickly than Peter, and came first unto the tomb, and, stooping down, seeth the linen clothes as they lay; nevertheless, he went not in. Simon Peter, therefore, cometh following him, and entered into the tomb, and beholdeth the linen clothes lying, and the handkerchief which was upon His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but folded up in a place apart. Then entered, therefore, also the other disciple that came first unto the tomb, and he saw [εἶδεν] and believed; for as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from (the) dead. The disciples, therefore, went away again unto their own (home)." (verses 3-10).

It was not John only who went forth at the tidings of Mary. Love, roused by words which sounded strange to their ears, led Peter to run along with John,<sup>359</sup> with no less desire, if not so fast. He had slumbered, when he ought to have watched and prayed; and, when the crisis came, he had denied his Master with no small aggravation after His solemn warning. But he was not a Judas: very far indeed from it. He loved the Lord Who Himself knew that he loved Him; and therefore, notwithstanding his deep and shameful sin, his heart was moved by the news so unaccountable to him of the disappearance of the body from the tomb. So the two disciples (who were for other reasons often seen together) strove which should reach the spot soonest. Not the most distant hope of what the fact was had as yet crossed their minds; yet were they as far as possible from indifference to any little circumstance which concerned even His body. That it was no longer where it had been laid, especially with such a safeguard against conceivable hazards, is enough to stir both deeply; and they are on the scene forthwith, John outrunning Peter. And as he came first to the tomb, so did he stoop down<sup>360</sup> and see the linen clothes as they lay;\* yet went he not in. Peter, though less agile, went farther when he reached the place, for he went into the tomb, and inspected the linen clothes as they lay, and the napkin which was on His head, not lying with them, but wrapped up in one place by itself.

\* The careful reader will notice the emphatic place given to the lying of the grave-clothes as seen by John, compared with Peter's contemplating them as they lay, and the kerchief or napkin for the head, not with them, but apart and wrapped up. I reject the irreverent thought of Wetstein that John shrank from going in "ne pollueretur, Num. 19: 16"; for this would have operated to hinder John afterwards (verse 8), as well as Peter's entrance. It was Peter's ardour, not burning less now, but more, from the sense of his recent wrong, which impelled him not merely to take a glance, but to enter and survey all more closely.

So also reports Luke (24: 12), though not in such detail as John does, who describes not only the twofold examination on his own part, but an added feature in Peter's intent gaze [θεωρεῖ], observing the peculiarity of the napkin wrapt up by itself. What clear presumptive proof that the body had not been taken away by enemies any more than by friends! for why should either leave the linen swathes behind? Who but one arising from sleep would dispose of the habiliments in this calm and orderly fashion? It must be His own doing as He rose from among the dead,<sup>361</sup> and laid aside what was unsuited to, as well as needless for, His new estate.<sup>362</sup> For here we may contrast the very different way in which Lazarus appeared when raised by the Lord, indicative of the different character of the Resurrection. Still, there was no depth in the conviction Peter could not but form; for he returned home, the true rendering, wondering at what had come to pass. Wonder is in no way the expression of the intelligence which faith gives; it implies rather the distinct lack of it. It does seem surprising that such men as Bengel and Stier should follow Erasmus and Grotius in the idea that John merely went as far as Mary's idea in verse 2.

"Then entered, therefore, also the other disciple that came first unto the tomb, and he saw<sup>362a</sup> and believed." It was faith, but founded on evidence, not on the written word. Mary's inference was

upset by the indications John as well as Peter observed. Theirs was a sound conclusion, based on a reasonable judgment of the facts observed; but this in itself is only a human deduction, however right in itself, instead of being the subjection of the heart to the testimony of God. And it is John himself who, here as elsewhere, teaches us to draw this most momentous distinction. But Peter seems, though amazed, to have taken in the import of what he observed as well as John. They both went beyond Mary of Magdala and inferred that Ho must have risen; not that either Joseph and Nicodemus on the one hand, nor that the Jews or Romans on the other, had taken away the Lord's body<sup>362b</sup>. On ground of the apparent facts, they rightly accounted for the disappearance of His body. But in neither was there that character of faith in His resurrection which springs from laying hold of God's word. The former was human, the latter Divine, because in this alone is *God* believed, which gives Him His true place and puts us in ours. Thus is the soul purged by virtue of the word, which is no less needful than cleansing by blood; and hence repentance ever accompanies faith. We could not be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light did we not know experimentally the washing of water by the word as well as cleansing from our sins by Christ's blood.

Now it is not too much to say that, as far as the truth of Resurrection, soon to be the characteristic testimony of the Apostles John or Peter, it was not yet taught them of God. They did not as yet with the fact connect God's testimony in the Law, the Psalms, or the Prophets, nor even the plain and recent words of our Lord Jesus. So little is there of truth in Lampe's judgment that from this moment in the very darkness of the tomb the mind of John was enlightened with the saving faith of the Resurrection of Jesus as with a certain new ray of the risen "Sun of Righteousness." There is nothing in Divine things beautiful which is not true; and this is not only not true, but the reversal of the truth inculcated by John himself in his inspired comment on the fact. They both believed in Christ, on the ground, not of facts only, but of God's word; they neither of them believed in His resurrection beyond the seen facts that so it must be. "For as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from<sup>363</sup> (the) dead."

We have had a fair sample of Protestant (I do not say Reformation) theology, which shows their loose and human idea of faith. Romanist, and perhaps one might add Catholic, views are no better. Hence the Tridentine depreciation of faith; hence the effort to bring in love and obedience and holiness in order to justification. They feel that there must be a moral element, and their reducing faith to an intellectual reception of propositions excludes it; so that they are driven to add other things to faith in order to satisfy themselves. All this turns on the great fundamental error that the thoroughgoing Papist makes faith in the Church the resting-place of his soul and the rule of faith, not the Scriptures, nor God revealed in Christ by them. If they carried out the error to its results, no Romanist could be saved; for he believes not God's word on God's authority, but Scripture and tradition on the Church's word. By *his own principle* he excludes faith in God, and could not truly believe unto life at all. Only through grace men may be better than their principle, as many, alas! are worse when the principle is of God. Believing Scripture as *God's* word, believing God in it, is of vital moment.<sup>363a</sup>

Facts are of high interest and real importance; and as the Israelite could point to them as the basis of his religion, to the call of Abram by God, and the deliverance of the chosen people from Egypt and through the desert and into Canaan, so can the Christian to the incomparably deeper and more enduring ones of the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Son of God, with the consequent presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But faith to have moral value, to deal with the conscience, to purify and draw out the heart, is not the pure and simple acceptance of facts on reasonable grounds, but the heart's welcoming God's testimony in His word. This tests the soul beyond all else, as spiritual intelligence consists in the growing up to Christ in an increasing perception and enjoyment of all that God's word has revealed, which separates the saint practically to Himself and His

will in judgment of self and the world. One has put off the old man and put on the new, being renewed into full knowledge according to the image of Him that created him.

To "see and believe," therefore, is wholly short of what the operation of God gives; as traditional faith or evidence answers to it now in Christendom. It is human, and leaves the conscience unpurged and the heart without communion. It may be found in him who is in no way born of God (compare John 2: 23-25), but also in the believer as here: if so, it is not what the Spirit seals, and it in no way delivers from present things. And this it seems to be the Divine object to let us know in the account before us. Faith, to be of value and have power, rests not on sight or inference, but on Scripture.<sup>363b</sup> Thus, as the disciples show the most treacherous memory as to the words of the Lord till He was raised up from the dead (John 2: 22), so were they insensible to the force and application of the written word: after that they believed both, they entered into abiding and enlarging blessing from above. This, as Peter tells us in his First Epistle (1 Peter 1: 8), is characteristically the faith of a Christian, who, having not seen Christ, loves Him; and on Whom, though not now seeing Him, but believing, he exults with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The faith that is founded on evidences may strengthen against Deism, Pantheism, or Atheism; but it never gave remission of sins, never led one to cry, "Abba, Father," never filled the heart with His grace and glory Who is the object of God's everlasting satisfaction and delight.

Here, also, we have the further and marked testimony of its powerlessness; for we are told (verse 10), "The disciples, therefore, went away again unto their own (home)." The fact was known on grounds indisputable to their minds, but not yet appreciated in God's sight as revealed in His word; and hence they return to their old unbroken associations.

Mary did not, could not, take things so quietly as the two disciples. What was "home" now to her? What was the world? Nothing but an empty tomb where Jesus had lain. Others might depart again to their own home. For her heart it was impossible.

"But Mary stood at the tomb without weeping. While, then, she was weeping, she stooped into the tomb, and beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where had lain the body of Jesus. And they say to her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them, Because they took away my Lord, and I know not where they laid Him. Having said thus, she turned back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom dost thou seek? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him, Sir, if thou didst carry Him off, tell me where thou laidest Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her, Mary. She, turning, saith to Him in Hebrew,\* Rabboni, which meaneth (or, is to say) Teacher" (verses 11-16).<sup>364</sup>

\* The Text. Rec. [as Blass] omits Ἐβραϊστὴν with twelve uncials [AK, etc.], most cursive MSS., and a few versions. But the Sinaitic, the Vatican, Beza's of Cambridge, the Parisian 62 [L], the Moscow [V] of cent. ix., the Munich or Landshut [X] of a later date, those of St. Gall [Δ] and of St. Petersburg [Π], both of the ninth century, with some excellent cursives [as 33], and most of the ancient versions [Syrpesch hier], give the reading [most Edd.].

The sorrow of love for Jesus, that which mourns His absence, or which feels wrong done to Him in any way, is far different from the sorrow of the world that worketh death. It soon passes into life and peace through the grace of Jesus. Mary's sorrow was not fruitless, nor was it long. Other servants of the Lord, and the Lord Himself, Whom she saw not, looked upon her. While she wept outside, she stooped into the tomb and beheld two angels in white. But He was not there; they were sitting one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. Yet we hear of no alarm, no amazement on her part: so absorbed was her heart with that one Person, to all appearance lost to her, even His body gone

so that she could not weep over it. Nor does she speak to them, but they say to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" They were in the secret. She had not read as yet aright the signs of the grave. Her sorrowing heart would ere long receive better and clearer tidings still. Meanwhile she explains to them why she wept: "Because they took away my Lord, and I know not<sup>365</sup> where they laid Him." She wholly overlooks the strangeness of the angelic apparition within the tomb, and takes for granted that every one must know Who He was Whose body was gone. But not even yet has the thought of His resurrection crossed her mind. The Lord was her Lord; she loved Him exceedingly, but to her apprehension men had taken Him and laid Him where she knew not. A soul may love the Lord, yet be dark indeed as to His risen glory, as we cannot fail to read here.

Grace would now intervene. "On saying this, she turned round<sup>366</sup> and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus." How often the like may be for our dull hearts! But He never acts beneath His name, and speaks that we may know Him. "Jesus saith to her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom dost thou seek?" This last was a leading question. Till He is known, however, there is still darkness, though there may be love. "She, thinking that He was the gardener, saith to Him, Sir, if thou didst carry Him off, tell me where thou laidest Him, and I will take Him away." One word dispels all the difficulty and doubt, the expression, not of our love to Him, but of His love to us. "Jesus saith to her, Mary." The work was done, the great discovery made. He had died, He was now risen, and He appeared first to Mary of Magdala. She that had sown in tears reaps now in joy. The Lord appreciated her abiding at the tomb in sorrow, even though but an empty tomb. Her heart was now filled with joy; and, as we shall see, the joy would run over to gladden other hearts, the hearts of all that believed.

It was the Good Shepherd calling His own sheep by name. She was the same to Him as ever; He stood in resurrection power; but His love was the same to her, certainly no less than when He cast seven demons out of her. Doubtless there was a sameness in the expression of her name which went straight home to her heart and recalled her from her dream about His Person, once dead but now in truth alive again for evermore. Soon she would learn that, as He lived, so did she also, alive to God in Jesus Christ her Lord. But for the moment to know Himself alive, Himself uttering her name with unutterable love, was the fruit of Divine grace that touched and best satisfied her heart.

Mary had known Christ according to the flesh, and evidently thought that she was thus to know Him still. But it is not so. Henceforth we know none after this sort. Christ was dead and risen, and about to take His place in heaven according to the counsels of God. The Christian is called to know Him as man in heaven. always the Son, but now Man glorified on high. Hence the force of that which follows. Mary must learn to regard the Lord in an entirely new light, not in bodily presence here below, but for an object of faith as received up in glory. She is thus delivered from all her former associations, and is the given ensample of the Jewish remnant henceforward to become Christian.

"Jesus saith to her, Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended<sup>367</sup> unto the (or, My)\* Father; but go unto My brethren and say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. Mary of Magdala cometh, bringing word to the disciples, I have seen† the Lord, and that He said these things to her" (verses 17, 18).

\* Text. Rec. adds  $\mu\omicron\upsilon$  with most uncials, cursives, and versions [Syrsin pesch, etc.], but not BD and some few other authorities [Edd.].

† The oldest manuscripts give the uncompounded form of the participle and also the direct style, "I have seen," etc., not as in Text. Rec.

It is the more striking if we compare Matt. 28: 9 with the Lord's prohibition of Mary in our Gospel. Both incidents happened very nearly about the same time. Yet the Lord permitted the other

women to come and hold Him by the feet, and pay Him homage, whereas only a very little while before He forbade Mary of Magdala to touch Him. *We know* that He was divinely perfect on both occasions, as, indeed, always, that though man and the Son of man it was not His to repent, for He is the truth. But we may be permitted, and I think ought, to inquire why ways so different and so rapidly following one another could be each absolutely right in its own place. The difference of design in the two Gospels helps much to clear the matter.

In Matthew the risen Lord resumes His relations with the Jewish remnant, and gives these women, as a sample of that remnant, to enjoy His presence on earth. For this reason, too, there is not only no ascension scene in the end of Matthew, but no allusion to the fact there; indeed, it would mar the perfection of the picture, which shows us the Lord present with His own until the consummation of the age. In John, on the other hand, Jewish feeling is immediately corrected; new relations are announced, and ascension to the Father takes the place of all expectations for the nations on the earth with the Jews as the Lord's centre and witnesses. "Touch Me not," says Jesus to Mary, "for I have not yet ascended unto the Father." Henceforth the Lord is to be known characteristically by the Christian as in heaven. The Jew had looked for Him on earth, and rightly so; as by-and-by the Jew will have Him reigning over the earth, when He comes again in power and great glory. Between the broken and restored hopes of Israel, we find our place as Christians. We are baptised unto His death, and we show forth His death until He come, remembering Him in the breaking of the bread; but we know Him above, no longer dead, but risen and glorified.

Yea, though we had known Christ according to flesh, yet now we know Him thus no more. Indeed, without boasting, in sober truth, but all-surpassing grace, we can say, and as believers are bound to say, that we are in Him. "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." "that day" of the N.T. is this day, being already come, the day of grace to the world in the Gospel; the day of grace to the saints in their union with Christ. "So if anyone be in Christ, it is a new creation; the old things have passed away, behold, all things are become new; and all things are of the God Who reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 5: 17f.) Such is Christianity; and this undeveloped was implied in our Lord's dealing and words with Mary of Magdala. "Touch Me not" was a saying of eminent significance, and still more when interpreted by the words that accompany it. It is not, as in Col. 2: 21, μή ἄψη (a single transient action), but μή μου ἄπτου, "Do not go on touching Me"; it is a general and continuous prohibition, and this to represent the remnant taken out of their associations as Jews and put into new relations, not only with Christ in heaven, but through Him with His Father and God; as contra-distinguished from those who represent the remnant allowed to lay hold of Him as a sign of His return in bodily presence for the kingdom.

But there is more. "Go unto My brethren." He is not ashamed to call the disciples His brethren. He had prepared the way for this; He had said on Israel's rebellious rejection of their Messiah, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12: 50.) Now, on the accomplishment of His atoning work He acknowledges definitely this blessed fruit of it, not only sins forgiven to faith by virtue of His shed blood, but believers in the most intimate way related to Himself, the risen Man and Son of God. They are His brethren; to whom, according to Ps. 22: 22, He proceeds to make known the name, not merely of Jehovah, but of the Father. For now they were not quickened only, but quickened with Christ. They stood in Him risen from the dead, forgiven all trespasses. And they learn that thus related to Christ in His new place as in the condition of Man according to Divine counsels for eternity, all question of sin being closed triumphantly on the cross, not for Him Who had no need, but for the believer who had all possible need in guilt and an evil nature and an accusing enemy and a holy, righteous Judge, they enter into His own

blessed and everlasting relationship with His Father and God. "And say to them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, My God and your God."

It was a moment of unequalled depth: the Son risen again after having borne the judgment of our sins in His own body on the tree and glorified God in respect, not of obedience in life only, but up to death for sin, on the resurrection morning sending, through one from whom He had formerly expelled seven demons to His disciples (desponding through unbelief), a message of the new and incomparable blessedness He had acquired for them by His death and resurrection. Doubtless He is the risen Messiah of the seed of David, and the mercies of David are made sure by His resurrection, as will be proved in the kingdom restored to Israel in due time. But this must be postponed in God's wisdom and yield to the far deeper purpose meanwhile coming into evidence, the calling out of God's children, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, into the knowledge and enjoyment and testimony of Himself and His Son by the Holy Ghost, which is usually styled "Christianity." It could not be before, nor only because He had relations after flesh and by promise with Israel, until they had thoroughly despised and rejected deliberately through unbelief, but guiltily and inexcusably, their infinitely blessed King; but because solely on the ground of redemption by His death could God be free to form and gather into one those children of His freed from their sins and quickened together with Him, whether Jew or Gentile. Now, having died, He could bear much fruit; and here He announces the fact as worthy of Himself as of the God Who sent Him in love beyond all thought of man. "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, My God and your God."

How poor and pale are the dreams of men even in their highest aspirations, compared with the simple truth spoken by the Lord and sent to His own! Yet nothing less could satisfy His love, which must demonstrate its power, first by going down with our sins to suffer for them from God, and next by ascending into glory and giving us as far as possible His own position as sons and saints, with all evil and guilt for ever gone before God, purged worshippers having no more conscience of sins. This was not merely a hope to be made good when He comes again to receive us to Himself, but the truth of a really existing relationship announced now on the resurrection day, sent to His disciples that they might know and enjoy it to the full, as pledged in His own ascension to the presence of the Father in heaven. It is for all saints till He come again: would that all knew it as their only true place in Him! Still, grace has given the truth fresh power in our day, though by messengers who have no more reason to boast than Mary of Magdala that came then with the tidings to the disciples (verse 18), I have seen the Lord; or, as it is more commonly read, that she had seen the Lord, and He had spoken these things to her. But we may and ought to glory in our risen Lord, and of such a place for the believer in Him. "Of such a one will I glory," said a greater than any of us; "yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." (2 Cor. 12: 5.) Of a man in Christ it is well to glory, only we cannot expect those to do so who do not even conceive what it means, and who are so depraved by a jargon of Jewish and Gentile notions, commonly called systematic divinity, that they are slow indeed to learn. If we know the truth may we have grace not only to walk in it, but to wait on such as know it not, if peradventure grace and truth may at length win their way and the saints learn their true blessedness in Christ.

The Lord's message was not in vain. The disciples gathered on that resurrection-day with the world shut out; and Jesus stood in the midst. It is the beautiful anticipative picture of *the assembly*, as may be seen more fully when details are entered into.

## **John 20: 19-23.**

Mark 16: 14-18 Luke 24: 36-49.

"When it was evening then, on that day which was the first of the week,<sup>368</sup> and the doors were shut where the disciples<sup>369</sup> were by reason of the fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood [took His stand] in the midst, and saith to them, Peace to you. And having said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. He (or, Jesus)\* said, therefore, to them again, Peace to you: according as the Father hath sent Me forth, I also send you. And having said this, He breathed into and saith to them, Receive the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; whose soever ye retain, they are retained."

\* Text. Rec. and Lachmann [with Weiss] follow AB and eleven other uncials, most cursives, etc., in reading Ó 'I., but DLCX and most ancient versions omit [as Tisch. and Blass; W. and H. bracket].

How many things of spiritual weight were here brought into the smallest compass and conveyed in the simplest form! That day which in due time was to receive its appropriate designation of "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1: 10), as characteristic of the Christian as the Sabbath of the Jew, was marked off, not only by the gathering together of the saints, but by the presence of the Lord in their midst. So it was at the beginning of the following week (verse 26); and so afterwards does the Holy Spirit distinguish it as the day when the *breaking of the bread* is observed (Acts 20: 7), and the wants of the holy poor rise up in remembrance before Him and them (1 Cor. 16: 2). It was indeed Divine guidance, though it did not take the shape of a command; but none the less precious or obligatory on all who value His special presence in communion with His own and the showing forth of His death till He come. It was the day, not of creation rest nor of law imposed, but of resurrection and of the grace which associated the believer with its rich and enduring results; on which all thus blessed come together to enjoy in common that death of the Lord which is the righteous ground of these privileges and of all others.

On that day the Lord gave the assembled disciples a signal witness of the power of life in resurrection; for where they were, the doors having been shut for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst. Weakness attaches to the natural body, which, unless a miracle be wrought, is stopped by a wall or a closed door or a chain or a thousand other checks. Not so the body which is raised in power, as the Lord here silently shows them. It appears to be the object of the statement here, and again lower down, to intimate that the risen body can thus enter, not by miracle (however wonderful it may seem to us, who view and measure things by the actual condition of this life), but normally as in the power of resurrection, wherein all indeed is supernatural. There is no ground here to suppose, but rather the contrary, that the doors were caused to open of themselves. So it was (Acts 5: 19), when the angel led the Apostles Peter and John out of prison; so, again, when Peter was a second time set free (Acts 12: 10), and the iron gate opened of itself, not to let in the angel, who needed it not, but to let Peter out. It is no question of omnipotence, but of the risen body, which has no more need of an open door than an angel. The ancients seem to have had far simpler faith as to this than most moderns who betray the growing materialism\* of the day. To talk of philosophical difficulties is puerile pretension: what does philosophy know of the Resurrection? It is a question of God and His Son, not of mere causes and effects, still less of experience. The Christian believes the word, and knows what God reveals. Let philosophy confess, not boast of, its nescience: if dumb before creation, resurrection is to it still more confounding.

\* Even Calvin was led into misunderstanding of this Scripture, through his dread of Popery and its effort to prove the dogma of a real presence everywhere in the Mass. His faith in, or at least intelligence of, the Resurrection was small.

Jesus then and thus came and stood in the midst, saying to the disciples, "Peace to you." This He had left as His legacy before the cross; now alive again from the dead He announces it to His own: how

sweet the sound in a world at war with God! Doubly so where earnest souls have striven ineffectually to make it for themselves with God, whatever their sighs and tears and groans, whatever their prayers, yearnings, and agony, whatever their-efforts to eschew the evil and cleave to the good. For such best know that conscience and heart can find no solid peace in self-judgment or in self-denial, in contemplation of God or in labours for Him; on the contrary, the more sincere, the less have they peace. They are on a wholly wrong road. Peace for a sinful man can only be made by the blood of Christ's cross, which faith receives on His word. And so the Lord spoke it to the disciples that day, the mighty work on which it is grounded being finished and accepted of God, as His resurrection declares. "And having said this He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord."

Some have conceived that the second "Peace to you " was a sort of farewell or *valet*, as the first a *salvete*.\* As the former was far otherwise, even the deep blessing which characterises those who are justified by faith, and ever recurring in one form or another throughout the New Testament, so the second is in connection with the mission the Lord proceeds to confer on the disciples. They first received peace for themselves; they are next charged to go forth with the gospel of peace to others. "According as the Father hath sent (ἀπέστ) Me forth, I also send (π.) you." These are Christ's true legates *à latere*: others are but thieves and robbers whom the sheep do well not to hear. Strangers to peace themselves, as their own tongue cannot but confess, how can they tell others of a peace which poor sinners might trust with assurance?

\* It will hardly be credited that Calvin saw no more than a desire for prosperity in these words of our risen Lord.

But the Lord next proceeds to another highly significant token of new and lasting privilege. "And having said this, He breathed into and saith to them, Receive (the) Holy Spirit:\* whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; whose soever ye retain, they are retained." It was He Who before He took flesh had breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life; and now He breathed into the disciples the breath of a better and everlasting life, His own life, as being both now-that is, Jehovah-God and the risen second Man-in one Person. Never had He so done before.<sup>370</sup> The right moment was come. He had been delivered for their offences, and was raised for their justification. The risen life is deliverance from the law of sin and death, as well as the bright witness of a complete remission of sins; and this not as an abstract truth for all believers, but intended to be known and enjoyed by each. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath delivered me from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8: 16.) In Rom. 7: before, from verse 7, we read how tried and sifted and wretched the "I" was, till it dropped self to find grace in Christ, not only for the past, but for the present, and, of course, for ever.

\* That character of the Holy Spirit's action, which consists of life in resurrection, and hence expressed without the article. It was not yet the Holy Spirit given personally, the baptism of the Spirit, as at Pentecost.

What can be more intensely personal than this deliverance from misery? and what more evident, also, that it was not only a new and Divine life, but this after judgment of sin and the curse of the law had fallen on Christ, and He risen victoriously dispensing a life beyond sin, law, or judgment, and this as having borne all and borne all away for the believer righteously? Of this His in-breathing was the sign; and He says: "Receive (the) Holy Spirit": not yet the Spirit sent down from the ascended Lord and Christ to baptise into one body and to give power and testimony, but the energy of His own risen life. For the Spirit ever in the closest way takes His part in every blessing; and as for the kingdom of God

every one is born of water and Spirit, and none else can see or enter that kingdom, so here with life in resurrection to deal with souls that heard and believed the Gospel.

For this is not all. The disciples thus delivered are invested with a blessed privilege and a solemn responsibility as regards others. Those without are now viewed as sinners, the old distinction of Jews and Gentiles for the time disappearing in the true light. But if it be the judgment of the world, it is the day of grace; and the disciples have the administration, the Spirit of life in Christ giving them capacity. Hence the word of the Lord is, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; whose soever ye retain, they are retained." So repentant souls were baptized for the remission of sins, whilst a Simon Magus was pronounced in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. So the wicked person was put away from among the saints, and the same man after the judgment of his evil and his own deep grief over his sin was to be assured of love by the assembly's receiving him back, obedient, yet taking the initiative in the act that it might be conscience work and not of bare authority or influence. It was the assembly's doing. "To whom ye forgive anything, I also; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, (it is) for your sakes in Christ's person." (2 Cor. 2: 10.) Paul would have nothing forced, but fellowship unbroken in discipline: not he dictating and they blindly or in dread following, as in the church-world; but they following Christ's authority and He also in a communion truly of the Spirit.<sup>571</sup>

## **John 20: 24-29.**

On the resurrection-day the Apostles were not all present. "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus,<sup>372</sup> was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples said [began to say], therefore, to him, We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will in nowise believe" (verses 24, 25).

His state of soul coincided with his absence on that day. He resisted the blessed news of the Resurrection, and did not join the gathering of the disciples to share the joy of the Master's presence in their midst. Slow of heart to believe, he missed the early taste of the blessing, and abode in the darkness of his own unbelief, whilst the rest were filled with gladness. He becomes, therefore, no unmeet type of the Jew, not of the ungodly mass who receive another coming in his own name, but of the poor sorrow-stricken remnant who cleave to the hope of the Messiah in the latter day, and will enter into rest and joy only when they see Him appearing for their deliverance.

"And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace to you. Then He saith to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see My hands, and reach thy hand, and put (it) into My side, and be not unbelieving, but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith to him, Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are those that saw not and believed" (verses 26-29).

It is a blessed picture of the fruit of Christ's resurrection in the latter day: not the Church, but "the great congregation," (Ps. 22: 25.) brought in infinite grace to know and praise the Lord, when He is no longer hidden but visibly reigning. Those before will have had the good portion, which shall not be taken from them—they saw not, yet believed.<sup>373</sup> Israel will see and believe: blest, indeed, but not after the same high measure of blessing. There will be no such revelation of the Father to them, no such association with the Son, no conscious link by His ascension with the heavens. The rejected One will have returned to reign in power and glory; and the heart of Israel, long withered and dark, is to be lighted up at length with the brightness of their hope accomplished in the presence of the Lord to make good every promise, when they on their part boast no more of their own righteousness, but take their

stand on the mercy that endureth for ever. They recognise the Judge of Israel that was smitten with a rod upon the cheek, and themselves given up by Him, until the birth of God's great final purpose in their favour, when He shall be great to the ends of the earth, and they as a dew of blessing from Jehovah in the midst of the nations, and all their enemies shall be cut off. "They shall look upon Me Whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for Him," in bitterness of self-reproach, but with a spirit of grace and supplication poured upon them. For truly He was wounded in the house of His friends, but wounded (as they learn afterwards) for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities, stricken for the transgression of Jehovah's people (see Micah 5, Zech. 12, and Isa. 53).

Hence we hear nothing now of not touching the Lord because of His ascension to His Father, nor of going to His brethren, and saying to them, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." On the contrary, grace will condescend to those who demanded signs and tokens ere they would believe; and they will stand overwhelmed and abashed at the fulness of visible proof when Messiah returns here below. There is peace to them; "for this man shall be the peace" in that day also, whatever the pride and power of the foe. But there will not be the same mission of peace in the power of His risen life; all their iniquities forgiven, all their diseases healed, but not the place of the Church to forgive or retain sins in the name of the Lord.

Accordingly, there is the characteristic exclamation and confession withal of Thomas, "My Lord and my God."\* So will Israel say in the kingdom. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa. 25: 9.) It is the truth, and true blessing for Israel to possess and blessedly acknowledge, especially for those who had so long despised Him to their own shame and ruin; but it has not the intimacy of that fellowship into which the Christian is now called. "For truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1: 3.) "We walk by faith, not by sight"; (2 Cor. 5: 7.) and having not seen Christ, we love Him; "on Whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter 1: 8.)

\* That Gilbert Wakefield should deny the confession and merge all in a mere exclamation, or rather in two, "O! my Lord! and O! my God!" was to have been expected from his heterodoxy. But such a notion is as inconsistent with the context as it is irreverent, and of course misses all the force of the truth. For it will be observed that the Gospel says, not merely that Thomas said these words, but that they were said to his Master. It is true that, if a mere assertion, the article would be absent, as being simply predicative. The emphatic form of the sentence is due to its combining exclamation in the vocative according to the New Testament usage with confession, and this said to the Lord Jesus; which also accounts for the twofold occurrence of the personal pronoun, the first of which assuredly could not have been used had it been an address to Jehovah as such.

Here the Evangelist, as on occasion is his manner, interrupts for a moment the thread of the Divine tale to say a few words on the gracious way of the Saviour in the affluence of signs or significant miracles which studded His ministry here below, as well as on the purpose of blessing the Holy Ghost had in view, in selecting from that countless crowd such as were most suitable for permanent testimony to God's grace. Two objects are set out: first and pre-eminently, the glory of the Lord's Person, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; secondly, that the believer may have life in His name.

## **John 20: 30-31.**

"Many other\* signs, therefore, did Jesus in the presence of the† disciples, which are not written

in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name."

\* It may be that the Authorised Version has led some into, or confirmed in, the mistake of a possible conclusion here. "And many," etc., is not a quite correct rendering. It is literally the familiar "Many and other signs," that is, "Many other signs," etc.

† αὐτοῦ, "his," is added by many copies, but not the oldest or best.

No doubt this was a fitting moment here to pause and thus to speak. The unbelief of a believer, yea, of an Apostle, furnished the material where the Lord had stooped to meet and receive His erring servant by the visible tokens and the tangible proofs he had insisted on in his folly, and to his hurt irreparable, if grace had not intervened as we have seen. It was a priceless favour to have seen the things the disciples saw. It is better still to believe without seeing. And grace would provide for those who in the nature of things could not see, that they might hear and live. Hence the writing of this precious book. It was to be in witness of Jesus; it was to be known and read of all men. Not that Scripture ever exhausts its wondrous theme, whatever it may be; and here, above all, it is as infinite in the Person described, as the blessing is eternal for those who believe. God graciously selects some signs out of many, in the considerate goodness which knows precisely what we can bear. For if Scripture be His word, it is given to man, even to us who believe, to the end of our enjoying that blessing in His Son—indeed, the deepest which He could bestow—the communication of that nature which, as it comes from God, ever goes to Him, yea, yields fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>374</sup>

But as the supreme and crucial test now is the Person of Jesus Christ come in flesh (1 John 4: 2, 3), so connected with it is the divinely given and guarded testimony to God's grace and Christ's glory, by which the family of God, weak as they are, overcome the adverse might of the world and its prince; because greater is He that is in them than he that is in the world. And those who are of God turn a deaf ear to such as are of the world and speak as of the world whom the world hears; but have they none especially to hear? Thanks be to God, they know God and hear those who are of God, His chosen witnesses, whom the Holy Ghost was to lead, and did lead, into all the truth, and who in due time wrote "this book," as did others no less inspired for the work than John. On the other hand, those who are not of God do not hear the Apostles, preferring the thoughts of themselves or of other men to their irremediable ruin. "By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4: 6.)

After this brief but worthy and gracious interruption the Evangelist turns to "the third" (John 21: 14) of the great manifestations of the risen Jesus which it was his task to describe, before he closes with the respective and peculiar places the Lord would give Peter and John in their service here below. How any men of intelligence could say that our two verses which conclude John 20 are a formal close of the Gospel might have been viewed as inconceivable, if it was not positive fact. Grotius<sup>375</sup> seems to have been the first man of mark who gave expression and currency to a supposition irreconcilable with the plain connection of the two first days of the week in chapter 20, and with the scene which follows in chapter 21: irreconcilable just in proportion to one's real understanding of the Gospel as a whole. Modern Germany took up this and other injurious notions of that learned Dutchman, not only Ewald, Lücke, and Tholuck, but even Meyer, Neander, and Stier. It is painful to add that Alford, Scrivener, Westcott, etc., have yielded to the uncalled-for theory that John 20 originally ended the Gospel, and that John 21 is a later appendix from the Apostle's own hand, though many go farther and deny it to him altogether.<sup>375a</sup>

When we enter on the details of the concluding chapter, we may be enabled to show yet more

how unfounded is this thought. Meanwhile it suffices here to point out briefly the mistake of regarding as a true end the two verses which have been now occupying us. In fact, they are an instructive comment by the way, not without a glance at the signs wrought by the Lord all through, but with special declaration of God's aim for the glory of Christ and the blessing of the faithful, suggested by the case of Thomas, yet delicately avoiding any needlessly direct allusion to one so honoured of the Lord. It would, indeed, be as true to say that the Evangelist began more than once in John 1 as to admit more than one ending in John 20, 21. In fact, if men are to reason thus from superficial appearances, it would be more plausible to infer at least two, if not three, supplements to the Epistle to the Romans. Nor is authority wanting which transports the doxology from the end of John 16 to that of John 14. Yet it is to be doubted if the hypothesis there be so unnatural as it would be here to sever the third manifestation of the Lord in resurrection from the two which preceded it, or even to admit the former as a later addition, since it is necessary to the completeness of the picture. It is the true complement. In no way is it, as men have thought, a mere supplement, since it forms an essential part of one organic whole; just as John 2: 1-22 pertains as a sequel to John 1, and never could be justly dislocated from it, as an afterthought supplied at a later date even by the same hand.

Mr. J. B. McClellan, in his "New Testament" (I. 744-747), is an honourable exception to the fashion of the day, which subordinates sound criticism to subjective ideas. On the one hand, the external authority is full and unimpeachable; on the other, the peculiarity of the Evangelist's manner has not been fairly taken into account by any who have indulged in the hypothetical Appendix. John was led of the Spirit to intervene from time to time with the expression of his heart at what affected his Divine Master for good or ill, or at the testimony rendered in His words, in His ways, and in the signs that accompanied all as here. More than this is a spurious inference, which severs chapter 21 from its due place. How discreditable to the self-vaunting "modern critics" that they allow their own thoughts to run away with them in the face of overwhelming authority and consentient witnesses! Nor is this all. For the true internal evidence is conclusive for the continuity of the text as it stands, as it demands the chapter which follows to complete the scope of this Gospel in general, and especially the bearing of what was begun in the latter part of chapter 20.

## **JOHN — THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER\*376**

\* [Cf. "Introductory Lectures," p. 566 ff.]

It is impossible fairly to sever the manifestation of Jesus at the lake of Tiberias from the two previous scenes of which it is the complement; as, indeed, verse 14 warrants us to say with decision. It is, therefore, quite improper to speak of John 21 as an Appendix, still more so to speculate on its being written at an interval of some length after the rest of the Gospel: an inference due chiefly, if not altogether, to a misunderstanding of the two closing verses of John 20, as has been already pointed out.

The reader will notice that the connection is immediate and marked with the two previous manifestations of the risen Lord. First, we have seen Him (after making Himself known to Mary of Magdala and sending by her a most characteristic message to His disciples) standing in their midst when gathered together, without seeing Him enter, on the first or resurrection day of the week, in their enjoyment of peace and the mission of peace in the power of the Spirit to remit and retain sins in His name. Secondly, we have seen Him eight days after meeting His disciples again when Thomas was there, representing saved Israel of the latter day who only believe by the sight of Him risen. Now we have the beautiful picture of the millennial ingathering from the sea of Gentiles, which follows the Jews returning as such to the Lord, as all prophecy leads us to expect. The third scene follows in due

order the second, on which the future truth conveyed by it hangs as a consequence, as here said to be "after these things."

## John 21: 1-14.

"After these things Jesus manifested Himself<sup>377</sup> again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and He manifested (Himself) thus. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus (that is, Twin), and Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, and the (sons) of Zebedee,<sup>378</sup> and two others of His disciples.<sup>379</sup> Simon Peter saith to them, I go away to fish. They say to him, We also come with thee.<sup>379a</sup> They went forth, and entered\* into the boat, and that night took nothing. But when early morn was now breaking†, Jesus stood on† the shore: however, the disciples did not know that it was (lit. 'is') Jesus. Jesus therefore saith to them, Children [lads], have ye anything to eat? They answered Him, No. And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye will find. They cast, therefore, and were no longer able‡ to draw it from the multitude of fishes" (verses 1-6).<sup>380</sup>

\* The Compl. rightly gives ἐν-, Erasmus wrongly ἄν-, with Steph., Be., and Elz., though not without uncials (ΔΛ) and other support; but the Compl. is as wrong as the rest in adding εὐθὺς with many more MSS.

† γεῦ. Text. Rec., [Blass] early read in uncials, and most copies; γιν. ABCpmEL, ten cursives, etc. [Tisch., W. and H., Weiss]. The MSS. also differ as to ἐπὶ [Tisch., Blass] and εἰς [W. and H., Weiss].

‡ The more correct form ἵσχυον is given by BCDLΠ, more than ten cursives, many Latin copies, Syriac, etc.

Peter, with his usual energy, proposes to go a-fishing, and six others accompany him. But the result is no better than when some of the same disciples with the same Peter essayed to catch fish before his call and theirs. Even in the days of the kingdom the power must be manifestly of the Lord, not of man nor of the saints themselves; and Peter must, and would, learn the lesson, if the Roman Catholic sect falsely claiming Peter refuse it in pride. It is not yet the kingdom manifested in power and glory, but in mystery for such as have ears to hear. And although grace works its wonders, the nets break, and the boats threaten to sink, even when their partners come to share in taking the great multitude of fishes.

Here Jesus is not aboard, and there is no putting out into the deep, but with the early morn just breaking He stood on the beach, and still unknown put a question which brought out their confessed lack of success. Then comes the word, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye will find." And so it was; for so casting they were now unable to draw the net for the multitude of fishes. It is the figure of the great millennial haul from among the nations, when the salvation of all Israel will prove to be incomparably blessed to the Gentiles. If their "fall" has been so fraught with good in Divine grace, how much more their "fulness" (Rom. 11: 12), of which these seven Israelites may be the pledge?<sup>380a</sup> The once rejected but now risen Christ is to be the head of the heathen, not only of the Church now on high, but by and by of the nations on the earth, owned by previously unbelieving Israel to be their Lord and their God. Then will the Jew sing, "God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him"; (Ps. 67: 6ff.) and again, "Princes shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God, Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto Jehovah. (Ps. 68: 31ff.) In the figure of that day the nets do not break, nor is there any thought of putting the fishes into the boat, still less of gathering the good into vessels and casting the bad away. The weakness of man and of earthly circumstances wanes before the present power of the Lord Who directs all.

Augustine may be safely regarded as the ablest and most enlightened of the early writers on this sign, which he compares with that which preceded the call of Simon Peter and the sons of Zebedee. He is right in distinguishing the take of fish which followed the resurrection from the miraculous draught before it. Nor does any other among the ancients add to the truth of his observations, Gregory the Great rather darkening the force of our Scripture by his effort to make much of Peter's part in order to help on the Papal pretensions then in course of rapid growth. The earlier miracle he regards as significant of the good and evil in the Church, as it is now; the later, of the good only which it is to have for ever when the resurrection of the just is accomplished in the end of this age (Serm. ccxlviii.-cclii., etc.).

Enough, perhaps, has been said already which anticipatively corrects so erroneous an interpretation of the sign before us. There is no thought of a fishing scene in the resurrection either of just or unjust, no truth in the employing of Jews or men for gathering in the risen righteous to their heavenly and eternal rest. The fathers saw nothing of the future restoring of the kingdom to Israel, nor of the general blessedness of all nations as such under the reign of the Lord in the age to come. The moderns are in general no less uninstructed; for though some see and allow the restoration of Israel to their land and the accomplishment of the glory promised so largely throughout the Old Testament, they somehow, with strange inconsistency, merge all into this age. They do not perceive that these are among the constituents of the age to come, before the eternal state when there will be no difference between Jew and Gentile absolutely, as there is none even now for the Christian and the Church.

But here is another source of this deep, long-lasting, and widespread misconception. Men, and even good men, fail to see the true nature of the Church, as they do not believe in the special features of the millennial age. How much error would be avoided if they discerned the peculiar character and unexampled privilege of the body of Christ in union with its heavenly head, since redemption, while He sits at God's right hand! How much more, if they looked for His return with His bride, already complete and caught up to be with Him on high, to make His foes His footstool, and Judah His goodly horse in the battle which introduces Jehovah-Jesus King over all the earth-one Jehovah, and His name one in that day! It is as egregious to confound with the Church wherein is neither Jew nor Greek all this distinctive blessing of Israel and the nations on the earth under the reign of the Lord, as it is to merge both in the end of the age or in the eternity which, they assume, is to follow. They blot out the new age to come, which is to be characterised by the reign of the second Man, the Lord Jesus, the absence of Satan, the exaltation of the glorified saints in power on high, and the blessedness of all the families of the earth here below.

But these all stand indelibly written in the Scriptures; and no strugglings of unbelief can get rid of a truth which may be, and is, offensive to the pride of nature and the worldly mind, as it would prove full of help and value to Christian men often perplexed by their own misreading of revelation and their misconception, consequently, of what is to be sought or expected at this present time. For there is no error which does not bear its own baneful fruits; and the error in question, though not assailing fundamental truth, affects most extensively the right understanding of the past, the present, and the future. Thus are the chief characteristic differences blurred, and an undistinguishable vague is presented; whereas the word of God affords the fullest light on the various dispensations, as well as on that mystery in regard of Christ and of the Church which comes in between and is superior to either.

The love which is of God makes the eye single, and thereby the whole body is full of light. John was quick to discern the Lord. "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith to Peter, It is the Lord. Then Simon Peter, hearing that it was (lit. 'is') the Lord, girt his overcoat about (him)-for he was naked-and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net of the fishes. So when they had got off to

the land, they see a coal-fire laid, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them, Bring of the fish which ye took just now. Simon Peter (therefore)\* went up and drew the net to land† full of great fishes, a hundred (and) fifty-three: and, many as they were, the net was not rent. Jesus saith to them, Come, dine. And none of the disciples durst inquire of Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was (lit. 'is') the Lord. Jesus‡ cometh and taketh the bread and giveth to them, and the fish likewise. This already (was the) third (time) Jesus was manifested to the disciples§ after having risen from (the) dead" (verses 7-14).

\* BCLLPm, etc., add οὐν [W. and H.], contrary to most uncials and cursives [Tisch., Weiss, Blass].

† Most, with Text. Rec., read ἐπὶ τῆς γ., but the best εἰς τὴν γ., a few ἐπὶ τὴν γ.

‡ οὐν is added by most, but BCDLX, etc., do not warrant it.

§ Text. Rec., against ABCL, etc., adds αὐτοῦ, "his."

But if John was the first to perceive Who He was that spoke to them,381 Peter, with characteristic promptness, is the first to act so as to reach His presence, yet not naked, but in seemly guise. He had failed miserably and profoundly and repeatedly, but not his faith; even as the Saviour had prayed for him that it should not fail. Despair because of the gravest failure is no more of faith than the indifference which hears not the Saviour's voice, and, never knowing His glory or His grace, never has the consciousness of its own guilt. In the Lord he thus learns experimentally to confide, after having too much trusted his own love for his Master; and Christ must be all to the heart of him who is to strengthen his brethren.

The Lord, however, despises none, and the other disciples follow in the small boat, dragging the net full of the fishes; for He had not given such a haul to leave it behind. Grace makes to differ, never to behave oneself unseemly. Peter carried himself suitably toward the Lord; so did they in their place; for, indeed, they all had one heart and purpose to please the Lord.

Thus will it be when the abundance of the sea shall be converted to Zion. What will not be the effect of all Israel being saved? "If their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (Rom. 11: 12, 15.) Jehovah will destroy the veil that is spread over all nations; and Israel will not only be the instrument of Divine vengeance on their enemies, but of God's mercy and blessing to all the families of the earth. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as dew from Jehovah, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations in the midst of many peoples as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and there is none to deliver" (Micah 5: 7, 8).

It is remarked and remarkable that, when the disciples landed, they see a fire laid, and fish thereon and bread. The Lord had wrought before them and without them, though He would give them communion with the fruits of the activity of His grace. He will have got ready a Gentile remnant Himself before He employs His people to gather the great millennial catch out of the sea of Gentiles. The grace of God will work after a far more varied and vigorous sort than men think; and while He deigns to use His people, it is good for them at that very time to learn that He can, and does, work independently. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! How verified both in Israel and in the Gentile!

Yet the Lord would have His own enter into the fellowship of what He has wrought as well as enjoy their own work. "Jesus saith to them, Bring of the fish which ye just now took. Simon Peter, therefore, went up and drew the net to land, full of great fishes a hundred and fifty-three;<sup>382</sup> and, as many as there were, the net was not rent. Jesus saith to them, Come, dine."

The contrast with all that characterises the actual work of His servants is very plain. The parable in Matt. 13: 47 shows us that even up to the close of the age good and bad fish are contained in the net, and that it is the marked call of the fishermen just then to put the good into vessels as well as to cast the bad away; whilst the angels, as we know, do the converse work, when judgment comes at the Lord's appearing, of severing the wicked from among the righteous. The miraculous draught in Luke 5: 4-9, descriptive of present service, shows us the nets breaking and the boats into which the fishes were put beginning to sink. Nothing of this appears here where the days of the kingdom are set forth, when the Lord is with His own on earth. There are many great fishes named, but none bad; the net is expressly said to be unrent; there is no thought of the boat sinking, and the net was dragged along instead of the boat being filled. Thus a wholly different and future state of things is pictured after this age closes and before eternity begins.

The Lord will surely yet and thenceforward renew His associations with His people on earth: I speak not of the Father's house on high and its heavenly relations, but of those to be blessed and a blessing on earth. It is an unquestionably scriptural prospect, and most cheering, that this very earth is to be delivered from its present corruption and thralldom into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God." (Rom. 8: 21.) For the revelation of His sons the earnest expectation of the creation waits, though, as we know, the whole of it groans and travails in pain till now. But it will not be so always. The Lord Himself is coming, and the day of His appearing will see creation delivered, not, of course, as we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit are now into the liberty of grace by faith, but the creation itself also by power shall be freed into the liberty of glory. It will be the kingdom of God, no longer a secret to faith, but displayed in power and in all its extent of blessing, with its earthly things and its heavenly, as the Lord intimated to Nicodemus, and as we are taught in Eph. 1 and Col. 1 in connection with the headship of Christ and His reconciliation.

Here the Lord on that day was giving the pledge of the future widespread blessing, when the Gentile world will afford common joy, and the occasion of the manifestation of His risen power and presence, to His people. None but He could or would act after such a sort. His grace is unmistakable. "And none of the disciples durst inquire of Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus cometh and taketh the bread and giveth to them, and the fish likewise.<sup>383</sup> This already (was the) third (time) Jesus was manifested to the disciples,<sup>384</sup> after being risen from the dead." It is the day, prefigured in prophecy and awaited by the saints from of old, when they shall all know Him from the least of them to the greatest of them, none more needing to say, Know the Lord. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem; and they shall no more walk after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel; and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I caused your fathers to inherit" (Jer. 3: 17, 18).

There would be an utter gap for this world and God's glory in it, a gap which nothing else could fill up for him who takes a large and observant view of God's dealings with the world, if there were not a period of Divine blessedness here below for Israel and the nations through the grace and to the praise of the risen Lord Jesus. This does not in the least interfere with the deeper and higher things above the world to which the Christian and the Church are now called. On the contrary, when the reality and the true character of the kingdom at Christ's appearing are not seen, there is a confusion of it with the

proper hopes of the Church, which is ruinous to the distinctive blessedness of the Church on the one hand and of Israel with the Gentiles on the other.

But our Gospel, while fully revealing God in Christ on earth, and in these closing chapters tracing His ways in Christ risen, first for the Christian and the assembly, next for Israel, and lastly for the Gentiles, never loses sight of grace working with the individual soul. Thus Peter must be thoroughly restored and publicly reinstated; so would the Lord have it. He had been already singled out specially (Mark 16: 7) at a moment when such a distinction was of all moment, both to himself and before his brethren, who would naturally have regarded with deep distrust the man who had so grievously, and spite of full warning, denied his Master. And before the eleven had the Lord standing in their midst, He had appeared to Simon (Luke 24: 34; 1 Cor. 15: 5). But He would carry on the gracious work profoundly in Peter's heart, and let us into the secrets of this truly Divine discipline.

"When, therefore, they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon (son) of Jonah (or, John),\* lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I dearly love Thee. He saith to him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again a second time, Simon (son) of Jonah,\* lovest thou Me? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I dearly love Thee. He saith to him, Tend My sheep. He saith to him the third time, Simon (son) of Jonah,\* dost thou dearly love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, Dost thou dearly love Me? and he said to Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I dearly love Thee. Jesus saith to him, Feed My sheep (or, little sheep) (verses 15-17).385

\* "John" is supported by a few of the oldest authorities [Edd.], "Jonah," or Jonas, too, being perhaps only an abridged form of the name Johanan or Jehohanan.

The Lord goes to the root of the matter. He does not speak of Peter's denying Him, but penetrates to its cause. Peter fell through confidence in himself, at least in his love to his Master. He judged that he might go where others could not safely, and that he would stand to the confession of His name in the face of prison and death. The result we all know too well. The greatest of the twelve denied the Lord repeatedly, and swore to it, notwithstanding fresh and solemn warning. But restoration is not complete, though we own the fruit ever so fully. In order to thorough blessing the Lord would have us, like Peter here, to discern the hidden spring. This he had not reached yet: the Lord makes it known to His servant. There is no haste; He waits till they had broken their fast, and then He says to Simon Peter: "Simon (son) of John, lovest thou (ἀγαπᾷς) Me more than these?" He calls him by his natural name; for well He knew wherein lay the secret which gave a handle to the enemy; and He would awaken a true sense of it in the Apostle's soul. Through assurance of his own superior affection he had not merely trusted in himself, in comparison with others, but slighted the word of the Lord. Had he laid His words to heart with prayer, he had not fallen when tried, but endured the temptation and suffered. But it was not so. He was sure that he loved the Lord more than all the rest; and if they could not stand such a sifting, he would; and this confidence in his own surpassing love to Christ was precisely the cause, as the interrogation of the bystanders was the occasion, of his fall. And now the Lord lays the root bare to Peter, who had already wept over the open fruit.

Yet at first Peter does not discover the aim of the Lord. He does avoid unwise comparison with others; he simply appeals to the Lord's inward conscious knowledge: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I dearly love (φιλῶ) Thee." Far from denying his profession of tender affection, the Lord proves His own value for it, and His confidence in Peter. For He, the Good Shepherd, about to quit the world, entrusts to His servant that which was unspeakably precious in His eyes and most of all needed His care: "Feed My lambs." Thus does He prove our love by answering to His love for the weakest of

saints. "Whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." We love because He first loved us; but it is not that we love Him only, but those that are His, not those that love us naturally, but those that He loves as divinely. "He that saith, I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"; and "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

Did not Peter deeply and increasingly feel the Lord's loving trust thus reposed in him, more than even before he fell? The administration of the kingdom of the heavens, the keys (not of the Church nor of heaven, but) of the kingdom, had been promised to Peter, and made good in due time. Here it is more tender and intimate, though there is no ground to extend the flock here committed to him beyond those of the circumcision (*cf.* Gal. 2). Did he not remember Isa. 40: 11, in communion with the blessed Messiah in His work of feeding that flock like a shepherd, gathering the lambs with His arm, and carrying them in His bosom, while gently leading the nursing ewes?

The Lord appeals once more, but drops all reference to others. "He saith to him again a second time, Simon (son) of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I dearly love Thee. He saith to him, Feed My sheep." It is painfully instructive that even such a ripe scholar as Grotius should commit himself to an opinion so unworthy as that these marked changes of expression represent no weighty distinctions of truth.\* But Peter, though he no longer thinks disparagingly of others, cannot give up his assurance that the Lord was inwardly aware of his true affection for Himself. And the Lord now bids him tend or rule His sheep, as before feed His lambs.<sup>386</sup> So Peter at a later day impresses the same on the elders among the Jewish Christians he was addressing. sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus and other districts of Asia Minor: "Tend the flock of God which is among you, overseeing not of constraint, but willingly; nor yet for filthy lucre, but readily; nor as fording it over your possessions, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5: 2, 3).

\* "Promiscue hic usurpavit Johannes ἀγαπᾶς et φιλεῖν, ut mox βόσκειν et ποιμαίνειν. Neque hic quaerendae subtilitates."

In the Lord's words, as in the apostle's, it will be noticed to our profit how carefully the lambs and the sheep are said to be Christ's, not the elders', nor even the apostle's. The flock is God's flock. He who treats Christians as *his* congregation is guilty of the same forgetfulness of Divine grace and Divine authority as the congregation in regarding the minister as *their* minister, instead of Christ's. If any think these to be slight distinctions, it is clear that they have no right apprehension of a difference which is as deep in truth as it is fraught with the most momentous consequences for good and ill in practice. Only this gives moral elevation, as it alone springs from faith; this alone delivers from self and gives the true relation and character, even Christ, whether to those that minister or to those ministered to.

But the Lord speaks to him yet again. "He saith to him the third time, Simon (son) of John, dost thou dearly love Me?" Here the probe reached the bottom. Not a word of blame or reproach; but the Lord for the third time questions him, and for the first time takes up his own word of special affection. Did not his threefold denial appear in the light of the threefold appeal, and, above all, of that word expressive of endearing love? "Peter was grieved, because He said to him the third time, Dost thou dearly love Me? and he said to Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I dearly love Thee. Jesus saith to him, Feed My sheep," or, if the reading of the Alexandrian, the Vatican, and the Paris palimpsest, etc., be preferred, My "little sheep,"\* a diminutive of tenderness and endearment.

\* [So W. and H., but Blass follows Syrsin reading πρόβατα.]

The work of restoration was now fully done. Peter abandons every thought of self, and can find refuge only in grace. Only He Who of Himself knows all without an effort, only He could give credit to Peter's heart, spite of his mouth and all appearances; yet did not He know that His poor denying servant dearly loved Him? The answer of the Lord, committing afresh what was dearest to Him on earth—the gift of the Father's love to Himself—seals Peter's restoration, not in soul only, but in his relation to the sheep of His pasture. *Feed* them, says the Lord. To tend or rule pastorally is not forgotten; but positive nourishment, as of the lambs at the beginning, remains to the last the abiding task of the shepherd, the habitual need of the sheep; but it demands enduring and deep love, not to scold, perhaps, or govern, but to feed, and not least of all the least of all Christ's sheep. Only the love of Christ can carry one through it.

But this is not all. It is not enough for the Lord to restore fully the soul of Peter and to more than reinstate him in his relation to the sheep which might have seemed otherwise compromised. Grace would give him in God's due time what he had not only lost, but turned to his own shame and his Master's dishonour, the confession of His name even to prison and death.

"Verily, verily, I say to thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. And this He said, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And having said this, He saith to him, Follow Me" (verses 18, 19).387-389

In this, as in what precedes and in what follows, actions and words are veiled yet significant. There was the intention to convey important and interesting truth, but only to such as weighed all and went not beyond the just hearing of the Lord's sayings or doings. Peter was then in his prime of natural vigour. In his youth (and he was still far from being an old man) he was ready for energetic action, and disposed to use his liberty with too little distrust of himself. He had just ventured to go whither he would, into the high priest's house; and as far as doughty words promised, one might have thought he had girded up his loins like a man to do great feats of valour, or to endure a great fight of afflictions for his betrayed and insulted Master. The issue we all know too well; and Peter had been led more and more to see and feel it, till he had now got down to the root and judged it thoroughly before God. But now also the Lord lets him know that grace would give him back what had seemed for ever lost to him, the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and conformity to His death, far more, in fact, than Peter in his own too confident love and strength had proffered before he miserably broke down.

See how grace shuts out all ground for boasting while it secures honour beyond what we in our most sanguine desires ever anticipated. Is not this worthy of God and suited to His saints? When Peter went forward according to his own words, he came to worse than nothing; he a most favoured servant, denying the Holy and Righteous One, his own most gracious Master. It was the deepest humiliation, yet was he a true saint and a loving disciple; but so it was because he entered into temptation at his own charges, instead of enduring it, when tried by it, according to God. Thus his fall was inevitable; for none can endure save in faith and self-judgment. To be a believer and fervently to love the Lord will not preserve in the least under such circumstances, however strange this may sound to many, who little think how often and deeply they deny the Lord practically, in great matters and small to which He attaches His name. We must be put to shame in whatever thing we are proud; and how much better is even this gain, than to be let go on in unrebuked self-complacency?

But the Lord promises Peter that, when he should be old, he should stretch forth his hands, and another gird and carry him whither he would not. Thus, when it was no longer possible to boast of his own strength or courage, as a helpless old man, Peter would enjoy from God the singular privilege, not

only of death for Christ's sake which in younger days he had essayed to face and most ignominiously failed in, but of that very death which the Lord had suffered with its prolonged agony and shame. For the Lord, as we are expressly told, said as He did, signifying not death so much as "by what" sort of death Peter was to glorify God; and after saying this, He saith to him, Follow Me.

The allusion was scarcely mistakable. In those days, when such a punishment was common enough for the lowest slaves and guiltiest criminals, every one understood the meaning of being "lifted up," or outstretching the arms by the force of another. Again, the illustrative act of calling Peter to follow Him as He walked some paces on the shore made plain its grave intent. Yet even then and thus, another carrying him whither he would not proves how little of self was to be in Peter's death on the cross in contrast with those who, at a later day and a day lower incomparably, sought a martyr's death to win this crown. No! Peter's close on earth was to be suffering and death for Christ, Who would give him to endure at the fit moment. Not heroism nor asceticism is the Christian badge, but obedience.

The lesson of its surpassing grace abides for us who love the same Saviour, and have a nature no better than the disciple's. Have we been taught it? Can one learn it safely and surely, save as following Christ? "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." Peter when called should follow the Master; and so he did. May the same grace strengthen and guide us in the same path for life or death! To follow Christ as He calls is our best service.

The ardent mind of Peter, kindled by the solemn intimation of the Lord, seizes the opportunity to inquire about one so closely linked with him as the beloved disciple. It is hard in this question to discern the jealousy of the active for the contemplative life, of which early and mediaeval writers say much. But the Lord gives him the correction he needed.

"Peter\* turning round seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following (who also at the supper leaned on his breast, and said, Lord, who is he that delivereth Thee up?); Peter, therefore,† seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what (of) this man? Jesus saith to him, If I will that he abide till I come, what (is it) unto thee? Follow thou Me. This saying, therefore, went forth among the brethren that that disciple doth not die; yet Jesus said not to him, that he doth not die; but, If I will that he abide till I come, what (is it) to thee?‡" (verses 20-23).390-392

\* Text. Rec., which DXΓΔΠ2 and others support, adds δὲ, "but," not the other ancient manuscripts.

† The highest authorities add οὖν, "therefore," but most oppose.

‡ pm is alone in omitting τί πρόσ σὲ "what is it to thee?" [so Cod. Vercellensis of Old Lat., and Syrsin hier].

It was really loving interest concerning one more closely associated with himself than his own brother Andrew by the bond of a common affection for Jesus and of Jesus. This made Peter curious to learn about John now that his own earthly destiny was just revealed. But the gracious Lord, if He reproved in His own gentleness the prying spirit of His servant, did furnish ample matter for thought in the riddle He sets before Peter. One can readily see how shallow is the notion of Augustine and many since his day, that the Lord meant no more than John's living to a protracted and placid age, in contrast with Peter slain violently in old age, as with his own brother James in youth. Peter emphatically was to follow the Lord even in His death as far as this could be. Not so John, who was to abide hanging on the will of the Lord till He came. "If I will that he abide," etc.

Needless to say that there is evident and intentional mystery in the manner it was spoken of; and

some have supposed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of the Jewish polity are here alluded to; as there is certainly more in such a thought than a merely peaceful death in advanced age. For death is in no true sense the Lord's coming, but rather the converse, our going to Him.<sup>393</sup> We know, at any rate, that to John it was given to see the Son of man judging the churches, and to have visions not only of God's providential dealings with the world whether Jews or Gentiles, but of the Lord's return in judgment of the apostate powers of the earth and of the man of sin, in order to the establishment of the long-predicted kingdom of God and the times of the restitution of all things, with the still higher glory in the New Jerusalem.

Out of the Lord's words, perverted as they speedily were, the synagogue seems to have had its fable of the wandering Jew, and Christendom its Prester John, to entertain minds which had lost the truth either through rejecting Christ or by turning to superstition.

But this we learn of great practical moment from verse 23, how dangerous it is to trust tradition, even the earliest, and how blessed to have the unerring standard of God's written word. The saying that went forth among the brethren in apostolic times seemed a most natural, if not necessary, inference from the words of our Lord. But we do not well to accept unreservedly an inferential statement, still less to be drawn into a system built on such deductions. We have the word of the Lord, and faith bows to it for its joy and rest to God's glory. Error easily insinuates itself into the first remove from what He says, as the Apostle instructs us here that the Lord did not affirm that that disciple was not to die, but "If I will that he abide till I come." Yet those who let in this primitive mistake were not enemies, were not grievous wolves, or men speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. It was "among the brethren" that the tradition, unfounded and misleading, got spread. Miracles did not hinder, nor gifts, nor power, nor unity. The mistake arose from reasoning, instead of cleaving to the word of the Lord. The brethren, through lack of subjection to God and of distrust in themselves, gave the words a meaning, instead of simply receiving from them their true import. No wonder another great Apostle commends us to God and to the word of His grace; for if we may fully profit by His word in simple dependence on Himself, we cannot duly honour Him if we slight His word. And though it is by the Holy Spirit that we are thus kept and blest, even He is in no sort the standard of truth (while He is power in every way), but Christ as revealed in the written word.<sup>394</sup>

Last of all comes the personal seal or attestation of the writer. "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they were written one by one, I suppose that not even the world itself would contain the books that should be written" (verses 24, 25).<sup>\*</sup> It was John, and no other.<sup>394a</sup> Every inspired writer preserves none the less his own style and manner, and none more unmistakably than he who wrote the fourth Gospel. Yet what was written is but a sample, selected in Divine wisdom, and with a specific plan subserving the grand scope and purpose of Divine revelation. If everything which Jesus did were written out, well might the adoring evangelist suppose that the world itself would be too small for the needed books.<sup>395</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Verse 25 is omitted in Tischendorf's eighth edition on the slender omission of the Sinaitic copy [*prima manu*], supposed to be confirmed by "Scholia," edited by Matthæi. The Ἀμήν at the end (Text. Rec.) is not in ABCD, etc. [Blass brackets the verse; see W. and H., "Select Readings," p. 90 f].<sup>396</sup>

It may be noticed how strikingly the close of the Gospel answers to the beginning, or at least the latter part of John 1 and 2. For though the subject be the Person of the Son manifested on earth, and then sending the Holy Spirit on His going to the Father, while thus beyond all others consisting of eternal truth and the highest privilege, yet is there care, before and after this is done historically, to

show that the dispensational ways of God are in no way slighted. The latter part of John 20 and the beginning of John 21 are the counterpart of the early notice. We may add that the Epistles of John are, of course, devoted to the deeper task of tracing eternal life and the fellowship it gives with the Father and the Son, of which the word, through the Apostles, is the revelation, and the Holy Spirit is the power. The book of the Apocalypse, on the other hand, is the full and final unfolding of the dispensational ways of God; but it also reveals that which is above them all, and their connection with heaven and eternity brought before us far more completely and vividly than anywhere else in the testimony of God.