

## John 7 - 12

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Part 2 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 SEVENTH CHAPTER\*

\*[Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 456-460.]

## John 7: 1-13.

The Lord had thus propounded His humiliation and His death, with His ascension to heaven, completely setting aside the carnal expectations then prevalent as to His kingdom. He had done more than this; He had taught the absolute necessity of appropriating Himself, both incarnate and dying, for eternal life. He had pointed forward all hope to resurrection at the last day, however unintelligible to the Jews, and repulsive even to many of His disciples. They looked for present honour and glory through the Messiah; they could not bear death with Him, opening into resurrection life and glory.

"(And)\* after these things Jesus walked in Galilee,<sup>136</sup> for He was unwilling to walk in Judæa, because the Jews<sup>136a</sup> were seeking to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the tabernacles, was near. His brethren therefore said unto Him, Remove hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples too may behold Thy works which Thou doest; for no one doeth anything in secret, and seeketh himself to be in public. If Thou doest these things, show Thyself to the world. For not even did His brethren believe on Him."

\* καὶ is read by most uncials and cursives, but not pm D, etc.

Thus we see the Lord in the despised place the True Light, not in the city of solemnities, where darkness reigned the more, because it was least suspected; and in Galilee He walks about on His errand of love. He does not wait for souls to seek Him; He seeks them, that, believing, they might, have life in Him. Judæa He avoids, knowing that the people of that part of the country, identifying themselves with the murderous hatred of their rulers, were seeking to kill Him. He was unwilling, not (one need not say) afraid, to walk about there. He was subject to His Father's will in this. He must complete the work given Him to do. As He said to certain Pharisees who sought to move Him by naming Herod's desire to kill Him, "I cast out demons and accomplish healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected (that is, reach the end of My course); but I must proceed to-day, and to-morrow, and the next (day), because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13: 32f.). He knew perfectly the end from the beginning. He feared not man. He goes up at the appointed moment to do and suffer all the will of God, as well as all from man and Satan.

The festival then at hand, the feast of Tabernacles, tests man afresh, or rather our Lord tests by means of it. Those attached to Him by natural kin, His brethren,\* were impatient at His Galilean sojourn, at His separateness from the centre of religious life and honour. As the Passover closely connected itself with the truth of the last chapter, so the Tabernacles furnished the occasion for what the Lord brings out here. There the blood of the lamb, itself eaten by the Israelites, points to His death, let them hear or forbear. Here the gathering of the people to rejoice was after the harvest and the vintage, types of the various forms of Divine judgment at the end of the age when Israel, at rest in the land, will remember their former days of pilgrimage, was pre-eminently the season of triumph, which proclaimed the promises fulfilled.

\*["*His brethren* were sons of Mary after His own birth. Of course, we can understand that Romanists have been anxious to make out that they were sons of Joseph, and not of Mary, but they were sons of Mary and of Joseph. They would like to make it out, sons of a former marriage of Joseph. We do not know anything of a former marriage, nor do they. We do know that Scripture is quite plain."-From "Lectures on Jude."]<sup>137</sup>

But was it really so now? Because Jesus, the Messiah, was there, and working such works as He did, was the time come for the accomplishment of Israel's hopes? So His brethren thought, because they wished it for themselves, though they put forward His disciples, and their need of seeing His

works, and this in Judæa. No thought had they of God, not the faintest conception that in the obscurity of Galilee Jesus was glorifying the Father, and manifesting the Father's name to those the Father gave Him. They betrayed their own condition, their ignorance of God, their lack of self-judgment, their unconsciousness not only of their own ruin, but of the world, their unbelief of Him Who deigned to be born of their family: Who He was, and what He had come to do, was in none of their thoughts. They reasoned from self, not from God, and were thus so much the more hopelessly wrong as it concerned the Lord. "No one," said they, "doeth anything in secret, and seeketh to be in public. If Thou doest these things, show Thyself to the world." It was what they would have done. They sought, and conceived that every wise man must seek, present glory. Had they never heard One Who taught even His disciples to do their alms and pray and fast in secret to their Father, Who will render accordingly? If they had, the truth and will of God certainly had left no impression. The real ground of the wish and words was in this, that, as the evangelist solemnly adds, even His brethren did not believe on Him. Such is man, however nearly related, naturally.

"Jesus therefore saith to them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify concerning it that its works are evil. Go ye up unto the\* feast. I go not† up unto this feast, for My time is not yet fulfilled " (verses 6-8).

\* ταύτη is added here in Text. Rec., in the pm and eleven other uncials and many ancient versions [as Syrsin], but not in B and some of the best. It was probably taken from the next clause.

† οὐκ DKMP and the most ancient versions [including Syrr.] and fathers [Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Cyril]; οὐπω in BLT and eleven other uncials, etc. [Lachm., W. H., Weiss; but Blass adopts οὐκ, as did the American Revisers for their text.]<sup>138</sup>

In no sense does flesh profit, and the friendship with the world is enmity with God, Satan taking advantage of both against man as well as God. Jesus abides in perfect dependence (to speak of this only). His movements were invariably in obedience. In everything it was a question to Him of the Father. His single eye saw that His time to show Himself to the world was, and could be, not yet. Death, as He had implied even before His Galilean ministry began (John 2: 19-22), and is still more emphatically opened out in John 6, was before being displayed to the world. This will be in its due time; but here, as ever, the order is the sufferings that pertain to Christ, and the glories after these. First must He suffer many things and be rejected of this generation. Man's time, contrariwise, was always ready. They spoke as of the world, and the world heard them. They loved the world, and the things of the world; and the love of the Father was not in them, but, what they valued more, they were loved by the world as its own. Terrible position for His brethren, but not more terrible than true! How could the world hate those who so prized its honours? Jesus it did hate with a deadly hatred, because He bore witness about it that its works are evil a testimony most of all galling to the religious world, to the men of Judæa and Jerusalem. Hence the Lord bids them go up to this feast, while He tells them that He goes not up, His time not yet being fulfilled.

The significance of this is the more marked by His action in contradistinction from theirs, and, as read above all, in the light of His subsequent testimony on the great day of the feast."\* Having said these things to them,† He abode in Galilee. But when His brethren had gone up, then He Himself also went up, not manifestly, but as in secret. The Jews therefore sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring about Him among the crowds. Some said, He is good;<sup>139</sup> others said, No; but He deceiveth the crowd. No one, however, spoke openly about Him because of the fear of the Jews" (verses 9-13). The seventh chapter of John has this point of view, for the truth taught is based on the sixth; it supposes the Lord not only in death, but in ascension. There is a manifest break with the

world, and flesh is treated as proved no longer capable of association or communion. It really never was; but now it takes its own way, and the Lord withdraws. His brethren go up to the feast of Tabernacles without Him; He does not go up, but abides in Galilee. Only after they had gone does He go, and then not manifestly, as they desired, but as in secret—more so than ever before. He is content to be, as it were, hidden: type of that which He really is now, and we with Him, as far as our life is concerned, hid in God.

\* δὲ is added in many uncials.

† For αὐτοῖς DKLXII, etc., excellent authority gives αὐτοῖς, "to them" [So W. H. and Weiss; but Blass accepts neither.]

This gives rise to questions and whispers about Him among the crowds, some speaking patronisingly, others with the utmost ill-will and contempt; but even so there was no discourse in public, or plainly. The leaders of Judæa kept men in fear.

That the Lord had a deeper purpose in view was soon apparent. He had refused to go with His brethren; He had affirmed that the fit moment for displaying Himself to the world was not come. But God had a present mission for His Son. and He goes to Jerusalem to fulfil it.

## John 7: 14-36.

"But now in the midst of the feast Jesus went up unto the temple and taught. The Jews therefore\* wondered, saying, How knoweth this (man) letters, having not learned? Jesus therefore† answered them and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If one desire to do His will, he shall know about the doctrine whether it is of God or I speak from Myself. He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him—He is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him."

\* οὐκ BDLTX, some cursives, etc.; καὶ as in Text. Rec., most uncials cursives, and versions.

†Text. Rec., with DLX and few cursives, etc., omits οὐκ.

There was no secrecy now: Jesus was teaching in the temple. It was His actual work. Soon He would suffer in atonement. Now it was the time for giving out the truth, to the astonishment of those who lived in the region of law and ordinance, who could only ask how He could know since He had not learned. They knew Him not, they rose not above human sources. Jesus was quick and careful to vindicate His Father. What is learned from man man is proud of. His doctrine He would not allow to be His own in the sense of independence, any more than the derivation from human teaching, which they owned to be out of the question. It was not of man, but of Him that sent Him. Was this a high claim and easily made? Any one of single eye would soon see its reality. Faith alone gives a single eye. Others speculate and err. God guides and teaches him who desires to practise His will, as Christ gives the positive assurance that he shall know concerning the doctrine whether it is of God or whether He speaks from Himself. How comforting as well as surely verified! The Son was making known the Father; and God is faithful in this as in every other way. He Who counts every hair of our heads, and apart from Whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, cares for His children.

Every one that is of the truth hears the voice of Christ. Whatever their pretensions, all others are not of the truth: else they would know that His teaching is of God. Where we do not know, we must suspect ourselves, not blame God; if we really desired to do, we should soon learn God's will. Certainly He did not speak from Himself. Yet of all men He was most entitled. But if He is the true God, He is

true man, and came to exalt His Father, not Himself. He had no private ends to serve. Lord of all, He became the servant of all-above all, of God. Self is what blinds the race, even the faithful, so far as it is allowed to act. He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but Jesus never did so-always served to the glory of Him that sent Him. There is, there can be, no solid guarantee of the truth where God's glory is not sought and secured. Christ in this was perfect; and so He here declares that He is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. As self is what hinders the truth, so it is just to neither God nor man. Jesus is both true and righteous.

Further, when men boast, they are sure to be wrong, not only in other things, but most where they are haughtiest. Did the Jews pique themselves on the law of Moses? How vain to boast of that law which none of them practised! Yet so it was, as the Lord pressed on their consciences here. They reasoned, but what was their walk?" Hath not Moses given you the law? and none of you doeth the law. Why do ye seek to kill Me?" (verse 19). Jesus is ever the touchstone. One might never have learnt their murderous malice but for Him Who brought God close and convicted them of sin. This they could not bear, and so sought to get rid of Him, in their zeal for the law violating it utterly, and in their dark rebelliousness rejecting Him Who gave it by Moses. But is it now uncommon to glory in the law and hate the truth?

Yet the people in general were not aware how far hatred was impelling the leaders, and had no suspicion that they were bent on the death of Jesus. "The crowd answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill Thee? Jesus answered and said to them, One work I did, and ye all wonder because of this.<sup>141</sup> Moses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers), and on a sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on a sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are ye angry at Me because I made a man entirely sound on a sabbath?" (verses 20-23). In their ignorance the crowd spoke with rash irreverence and violence against the Lord, Who stops not to notice it, but draws attention to the absurdity of their quarrelling as well as of wondering at one work of His, the cure of the infirm at Bethesda on the sabbath. Yet it was a common matter of course to circumcise a male child on the eighth day spite of its being a sabbath, and this in honour of the law of Moses, though, in fact, circumcision was rather of the fathers. The Lord closes His reproof with an exhortation which touches the root of their cavils, "Judge not according to sight, but judge the righteous judgment" (verse 24). They had not brought in God, and were consequently wrong, not on the surface merely, but altogether. If the readings (as in Tischendorf's text) be κρίνετε . . . κρίνατε, the first warns against the evil habit in general, the second urges the righteous judgment they should follow on this occasion. It is clear that one wants Divine guidance, if we are not to judge according to appearance; but that is what God is so willing to vouchsafe His children, not teaching only, but direction and judgment. Knowing all, He knows also how to communicate what is needed by His own.

The Lord's plain speaking surprised, if the multitude, not such as knew the enmity of the rulers. "Some therefore of those of Jerusalem said, Is not this He Whom they seek to kill? And, behold, He speaketh openly, and they say nothing to Him. Did the rulers indeed decide that this is the Christ?<sup>142</sup> Howbeit we know Him whence He is; but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence He is.<sup>143</sup> Jesus therefore cried<sup>144</sup> in the temple, teaching and saying, Ye both know Me and ye know whence I am; and I have not come from Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not. I know Him, for I am from Him, and *He* hath sent Me" (verses 25-29). The men of Jerusalem, knowing too much of the rulers to accept their decisions absolutely, indulge in irony; but they, too, prove their ignorance like the rest. They did not know whence Jesus was, whilst they ought to have known where and when the Messiah was to be born. Isa. 7 and Micah 5 taught much more.

Jesus in replying contrasts their assumed knowledge of Him and His origin with their positive

ignorance of the Father Who sent Him. He assuredly knew the Father, as He was from Him and sent by Him. And the Father was not only truthful, but true, as the Son could attest in all its force, not the Jews, who knew not the Father. This drew on Him the open desire to lay hold of Him with which He had charged them. How little man knows himself any more than God, as Jesus shows! "They sought therefore to seize Him, and none laid hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. But many of the crowd believed on Him, and said, When the Christ cometh, will He do more signs than these\* which this (man) did?"\* (verses 30, 31).<sup>145</sup> Those who rejected the Lord for their tradition and will were only the more exasperated by the truth; but they were powerless till His hour came. God abides God, spite of man and Satan. His purpose stands, though the enemies betray and commit themselves; but even when they do their worst, they but fulfil the Scriptures they deny and the will of God they detest. Another effect also appears: "many of the crowd believed on Him." The truth might not enter conscience, and so the result be human; but at least it was felt and owned that from the Messiah none need expect more signs. Still all is vain Godward but Christ and the faith that receives Himself from the Father that sent Him.

\* ἐποίησεν, the common reading, is supported by corr.BLT and the body of the uncials and cursives, save pmD, 13, 69, and a few versions, which read ποιεῖ, "doeth." [So Blass. Syrsin has "showeth."] The best witnesses omit τούτων, "these" also.

The religious leaders are disturbed at any impression made on the multitude, and show their fear as well as their enmity. They dislike the truth they did not themselves possess, and would gladly get rid of Him Who told it out. "The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees\* sent officials to seize Him. Then said Jesus,† Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find‡; and where I am, ye cannot come" (verses 32-34). The Lord speaks with a solemn calmness. All efforts to apprehend Him would be vain till the appointed moment; nor need they hurry. It was but a little while for Him to be with them: then He is going to His Father. So it is ever in this Gospel. It is no question only of the rejection of men nor of the Jews despising Him, though both were true and fully set out by the Synoptic evangelists; but here the Spirit shows us One fully conscious of where He was going, and so speaking to all, if any by grace might believe and see God's glory in Him. Soon unbelief would seek and not find Him. What does the world know of the Father? Heaven is to it more dreary than the earth. "Where I am, ye cannot come;" nor would they if they could. Nothing is so repulsive to a sinner as the light, presence, and glory of God.

\*There is high authority for the transposition here as compared with the Text. Rec.

†There is little authority for adding αὐτοῖς "to them," as in Text. Rec.

‡BTX with a few cursives and ancient versions [as Syrsin] add με, which Lachmann edits here, and in verse 36 too.

"The Jews therefore said unto each other, Where is this (man) about to go that we shall not find Him? Is He about to go unto the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this word which He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find; and where I am, ye cannot come?" (verses 35, 36). It was blindness indeed; nor is any darkness so dense as that of unbelief. But it is striking that what the unbelieving pride of the Jew deemed incredible is what God has made true of Christ exalted to His right hand. It is not more certain that He went on high than that He came and preached peace to the Gentiles that were far off and peace to them that were nigh (Jews), giving both access by one Spirit to the Father. The dispersed among the Greeks\* are those that Peter shows to have found in Him the object of their faith, believing on Jesus in the Father's house as they believed on God; and Paul no less

clearly shows that he is teaching the Greeks. To those that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom—Christ crucified, let others count it an offence or foolishness. But He is none the less the Lord of glory, which none of the princes of this age knew: had they known it, they would not have crucified Him. And so it was that Scripture was verified, man humbled, and God glorified; even as those that dwelt in Jerusalem and their rulers, not knowing Him nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by their judgment of Him. And now is God pleased to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, "which is Christ among you the hope of glory." He is lost meanwhile to the Jew, who, seeking Him not in faith, cannot find Him nor come where He is; for He is in heaven, and they, given up more and more to an earthly mind, grovelling after filthy lucre.

\*The late Dr. Alford says (the Greek Test. in *loco*): "The διασπ. τ. Ἑλλ. must not be interpreted 'the Hellenistic Jews,' for the Ἕλληνες are always distinguished from the Jews; and this would convey hardly any meaning. The sense of διασπορᾶ is—see reff. James, 1 Peter—'the country where Jews lay scattered, as qualified by the succeeding genitive, where one occurs, as here. So here ἡ δ. τ. Ἑλ means 'the dispersed in the Gentile world.'" This seems a singular mystification of plain Greek. The meaning unquestionably is the Jews dispersed among the Greeks as representative of Gentiles in general. The country is in no way expressed, but at most implied. The Dean further confused the meaning in his Prolegg. to 1 Peter (Greek Test., iv., third edition, p. 123) by saying that δ. "may well designate the engrafting of Gentile (!) converts into dispersed Israel."

## John 7: 37-52.

But the Faithful Witness speaks. "Now in the last, the great, 146 day of the feast Jesus stood 147 and cried, saying, If any one thirst, let him come unto Me\* and drink. He that believeth on Me, even as the Scripture said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 148 But this said He of the Spirit, which they that believed† on Him were about to receive, for (the) Spirit‡ was not yet,‡ because Jesus was not yet glorified" (verses 37-39).

\*Tischendorf omits πρὸς (or ἐμὲ ), "unto me," on the testimony of pmD and a few other witnesses contrary to the great mass [as Syrsin, and so the other Edd.].

† πιστεύοντες the vast majority, πιστεύσαντες BLT, etc. [Syrin].

‡ ἅγιον and δεδομένον are evident additions, contrary to the best authorities. [KTI, etc., followed by most Edd., as Blass, The Vatican has the added words, which Weiss accepts.]

It is not the new birth, but the Holy Ghost in power of testimony, rather than of worship. Thus is it distinguished not merely from John 3, but also from John 4, even though He be given at the same time to be a fountain of living water springing up to life eternal within the believer, and rivers of living water flowing out, which suppose the soul already born afresh. It is not here, however, communion with the Father and the Son in the energy of the Spirit which goes upward in adoration; but the same Spirit going outward to refresh largely the weary and parched in the wilderness from the inmost affections of the believer. Both figures are strikingly true, but they are different, though enjoyed by the same individual. They are the characteristic power and privilege of the Christian, not only the Divine life, but this in the power of the Spirit going up to its source in praise, or flowing out actually in testimony to Christ in a dry and thirsty land. Here it is the glorified man Who is the object, as in chapter 4 the Son of God is the giver.

Even so there is the most careful guard against coming to the Lord merely for teaching as a

scholar or for material as a teacher: both in Divine things attitudes of peril to the soul. "If any one *thirst*, let him come unto Me and *drink*." It is the heart met in its own need, not men invited to draw for others, but to drink for themselves; and thus it is they safely and best learn so as to teach others also. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Such is the general testimony of Old Testament Scriptures; and so the Lord urges even more distinctly. But this follows not only the coming, but the glorification of Jesus founded on His work. Only then could the streams flow thus abundantly from "the inward parts," truth being there already, and God on His part perfectly glorified in the cross. The Holy Spirit could act freely and in power, on the owned ruin of the first man, to the glory of Him Who is at God's right hand, and in those who are His for a little while in a dry and thirsty land where otherwise no water is. But now, to His praise Whom the Spirit is here to glorify, water is given, not alone the fountain to refresh within, but rivers to flow out. The Israelites never rose to this even in figure. They drank of water from the smitten rock; and after, when the rod of priestly power had budded, the rock was but to be spoken to in order to yield abundantly. But no Israelite, not even a Moses or an Aaron, could be the channel of living water, as every believer now; and this, let it be repeated, no premium on the Christian, but solely in witness of God's delight in Christ and appreciation of His work, wherein as He is, so are we in this world.

The feast, and the day of it so noted, are not without deep significance. It was not Pentecost as might be thought natural in view of the gift of the Spirit, but Tabernacles. Indeed, if the feast of Weeks was ever the epoch of any acts or discourses of our Lord in the fourth Gospel, it is carefully kept out of sight; and this because it falls within the province of Paul, rather than of John, whose characteristic truth is the revelation of God and of the Father in the man Christ Jesus on earth, not the Head of the body on high. It is not therefore the Spirit baptizing into one body which is here treated, but power of testimony, and this from the most intimate enjoyment of the soul, through that Spirit Who comes from Jesus glorified.

We are not in heaven yet, but passing through the wilderness. The day of glory is not come; but He Who died in atonement is in glory, and thence sends down the Spirit on us who are here that we may have a Divine association with Him there. What could give such force to testimony? There is more than the brightest hope; for the Spirit is a present link with Him Who is on high; yet is there all the power of hope bearing us onward and above surrounding circumstances. For the glory itself does not yet appear, though He Who will introduce it is already in it, its centre and in its highest sphere. His hour will come to show Himself to the world. Meanwhile we are in the secret of His exaltation and waiting for His display; while we have the Holy Ghost sent down by Him from that glory which He gives us to know, and so much the more to feel the dreary desert through which we pass. This is not our rest; it is polluted; and here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. But we are awaiting, not righteousness nor the Spirit of glory, but through the Spirit by faith the hope of righteousness (that is, the glory of God). And He Who is not only in the glory, the Head and Heir of all things, but will shortly come to bring us like Himself there, gives us the Spirit as rivers of living water to fill us inwardly and to flow abroad, let the wilderness be ever so parched.

I do not know a stronger expression of the intimacy of the Spirit's indwelling in us as contrasted with His working of old even though by saints. But here there is supposed such a deep intermingling with the inner man's affections and thoughts as is eminently characteristic of the Christian's possession of the Spirit, and the more remarkably because it is in view of a rich outflow of testimony to Christ on high. Hence there could be no such privilege till Jesus was glorified consequent on His glorifying of God morally by the death of the cross.

The phraseology of verse 39, though at first it may sound strange, is strictly accurate and suitable.

The Spirit is beyond doubt a person, but He is viewed here as the characterising fact of a state not yet in being. Hence it is πνεῦμα without the article. Again it is ἦν, not ἐγένετο. He never began to exist, for His being was Divine and eternal. But it was not yet a fact for man on earth. At Pentecost He was sent down from heaven. Compare Acts 19, where the question was, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? and the answer is, We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was (lit. is). The meaning is not at all as to His existence, but His baptism, of which John the Baptist had testified to His disciples.<sup>149</sup>

We have had, then, the Lord's anticipative declaration of the power of the Spirit that the believer was about to receive, which he did receive at Pentecost and thenceforward: not the quickening of the unbeliever; nor yet power rising up in worship, but flowing forth abundantly from the inner man in testimony, both eminently characteristic of Christianity. How painful that Christendom should now, and for ages, show itself incredulous and hostile! But thus it is that God's warning must be verified in every little. In man's hands each dispensation makes manifest nothing so much as faithlessness to its own special privileges and responsibility. Thus Israel not only rebelled against the law, but renounced Jehovah for heathen vanities, the returned even rejecting their own Messiah. Is the Spirit now sent down and present since Jesus was glorified? Christendom, since the apostolic days, ran greedily after law and forms, reinstating thus the first man, to the denial of the cross on earth and of the Second man in heaven about to come again. It opposes itself to no truth so expressly as that to which it is called above all to testify in word and deed.

The words of our Lord made a certain impression;<sup>150</sup> but all is in vain unless conscience be reached before God. "(Some)\* of the crowd, therefore, when they heard these sayings,† said: This is truly the prophet; others said, This is the Christ; others‡ said, Doth the Christ then come out of Galilee? Did not the Scripture say that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? A division therefore took place in the crowd on account of Him; and some of them wished to seize Him but none laid his hands on Him" (verses 40-44).

\* πολλοί is added by some eleven uncials and most cursives, etc., as in Text. Rec, contrary to BDLTX and some other of the most ancient authorities.

† τῶν λόγων BDECHKLMTUΓΔρμΠ and many more witnesses, many of which give TOVTCOV also, contrary to Text. Rec., which on inferior authority has τὸν λ.

‡Text. Rec. adds δὲ with some cursives [and Syrsin].

Men do not only join what God separates, but separate what God joins. Some called Him the prophet, others the Christ, as we have seen from the beginning of this Gospel: a distinction then prevalent but unfounded. The objections which lack of knowledge makes expose an ignorance which the least conscientious inquiry must have dispelled. With faith too there may be, and often is, want of light; but, spite of obstacles, it holds on to what it discerns to be of God, instead of being stumbled by a difficulty which further knowledge would have shown to be unreal. Bartimaeus, when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was at hand, did not fail to cry, "Son of David, have mercy on me;" and his faith reaped the blessing immediately. None the less was He the Messiah from Bethlehem,<sup>151</sup> and of David's line, because He was the despised prophet of Galilee. But unbelief is blind to His glory, and finds but an occasion of division<sup>152</sup> in the only centre of union. Yet, whatever the hostility of men, they could not take Him till the hour was come, little as they thought it, for God to accomplish the reconciliation in His cross.

There were darker traits, however, in the religious leaders than in the crowd; and this the Spirit next brings before us. "The officials therefore came unto the chief priests<sup>153</sup> and Pharisees, and these said to them, Why did ye not bring Him? The officials answered, Never man so spake as this man.\*

The Pharisees therefore" answered them, Are ye also deceived? Did any one of the rulers believe on Him, or of the Pharisees? But this crowd that knoweth not the law, they are accursed" (verses 45-49). Here conscience answered to the words of the Lord in such a manner at least as to draw out before their masters an involuntary confession of the power with which He spoke. It was not as the scribes. But the Pharisees, with invincible hardness, retort on their weakness, challenge them to produce any of the rulers or of the Pharisees that believed, and betray their contempt for the mass of their countrymen. Boasting in law, they by transgression of the law and far worse were then dishonouring God. But God brings forward an unexpected, even if feeble, witness from among themselves, not only a Pharisee, but a ruler.

\*Besides a difference in collocation, , etc., add λαλεῖ; others omit the clause, perhaps by ὁμοιοτέλευτον, or through love of brevity.

† D, twelve cursives, etc., omit οὖν.

"Nicodemus\* saith unto them, being one of them, Doth our law judge the man, unless it have first heard from him and know what he doeth? They answered and said to him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see that no prophet ariseth† out of Galilee" (verses 50-52). Unable to resist the righteous requirement of their own law, they proved that their insubjection had a deeper root by their haughty contempt, not now of the ignorant rabble, but of not the least of their own chiefs; and, as usual, they manifest that men are never so sure to err as when most confident in an arm of flesh. Indeed, it is the fatality of tradition-mongers to be always astray, whether in Judaism or in Christendom. Scripture alone is reliable; and those who profess to be ruled by Scripture as interpreted by tradition will be found, like all who serve two masters, to hold to tradition and its uncertainty, and to despise Scripture spite of its Divine authority, with a blindness to their own state which is truly pitiable, though not less censurable also. Thus Eusebius of C., though by no means the least able or the most superstitious of the Fathers, makes the grossest mistakes in reporting ecclesiastical facts from the Acts of the Apostles, or elsewhere.

\*Text. Rec. adds ὁ ἐλθὼν νεκτὸς πρὸς αὐτὸν, with EGHMSΓΔ, most cursives (probably from xix. 39), some, as KUΔΠ, putting v. after π. αὐ., and others, as corr.BLT, etc., omitting v. and adding πρότερον [W. and H., Weiss], and others giving both, as X and some cursives and ancient versions. Tischendorf omits the clause with pm, etc. [so Blass].

† ἐγείρεται BDKSmgTΓΔΠ, many cursives, Latin and other ancient versions [as Syrsin, and followed by Edd.]; ἐγήγερται "is risen," Text. Rec. following many uncials, cursives, etc.

So here the Pharisees assume that no prophet arises out of Galilee. They were wrong in every possible way. Were they prophets to speak for God at that time? Had they never heard of Jonah or Nahum? The greatest of the prophets who wrote not-the mysterious Tishbite-who had arisen, and will yet again arise, was of Gilead, and so even more severed than Galilee from the seat of religious pride, being on the east of the Jordan. But the truth is, that the One their soul abhorred, on Whom the poor of the flock waited, had come forth out of Bethlehem-Ephratah, Whose goings forth are from of old, from the days of eternity. (Micah 5: 2.) Of Him they were profoundly ignorant, though law and prophets everywhere testified to Him; but the pillar of the cloud which encompassed Him gave no light to the proud men of Jerusalem. Their darkness comprehended not the true light.

## JOHN — THE EIGHTH CHAPTER\*

\* [Cf. Introductory Lectures," pp. 461-477.]

## John 7: 53, to John 8: 11.

We are now arrived at a section of our Gospel, the external condition of which is to the reflecting mind a solemn evidence of human unbelief, here as daring as usually it appears to hesitate. No evangelist has suffered as much in this way, not even Mark, whose close disappears from two of the most ancient manuscripts. But as we saw that the angel's visit to trouble the waters of Bethesda was unwelcome to not a few copyists of John 5, so here again incredulity indisposed some to reproduce the story of the adulteress. This is plain from some copies (as LΔ), which leave a blank—a fact wholly inexplicable, if the scribe had not been aware of a paragraph which he knew to exist, but for reasons of his own thought fit to omit. Others, again, transposed it to another place, as the cursives 1, 19, 20, 129, 135, 207, 215, 301, 347, 478, etc., to the end of the Gospel (and 225 after John 7: 36), and even to another evangelist, as 13, 69, 124, 346, and 556, though alien in tone from all but John, and suiting no place in John but here, where the mass of authority gives it. A (probably), BC (probably), TX, with many cursives and ancient versions [as Syrsin pesch], simply omit the passage; DF (defective) GHKUT (defective), more than 330 cursives, and many versions have it. It is marked by an asterisk, or obelus, in EMSAΠ, etc. The variations of the copies which do give it are considerable. This brief view of the evidence may suffice for the general reader, as it is more than enough to prove the peculiarity of the case externally.

As regards the internal evidence, some have alleged against the passage its entire diversity from the style of the Gospel elsewhere; and this, not merely in words and idioms which John never uses, but in its whole cast and character, which is said to savour more of the Synoptic Gospels.

All this, however, fails to meet the positive weight of truth in the passage; and its fitness at this very point of the Gospel is utterly unaccountable in a forgery or a tradition. The Lord is displaying the true light in His Person, as contrasted with others who boasted in the law. We have seen their conscienceless discussion in the preceding chapter.<sup>154</sup>

"And they went each to his home, but Jesus went to the mount of Olives" (John 7: 53; John 8: 1). Afar from man's uncertainty and contempt, the Son of God retired to enjoy the fellowship of the Father. Thence He returns for service. "And early in the morning He came again to the temple, and all the people were coming unto Him; and He sat down, and was teaching them" (verse 2). The Lord's habit in this respect, recorded by Luke (Luke 21: 37, 38; Luke 22: 39), is a strange reason for discrediting John's mention of this particular instance. Nor does any reason appear to question that it was not merely "the crowd" (ὄχλος), but "the people" in a large sense (λαὸς), which here flocked to the Lord's teaching in the temple.

"And the scribes<sup>155</sup> and the Pharisees bring to Him a woman taken in adultery, and having set her in (the) midst, they say to Him, Teacher, this woman was taken in the very act of adultery. Now in the law Moses charged us to stone such:<sup>156</sup> Thou, therefore, what sayest Thou? But this they said proving Him, that they might have (whereof) to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger was writing on the ground" (verses 3-6).

Such is man at his best estate when he sees and hears Jesus, but refuses the grace and truth which came by Him. They were not ignorant men, but learned in the Scriptures; they were not the crowd that knew not the law, but possessed of the highest reputation for religion. Nor could there be a question as to the guilt and degradation of the woman. Why they brought her, and not her paramour, does not appear. But her they brought in the hope, not only of perplexing, but of finding ground of accusation against, the Lord. It seemed to them a dilemma which allowed of no escape. Moses, said they, bade the Jews stone such as she. What did Jesus say? If He only confirmed the decree of the law, where was the

grace so much boasted of? If He let her off, did He not evidently set Himself in opposition not only to Moses, but to Jehovah? What profound iniquity theirs! No horror at sin, even of the darkest dye, but an unfeeling perversion of the exposed adulteress to entrap the Holy One of God.

But if the Lord wrote on the ground, it was in no way as if He heard them not. Rather was it to give them time to weigh their guilty question, and guiltier motive, while their hope of entrapping Him betrayed them more and more to commit themselves as He stooped to the ground.

"And when they continued asking Him, He lifted Himself up and said to them, Let Him that is without sin among you first cast the stone at her; 156a and, again stooping down, He was writing on the ground. But they, having heard [it],\* kept going out one by one, beginning from the elder ones until the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in (the) midst" (verses 7-9).

\*The clause translated, "and being convicted by their conscience," in the Text. Rec., and supported by EGHKS, etc., is omitted by still better authority.

Thus did the Lord show Himself the true light which lightens every man. Occupied with the law in its condemnation of the adulteress, and, indeed, far more essaying to condemn the Lord Himself, their darkness is laid bare by these few solemn words. God judges sin, not gross sins, but all sin, be it what it may be; and the Judge of quick and dead was He Who thus searched them through and through. It was no question of the law for either now: they shrank abashed from the light, even though Jesus stooped down again, and was writing on the ground. Assuredly He heard their question, and discerned their iniquitous aim, veiled as it was; and now they heard Him, and cowered before His all-scathing words of light. Convicted by their consciences, but in no way repentant, they sought to flee, ashamed to see His face, Who stooped once more, and thus gave them time to retire, if they refused to bow with broken spirit and heartfelt confession.

This, however, is not the object of the passage to illustrate, but the supremacy of Divine light in Jesus, let Him be ever so lowly, and in presence of the proudest. And they were going off, one by one, beginning at the elder until the last, beginning at those who dreaded most their own exposure—an exposure which the youngest could not bear, only less ashamed of their fellows than of Jesus, Who had awakened the feeling. How awful the contrast with their own sweet singer, who, spite of his sins, could say by grace, "*Thou art my hiding-place!*" (Ps. 32: 7.)—hiding in God, not from Him, and having before him One Who could and would cover all his iniquities, and impute nothing. Vain, indeed, is our effort to cover our sins, or to escape from His presence. But unbelief trusts itself, not Him, and betrays the will to get away from His light, as it may for a little season, till judgment come. How will it be then? It will be theirs to stoop in shame and everlasting contempt, when evasion cannot be even for a moment, and all is fixed for ever.

Jesus then was left alone, as far as the tempting scribes and Pharisees were concerned, and the woman in the midst; for "all the people" appear to have been around, and He addresses them in a subsequent discourse, which seems to be founded on this very incident, as giving occasion to it (see verse 12 and following). "And Jesus lifting Himself up, and beholding no one but the woman, said to her, Woman, where are they, thine accusers? Did no one condemn thee? And she said, No one, Sir. And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (verses 10, 11). It is the mistake of Augustine, as of others in modern no less than ancient times, that we have here "*miseria*" in the presence of "*Misericordia*," which is much more true of the scene at the end of Luke 7.

Here the Lord acts as light, not only in the detection of His self-righteous and sinful adversaries, but throughout. There was no need, however, for His exposure of the woman caught in the very act of sin. Hence the ignorance of the scribes who left out the tale was as glaring as their impiety was without

excuse. There is not the least semblance of levity in dealing with her evil. The Lord simply brings out the fact that her accusers retreat from the light which convicted their conscience, when the law had utterly failed to reach it; and as they could not condemn her, because they were sinners no less truly than herself, so He would not. It was not His work to deal with causes criminal any more than civil. But if grace and truth came by Him, He is none the less the true light; and so He abides here. As we do not hear of repentance or faith in the woman, so we have no such words from Him as, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," "Thy faith hath saved thee," "Go in peace." He is the light still, and goes not beyond "Go and sin no more." By and by He will act as a King, and judge righteously; on their own showing, He speaks as a "teacher," not a magistrate. And it was a question of sin, but most unexpectedly of theirs as well as of hers, if they face the light of God.<sup>157</sup>

The words of our Lord are utterly lowered by such as infer that, either to the accusers or to the accused, He restrains sin to that offence against purity of which the woman was guilty. He means any and all sin as intolerable to God, Who is light, and in Whom is no darkness at all.<sup>158</sup>

The Lord continues His teaching of the people, but not without allusion to the incident which had just occurred, or rather to the character in which He had dealt with it. Nothing can be more evident than the True Light which was then shining and lightening every man. It is the more striking because the word "light" does not occur in that transaction; but the fact is thoroughly in harmony with what immediately follows.

## **John 8: 12-20.**

"Again<sup>159</sup> therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall in no wise walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (verse 12). His rejection by the Jews always brings Him out in a still larger character of blessing and glory to others. In our Gospel, however, the Spirit speaks of what He is personally or independently of all circumstances and above all dispensations. He is "the light of the world." His glory, His grace, could not be confined to Israel. He is come to deliver from Satan's power and to give the enjoyment of God and the Father. Hence, whatever be the darkness of men-and it was now profound among the Jews-"He that followeth Me shall in no wise walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Christian is not only called out of darkness into God's wonderful light, but he becomes light in the Lord, a child of light, and he walks in the light, being brought to God Who is light; and in the light, as John says, we have fellowship one with another, for in him is life as well as light; or, as He says here, His follower has "the light of life." He has Christ, Who is both.<sup>159a</sup>

So energetic a testimony rouses the pride and enmity of those who listened. They could not but feel that He spoke of a privilege and blessing which they did not enjoy. "The Pharisees therefore said to Him, Thou bearest witness of Thyself; Thy witness is not true" (verse 13)<sup>160</sup>. They turn His own words in chapter 5: 31 against Himself, but most unfairly. For there He was speaking of testimony alone and human, such as vanity gives itself; here, as He proceeds to show, He has the very highest support in God Himself. "Jesus answered and said to them, Even though I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and where I go, (but)\* ye know not whence I come or† where I go" (verse 14). They were wholly ignorant of the Father as of the Son. They never thought of heaven. The Lord had the constant consciousness of the truth of His Person and mission; and His witness was inseparable from the Father's. As He says elsewhere, "I and My Father are one"-not more true in Divine nature than in testimony to man. He never lost the sense for a moment whence He came and whither He was going away, whereas they had no true idea of either. They were in utter darkness,

though the light was there shining in Him.160a How truly then He could say, "Ye judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. And if also I judge, My judgment is true,‡ because I am not alone, but I and the Father§ that sent Me" (verses 15, 16).

\* FHK, many cursives, etc., omit δέ.

† ἦ BDgrKTUXΛ, very many cursives and ancient versions [as Syrsin], instead of καὶ with the rest and Text. Rec.

‡ ἀληθῆς and eleven other uncials, most cursives, etc.; ἀληθινῆ BDLTX, etc.

§ pmD omit πατήρ [as Weiss and Blass; W. H. Bracket].

Self is the source and object of all the activity of the flesh, according to which the Jews were judging. Christ brought love as well as light into the world. He was judging none; He was serving all. This made Him intolerable to the self-complacent. Yet is He to be the Judge of all. In His resurrection God has given the pledge that He is to judge the world; even as in His own Person He is the fitting one to do so, being Son of man as well as Son of God. "And if also I judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me." It was an admitted principle that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. To this the Lord here appeals, "And in your law too it is written that the witness of two men is true" (verse 17).161 How much more, then, the testimony of the Father and the Son!" I am He that testifieth concerning Myself, and the Father that sent Me testifieth concerning Me" (verse 18). Of this, too, the Lord had spoken before in chapter 5, but they had not heard to receive it, only to despise Him.161a

"They said to Him then, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither Me nor My Father. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also" (verse 19).162 Such ignorance of the only true God and of Jesus Whom He sent is death, eternal death; and the more solemn, because it was said not to the heathen, but to Jews who had the oracles of God. These things they were saying because they knew not the Father nor the Son; as the hour would come when they would think to render God service by killing Christ's disciples. Their sayings and doings betrayed their state of utter alienation from and ignorance of the Father. All that followed of persecution and hatred, whether for Christ or for the Church, was but the consequence. "These words He spoke in the treasury, teaching in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour was not yet come" (verse 20)163. Their malice was as manifest as it was deadly; and it was against the Father as much as the Son.

But, spite of will, they were powerless till the time was come. Then was He given up to their murderous iniquity; then, too, still deeper counsels were in accomplishment through the sacrifice of Himself. If on the one hand He was cut off and had nothing of His Messianic rights in the midst of the Jews in the land, He was on the other to suffer for sins, Just for the unjust, to bring all who believe to God, to be glorified on high, and to have a bride given Him associated with Himself in His supremacy over all things. But this would carry us into the Apostle Paul's teaching. Let us pursue the line given to St. John, where we behold the Word become flesh, and His Divine glory shining through the veil of humiliation, and in this chapter particularly, first as light convicting, then as the light of life possessed by His followers; but if His word were rejected, no less was He the Son Who alone can make free-yea, the I AM-let men avail themselves of His manhood to scorn and stone and crucify Him as they may.

The next discourse turns on our Lord's announcement of His departure-a truth of the most solemn import, especially for Israel responsible to receive Him as their Messiah.

## John 8: 21-30.

"He\* said therefore again to them, I go away, and ye shall seek Me and shall die in your sin:† where I go away, ye cannot come. The Jews therefore said, Will He kill Himself because He saith, Where I go away, ye cannot come? And He said to them, Ye are of the things beneath, I am of those above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore to you that ye shall die in your sins; for, unless ye believe that I am (He),<sup>164</sup> ye shall die in your sins" (verses 21-24).

\* Eleven uncials, and the cursives, versions, etc., invert ὁ Ἰησοῦς, contrary to BDLTX, etc. [Syrsin], Orig. Cyr.

† All the old English versions, too, are wrong, save the Rhemish, which has "your sinne."

The departure of Jesus after His coming is the overthrow of Judaism and the necessary condition of Christianity. We must not be surprised, then, if our Lord again and again recurs to it, to its moral associations and consequences, and, above all, to its bearing on Himself personally, ever the uppermost thought of our Evangelist. He was going, and they should seek Him and die in their sin. They sought amiss, and found Him not. They sought a Messiah that they might gratify their ambition and worldly lusts; and such is not the Messiah of God, Who is now found of those that sought Him not, after having spread out His hands all the day to a rebellious people that walked in a way anything but good, after their own thoughts. But God is not mocked, and he who sows to the flesh reaps corruption: if it be not public judgment, it is none the less the recompense of evil into the guilty bosom. "Ye shall die in your sin." They were rejecting Christ and cleaving to their own will and way. There was no fellowship between them and Him. "My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred Me." (Zech. 11: 8.) The issue would make it still more apparent: "Where I go away, ye cannot come." They could not follow Him.

The Lord was going to heaven, to His Father. Their treasure was not there, nor therefore their heart, as both were on His part. So, too, as grace attracts the heart of the believer to Christ, faith follows Him where He is; and He will come and bring us there in due time, that where He is there we may be also. Unbelief clings to self, to the earth, to present things; and so it was and is with the Jews: "Where I go away, ye cannot come." They were rejecting the only One Who could wean from earth or fit for heaven, meeting them in their sin that they might not die in it, but live through Him. But Him they would not have and are lost, and proved it by their utterly false estimate of Him and of themselves, present or future, as we see in what follows. "The Jews therefore said, Will He kill Himself because He saith, Where I go away, ye cannot come?" There was nothing too evil to impute to Him Whom they more and more hated.

But He tells them out more. "And He said to them, Ye are of the things beneath, I am of those above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore to you, that ye shall die in your sins." Here the Lord solemnly unveils the sources of things. To be of this world now is to be not merely of earth, but from beneath. Such is the Jew that rejects Jesus, Who is not of this world, but of the things above. Therefore should they die in their sins: their nature evil as their works, and they refusing the only light of life, how else could they end? "For, unless ye believe that I am (He), ye shall die in your sins." The truth shines out fully from a rejected Christ-not only His personal glory, but their subjection to Satan, who employs them to dishonour Him. But His rejection is their everlasting ruin. They die in their sins, and have as their judge Him Whom they refused to believe on for life eternal.

"They said therefore to Him, Who art Thou? Jesus said to them, Absolutely\* that which I am also speaking to you" (verse 25). Jesus is not merely the way and the life, but the truth. He is, in the

principle of His being, what also He speaks. A less expected answer could not be, nor one more withering to the thoughts of themselves and of Him. He alone of all men could say as much; yet was He the lowliest of men. His way and words were in perfect accord; and all expressed the mind of God. It is not merely that He does what He says, but He is thoroughly and essentially what also He sets out in speech. The truth is the reality of things spoken. We cannot know God but by Him; nor can we but by Him know man. Good and evil are displayed and detected only by Him, and He identifies Himself with His speech.

\* The Authorised Version is here faulty, like many others, ancient and modern. It is true that ἀρχὴν with or without the article, may be used in ordinary Greek for "at the first," or "formerly." So in the Sept. of Gen. 13: 4; Gen. 43: 18, 20, etc.; and thus Nonnus understood the language of our Evangelist in this place. Not the temporal sense, however, of the word is meant in the present remarkable phrase, but that of archetypal character, or first principle. Thus, Tyndale (1534): "Even the very same thinge that I saye unto you"; and Cranmer (1539), only changing "saye" into "speake." After them the Rhemish followed the strange and ungrammatical rendering of the Vulgate, "Principium qui et loquor vobis," It is hard, if not impossible, to understand "qui" here; yet "principium" is not so far from the truth, as if the phrase had been confounded with "ab initio." Indeed, the old Cod. Vero. has "Initium quod loquor vobis," as Cod. Brix. "Principium quod et loquor vobis" The Geneva Version misled the translators of 1611 into a sort of double rendering, "Even the very same," which would be a good enough version of τὴν ἀρχὴν, but they added also "from the beginning," which necessitated a false representation of λαλῶ as if it were ἐλάλησα or ἔλεξα

As the fourth Gospel pointedly employs ἐν ἀρχῇ, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς (and in two cases ἐξ ἀρχῆς), there is the less reason for confounding the single occurrence of τὴν ἀρχὴν with any of them. The Lord uses the phrase prominently in answer to the question, "Who art Thou?" raised by the contemptuous unbelief of the Pharisees. He had already declared Himself the light of the world, but that they knew neither Him nor His Father, and should die in their sin because of their unbelief. He had not yet in terms disclosed His eternal Being as in verse 58, but is gradually rising to this from the incident which so fittingly opens the chapter. The law of death in man's hand is powerless before the Light of Life, Who is from above, and not of this world. He is the Word of God. He, and He alone, when challenged, could say, "I am absolutely [kuinoel]164a, altogether, what I speak also to you." His speech thoroughly expresses Himself. Essentially [Afford], precisely [Godet], What He is, He also speaks. These alternatives, suggested by various interpreters, differ no doubt in degrees of accuracy; but substantially they agree in identifying the Lord with His utterance also, for He is the truth. They seem better than "originally," which means little more than "at first," or "at the beginning," and, though often legitimate, looks quite out of place when applied to Christ, the Faithful Witness, Who is "the same yesterday and today and for ever." He alone could say that He was wholly what He also speaks. Mr. McClellan is right in holding that Christ's speech reveals His eternal Being, but does not "originally" fail to convey it?

If the Sanscrit root helps us, it implies "worth, merit, fitness, dignity, and worship"; and "beginning" is secondary. Certainly ἀρχὴ appears in philosophic usage as "a principle," whether of being or of thought; and in ordinary application as a "first place," estate, or office, and even materially as in Acts 10: 4; Acts 11: 9. Thus, "at the first," or "originally," is the sense in Herodotus (i. 86, 140; ii. 28, 148; iv. 59; viii. 128, 132), when contrast with the present is intended. But an exclusive force appears with the negative even more frequently still (as in i. 192; ii. 95; iii. 16, 39; iv. 25, 28; vi. 33; vii. 26; ix. 57). On its very first occurrence (i. 9), how could "originally" assure Gyges? Did not the king mean that his own contrivance was to screen him absolutely? So Larcher understood in his learned

version (i. 8, note a, ed. 1802). Dean Blakesley's view was "to begin with," which would be almost absurd, and certainly inadequate, for our text. To assume that only in negative sentences the absolute sense occurs is mistaken, at any rate, in later Greek, as the reader may see in the following references to "Dion Cassius " (vol. i. 96 [Fr. Peir. ci.], ii. 342 [xlv. 34], iii. 688 [lix. 19], iv. 52, [lxii. 4] ed. Sturz. Two cases, at least, might be added of ἀρχὴν without τὴν.

We may dismiss, then, among many untenable proposals, the renderings of "Wiclif and the Wiclifite" (iv. 280, Oxford, 1850), following the Vulgate, with which go Syrhc1. and the Gothic, and with slight variations Augustine of old, and Fritzsche and Wordsworth of late. Not so, held Cod. Veron., but "Imprimis," as Cod. Corb, "de superioribus," though it is hard to say what they meant. Nor can the interrogation stand with "at all," as Chrysostom, Cyril. Alex. (and so Lucke and Ewald), and the R.V. margin [as Westcott]; nor with "from the beginning," as Meyer. The more prevalent construction of the A. and R.V., like the Sah. Memph, Syrpesch., slights both the sense and the tense of λαλῶ, with the place and force of καὶ, through the first fault of misrendering τὴν ἀρχήν. The Aeth. Arab. Arm. differ from these and from one another, but afford no help, as far as I can judge. "Absolutely [or, In principle] what also I speak to you," reflects justly the language, the order of the words, the grammar, and above all the bearing of the context, and of this sentence in particular. There is no need, therefore, of connecting the end of verse 25 with the beginning of 26, as Bengel, Raphelius, and Wakefield suggested, who otherwise rather confirm the true import, as does the ὅλωσ of Euth. Zig.

Such was the One the Jews were then rejecting. They have then and there lost the truth. Impossible to have the truth apart from Jesus, Who adds, "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you; but He that sent Me is true, and I, what I heard from Him, speak these things unto the world" (verse 26). He was a servant though Son, and uttered what the Father pleased as needed truth, not according to the affluence of what He had to say and judge respecting the Jews.

It is impossible to know the Father but by receiving the Son; and Him they rejected, as they did even to the cross. "They knew not that he was speaking to them of the Father. Then said Jesus (to them),\* When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am<sup>164</sup> (He) and from Myself do nothing, but, even as the Father taught Me, these things I speak. And He that sent Me is with Me: He† left Me not alone, because the things pleasing to Him I do always" (verses 27-29).<sup>165</sup> It is the actual truth presented by God which tests the soul. A former testimony, however true, does not provoke opposition in the same way. Often, indeed, unbelief avails itself of the past to strengthen its present antagonism to what God is doing. Thus the Jews avail themselves of the unity of God to deny the Son and the Father, for they knew not of Whom Jesus was speaking. His cross might not convince them divinely or win their heart to God; but it would convict them of deliberate and wilful rejection of the Messiah, and prove that what He spoke was spoken from the highest authority. As He was sent, so was He taught. The Father was with Him too, for Christ was doing always the things that pleased Him. If we know this in our measure, how much more fully and unwaveringly was it true of Him Who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth!

\* BLT, etc., omit αὐτοῖς, which is read by the great body of the witnesses [and so Blass],

† Some good authorities [and so Blass] prefix καὶ, "and," others add ὁ πατήρ, "the Father," at the end of the clause, and so Text. Rec.

How solemn it is to weigh the force of "When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am (He) and from Myself do nothing, but just as My Father taught Me, these things I speak!" For the Son of man is alike His title as the rejected Messiah, and as the appointed Judge of living and dead. So He was crucified, and so returns for the kingdom of universal glory as in Ps. 8 and

Dan. 7. How terrible to know this too late, when pride shuts out repentance to the acknowledgment of truth!

It is an encouraging fact that a time of unbelieving detraction may be used of God to work extensively in souls. "While He was speaking these things, many believed on Him" (verse 30). But faith, where divinely given, is inseparable from life, exercises itself in liberty, and is subject to the Son of God; where it is human, it soon wearies of His presence, and abandons Him Whom it never truly appreciated, for licence either of mind or of ways in rebellion against Him. Hence the urgency of the Lord's solemn appeal. Continuance in and with him is of God.

John 8: 31-59.

"Jesus therefore said to the Jews that had believed Him, If ye abide in My word, ye are truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.165a They answered Him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to anyone: how sayest Thou, Ye shall become free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Every one that practiseth sin is a bondman of sin. Now the bondman abideth not in the house for ever; the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill Me because My word maketh no way166 in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and ye therefore practise what ye have seen\* with your† father. They answered and said to Him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith to them, If ye are‡ Abraham's children, ye would practise the works of Abraham; but now ye seek to kill Me, a Man who hath spoken to you the truth which I heard from God: this Abraham did not practise. Ye practise the works of your father. They said (therefore)§ to Him, We were not born of fornication; we have one father, God.167 Jesus said|| to them, If God were your Father, ye would have loved Me, for I came forth from God and am come; for neither have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do ye not know My speech? Because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your¶ father, the devil, and ye desire to practise the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from (the) beginning, and standeth168 not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: whenever he speaketh the lie, he speaketh out of his own things, because he is a liar, and the father of it. But because I speak the truth, ye believe Me not. Which of you convinceth Me of sin? If\*\* I speak truth, why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God; for this cause ye hear (them) not, because ye are not of God" (verses 31-47).

\* Ἐω(ο)ράκατε pmDEFGHMSTUΓΔΛ, etc., Text. Rec.; ἠκούσατε corr BCKLX, etc. [W. and H., Weiss, Blass].

† The great majority read ὑμῶν, but not BLT, etc.

‡ ἔστε BDLT, etc.; ἦτε Text. Rec. following the great mass [as Syrsin],

§ Text. Rec. adds οὖν with fifteen uncials, but not the oldest.

|| The authorities are pretty equal for and against reading οὖν, "therefore," as given in Text. Rec. [W. and H., Weiss, Blass omit].

¶ Text. Rec. omits τοῦ, contrary to all good witnesses.

\*\* δὲ is added by many uncials, etc., and followed by Text. Rec., contrary to the best MSS. and versions. [Syrin has it.]

To abide in His word, then, is the condition of being in truth Christ's disciple. Others may be interested greatly, but they soon grow weary, or turn ere long to other objects. Christ's disciple cleaves to His word, and finds fresh springs in what first attracted. His word proves itself thus Divine, as it is

faith which abides in it, and the truth is thus not only learned but known. Vagueness and uncertainty disappear, while the truth, instead of gendering bondage, like the law, makes the soul free, whatever its previous slavery. There is growth in the truth and liberty by it. Law deals with the corrupt and proud will of man to condemn it on God's part, as is right; the truth communicates the knowledge of Himself as revealed in His word, and thus gives life and liberty: privileges unintelligible to the natural man, who hates the sovereign grace of God as much as he exalts and loves himself, while he despises and distrusts others. Man's only thought, therefore, of obtaining righteousness is through the law. They know not the virtue of the truth, and dread liberty as though it must end in licence; while at the same time they are proud of their own position, if it were inalienable, and God were their servant, not they bound to be His. Hence the Jews answered Jesus, "We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to anyone: how sayest Thou, Ye shall become free?"

Far from this was the truth. Even outwardly, not to speak of the soul, the Jews were, and had long been, in servitude to the Gentiles. So Ezra (chapter 9) confessed at the evening sacrifice: "Since the days of our fathers we have been in great trespass to this day; and for our iniquities we, our kings, our priests, have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, and to captivity, and to spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little space there has been favour from Jehovah our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we are bondmen; yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended mercy unto us before the kings of Persia," etc. So, again, Nehemiah (Neh. 9): "Yet many years didst thou forbear with them, and testifiedst against them by Thy Spirit through Thy prophets; but they would not give ear; and Thou gavest them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.... Behold, we are bondmen this day, and the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are bondmen in it; and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins; and they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure; and we are in great distress."

Thus men of conscience felt when they lay under conquerors milder far than the Romans who now ruled. It was not that the Jews to-day were lightened, but that they had grown so used to the yoke as to forget and deny it altogether. And if it were because of God's righteous government externally, much less did they estimate aright their true state before God, as the Lord Jesus was bringing it out now. Their haughty spirit was nettled at His word, which lay bare their thralldom to the enemy. "We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to anyone: how sayest Thou, Ye shall become free?" Jesus in His answer brought in the light of God, for eternity indeed, but also for the present. "Verily, verily, I say to you, Every one that practiseth sin is a bondman of sin." How true, solemn, and humiliating! No bondage so real, none so degrading, as that of sin: could they seriously deny it to be theirs? Truly unbelief blinds to moral state, and even to plain facts. Only grace delivers, and through the truth believed.

But the Lord intimates more. None under sin is entitled to speak of permanence. Such a one exists only on sufferance till judgment. Bondage there was none when God created and made according to His mind; nor will there be when He shall make all things new. The bondman, in every sense, belongs only to the transitory reign of sin and sorrow. So says the Lord: "Now the bondman abideth not in the house for ever." Another and contrasted relationship suits God's will; "the son abideth for ever." But there is infinitely more in Christ. He is not merely Son, but "*the* Son." He is the Son in His own right and title, as God and when man, in time and in eternity. He is therefore not "free" only, as all sons are, but such is His glory that He can and does make free in virtue of the grace which pertains to Him alone. Thus it is not only the truth which sets free, where law could only condemn, but the Son also

gives and confirms the same character of liberty according to His own fulness. It is a question of what suits not them merely, but Him. He could make free those who hear Him and abide in His word, and nothing else but free. It is worthy of Him to deliver from sin and Satan; and "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He frees after a Divine sort. He brings into His own character of relationship out of the bondage to sin, which the first man made our sad inheritance. The last Adam is a quickening spirit and a Deliverer. Let us stand fast in His liberty, and be not entangled again with any yoke of bondage, as the Apostle exhorts the Galatians against that misuse of the law, whatever its shape. (Gal. 5: 1.)

To be Abraham's seed, as the Lord lets the Jews know, is a sorry safeguard. One might be of Abraham, and be the worst enemy of God. Such were the Jews then, who were seeking to kill Christ because His word had no hold in them. Every one acts according to his source; character follows it. So our Lord deigns to say, "I speak what I have seen with My Father; and ye therefore practise what ye have seen with your father." To be of Abraham does not save from Satan. To hear the Son, to believe on Him, is to derive one's nature from God and have life eternal. They boasted most of Abraham who were still in the darkness of unbelief and the enemy's power. Hence "they answered and said to Him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith to them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would practise the works of Abraham; but now ye seek to kill Me, a Man Who hath spoken to you the truth which I heard from God: this Abraham did not practise. Ye practise the works of your father." It was allowed already that they were descended from the father of the faithful; but did they bear the family likeness? Was it not an aggravation of their evil that they stood in contrast with him from whom they vaunted themselves sprung? Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness. They believed not, but sought to kill the Man, albeit the Son of God, Who spoke to them the truth which He heard from God the Father. Whose works were these? Certainly not those of Abraham, but of a very different father. They were corrupt and violent.

The Jews felt what was implied and at once take the highest ground. "They said therefore to Him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God. Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, ye would have loved Me, for I came forth from God and am come; for neither have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do ye not know My speech? Because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and ye desire to practise the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: whenever he speaketh the lie, he speaketh out of his own things, because he is a liar, and the father of it. But because I speak the truth, ye believe Me not. Which of you convinceth Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God; for this cause ye hear (them) not, because ye are not of God."

The case is thus closed as regards the Jews. They were of the devil beyond all doubt, as this solemn controversy proved. It is really the conviction of man as against Christ, in every land, tongue, age. He turns out no other when tested by the truth, by the Son; however circumstances differ, this is the issue, and it comes out worst where things look fairest. If there was a family on earth which might have seemed farthest removed from impurity, it was the Jews; if any could claim to have God as their Father, they most of all. But Jesus is the touchstone; and they are thereby proved to be God's enemies, not His children; else they would have loved Him Who came out from God, and was then present in their midst, Who had not come of His own mere motion, but at God's sending. He came, and was sent in love beyond man's thought or measure; and they rose against Him in hatred, seeking to kill Him.

The Jews did not even know His speech, such utter strangers were they to Him, and the God Who spoke by Him. The reason is most grave: they could not hear His word. It is through understanding the

thought, the scope, the mind of the person speaking that one knows the phraseology; and not the inverse.<sup>169</sup> If the inner purpose is not received, the outer form is unknown. So it was with Jesus speaking to the Jews; so it is pre-eminently with the testimony in John's writings now. Men complain of mysticism in the expression, because they have no notion of the truth intended. The hindrance is in the blinding power of the devil, who is the source of their thoughts and feelings, as surely as he is the adversary of Christ. Men's judgments flow from their will and affections, and these are under the sway of His enemy. And as he pushes on men, especially those who are most of all responsible to bow to Christ, as the Jews then were, to practise the lusts of their father, so violence follows as naturally as falsehood. For Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him, the great personal antagonist of the Son.

Jesus alone of men is the Truth; He is not only God, but the One Who reveals God to Man. In Him is no sin, nor did He sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.<sup>170</sup> He was the manifest opposite, in all respects, of the devil, who, whenever he speaks falsehood, speaks out of his own store, because he is a liar and the father of it. Jesus is the truth, and makes it known to those who otherwise cannot know it. "But because I speak the truth, ye believe Me not." How awful, yet how just, God's judgment of such! For we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth; and what can be the end of these things but death and judgment?

Finally, the Lord proceeds to challenge them, in order to lay bare their groundless malice. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God." He was the Holy One, no less than the Truth, and surely both go together. And thus were they convicted of being, in word and deed, in thought and feeling, wholly alienated from, and rebellious against, God. They were not of God, save in haughty pretension, which only made their distance from Him, and opposition to Him, more glaring. Instead of convincing Christ of sin, they were themselves slaves of sin; instead of speaking truth, they rejected Him Who is the Truth; instead of hearing the words of God, they hated Him Who spoke them, because they were not of God but of the devil. Terrible picture, which the unerring light failed not to draw and leave, never to be effaced, of His adversaries! To be not of God is to be wholly without good, and left in evil, exposed to its consequences, according to the judgment of Him Who will not, cannot, change in His abhorrence of it. Such were and are the rejecters of Jesus.

There is nothing a man so reluctantly admits as evil in himself; there is nothing he so much resents as another's saying evil of him, and leaving him no loophole of escape. So was it now with the Jews whom the Lord denied to be of God, as they heard not His words. Never had their self-complacency been thus disturbed before. The scorn of the heathen was as nothing compared with such a libel, which was severe in proportion to its self-evident truth. For the ground taken was indisputable. Who could doubt that he who is of God heareth the words of God? How solemn, then, to face the fact that One Who spoke as none ever did declared with holy calmness that therefore they did not hear, because they were not of God! Conscience might wince, but refused to bow. Will, ill-will, alone declared itself, save, indeed, that it was animated from beneath.

"The Jews\* answered and said to Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon? Jesus answered, I have not a demon, but honour My Father, and ye dishonour Me. But I seek not My glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say to you, If anyone keep My word, death he shall in no wise behold for ever" (verses 48-51). Thenceforth the Jews, unable to refute, and unwilling to confess, the truth, betake themselves to insolent retort and railing. They justify and openly repeat their application of "Samaritan" to Him; for what could more prove enmity in their eyes than to refuse their claim to be pre-eminently God's people? If He declared them to be of their father,

the devil, they did not scruple to rejoin that He had a demon. He was, they dared to imply, outside the Israel of God and the God of Israel. Yet was He the true Israel and the true God.

\* A dozen uncials and most cursives, etc. (and so Text. Rec.) add οὖν, "therefore," contrary to the oldest, BCDLX, many cursives and versions.

No Christian, then, has ever suffered worse in this way of dishonour than Christ. The disciple is not above his Lord, and can expect no exemption. And none are so prone to reproach others falsely as those who are themselves really slaves of the enemy. But let us learn of Him Who was meek and lowly of heart, and now calmly repudiates their taxing Him with a demon. Not so, but He was honouring His Father, they dishonouring Him. Yet was there no personal resentment as on his part who courts his own honour now, or seeks to injure when he can such as insult him.<sup>171</sup> "But I seek not My glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth." He leaves all with His Father, Himself content to serve, able and ready to save. "Verily, verily, I say to you, If anyone"-let him be the vilest of His foes-"keep My word, death he shall in no wise behold for ever." Such an utterance was worthy of all solemnity on His part, of all acceptance on theirs.

"The Jews therefore\* said to Him, Now we know [learn, perceive] that Thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and Thou sayest, If anyone keep My word, he shall never taste of death. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham who died? and the prophets died: whom makest Thou Thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing: it is My Father that glorifieth Me; of whom ye say, He is our† God; and ye have not known Him, but I know Him; and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be like you a liar; but I know Him, and keep His word. Abraham your father exulted to see My day, and he saw and rejoiced. The Jews therefore said to Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old,<sup>172</sup> and hast Thou seen Abraham?‡ Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Before Abraham was, I am. They took up therefore stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out from the temple,§ going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (verses 52-59)

\* Fifteen uncials and most cursives, etc., read οὖν, "therefore," but not BC, etc., with some very old versions [as Syrsin].

† BpmDFX, etc., ὁ μὴ ὄν (and so Text. Rec.), contrary to the rest.

‡ [Syrin Shows "has Abraham seen thee?" so corr.Bpm ]

§ Here end BD and some of the oldest versions [as Syrsin], the rest adding substantially as in Text. Rec.

Unbelief reasons from its own thoughts, and is never so confident as when completely wrong. So the Jews, misinterpreting the faithful sayings of the Lord Jesus, avail themselves of it triumphantly as the proof that Abraham and the prophets could not be of His school; for they, beyond controversy, were already dead. He must be possessed, therefore, to speak thus. Did He set up to be greater than they? Whom did He make Himself? Alas! it is here that man, Jew or Gentile, is blind. Jesus made Himself nothing, emptied Himself, taking a bondman's form, becoming a man though being God over all, blessed for ever, and as the humbled man exalted by God the Father. If the eye be single, the whole body is full of light. So it was with Him Who came here and became man to do the will of God, in Whom He could and did confide to glorify Him. His path was one of unbroken fellowship as of obedience. He never sought His own glory, He always kept His Father's word; He could say, from first to last, I know Him; in all leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. We may learn of Him that, if it be the grossest presumption for men of the world to affect the knowledge of God the Father, it is the greatest wrong in a child of His to deny it. "If I should say, I know Him not, I shall be like you a

liar." But He that claims to know Him keeps His word, and herein gives the testimony of reality along with that claim. The Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit, and where he communicates the truth, He also effectually works in holiness according to God's will.

But the Lord did not hesitate to meet their challenge of Abraham, and lets the Jews know that the father of the faithful exulted to see His day (as ever, I presume, His appearing in glory),\* and saw and rejoiced. It was, of course, by faith, like the not seeing or tasting death in the context; but the Jews took all in a mere physical way, and on their arguing from His comparative youth to the denial of Abraham's seeing Him, the still deeper utterance comes forth, "Verily, verily, I say to you, Before Abraham was, I am," the ever-subsisting One.<sup>173</sup>

\* ["It was the day when the promises would be accomplished, and very naturally he who had the promises looked for the time when they are to be made good in Christ."-"Lectures on the Gospels," p. 476, note.]

It was said: the good confession before the Jews, the truth of truths, the infinite mystery of His Person, which to know is to know the true God and eternal life, as He is both. Such He was, such He is, from everlasting to everlasting. Incarnation in no way impeached it, but rather gave occasion for its revelation in man to men. He Who was God is become man, and as He cannot cease to be God, so He will not cease to be man. He is the Eternal, though also a man, and has taken manhood into union with Himself, the Son the Word, not with God only, but God too. "Before Abraham was (γενέσθαι), I am" (εἰμί). Abraham came into being. Jesus is God, and God is. "I am" is the expression of eternal subsistence, of Godhead. He could as truly have said, Before Adam was, I am; but the question was about Abraham, and with that calm dignity which never goes beyond the needed truth, He asserts it, and no more; but what He asserts could not be true, were He not the ever-present and unchanging One, the I AM before Adam, angels, and all things; as, indeed, He it was Who created them. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that has been made.

Not to know Him is the fatal ignorance of the world; to deny Him, the unbelieving die of the Jews, as of all who assume to know God independently, and to the exclusion of His Divine glory. And it is death while they live, eternal death, soon to be the second death, not extinction, but punishment in the lake of fire. Meanwhile unbelief can with impunity show its spite. "Then took they up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple." The remaining words are probably taken from Luke 4: 30, though many witnesses (ACELKΔ, etc., with some very ancient versions)\* insert them.

\* [But not Syrsin.]

## JOHN — THE NINTH CHAPTER\*

\* [Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 477-485.]

The light of God had shone in Jesus (light, not of Jews only, but of the world); yet was He rejected, increasingly and utterly, and with deadly hatred. There was no miracle wrought; it was emphatically His words that we hear, but asserting at length the Divine glory of His Person. This roused, as it always does, the rancour of unbelief. They believe not on Him, because they bow neither to their own ruin nor to the grace of God, which thus comes down to meet man, revealing the God Who is unknown. But Jesus pursues His way of love, and unfolds it in a new and suited form, only to meet with similar rejection afresh, as our chapter and the next will show.

## John 9: 1-12

"And passing along, He saw a man blind from birth.<sup>174</sup> And His disciples asked Him, saying, Rabbi, which sinned, this (man) or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus\* answered, Neither this (man) sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him. It must work the works of Him that sent Me† while it is day: night cometh, when no one can work. When I am in the world, I am the world's light" (verses 1-5).

\* Some authorities insert ὁ, "the," contrary to the great mass.

† Tischendorf, in his eighth edition, reads ἡμεῖς, "us," in both occurrences, following pmBDL, several ancient versions, etc.; but Alford, Green, Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, etc., adhere to ἐμὲ and με, with AC and the great majority of uncials, cursives, and many ancient versions. BD give με in the second place, followed by Tregelles, as by Westcott and Hort also [and Weiss], with the Sahidic and the Syriac of Jerusalem, etc. This goes far to explode the "we" [Syrin] must work; still more is the internal evidence against it.

It was an act of pure grace which the Lord was about to do. Nobody had appealed to Him, not even the blind man or his parents. The disciples only raised a question, one of those curious speculations in which the later Jews delighted:<sup>175</sup> was it the man's sin, or his parents', which had involved him in congenital blindness? Certainly no such Pythagorean fancy prevailed then in Judea as that a man might have sinned in a previous existence on earth, and be punished for it in an after-state also on earth. Nor is there any sufficient reason to endorse a pious and learned author's view, that the disciples might have entertained-what rabbis afterwards drew from Gen. 25: 22-the notion of sin before birth.

It seems easy to understand that they conceived, however strangely, of punishment inflicted anticipatively on one whose eventual sin was foreseen by God. Doubtless it was unsound; but this need be no difficulty in the way; for what question or assertion of the disciples did not betray error enough to draw out the unerring correction, so precious to them and us, of our Lord? He now puts the case on its real purpose in the Divine mind-that the works of God might be manifested in him. It is the day of grace now: therefore was Jesus come; and this was just an opportunity for the display of His gracious power. Yet man understands not grace but by faith, and even believers only so far as faith is in exercise. Government is the natural thought when one sees God's cognisance of every thing and every one here below. But it was not then, nor is it now, the time for His government of the world. Here lay the mistake of the disciples, then, as of Job's friends of old: a mistake which leads souls, not only to censoriousness and misjudgment, but to forget their own sins and need of repentance in occupying themselves with what they count God's vengeance on others.

Here, however, it is not the side of uncharitable self-righteousness which the Lord exposes. He speaks of the activity and purpose of grace as the key. It was no question of sin, either in the blind man or in his parents, but of God's manifesting His works in man's grievous need and sorrow. In the world He was the world's light. He was the sent One and Servant in doing His work, as in speaking His word. Perfect God, He was perfect man, never swerving from the place He had taken here below.

Further, the pressure of His rejection was felt by our Lord, whatever the holy calm which could so quickly turn from man's murderous hatred to a work of Divine love. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: night cometh, when no one can work." He was the "light" of the "day" which was then shining for Him to do the will and manifest the love of the One Who sent Him-yea, to declare God (see John 1: 18), Whom man otherwise was incapable of seeing. Truly the need was great;

for man like the one in question, was utterly blind. But Jesus was the Creator, though man amongst men. Let Him be in the world, He is its light. It attaches alike to His mission, and to His Person, in virtue of His Divine nature.

"Having said these things, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay over His eyes,<sup>176</sup> and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is interpreted Sent. He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing" (verses 6, 7). This was no unmeaning act on Christ's part, no mere test of obedience on the man's. It was a sign of the truth which the chapter reveals, or, at least, in harmony with it. For He Who was there manifesting the works of God was Himself a man, and had deigned to take the body prepared for Him; most holy, beyond all doubt, as became the Son of God Who knew no sin, about to be made sin for us on the cross, but none the less really of the woman, of blood and flesh, as the children partake. But Incarnation, precious as is the grace of the Lord in it, of itself is quite insufficient for man's need; yea, it seems rather to add at first to the difficulty, as did the clay on the man's eyes. The Spirit must work by the word, as well as the Son sent into the world, Jesus Christ come in flesh. Without the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in man he cannot see. Compare John 3. So it is here: the man must go to the pool of Siloam, and wash there. Attention is the more fixed on this by the appended interpretation or meaning of the word.<sup>177</sup> It signifies the soul's recognition that Jesus was the sent One of God, sent to do His will and finish His work, the Son yet servant withal, to accomplish the great salvation of God. The heart is thus purified by faith. Now the man has eyes and can see, not when the clay was laid on, but when he washed in the pool of Siloam. Christ must be here, and a man too, in contact with men in all their darkness; but only when the Holy Ghost applies the word to the conscience do they, owning Him to be the Sent of God, receive sight. Not Incarnation only, but the efficacious work of the Spirit, is needed that man may see according to God. "According to His own mercy He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3: 5-7.)

"The neighbours therefore, and those who used to see him before that he was a beggar,† said, Is not this he that sitteth and beggeth? Some said, It is he; others‡ said, No, but he is like him; butt he said, It is I. They said therefore to him, How then§ were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man|| that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go unto¶ Siloam, and wash. Having gone away then\*\* and washed, I received sight. And†† they said to him, Where is He? He saith,‡‡ I do not know" (verses 8-12).

† The common and largely supported reading is τυφλὸς "blind," but the more ancient is προσάτης, "a beggar." [So Syrsin, Weiss, Blass.]

‡ So read BCLX with many old versions; Text. Rec. ἄλλοι δὲ ὅτι, with more than a dozen uncials, etc., as δὲ, also.

§ οὖν CDLX, etc.

|| ὁ . . . ὁ B, etc., but omitting the first καὶ εἶπεν, as the mass [so Blass, etc.] omit the articles.

¶ BDLX, etc., omit τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ, and read τοῦ, Σ [W. and H., Weiss, Blass].

\*\* οὖν BDLX, etc. [Weiss, Blass], δέ the mass.

†† καὶ BLX, etc., οὖν majority, but A and some old versions omit both [as Blass].

‡‡ D, etc., with ancient versions, add αὐτοῖς, "to them."

Those accustomed to the blind beggar could not conceal their surprise and perplexity; for as the

sightless eyes are a prime disfigurement of the human face, so their presence thus unexpectedly changed the man's entire expression. No wonder that they wondered; yet was the fact certain, and the evidence incontestable. God took care that there should be many witnesses, and would make the testimony felt the more it was discussed and weighed. Had they known Who Jesus was, and for what He was sent, they would have understood the fitness of the work done that day. But he on whom the work was wrought gave out no uncertain sound. *He* was the man whom they were used to see sitting and begging. His witness to Jesus is most explicit. He does not know much yet, but what he knows he declares with plain decision. How could he doubt whose eyes were opened? Did they ask how it was? His answer was ready and unreserved: "The (or, A) man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash." The mighty effect followed at once: "And having gone away and washed, I received sight." They are curious to know where Jesus is; but the man is as frank in acknowledging his ignorance of this as before in confessing the reality of what He had done. It might not be to his own praise that he did not return to Jesus in thanksgiving for God's grace; but God would use it to show how wholly the worker and the object of the work were above collusion. How few have the honesty to say "I do not know" when they know as little as he who here owns it! Yet is it no light condition of learning more.

On the other hand, we see that the Lord not only would draw attention by men's debate, and by the man's distinct testimony, but leaves the man for the present, that, by his own reflection on what was done and answering their questions, he might be prepared both for trial that was coming, and for still better blessing from and in Himself. The agitation among the neighbours was to be followed quickly by the more serious inquisition of the religious chiefs. These, as we shall see, readily find matter in the good deed for their usual malevolence toward that which brought honour to God independently of them. Worldly religion, whatever its profession, is really and always a systematic effort to make God the servant of man's pride and selfishness. It knows not love, and values not holiness; it is offended by the faith that, feeding on the word, serves by the Spirit of God, glories in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh. It hates walking in the light as a constant thing, for it only wants religion at its fit times and seasons as a shield against the day of death and the hour of judgment. Hence, for the Son of God to be here on earth, a man presented to men's eyes, blind as they are, and sending them where they can wash and see, outside the regular established religion of the land and without the medium of the accredited guides, is intolerable. It comes out plainly in what follows, a most weighty, and, I doubt not, intended lesson in this instructive narrative: God's witness in work, as before (John 8) in word.

Whenever God acts, the men of religion set up to judge, and the neighbours fear their displeasure more than they pitied the blind man or rejoiced in his healing. Such men are accredited of the world, and count it their province to decide such questions, while others love to have it so. What, then, will the Pharisees say? They had cavilled before.

### **John 9: 13-34.**

"They bring unto the Pharisees him that was once blind." Nor are the Pharisees slow to detect a flaw, as they supposed. Not that the man had not been blind, nor that Jesus had failed to give him sight; but had they not both, Jesus especially, broken the law? "Now it was sabbath (on the day)\* when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." How little men, particularly those whom public opinion regards as pillars, are apt to suspect that their will exposes them to Satan! But so it is, and, above all, where the Son of God is concerned, Who was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and give us an understanding that we should know Him that is true. Yet those who, confident in their traditions, dare to arraign the Saviour, commit themselves the more to the enemy, because they flatter themselves

that they are upholding the cause of God. Thus are they ensnared to the destruction of themselves and of all who heed them. "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent Him" (John 5: 23).

\* ἐν ᾗ ἠμῆρα BLX, etc, but the great mass give ὅτε, "when."

"Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received sight. And he said to them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see. Some of the Pharisees then said, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath. \*Others said, How can a sinful man do such signs? And there was a division among them" (verses 15, 16). They are uneasy, whatever may be their affectation of superior sanctity and zeal for God's honour. The power which gave sight, where blindness had hitherto ever rested, startled them, and excited their curiosity, with the desire of discovering an evil source, if not of alarming the man. But grace wrought in him, and gave him quiet courage to confess the good deed wrought, albeit on a sabbath and without a word about it. "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see." God calls us, when blessed through Christ, all to be confessors, though not all martyrs; and surely it is the least we owe Him in praise and our fellowmen in love.

\* BD and some cursives and versions [Syrsin] add δὲ, "but."

But all true confession is odious to the religious world and its leaders. "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath." This malicious plea had been already refuted; but Pharisaism has no heart for, no subjection to, the truth. It had never entered their consciences, or they had forgotten it in their zeal for forms and traditions. But how sad the self-deceit of men destitute of true holiness, or of real obedience, daring to arraign the Holy One of God!

Yet others there were among them not so blinded by party passion or personal envy who ventured to say a word, if they took no further step. "Others said, How can a sinful man do such signs?" All they meant was that He Who wrought thus could be no such deceiver or impostor as the rest conceived. They had no right view of Himself, of His Person, or His relation to God. They had not the faintest idea that He was God manifest in flesh; but they questioned whether He must not be "of God," since He did such signs.<sup>178</sup> "And there was a division among them." Thus, as they were not yet of one mind, there was a delay for Satan's design.

But in their restlessness they examine once more the man, and are used unwittingly by the God of grace to help him on in the apprehension and acknowledgment of the truth which is according to piety. "They say therefore\* to the blind (man) again, Thou,† what sayest thou of Him, because He opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet" (verse 17). The first examination was as to the fact and the manner. Now they want to force out of the man his thoughts of his Benefactor, in their malice wishing to find a plea for condemning both. On the other hand, the grace of God is as manifest as it is sweet in using the painful trial and exercise of soul to His own glory, through the man led on and blessed only the more. He knew their hatred of Jesus, yet he answers their challenge boldly, "He is a Prophet": a decided advance on his previous confession, though far from the truth he is soon to learn. He owns that Jesus has the mind of God as well as His power.

\* οὖν ABDLX, many cursives and versions [W. and H., Weiss, Blass], but most, followed by Text. Rec., omit.

† σὺ τί Text. Rec. with most; τί σου BLX, etc.

Baffled by his quiet firmness, the religious inquisitors turned to another and accustomed means of assault. As the neighbours in their perplexity appeal to the Pharisees, so these work on, and by natural relationships too. They would try whether some disproof could not be made out of the parents. Clearly

unbelief lies at the bottom of all. Man, being fallen and evil, is unwilling to believe in the goodness of God—above all, in His grace to himself. Had the neighbours bowed to the clear evidence of God's intervention, they would not have brought the man to the Pharisees; had the Pharisees, they would not have persisted in sifting again and again beyond the ascertainment of the fact; still less would they have awakened the fears of the family. "The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him that he was blind, and received sight, until they called the parents of him that received sight, and asked them, saying, Is this your son who, ye say, was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents therefore\* answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth we know not, or who opened his eyes we know not; ask himself; he is of age, he will speak for himself. These things said his parents because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that, if any one should confess Him (to be) Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. On this account his parents said, He is of age: ask him" (verses 18-23).

\* οὐκ B, etc.; most δὲ ; many [as Blass] omit, and so Text. Rec., which adds αὐτοῖς with most, contrary to BLX, etc.

The matter of fact is thus again the cardinal question, as it really was; and as to this the parents answered conclusively. That the man now saw was undeniable, and this through Jesus, as he declared; that he was their son and born blind, the parents maintained unhesitatingly. The conclusion was irresistible, if unbelief did not resist everything where God is concerned. The parents answer only where they are concerned. It was not that they, or any reasonable person, doubted that Jesus had wrought the miracle; but they dreaded the consequence, from Pharisaic enmity, of going beyond their own circle of natural knowledge, and pleaded ignorance of how it was done, or of Whom it was that did it. Overborne by fear of the Pharisees, they forget even the affection that would otherwise have sheltered their offspring from the impending blow; and they throw all the burden on their own son. "Ask him: he is of age, he will speak concerning himself." Thus their very fears, on which the Pharisees reckoned for a denial of the facts, God used to make it solely a controversy between the Pharisees and the man himself, when they were compelled by the evidence of the parents to accept as a certain fact that he who now saw had been ever blind, and blind till just now.

Another thing also comes out very plainly, that the enmity of the Jews to the Lord Jesus was known ere this to have gone so far as to threaten with excommunication every one that confessed Him to be the Christ.<sup>179</sup> The will of man is blind to proofs; and as this flows from corruption, it issues in destruction.

Hence the man is once more appealed to, and all question of the miracle is dropped. "Therefore they called a second time the man who was blind, and said to him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner. He therefore answered,\* If He is a sinner I know not. One thing I know, that, blind as I was, now I see" (verses 24, 25). They now assume the highest ground; they at least hold to the Divine side, if others are carried away by the apparent good done to man. Accordingly they call on him to give glory to God,<sup>180</sup> whilst they assert their unqualified assurance that Jesus was a sinner. Nor has it been an uncommon thing from that day to this, for men to profess to honour God at the expense of His Son; as the Lord warned His disciples to expect to the uttermost, where the Father and the Son are unknown. But the man in his simplicity puts forward the fact which he deeply felt and they would fain hide. "If He is a sinner I know not. One thing I know, that, blind as I was, now I see." No argument can stand against the logic of reality—above all, of such a reality as this. He certainly did not know what they pretended to know; but that Jesus was a sinner could not be: he alleges the most distinct and irrefragable proof; and this on their own ground of what was before all. If reasoning be unseasonable and powerless, what is religious antipathy in presence of an undeniable fact which proves the mighty

power and goodness of God? Their efforts proved their ill-will to Him Who had thus wrought: the blessed reality remained, whatever the insinuations or the assaults of unbelief.

\* καὶ εἶπεν is the addition of Text. Rec., following most uncials and cursives, but not of ABDL, some good cursives, and the best ancient versions.

It is well also to remark that with faith goes a mighty operation of God, with its own characteristic effects, and more important in every soul that believes the Gospel than even that of which the man, once blind but now seeing, was so sensible. Those who believe are quickened from death in trespasses and sins, and they henceforth live to God. Crucified with Christ, they nevertheless live, yet not they themselves properly, but Christ lives in them. They are thereby partakers of a Divine nature, being born of God. It is no improvement of their old nature as men. They are born of water and Spirit; they are begotten by the word of truth. With faith goes this new life, which shows itself in wholly different thoughts and affections, as well as ways or walk. Of its gradual progress in the midst of opposition and persecution, the story of this blind man, who now saw, is no inapt illustration.

The pertinacity of the Pharisees finds in the man a quiet courage, which stands out in contrast with the fears of his parents, and even urges the claims of Him Who had wrought so good and great a deed on His adversaries in a way they could not resist. If they ply the man with the question, *How?* he answers with the question, *Why?*

"They said therefore\* to him (again),† What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes? He answered them, I told you already, and ye did not hear: why do ye wish to hear again? Do ye also wish to become His disciples? They railed‡ at him, and said, Thou art His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken to Moses, but this man we know not whence He is" (verses 26-29). It was unbelieving scorn, not real ignorance.181

\* Text. Rec. has δὲ, "and," with many good authorities, but not corr ( pm omitting) BDKLX, many cursives and versions.

† πάλιν, Text. Rec., with most uncials, cursives, etc., but not BD, etc., and many ancient versions.

‡ οὖν is added in Text. Rec., with little support; καὶ B, etc., but the most read neither.

He who was once blind, but now saw, discerned the true state of the case, as those did not who had never experienced His gracious power. He felt satisfied that their opposition was invincible. The apostle of grace none the less, but the more, warns the despisers of their self-willed unbelief and danger of perishing. The same spirit of faith expresses itself in him who just now was but a blind beggar, even as from those that had not should be taken away what they seemed to have. Christ is a rock of strength to the one, and of offence to the other. They thus expose themselves to the sharp rebuke of their folly by the man they affected to despise. Zealous for the servant whom they set up as master, they confessed their ignorance of Him Who is Lord of all.

"The man answered and said to them, Why in this is the\* wonderful thing, that ye know not whence He is, and He opened mine eyes! †We know that God heareth not sinners, but if anyone be God-fearing, and do His will, him He heareth. Since time (began) it was not heard that anyone opened a born blind man's eyes. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing. They answered and said to Him, In sins thou wast born wholly, and dost *thou* teach us? And they cast him out" (verses 30-34).

\* τὸ θ. "the," in BL, a few cursives, etc., omitted in the great majority.

† Text. Rec. adds δὲ, "now," with most [as Syrsin], against BDGL

The man's answer was as solid as to the point. He discards the attack on himself personally, and treats it as a question between the religious leaders, who avowedly could not tell whence He was Who had wrought a work wholly unexampled as a display of God's power. It was hard, if not impossible, to believe that such a one could be evil, as they had imputed. "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if anyone be God-fearing and do His will, him He heareth." For what can be surer, as a general principle, than that "them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed"? (1 Sam. 2: 30.182) Indeed, this was plain as between Jesus (to take the lowest ground) and the Pharisees, whose moral incapacity astonishes the man. What then remained for his adversaries? Nothing but contemptuous rage, and the extreme blow of the ecclesiastical arm. "They cast him out," but not before they unwittingly testified to the force of his words. "In sins *thou* wast born wholly, 182a and dost *thou* teach us?" They were too proud to learn.

## John 9: 35-41.

But they cast him out into the arms and bosom of the Lord. For, as we are next told, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and, having found him, He said, Believest *thou* on the Son of God (or, man)? He answered,\* and said, And† who is He, Sir [Lord], that I may believe on Him? ‡Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen Him, and He that speaketh with thee is He. And he said, I believe, Lord; and he did Him homage" (verses 35-38). Such is the final step of God's grace in working with the blind man. He is thrust outside Judaism for the truth's sake, consequent on the work wrought on his person; he there is found by Christ, and led to know and believe on Him, far beyond any thought, however true, he had previously conceived. It was faith in His own testimony and Person.

\* B and Theb. omit ἀπεκρίθη ἑκεῖνος, "he answered." Memph. omits "said."

† Text. Rec. omits καὶ, "and," with AL and a few others, but good versions.

‡ Text. Rec. adds δὲ with many good authorities, but BDX, etc., omit.

It is really the history of a soul that goes onward under the guidance of God, Who makes the grace of the Lord and His glory shine the more fully after one is outside the world's religion, whether cast or going out. And such is the character of Christianity, as the believers had at length to learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially from its final chapter. So patient was the Spirit of grace with those of the ancient people of God, dull to learn the new thing which God has introduced through and in our Lord Jesus. But, late as it may be, the breach with earthly religion must come. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; and this so much the more, because we have boldness to enter into the holies by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which He has dedicated for us through the veil—that is, His flesh. But the work was not yet done which opened this way, nor the Spirit shed to give souls the consciousness of righteous title. We have one, therefore, not yet going forth thus, but cast out by hatred far more against the name of Jesus than against the man-yea, we may say against the man solely for Jesus' sake, Who had heard of, and felt for, and found the sheep thus worried of men.

But a perplexing difference of reading follows, which claims more than a bare critical notice. "Dost thou believe on the Son of *man*?" say the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Cambridge [of Beza] manuscripts, supported by the [Syrin], Sahidic, Roman edition of the Aethiopic, etc., though more than a dozen uncials [A, L, etc.], all the cursives, and the rest of the ancient versions, etc., give us τοῦ Θεοῦ, "of God" [Lachm. and Treg.]. But Tischendorf, in his eighth edition, and W. and H. [Weiss and Blass] adopt τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Nor can it be denied that, as the rule, the Lord habitually and graciously loved to present Himself in relation to man; as, again, it is plain that this chapter in particular sets Him

forth, not only as the Light, Word, and God, like the preceding one, but as the Incarnate One Who was sent to manifest the works of God, the rejected Messiah about to suffer, but to be exalted over all. On the other hand, that the Son of God is the great distinctive testimony of our Gospel none can overlook; and we can well understand how the light of this glorious truth (bursting on the soul gradually led on, spite of, and in a certain sense through, the blind hostility of the Pharisees) draws him out in homage to the Lord. It was, at any rate, the Son of God in grace, a man on earth, Who had been seen by, and was talking with, one who had experienced His light-giving power.<sup>183</sup>

"And Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that they that see not may see, and they that see may become blind. \*And some of the Pharisees that were with Him heard these things,\* and said to Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said to them, If ye were blind, ye would not have sin; but now ye say, We see, † your sin remaineth" (verses 39-41).

\* BLK, three cursives, Theb. or Sah. Memph. Arm., etc., do not read καὶ, as in Text. Rec. with most uncials, cursives, and versions, which also add Taura, "these things," save pmD, etc., with several versions [as Syrsin].

† Text. Rec., adds οὐ̃ν with ten uncials and most cursives [with Syrsin], contrary to BDKLX, etc., and the bulk of the ancient versions.

The Lord thereon shows how His coming acted, and was meant to act, on souls. It had a higher purpose and more permanent result than any energy, however mighty and benign, that dealt with the body. He was the life to those, however dark, who received Him: those who rejected Him sealed their own ruin everlastingly, whatever their estimate of themselves or in the mind of others.<sup>184</sup> The Jew, especially the Pharisee, might be ever so confident that he himself was a guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness; but the coming of the only True Light brought to evident nothingness all such haughty pretensions as surely as it gave eyes to such as owned their blindness. No flesh therefore shall glory: he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord Who was come a man, but God on earth, for this reversal of fallen man's thoughts, and display of His own grace. Pharisaic pride refuses to bow to Jesus imputing blindness, as they thought; but if it speaks, it is obliged to hear its most withering sentence from the Judge of all mankind. For blindness there is all grace and power in Christ; but what can be the portion of those who, stone-blind, say they see? Their sin remains, as well as blindness, which of itself is not sin, though its consequence.<sup>185</sup>

## JOHN — THE TENTH CHAPTER\*

\*[Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 485-495.]

### John 10: 1-6.

The Lord proceeds to set forth the consequences of His rejection, spite of His dignity, under a variety of forms. It is the disclosure of His grace to and for the sheep (from His humiliation as man and servant, even to the laying down His life in all its intrinsic excellency), and of His glory as one with the Father. The bright side of the truth comes to view.<sup>186</sup>

"Verily, verily, I say to you, He that entereth not through the door into the fold of the sheep but climbeth up otherwise, *he* is a thief and a robber; but he that entereth through the door is shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth\* his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.<sup>187</sup> †When he hath put forth all‡ his own, he goeth before them, and the

sheep follow him because they know his voice; but a stranger they will in no wise follow, but will flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers. This proverb said Jesus to them; but they knew not what things they were which He was speaking to them" (verses 1-6).

\* καλεῖ Text. Rec. with eleven uncials and most cursives, etc.; φωνεῖ BDLX, some cursives, etc. Either means "calleth."

† Most [as Syrsin] insert καὶ (as Text. Rec.), or δὲ; but the most ancient omit.

‡ Most uncials, etc., read πρόβατα, "sheep," as Text. Rec., but very ancient ones have either πάντα, "all," or [as Blass] nothing more than τῶ ἴδιᾳ "his own."

The mode of speech is allegorical, departing so far from ordinary language, but adopting a figure very familiar to the law, the psalms, and the prophets (Gen. 49; Ps. 80; Isa. 40; Ezek. 34; Zech. 11, 13). The application to pastors of the church is ridiculously out of place and time. It is the Shepherd of Israel in contrast with those who claimed to guide the ancient people of God. Even He, albeit a Divine Person, entered in the appointed way. Others who had no competency were no less destitute of title or commission. The woman's Seed, the Virgin's Son, the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the mighty God, the Father of the age to come, coming forth out of Bethlehem, from of old, from everlasting, yet to be cut off after sixty-nine of Daniel's seventy weeks, the righteous Servant abased beyond all, yet to be exalted above all, what did not meet to point Him out and exclude every rival? Yes, the rejected Christ is He that entered through the door, Shepherd of the sheep — none but He.

All others sought to mount some other way. Theudas might boast to be somebody, Judas of Galilee draw away people after him, Pharisees love the first seats, scribes and doctors of law lay heavy burdens on men. But the sheep, taught of God, hear His voice, not theirs; even as the Spirit, in His care for God's glory, was pleased to do the porter's work, opening the door to Him only, as we see from the beginning in the Simeons and Annas and all who waited for redemption in Jerusalem. The others, small or great, orderly or revolutionary, had no right to the sheep; they were nothing better than thieves or robbers, if they claimed as they did the sheep that were His. He only is Shepherd, and the Sheep hear His voice. They are His own, and He calls them as such by name. Who could, who would, but Himself? He knows and loves them, making them feel that He has an interest in them, such as God alone could feel, and such a right to them as God alone had and gave.

Again, Christ entered in, but He leads out. Judaism is doomed. The Israel of God follow Him outside. It was no question now of gathering back into the land the outcasts of Israel, or the dispersed of Judah; this must await another day. Now He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. "When He shall have put forth all His own"- for if such were the principle of His action now, still it was to be the necessary effect of His death on the cross-He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. It is the wisdom of God for the simple.188

Precious word of God, the hearing of His voice! It is due to His Person, it is the fruit of His grace, it is their true and best safeguard. "And a stranger will they in no wise follow, but will flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers." The "stranger," or alien, has nothing to do with them; however he might seek it, what have they to do with him? Their wisdom is to follow Jesus, Whose they are, Whose voice they hear and know. How simple, were we but simple! How honouring to the Son! This, too, best pleases the Father. It is through faith we are kept, not by discerning shades of scepticism or superstition, though this may be for some a duty or call of love for others, but by adhering to the truth.

Yet such words are powerless to the men of either reason or tradition. For they seek their own honour, they give or receive it one of another. Jesus came in the Father's name, and Him they receive not. They avow themselves strangers to Him; they deny that any can know His voice. Had they heard it themselves, they would not doubt it could be known. They prefer and follow a stranger. The superstitious exalt *their* church; were it God's church, it would repudiate such exaltation at the expense of Christ. The sceptical exalt man as he is. But both agree in ignoring the Shepherd's voice. So it is now, and so it was then.

"This proverb\* said Jesus to them, but *they* knew not what things they were which He was speaking to them." His sayings are as Himself: if He is valued, so are they; if He is not believed on, neither are they understood.<sup>188a</sup> He is the light and the truth. All that He says depends on faith in Him for its apprehension. And therefore it is that in 1 John 2 the very babes of the family of God are said to know all things. Knowing Christ, they have an unction from the Holy One. It is not by learning or by logic, any more than by sentiment, enthusiasm, or bigotry, but by the possession of Christ, that they refuse errors which have ensnared unnumbered doctors of divinity. They are thus kept bright and fresh, simple and secure, because dependent on Him. Those who count themselves wise venture to judge for themselves, and perish in their unbelieving presumption. To hear His voice is the humblest place in the world, yet has it the power and wisdom of God with it. What they heard from the beginning abides in them, but for the stranger they have no ear or heart. They are satisfied with Christ's voice. They know the truth in Him, and that no lie is of the truth. They are glad of every help which reminds them of His words, and brings them home to their souls. A stranger's voice they distrust, and flee from him. They are right: God would have us value no other voice.

\* The Gospel of John does not use the ordinary word "parable," as the Synoptics do frequently, and no other, for our Lord's narrative likenesses in illustration of truth. John was led to employ the word [παροιμία] given in the Septuagint [Prov. 1: 1] for a "proverb," in the sense of an "allegory," or a divergence from the common way of speech, as parable means a comparison.<sup>187a</sup>

## John 10: 7-21.

"Therefore said Jesus again to them,\* Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All as many as came (before Me)† are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; through Me if anyone have entered, he shall be saved, and shall go in and shall go out, and shall find pasture. The thief cometh not unless that he may steal and slaughter and destroy; I came that they might have life, and have abundantly" (verses 7-10).

\* Some omit πάλιν and others αὐτοῖς.

† Authorities are about equally for and against [SyrSin, BIUSB] πρὸ ἐμοῦ, as in Text. Rec.<sup>189</sup>

In the former allegory the Lord speaks of Himself generally as Shepherd of the sheep, and this to put them forth, going at the head of them as they follow Him. Now He employs a different figure of Himself in direct terms, and with no less solemnity, "Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep." There is no confusion with the former relation. It is not a question now of the sheepfold. This He had entered with every proof suited to man by God-proofs personal, moral, ministerial, miraculous, and prophetic; but the carnal mind is invincible in its unbelief, and withal being enmity against God, it is, if possible, less subject to His grace (which it understands not, but suspects) than to His law, which conscience feels to be just and right. When bowed or broken in the sense of sin against God, how sweet to hear the voice of Jesus! "I am the door of the sheep," not of the fold, but of such as are of God, who yearn after the knowledge of Him and deliverance from self. "All, as many as came . .

. are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." They were not sent, but came without warrant; they sought their own things, not those of Jesus Christ, not of others, therefore. Corrupt or violent, how could they avail, either for the sheep, or for God's glory? To them the porter did not open, and if the adversary deceived, the sheep listened not; these were guarded, however tried.

But quite another was here. "I am the door; through Me, if any shall have entered, he shall be saved, and shall go in and shall go out, and shall find pasture." How striking, yet perfectly simple, the fulness of grace touched in His words! It is no longer the narrow enclosure, but in principle for "anyone" to enter; and if one shall have entered through Christ, there is salvation, liberty, and food<sup>190</sup>-the sure, free, and rich blessing of Christianity. All turns on His glorious Person. Grace bringing salvation to any, to all, has appeared. When law shut up a people from the depravities of a rebellious and idolatrous race, when it schooled those who heeded it, we can see why the wisdom of God chose a single nation for this great moral experiment. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law, to redeem those under law, that *we* (the sheep of the fold) might receive sonship. But because ye are sons (the Gentiles that believe the Gospel) God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father (Gal. 4). The gift was too precious, the boon too efficacious, to be pent up in the strait limits of Israel, especially as the Light manifested the darkness universal around.

Whoever, then, has entered through Christ shall be saved, shall go in and shall go out, and shall find all he lacks. God "that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things"? (Rom. 8: 32.) The law condemned the sinner, placed him in bondage, and sentenced him to die. The unchanging One changes all for the believer, be he who he may. This is grace as well as truth, and both came through and in Christ the Lord. What a Saviour! How worthy of the God Who gave and sent Him, His Only-begotten Son, into the world, that we might live through Him!

Outside Christ is sin and misery. Such is the world; and of all the world no part so delusive, so selfish, so fatal to itself and all governed by it, as the religious world and its leaders, the leaders now of infidelity as well as of superstition. Here is the testimony of Christ, of Him Who is the truth; "the thief cometh not unless that he may steal, and slaughter, and destroy." No creature can rise above his level; what, then, can the creature do that is steeped in unremoved evil and selfishness? It may sink indefinitely; it cannot possibly rise above itself. The world's hatred may become more deadly, its darkness more dense; yet no ideas nor feelings, no helps nor ordinances, can change its nature. But the pretension to be of God, when one is not, may and does precipitate into the depths of avarice and cruelty. It is the more destructive because the false claim of His name shuts up every avenue of ordinary human pity; and the reality of what is of God provokes in the unreal the determination to get rid of what condemns itself.

How blessed the contrast of Christ! "I came that they might have life, and have abundantly." He was the life, and life was in Him-not light only, but life. All outside Him lay in darkness and death. He not only was sent of the Father, but came, and came that the sheep might have life; and He would give it abundantly,<sup>191</sup> as was most due to His personal glory and His work-a work ever before Him here. Hence it was only in resurrection that He breathed into the disciples. As Jehovah God breathed on Adam, and the man became a living soul, after a different sort from every other living thing on earth; so did He, Who was alike the risen Man and true God, breathe a better life into those who believed on Him. It is life eternal, and this, after all question of sin and law, was settled for faith by His death.

The Lord next presents Himself in the beautiful character of the good Shepherd; a most affecting

and expressive proof of His lowly love, when we think Who He is, and what we are.

"I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd layeth down his life [soul]<sup>192</sup> for the sheep. (But)\* he that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are† not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth; and the hireling fleeth‡ because he is a hireling, and no care hath he for the sheep" (verses 11-13).

\* The copulative particle δὲ is not in BGL and a few other good witnesses.

† ἔστιν ABLX. etc. εἶστιν most uncials and cursives.

‡ This clause ὁ δὲ μισθωτὸς φεύγει, "and the hireling fleeth," is not given in (A is somewhat uncertain) BDL, some cursives, ancient versions [as Syrsin], etc., but a dozen uncials of inferior age and weight, with most cursives and some of the old versions, insert as in Text. Rec.

This indeed is love; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and died as propitiation for our sins. The giving up of life, in any case, for others would have been the fullest manifestation of love: how much more in His, to Whom the sheep belonged, Who had been from of old promised to stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God! Greatness to the ends of the earth is a little thing compared with the good Shepherd's laying down His life for the sheep. It is the same Messiah; but how incalculably greater the testimony to His love in thus dying than in reigning ever so gloriously, however suitable and due to Himself, as well as to God's glory, and blessed for man when the kingdom comes!<sup>193</sup>

Another phase of human pretension in Divine things next appears, not thieves and robbers as before, but the "hireling," the man who meddles with the sheep, without higher motive than his own wealth or greed. "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed," as sung one of our own poets,<sup>193a</sup> and not untruly. Here, then, the Lord first describes not their trials, but his character who claims what is not his own, but Christ's, and so deserts them openly in the hour of danger. He "beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth." It is the adversary, by whatever means or instruments he may work. Then follows the peril they incur, and the actual injury done. "And the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth; because he is a hireling, and no care hath he for the sheep." As Divine love wrought in God's purpose and will, so in Christ's death; nor is there anything good or acceptable where love is not the motive. It is the true and only right spring of service; even as the Lord intimated to the servant, now fully restored and reinstated, after his denial of Himself, "Feed My lambs-My sheep." Not that He does not propose rewards the most glorious to encourage the servant who is already in the path of Christ and apt to be cast down by its difficulties; but love alone is recognised as that which constrains him to serve. Christ was the perfection of self-sacrificing love; and it is Satan who, as the wolf, seizes and scatters what is so precious to Him, through the selfishness of such as abandon the sheep in their greatest peril, the mercenary having no care for the sheep. The character of man and Satan is as plain as that of Christ, which last comes out for other traits in the next verses. From Him self-seeking was wholly absent; love only was there.

"I am the good Shepherd, and know Mine, and Mine know Me,\* even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father, and My life I lay down for the sheep" (verses 14, 15).

\* The Text. Rec., with thirteen uncials and perhaps all cursives, etc., has γινώσκομαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἐμῶν, "I am known of Mine"; BDL, with the oldest versions [as Syrsin, Weiss, Blass], γινώσκουσί με τὰ ἐμέ.

Here it is in the mutual knowledge of the Shepherd and the sheep that His goodness is shown; and this, wondrous to say, after the pattern of the Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's of the

Father. It is a knowledge after a Divine sort, and as true in His absence as in His presence. It was not such sheltering care as the Messiah might and will extend to His people, however tender; for "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead those that give suck." (Isa. 40: 11.) But there had never been such transparent intimacy as between Him while on earth and His Father; and after this pattern, and none other, was it to be between Him on high and the sheep here below. This mutuality of knowledge disappears almost entirely in the Authorised Version through the unhappy full stop between verses 14, 15, and the consequent mistranslation of the earlier clause of verse 15.

The Lord returns to His laying down His life for the sheep. Nor can we wonder; for as He could give no greater proof of love, so there is nothing which is so strengthening, as well as humbling, to our souls, nothing that so glorifies God, and no other turning-point for the blessing of the universe. At this point, however, it is the good Shepherd's love for the sheep.

Here the Lord can speak distinctly for the first time of other objects of His love. He might come minister of the circumcision for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 15: 24.) But His love could not be so circumscribed, when His death opens the floodgates. The mention of His death leads Him to speak of what was quite outside Israel. "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold"-not of the Jewish people within their enclosure of law and ordinance; "them also I must lead, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be\* one flock, one shepherd" (verse 16).

\* corr BDLX, etc., support the plural form, γενήσονται, "they shall be," the rest have the sing., γενήσεται [Weiss, Blass], which might bear the same meaning.

It is not, as in the English Bible and others, following the Vulgate, "one *fold*," but "one flock." God owns no such thing now as a fold. It is exclusively Jewish; and the idea came in among Christians through the Judaizing of the Church, while the truth of the Church, when seen, makes such a thought or word, as applied to itself, intolerable. The truth is, as we have heard, that the Lord was to put forth all His own, He going before them, and the sheep following. So it was out of the Jewish fold. But other sheep He had which were not of it. "Them also I must lead, and they shall hear My voice." It was to be from among the Gentiles; and the believers there hear His voice, believing the Gospel. But they form no new enclosure, fenced in by law, like the fold of Israel. The liberty of Christ is of the essence of Christianity, not only life and pardon, but freedom as well as food. For if Christ be all, what lack can there be? The Jewish sheep have been led out, the Gentile sheep are gathered, and both compose one flock, as truly as there is one Shepherd.<sup>194</sup>

One cause that has done as much as anything to dull the saints to the perception of the truth here is the fact of so many denominational enclosures in which they find themselves. Does it seem harsh to say that such a state of things, built up by Reformers and others of peculiar energy since the Reformation, is unauthorised? But what saith the Scripture, our only standard? "One flock, one Shepherd." How painful to find persons so prejudiced as to teach, "Many folds, but one flock"! But this is to pervert rather than to expound the word of God, which admits of no fold now that spirit and letter refuse the plea.

Another element which has wrought powerfully in favour of "one fold" is the mischievous confusion of the Church with Israel, Zion, etc., which runs through not only common theology, but even the headings of the Authorised Version, and constantly, therefore, is before all eyes. Hence, if we are now so identified with the ancient people of God that we are warranted to interpret all that is said of them in the Old Testament as our present portion, one cannot be surprised that this should tend to a similar result in the New.

But Christ's death has an aspect towards His Father of the deepest delight and complacency, besides being the basis of redemption and of Christianity. "On this account the Father loveth Me, because I lay down My life (soul) that I may take it again. No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again: this commandment I received from My Father" (verses 17, 18). The Lord does not add here "for the sheep," nor should we limit His death to ourselves. He lets us see the value His own laying down His life had in itself. It was a fresh motive for the Father's love; and no wonder, if it were only as the unfathomable depth to which His own devotedness could go down. But, indeed, none but the Father knows what He found in it of love, confidence in Him, self-abandonment, and moral excellence in every way, crowned by the personal dignity of Him Who, standing in ineffably near relationship to the Father Himself, was thus pleased to die. Hence it could not but be that the Son would take His life again, not now in connection with the earth and man living on it, but risen from the dead, and so the power and pattern of Christianity.<sup>195</sup>

In this profound humiliation, to which the Lord submitted in grace, there is the utmost care to guard against the least suspicion that could lower His glory as the Son and God. It is not, as in Matthew (where He is viewed as the rejected Messiah, the Son of man, not merely the destined head of all nations and tribes and tongues, but in command of the holy angels-His angels): He had only to call on His Father, Who would furnish Him more than twelve legions of angels. And what would have availed all Rome's legions against those heavenly beings, mighty in strength, that do His word? But how, then, He blessedly adds, could the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?

Divine Person though He was, He had come to die; the Life Eternal which was with the Father before there was either man or earth, He had deigned to become man, that He might thus lay down His life and take it again. But here He speaks not more in lowly love than as consciously God, "No one taketh it [away]<sup>195a</sup> from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again: this commandment I received from My Father." On the one hand there is the calm assertion of the right as well as power to lay down His life and to take it again. As none but the Creator could do the latter, so no creature is entitled to do the former. None but God has power and title to do both; and the Word, without, of course, ceasing to be Divine (which, indeed, could not be), became flesh that He might thus die and rise. On the other hand, even in this, which might have been justly deemed the most strictly personal of all acts, He abides the obedient man, and would do only the will of His Father. He was come to do the will of God. This is perfection, and found in Jesus alone.<sup>195b</sup> Well may we adore Him with the Father Who gave Him. He is worthy.

These wondrous words were not without effect even then among the Jews. Love unknown before, the lowliness of a servant, the dignity of One consciously Divine, wrought in some consciences, while they roused others to a deeper hatred. So it is, and must be, in a world of sinful men, where God and Satan are both at work in the momentous conflict of good and evil.

"There was a division\* again among the Jews because of these words; butt many of them said, He hath a demon and is mad: why hear ye Him? Others said, These are not the sayings of one possessed by a demon: can a demon open blind (men's) eyes?" (verses 19-21). The greater the grace, and the deeper the truth, the less does the natural mind appreciate Christ. He is, indeed, the test of every soul that hears His word. But if some imputed what was infinitely above man to a demon, and to the raving consequent on such a possession, others there were who felt how far the words were from those of a demoniac, and who bowed to the Divine power which sealed them. The words and the works to their consciences had another character and import.<sup>196</sup>

\* "Therefore" in the Text. Rec. has considerable support of MSS., but the older omit it.

† Here, again, some give "therefore" instead of "but."

## John 10: 22-38.

"Now\* it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem, (and) it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in the porch of Solomon. The Jews, therefore, surrounded Him, and said to Him, How long cost Thou hold our soul in suspense? If Thou art the Christ, tell us openly. Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believe not. The works which I do in the name of My Father, these bear witness of Me; but ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep.† My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them life eternal, and they shall in no wise ever perish, and no one shall seize them out of My hand. My Father‡ Who‡ hath given Me (them) is greater than all; and no one is able to seize out of the hand of My‡ Father. I and the Father are one" (verses 22-30).

\* BL, 33, Memph. have "then," as they and more omit "and." [Text as ADX-adopted by Blass-Latt., Syrr., Chrys.]

† The weightiest authorities omit "as I told you."

‡ Some MSS. say "the" for "My" [Blass]; others, not "Who," but "as to what He." — BL [Syrin] omit last μου, "My" [Weiss, Blass].

We are many of us familiar with the effort to sustain tradition and human authority in Divine things by such a passage as the opening of verse 22. But it is really futile. For here we learn nothing of our Lord's participation in any observances of men,<sup>197</sup> whatever they may have been, but of His being then in Jerusalem, winter as it was, and walking in Solomon's porch, when the Jews came round, and kept saying to Him, "Till when (or, How long) cost Thou excite our soul (or keep it in suspense)?" Wretched and guilty as their unbelief was, the Jews drew no such inference from His presence then and there. They were uneasy, spite of their opposition to Him. "If Thou art the Christ, tell us openly."<sup>198</sup> But the fatal hour was at hand, and the power of darkness; and the light was about to pass away from them after its full manifestation in their midst. "Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believe not." Take only His words recorded in John 5, 6, and 8. A plainer and richer testimony could not be. But testimony does not always last. It is given freely, fully, patiently, and may then be turned aside from those who reject to such as hear. Thus is God wont to act, and so does the Lord answer on this occasion. "I told you, and ye believe not."

But there was more than words, however truly Divine-words of grace and truth according to His Person. There were works of similar character; and the Jews were accustomed to look for a sign. If they sought honestly, they might see signs beyond man's numbering or estimate. "The works which I do in the name of My Father, they bear witness of Me." What could account for such hardness in any heart?" But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep." Solemn solution of a difficulty, of a resistance to truth, of a rejection of Christ, as true now as ever!

Men trust to themselves, to their own feelings, to their own judgments. Have these never played them false? Have they ever been true before God? What suicidal folly not to distrust themselves, and look to God, cry to God, ask of God, what is His way, His truth, His Son! But no: this were to believe and be saved; and they will not. They are too proud. They will not bow to the Word that arraigns them as sinners, even though it sends them the message of remission of sins on their faith. They feel that such grace on God's part supposes utter guilt and ruin on theirs, and this they are too hard, too proud, to own. They believe not; they are not of the Saviour's sheep. Criminals, heathen, perhaps, may need a

Saviour; not decent, more, religious men like themselves! They do not, will not, believe, and are lost, not because they are too great sinners for Christ, but because they refuse Christ as the Saviour, and deny their ruin as sinners. They prefer to go on as they are, like the great mass of men: God, they think, is too merciful; and they hope to improve some day if they feel not quite right to-day. Thus are they lost. Such is the way and end of many an unbeliever now, as of the Jews then.

How, then, are Christ's sheep characterised? We need not hesitate to receive the answer, for here is His own account of them. "My sheep hear My voice": a quality incomparably better than doing this, or that, or all things without it. It is the obedience of faith, the holy parent of all holy issues. Without faith it is impossible to please God; and this is the present characteristic of those who are of faith: they hear the voice of Christ, and are truly humble, yet firm. It is not self-assertion, nor the forgetfulness of their own sinfulness and of His glory. It is the simple owning of His grace, and of their own need; and thus only are souls blessed through Christ to God's glory.

This, however, is not their only privilege. "And I know them," says the Saviour. It is not here said that they know Christ, however true by grace. But He knows them, all their thoughts and feelings, their words and ways, their dangers and difficulties, their past, present, and future. He knows themselves, in short, perfectly, and in perfect love. How infinite the favour and the blessing! What a resource and a joy!

But there is more. The sheep not only hear Christ's voice, but, says He, "They follow Me." For faith is divine and practical, or worse than useless. And as it is due to Christ that His own should follow Him, so they need it, exposed as they are to countless foes, seen and unseen. It is their security, whatever the circumstances they pass through: Christ Who leads the sheep cannot fail, and, as He knows them, so they follow Him. Thus He keeps them by the way, which He is.

"And I give them life eternal, and they shall never perish, and no one shall seize them out of my hand." Thus the Lord guarantees His own life to them, not the life of Adam, who brought in death, and died, and left the sad inheritance to all his offspring; whereas the Second Man and last Adam, being Son of God, quickens whom He will, and quickens with and to life everlasting. Is it said, however, that the sheep are weak? Unquestionably; but here He excludes fear and anxiety for all who believe in Him, for He immediately adds that "they shall in no wise ever be lost." No intrinsic weakness, therefore, shall compromise their safety for a moment; nor shall hostile force or wiles jeopard them; for "no one shall seize them out of My hand."<sup>199</sup>

Could love assure its objects of more? His love would impart to them the certainty of His own deepest joy, His Father's love as sure as His own; and so He closes His communication with it. "My Father Who hath given to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to seize out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one." Here we rise into that height of holy love and infinite power of which none could speak but the Son; and He speaks of the secrets of Godhead with the intimate familiarity proper to the Only-begotten Who is in the Father's bosom. He needed none to testify of man, for He knew what was in man, being Himself God; and He knew what was in God for the self-same reason. Heaven or earth made no difference, time or eternity. Not a creature is unapparent before Him, but all things are naked and laid bare in His eyes with Whom we have to do. And He declares that the Father Who had made the gift resists all that can threaten harm, and as He has given to Christ, so He is greater than all, and none can seize out of His hand. Indeed, the Son and the Father are one, not one Person (which ἕσμεν with every other Scripture bearing on it, refutes), but one thing, ἕν, one Divine nature or essence (as other Scriptures equally prove). The lowliest of men, the Shepherd of the sheep, He is the Son of the Father, true God and eternal life. And He and the Father are not more truly

one in Divine essence than in the fellowship of Divine love for the sheep.

Thus did the Lord assume and imply Divine glory as His, no less than the Father's, spite of the place of man He had taken in the humiliation of love, in order to undo the works of the devil, and deliver guilty sinners who hear His voice from the bondage of sin and God's most righteous judgment. This roused again the murderous hatred of His hearers.

"The Jews (therefore)\* again took up stones, that they might stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works I showed you from the (or, my)\*\* Father: on account of which work of them do ye stone Me? The Jews answered Him,† For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (verses 31-33).

\* BL, 33, etc., omit, the rest add.

\*\* pmBD omit μου, "My."

† The bulk of witnesses omits, "saying."

Alas for the will and self-confidence of man! They were right in saying that Jesus was a man; they were not wrong in understanding that He claimed to be God. But it was the insinuation of Satan working on man's unbelief of all beyond his senses and mind, that He Who was God would not deign, in love to men and for the Divine glory, to become man in order to accomplish redemption. Was it incredible that God should stoop so low for these most worthy ends? And had not Jesus given adequate evidence of His glory and relation to the Father, in power and goodness, as well as truth? A life of purity unknown, of dependence on God beyond parallel, of active goodness untiring, of humility and of suffering the more surprising, because in evident command of power unlimited in testimony to the Father, and this in accomplishment of the entire chain of Scripture types and prophecy, combine to hurl back the imputation of imposture on the old serpent, the liar and father of it; whose great lie is to oust God from being the object of man's faith and service and worship for false objects, or no object but self, which, however little suspected, is really Satan's service.

Nothing, therefore, so rouses Satan as God thus presented in and by the Lord Jesus, Who displays His own perfect meekness and man's enmity by no intervention of power to save Him from insult and injury. "First He must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation" (Luke 17: 25.) — a generation which goes on still morally, and will, till He returns in glory to judge. They therefore took up stones to stone Him; for Satan is a murderer as well as a liar, and nothing so awakens violence, even to death, as the truth which condemns men pretending to religion. To their blinded and infuriated minds it was blasphemy<sup>200</sup> for Him to say that He gave His followers eternal life beyond the weakness or the power of the creature-blasphemy to assert that He and the Father were one; whereas it is the truth, so vital and necessary that none who reject it can be saved. His words were as good as His works, and even more momentous to man; while both were of the Father.<sup>201</sup> He Whom God sent, as John testified, spoke the words of God. It was they who blasphemed, denying Him to be God Who, in grace to them, condescended to become man.

But He meets them on their own ground by an *à fortiori* argument, which left His personal glory untouched. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods to whom the Word of God came<sup>202</sup> (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of Him Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest", because I said, I am Son of God?" (verses 34-36).<sup>203</sup> Thus does He reason most conclusively from the less to the greater; for every Jew knew that their inspired books, as for instance, Ps. 82, calls judges *elohim*, (gods), as commissioned by God and responsible to judge in His name. If such a title could be used of a mere magistrate in

Scripture (and its authority is indissoluble), how unreasonable to tax with blasphemy Him Whom the Father set apart,\* and sent into the world, because He said He was God's Son! He is not affirming or demonstrating what He is in this, but simply convicting them of their perverseness on the ground of their law. They had not the least excuse whilst they claimed adherence to their law of Divine authority. If God called the judges by His name as being His representatives, how much more was it due to Him Who had a place so unique?

\* It is well to note that the Lord predicates sanctification of Himself in John 17: 19 as set apart now in heaven, the model Man in glory, and here by the Father for His mission into the world, quite distinct from the application of the word to us who were sinners, and even dead in sins. Sanctification, in the case of the Holy One, resolves itself into its pure and abstract sense of setting apart.

"If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, even if ye believe not Me, believe\* the works, that ye may perceive and know [or, believe]\* that the Father (is) in Me, and I in the Father"† (verses 37, 38). There was no denying the irresistible force of this appeal. The character of the works bore testimony, not only to Divine power, but to this in the fulness of love. Think as they might of Him, the works were unmistakable, that they might learn and come to know the unity of the Father and the Son. It is not that He enfeebles the dignity of His Person, or the truth of His words; but He was pleading with them, and dealing with their consciences, by those works which attested not more the power than the grace of God, and consequently His glory Who wrote them. But self-will holds out against all proofs.

\* The weight of testimony is for πιστεύετε [A, etc., so Weiss] rather than πιστεύσατε [Blass]. Then, as γινώσκητε [know, come to know] seemed difficult after γνῶτε [perceive, learn], many read πιστεύσητε [believe] as the Text. Rec. has it.

† "The Father" is in BDLX, two cursives, several It. Vulg. Syrr. Sah. Arm. Arab. Anglo-Sax. Pers. (Memph. Aeth. reversing order-as Weiss); "Him," as in Text. Rec., ΑΓΔ, and nine uncials more, mass of cursives, some It. Gothic, Syrrtxt Slav [Blass].

John 10: 39-42.

"They sought, therefore, again to seize Him, and He departed out of their hand. And He went away again beyond the Jordan<sup>204</sup> to the place where John was at first baptizing, and abode there. And many came unto Him and said, John did no sign, but all things whatsoever John said about Him were true. And many believed on Him there" (verses 39-42). Thus it was not that their unbelief was incomplete, but that His time was not yet come. The Lord therefore retires till the moment appointed of God, and meanwhile goes to the scene of John's work at the first, and there abode, where grace wins many a soul that recognised in Him the truth of John's testimony.

## JOHN — THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER\*

\*[Cf. "Lectures on Gospels," pp. 495-502.]

### John 11: 1-16.

The Lord was rejected, rejected in His words, rejected in His works. Both were perfect, but man felt that God was brought near to him by both, and, an enemy of God, he increasingly musters hatred against His Son, His image.

But the grace of God still waits on guilty man, and would give a fresh, full, and final testimony to

Jesus. And here we begin with that which was most of all characteristic of our Gospel-His Divine Sonship displayed in resurrection power. All is public now; all near or in Jerusalem. The design of God governs here, as everywhere. All the Evangelists present the testimony to His Messianic glory, the second of these three testimonies, though none with such fulness of detail as Matthew, whose function it was pre-eminently to show Him as the Son of David according to prophecy, but rejected now, and about to return in power and glory. It was John's place, above all, to mark Him out as Son of God, and this the Holy Spirit does by giving us through His Gospel the resurrection of Lazarus. Christ is in resurrection the life-giving Spirit, as contrasted with Adam; but He is the Son eternally, and the Son quickens whom He will, before death no less than after resurrection; and this is here exhibited with all fulness of detail as was due to it 205

"Now there was a certain (man) sick, Lazarus, from Bethany, of the village of Mary and Martha her sister. But Mary was she that anointed the Lord with unguent, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 205 The sisters then sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest (φιλεῖς) is sick" (verses 1-3). Thus does John introduce the account. It puts us at once in presence of all concerned-the household whither He used to retire from the sterile but guilty parties of Jerusalem. Who had not heard of the woman that anointed the Lord with unguent, and wiped His feet with her hair? (John 12: 3.) Wherever the Gospel was preached in the whole world, this was told for a memorial of her. But her name had been withheld till now. It was John's place to mention what so closely touched the Person of the Lord. John names others, if he conceals his own name. It was Mary; and she, with her sister, sent a message to the Lord reckoning on the promptness of His love. They were not disappointed. His love exceeded all their thought, as His glory was beyond their faith, however real it might be. But their faith was tried, as it always is.

"But when Jesus heard, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved (ἠγάπα) Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When, therefore, He heard that he was sick, He then remained two days in the place where He was; then, after this, He saith to His\* (or, the) disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. The disciples say to Him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours of the day? If one walk in the day, he doth not stumble, because he seeth the light of this world; but if one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him" (verses 4-10).

\* BELX, etc., read τοῖς [Weiss, Blass], but the weight favours αἰτοῦ also.

First appearances are ever in this world against the good and holy and true. Those who seek occasion against what is according to God can easily find excuse for their own evil. And the moral object of God, as of His Word, tests every soul that comes into contact. So here the Lord knew the end from the beginning when He said, This sickness is not unto death; but he who was quick to judge by the beginning must inevitably misjudge. What would he have judged who heard Him say, Lazarus, come forth, and saw the dead man come forth from the cave of burial?

Resurrection displays the glorious power of God beyond all else. It arrests, and is intended to arrest, man, who knows too well what sickness is, and how hopelessly death severs him from all his activities. The sickness of Lazarus, then, just because it ran up into death, was about to furnish a meet occasion for God's glory, and this, too, in the glorifying of His Son thereby.

There are those who delight in what they call "the reign of law"; but what is the sense of such thoughts or words when brought to the touchstone of resurrection? Does not the raising of the dead prove the supremacy of God's power over that which is a law, if there be an invariable lot appointed to sinful man here below, the law of death? For certainly death is not the cause of resurrection; but the

Son is He Who wields the power of life. He quickens whom He will, for He is God, but as the Sent One, the dependent and obedient Servant, for He is man. Such was Jesus here in this world, and this manifested most fully a short time before He laid down His life for the sheep.

But man is a poor judge of Divine love, and even saints learn it only by faith. Jesus will have us confide in His love. For this is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and proved it in His dying a propitiation for us. Even here, too, how significantly the Evangelist says that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, just before the mention of His staying two days in the place where He was after the message came. If a mere man, with power to heal, loved another that was sick, how soon he would have healed the patient! And Jesus had already shown His power to heal in the same hour. No matter what the intervening distance, or how unconscious the sufferer, why not speak the word on behalf of Lazarus? Did He love the nobleman of Capernaum and his boy, did He love the Gentile centurion and his servant, better than Lazarus? Assuredly nothing of the sort; but it was for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified by that very sickness, not arrested, but allowed to work its way.

The Lord was about to raise the dead Lazarus; and this when it had not the appearance of a law, but rather by grace the exemption of one from the law of death. How truly for the glory of God was the result! Not so was the way man would have wrought at once if he could. He Who was God, and loved as no man ever did, abode two days where He was, and then calmly said to the disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. They wonder. Did He not know better than they the murderous rancour of the Jews? Had He forgotten their repeated efforts to stone Him? Why then, did He propose to go thither again? He was here to do the will of His Father; and here was a work to do for His glory. His eye certainly was ever single, His body full of light.

"Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours of the day? If one walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world; but if one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." If it was the will of the Father, it was day; and as Jesus was not only sent by the living Father, but lived on account of Him, so for the disciple He is the light and the food and the motive. The known will and word of God is the light of day; to be without it is to walk in the night, and stumbling is the sure consequence. If Christ be before us, the light will be in us, and we stumble not. May we evermore heed His word!

The Lord would exercise the hearts of His own. As His tarrying in the same place for two days was not the impulse of human feeling, so His going to the place of deadly hatred was according to the light He walked in and was. He has more to say which they had to ponder. He abides in dependence; He awaits His Father's will. This given decides His movements at once.

"These things said He, and after this He saith to them, Lazarus our friend is fallen asleep; but I go that I may awake him. Therefore said the disciples to Him,\* Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover. But Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking (lit. speaketh) of the rest of sleep. Then therefore said Jesus to them plainly, Lazarus is dead; and I rejoice on your account that I was not there, that ye may believe. But let us go unto him.<sup>207</sup> Thomas therefore, that is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him" (verses 11-16).<sup>208</sup> The Lord begins to disclose what He was about to do; but they were dull to think of death on the one hand, or of His resurrection power on the other. The prevention of death, the healing of disease, is far short of triumph over death. The disciples were to be strengthened by the sight of resurrection before He died on the cross and rose again.

\* αὐτῷ οἱ μ., DKΠ, etc., some adding αὐτοῦ with Syr., etc.; BCpmX, etc., οἱ μ. αὐτῷ (the

latter only is in A, etc.), while the Text. Rec. with most gives οἱ μ. αὐτοῦ.

It is important to note that here, as everywhere, sleep is said of the body. It is the suited word of faith for death: how dark the unbelief that perverts it, as some do, to materialise the soul! He Who is the truth speaks as the thing really is. He knew that He was about to raise Lazarus.

But the Lord Who tries faith meets the weakness of His disciples, and clears up the difficulty. He tells them plainly "Lazarus is dead," and expresses His joy on their account that He was not there (that is, merely to heal), in order that they might believe, when they knew better His power to quicken and raise the dead. Gloomy Thomas can see only His rushing into death when He proposed to go to Judea, though his love to the Lord prompts him to say, Let us also go that we may die with Him. How poor are the thoughts of a disciple, even where affection was true to the Master, Who was indeed about to die in willing grace for them-yea, for their sins-that they might live for ever, justified from all things; but Who would prove before He died a sacrifice that He could not only live, but give life to the dead as He would, yet in obedience to, and in communion with, His Father! Such is our Saviour.

### **John 11: 17-44.**

"Jesus therefore, on coming, found that He was four days in the tomb. Now Bethany was<sup>209</sup> near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off; and many of the Jews had come unto Martha and Mary\* that they might comfort them concerning their brother. Martha then, when she heard Jesus is coming, met Him; but Mary was sitting in the house. Martha then said unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And now I know that, whatsoever Thou mayest ask of God, God will give Thee. Jesus saith to her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him, I know that He shall rise in the resurrection at the last day.<sup>210</sup> Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he have died, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth on Me shall in no wise die for ever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him, Yea, Lord, I do believe (I have believed, and do) that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world.<sup>211</sup> And having said this she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee. When she heard (it), she riseth quickly, and cometh unto Him" (verses 17-29).

\* The Received Text with [ACcorr.ΓΔ] Syrhc1 implies "and their company" [Blass, conflate reading], but the more ancient copies and versions do not allow this.

The interval since death and burial is carefully stated, as well as the contiguity of the spot to Jerusalem, and the number of Jews who at the moment had joined the company of Martha and Mary, with a view to console them in their sorrow. God was ordering all for a bright testimony to His Son. For Aeschylus (Eum. 647) but expressed the universal mind of the heathen, himself a religious heathen, that man, once dead, has no resurrection. What had God for such as believe on Jesus? What had Jesus? What is He but the resurrection and the life? It was no question of the last day only. Jesus was there then, the conqueror of death as of Satan.

Again Martha, prompt as ever when she heard of Jesus approaching, went to meet Him, while Mary kept sitting in the house with a deeper sense of death, but at least as ready to go when summoned. Meanwhile she waits, as the Lord knew well and appreciated. When Martha did meet the Lord, she confesses His power to have warded off death by His presence. She owns Him as the Messiah; and as such she is confident that even now, whatever He may "ask" of God will be given Him. No doubt she meant this as a strong expression of her faith. But it was to correct this error, to give an incomparably fuller apprehension, that the Lord came now to raise Lazarus. Hence she applies to the Lord language far below His true relation to the Father: ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσῃ τὸν Θεόν. Had she said

ἐπωτήρη τὸν πατέρα, it would have been more becoming. It is all right to use αἰτέω of us, for the place of a suppliant or petitioner becomes us; but the word of more familiar demand, *g ejrwtauw*, is suitable to Him. This, however, she, though a believer, had to learn.

When Jesus tells Martha that her brother shall rise again, she replies at once, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But the Lord was here, not to teach truths known already, but to give what was unknown, and this in the glory of His own Person. Therefore said Jesus to Martha, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and in this order as strictly applicable to the case in hand, Lazarus being dead and buried. He is the Resurrection no less than the Life, and this in fulness of power. "He that believeth on Me, though he should die, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die: believest thou this?" It is the superiority of life in Christ over all impediments, to be displayed at His coming. "For we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. 15: 51.) Thus, at the coming of the Lord "the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we the living that remain," without passing through death, "shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4: 16f.) Thus will He be proved the resurrection and the life: the resurrection, because the dead believers immediately arise, obedient to His voice; the life, because every one that lives and believes on Him has mortality swallowed up of life at the same moment.

This tests Martha. To the Lord's inquiry, "Believest thou this?" she can only give the vague reply, "Yea, Lord, I have believed, and do believe (πεπίστευκα) that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world:" a word containing truth doubtless, but no read answer to the question. She felt the uneasiness usual even to saints who hear what is beyond their depth; and she thinks of her sister as one that would understand incomparably better than herself; and so, without staying to learn, she hurried off, and called Mary secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here, and calleth thee." Mary, when she heard, quickly rises and comes. How sweet the call to her heart!

There was not the smallest haste in the movements of our Lord. Indeed, we may rather note His calm bearing in presence of the one sister, so quick to go before she was called, and of the other when she was. Jesus abides the same, a man yet in the quiet dignity of the Son of God.

"Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha came to meet Him. The Jews therefore who were with her in the house and consoling her, having seen Mary that she quickly rose up and went out, followed her,\* thinking she goeth unto the tomb, that she may weep there" (verses 30, 31). It was not so, however; but the grace of Christ meant that there He should meet Mary, soon about to behold a bright outshining of the glory of God in her beloved Lord. What strangers to Jesus were those who would console her in vain in the presence of death!

\* δόξαντες BCpmDLX, some cursives, and most ancient versions etc.; λέγοντες, "saying" (Text. Rec.), ACcorr and a dozen uncials, most cursives and versions.

Not that Mary was above the pressure of death more than others. She repeats what Martha said; but she was of a different spirit in repeating it. "Mary therefore when she came where Jesus was, having seen Him, fell at His feet, saying to Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (verse 32). But if she saw in Him as yet only power to preserve, if she had to learn that He is the resurrection and the life, at least she fell at His feet, as Martha did not; and the Lord, if He says nothing, will soon answer in deed and in truth. But the consciousness of Divine glory, and this about to manifest itself superior to death in presence of all, in no way detracted from the sensibilities of His spirit. On the contrary, the very next verses let us know how deep were the emotions of our blessed

Lord at this moment.

"Jesus therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that came with her weeping, was deeply moved in spirit, and troubled Himself, and said, Where have ye laid Him? 212 They say to Him, Lord, come and see. \*Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said, Behold, how He loved (ἐφ.) him! And some of them said, Could not this (Man) that opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this (man) also should not have died?" (verses 33-37).

\* D, etc., with most of the ancient versions, add the copula καὶ, "and."

The word translated "deeply moved" occurs elsewhere for a "strict" or stern "charge," as in Matt. 9: 30, Mark 1: 43; or an angry speech, as in Mark 14: 5. Here it is rather the inward feeling than the expression, approached rather nearly by such use as that in Lucian (Nec. 20), of (it would seem) groaning. It means the strong, and it may be indignant, affection the Lord experienced at the power of death over not the Jews only, but Mary, wielded as it still was by the enemy. This is still farther expressed by the phrase that follows, as well as by verse 38. His tender sympathy appears rather in His weeping (verse 35), after asking where they had laid Lazarus, and the invitation to come and see. His indignant sense of Satan's power through sin did not interfere in the least with His deep compassion; and what we see here is but the counterpart of His habitual bearing the diseases and taking the infirmities, which the first Gospel applies from Isa. 53: 4. (Matt. 8: 17.) Never was it mere power, nor was it only sympathy, but the entrance of His spirit into every case He cured, the bearing of the weight on His heart before God of all that oppressed sin-stricken man. Here it was the still greater ravage of death in the family He loved.

But we may note that in our Lord's case, profound as was His grief, it was His servant. "He troubled Himself." It did not gain the mastery, as our affections are apt to do with us. Every feeling in Christ was perfect in kind and measure as well as season. His groaning, His trouble, His weeping-what were they not in God's sight! How precious should they not be to us! Even the Jews could not but say, "Behold, how He loved him!" What had they thought had they known He was just going to raise the dead man? If they did not recall His power, it was only the unavailing regret that He Who healed the blind had not forefended death in the case of Lazarus. They were utterly at fault about this sickness, as blind to the glory of God as to the way of it, that the Son of God would be glorified thereby. Faith in the glory of His Person alone rightly interprets and appreciates in its measure the depth of His love. "Jesus wept." What a difference these words convey to him who sees nothing but a man, and to him who knows Him to be the mighty God, the only-begotten Son! Even the believer could not in this case fail to own His love; but how immensely that love is enhanced by His Divine dignity, and the consciousness that He was about to act in the power of Divine life above death! 212a

Now it is of all consequence that we should believe and know, without doubt, that all which Jesus showed Himself that day on behalf of Lazarus He is, and far more, for His own, and that He will prove it for every one of us at His coming. For there is now also the fruit of the travail of His soul, and the power of His resurrection, after the fullest judgment of sin in the cross. Hence all His love and power can act unhindered on our behalf, as they surely will to the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. What men then beheld was but a testimony, however truly Divine; but at His coming the truth will be fully out in power. Now is the time to believe and confess the truth in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation. May we be enabled in lowliness of mind to appear as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life!

"Jesus therefore again, deeply moved in Himself, cometh unto the tomb. Now it was a cave, 213 and a stone lay upon it. Jesus saith, Take away the stone. 214 Martha, the sister of the deceased,\* saith

to Him, Lord, he already stinketh, for he is four days (dead). Jesus saith to her, Said I not to thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? They took away therefore the stone;† and Jesus lifted His eyes upward, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but on account of the crowd that standeth around I said (it), that they may believe that Thou didst send Me.<sup>215</sup> And having said this, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And‡ the dead came forth,<sup>215a</sup> having the feet and the hands bound with grave-clothes, and his face was bound round with a handkerchief. Jesus saith to them, Loose him, and let him‡ go" (verses 38-44).

\* For the received reading τεθνηκότος, "dead," supported by a good many uncials and most cursives, the highest authorities give τετελευτηκότος, "deceased,"<sup>214a</sup>

† Text. Rec., with the great majority of MSS., adds οὗ ἦν ὁ τεθνηκώς κείμενος, AKPI, etc., only οὗ ἦν, but the best (BCp<sup>m</sup>DLX, some cursives, and the oldest versions) omit.

‡ The Received Text with most authorities begins with the copula καὶ, "and," but omits the last αὐτόν, "him," contrary to a few of the best authorities.

It was no longer the time for words, and Jesus, again realising for Himself the power which shut out God's glory from man, comes to the cave with a stone laid on it, which served for a tomb. There the unbelief of Martha ventured (what does it not?) to oppose the Lord's word to remove the stone: He, that all might be clear; she, because His words disappointed her haste, if, indeed, she expected anything. But if Martha could not rise above the humbling effects of death, which she would shut out from others, Jesus would not hide what was due to God in grace to man. How quickly the word of the Lord is forgotten in presence of the sad circumstances of human ruin! Faith gives the word heed, and reaps the blessing in due time. Listen to Jesus. He is heard already. He knows beforehand that He has what He asks, heard now as always before. The Father was concerned no less than the Son, and it was said that those who heard might believe that the Father sent Him forth.

Thereon comes the word of power: "Lazarus, come forth." He had prayed to the Father, jealous above all for His glory, and never forgetful of the place He had Himself come down to as man. But He was the Son, He could quicken whom He would, and so He does. Yet even in the majesty of this Divine display, He intermingles after, as well as before, what drew men's attention, that they might not be faithless but believing. What difficulty was there in the stone? For Himself He needed to remove nothing. It was for their sakes. Behold, man in the loathsomeness of death before he was raised! And so now what for Him mattered the binding of the grave-clothes, or of the handkerchief? The grace of the Lord by both would only give them the better confirmation of what He had wrought. He could have loosed Lazarus as easily as He could have caused the stone to disappear; He could have willed all without crying with a loud voice; but He, Who would that we should confide in the power of His word, would have us note the corruption that precedes quickening and the bondage which may follow it now. Liberty is needed as well as life; but it is unnatural that one who is made to live should be longer bound.

Mighty as was the work of thus raising Lazarus, we see here, as everywhere, how dependent man is on grace. Sin makes him the slave of Satan, little as he suspects it. His will is against God, in His goodness or in His judgment, in His word or His works; and the greater the mercy, the less he likes what is so contrary to his thoughts, and so humbling to his pride. If many were impressed and believed, some went mischievously to the enemy with their information.

## John 11: 45-54.

"Many of the Jews, therefore, that came to Mary, and beheld what He did, believed on Him; but some of them went away unto the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus did.<sup>215b</sup> The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered together a council, and said, What do we, for this man doeth many signs? (and)\* if we leave Him thus, all will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest of that year, said to them, Ye know nothing, nor reckon† that it is profitable for you‡ that one man should die for the people, and not the whole nation perish. Now this he said not from himself, but, being high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that also He should gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. From that day, therefore, they consulted§, that they might kill Him. Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews, but went away thence into the country near the desert, unto a city called Ephraim, and there He abode|| with the¶ disciples" (verses 45-54).

\* D, 255, with Syrr., Memphwi, Aethr, add καὶ, "and."

† λογίζεσθε ABDL, some cursives, etc., instead of the Text. Rec. διαλ., "consider," supported by most uncials, cursives, etc.

‡ ὑμῖν, "you," BDLMXΓ, many cursives, etc., ἡμῖν, "us," still more witnesses; , etc., omitting either [Blass].

§ ἐβ, BD, etc., συνεβ. much the most.

|| Instead of διέτριβεν, "tarried," as most [so Blass]; BL ἔμεινεν, "abode " [W. and H., Weiss].

¶ BDILΓΔ, etc., do not read αὐτοῦ, "his," as in the rest.

The chief priests and the Pharisees are immediately on the alert. They assemble a council; they wonder at their own inactivity in presence of the many signs done by Jesus; they fear that, if left alone, He may become universally acceptable, and that they may provoke the Romans to destroy them, Church and State, as men now say. How affecting to see the power of Satan blinding those most who take the highest place in zeal for God after the flesh! It was their desperately wicked purpose to put Him to death—a purpose as desperately effected, which led to the cross, in which He did become the attractive centre to men of every class and nation and moral condition; and it was their guilt in this especially, though not this alone, which drew on them the wrath of "the king," who sent his forces, destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. All righteous blood came upon them, and their house is left desolate unto this day, and this, too, by the dreaded hand of the Romans, whom they professed to propitiate by the death of Jesus. Such is the way and end of unbelief.

Yes, most solemn it is to see that God at the last hardens those who have long hardened themselves against the truth. So He is by-and-by to send men "a working of error, that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth, but found pleasure in unrighteousness;" and this most justly, "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2: 10-12.)<sup>216</sup> It was He Who spoke by Balaam against his will to bless His people, though hired of Balak to curse them, and proving afterwards, not only by his corrupting wiles, but to his own destruction, how little the prophecies then were from himself. It is He Who now speaks by Caiaphas, whose high-priesthood in that year gave his words the more official weight. Not that it was an orderly condition that there should be such shiftings of the high priest.<sup>217</sup> But so it was total confusion when the Son of God came here; so most of all when He was to die. No wonder that God, long silent, should speak by the high priest of that year.<sup>217a</sup> He is Sovereign. He can employ evil as

well as good-these heartily, those spite of themselves, and if their will be in it, with a sense as wicked as themselves.

So it was here, when Caiaphas<sup>217b</sup> said, "Ye know nothing, nor reckon that it is profitable for you that one man die for the people, and not the whole nation perish." God was not in his thoughts, but self without conscience. The Evangelist comments on this, that he said it not from himself, but, being high priest of that year, *prophesied* that Jesus was about to die for the nation,<sup>218</sup> and not for the nation only, but that He should also gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. In the heart of Caiaphas it was an unprincipled sentiment; in the mind of the Spirit it was not only most holy, but expressed the foundation of God's righteousness in Christ. On His death is based the future hope of Israel, and the actual gathering of God's scattered children, the Church.\* From that day measures were taken in concert to compass the death of our Lord,<sup>219</sup> Who retired to the northern wilderness of Judæa, and there abode awhile with the disciples in the city called Ephraim.<sup>220</sup> The hour was coming.

\* [Cf. "Lectures on the Church of God," pp. 82-84.]

## **John 11: 55-57.**

"But the Passover of the Jews was near; and many went up into Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, that they might purify themselves. They were seeking, therefore, Jesus, and said among themselves, standing in the temple, What think ye, that He will not at all come unto the feast? Now the high priest and the Pharisees had given commandment that if anyone knew where He was, he should inform, that they might seize Him" (verses 55-57).

Thus the closing scene is at hand; and Jesus pursues His service in retirement during the little interval before the Passover, the last so soon to be fulfilled in His death. They went up to purify themselves before the feast, which gives rise to their seeking Him, and to surmises as to His not coming. For orders had been given to inform them of His whereabouts, in order to His apprehension. Little did any, friends or foes, anticipate that one would be found among the chosen twelve to indicate the spot whither the Lord was wont to resort; but He knew all that should come upon Him. How far is man from suspecting that it is all a question between Satan and God, and that, if evil seems to gain the upper hand, good triumphs even now to faith, as it will in the judgment of evil to every eye ere long!

But if the Lord retired from the machinations of men hardened in their enmity toward Himself because of their false pretension to feel and act for God, He had His own death on the cross to God's glory ever before Him. It was not to be done in a corner, nor on mere secret information. It must be at that feast, and no other, at the approaching Passover, when all the religious chiefs should thoroughly commit themselves, the elders, chief priests, and scribes; when the whole nation save the little remnant that believed should also play their blinded part; when they all should deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify. Oh, how little did any of them think of Him as in all this guilt and faithlessness of theirs the Son of God, and the Son of man come not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many! Then should He quickly, but in measured, predicted time, rise in resurrection power, transcending that of Lazarus beyond all comparison; thenceforward to work spiritually in all that believe, quickened with Him and raised up together, and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Him (as another Apostle was given to teach), (Eph. 2: 5, 6) before the bright moment of His coming for us, when we shall all be changed.

## JOHN — THE TWELFTH CHAPTER\*

\* [Cf. "Introductory Lectures," pp. 502-507.]

Such was the testimony God gave to the Lord Jesus as the Son in resurrection power, with the plain result of deadly hatred in those that bowed not by faith. Here, 220a before a fresh witness is given, we are permitted to see Him in the home of those He loved at Bethany, where the Spirit gives us a fresh proof of grace in the recognition of His glory, and this in view of His death. There reclined the man so recently raised from the dead with Him Who raised him!

### John 12: 1-11.

Matt. 26: 6-13; Mark 14: 3-9.

"Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came unto Bethany, where was Lazarus,\* whom Jesus\* raised from (the) dead. They made there for Him a supper, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of those at table with Him. Mary then, having taken a pound of unguent of costly pure† nerd, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the unguent. And‡ Judas Iscariot,§ one of His disciples that was about to give Him up, saith, Why was this unguent not sold for three hundred denaries, and given to poor (persons)? And this He said, not because He cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and, having|| the bag,|| used to bear what was deposited. Jesus then said, Leave her to have kept it\*\* for the day of My preparation for burial: for the poor ye have always with you, but Me ye have not always" (verses 1-8).

\* Text. Rec. adds ὁ τεθνηκώς, with large consent of uncials, cursives, and versions [as Syrsin], contrary to BLS, Syrpesch, Sah., Aeth., etc.; as it omits Ἰησοῦς at the end, spite of the best witnesses inserting it. [Blass, πρὸς Λάζαρον, omitting the rest of the words.]

† πιστικὸς perplexes the critics, some taking it as *liquid*, others as *genuine*, or *pure*, according to its supposed source.

‡ δὲ B, Memph., Goth., Syrsin, and probably Syrpesch), Aeth., etc.; Text. Rec., οὖν, with most uncials and cursives, etc., a few omitting.

§ Text. Rec. Σιμωνὸς without ὁ, on the authority of many MSS., etc.

|| εἶχεν καὶ Text. Rec. with most; ἔχων BDLQ, a few good cursives and versions. The ancient versions generally render γλ, "chest."

\*\* τετήρηκεν Text. Rec., with a dozen uncials, most cursives, and many versions, but ἵνα . . . τηρήσῃ BDKLQX, several cursives [33], and most ancient versions.

In presence of the Lord each comes out in his true colours. Jesus personally, as everywhere, is the object of God, the light which makes all manifest. But He does more. As He had brought life into the scene of death, the witnesses of His power and grace are there in their due place, according to their measure, one only having that special discernment which the love that is of God imparts, though grace may interpret it according to its own power. They 221 made for Him a supper there, Martha serving, Lazarus at the table with Him, Mary anointing His feet with the precious spikenard; and the house filled with the odour of the unguent. 222 The Lord felt and explained its meaning, according to His own wisdom and love.

But if one of the blessed family was led by a wisdom above her own, in single-eyed devotedness, to an act most fitting and significant at that time, one of His disciples was not found wanting for the

work of the enemy, which makes nothing of Jesus. All of good or evil turns at bottom into a true or false estimate of Him. We may be, and are, slow to learn the lesson, albeit of greater moment than any other; but it is the object of the Spirit in all Scripture to teach us it, and nowhere so conspicuously, or so profoundly, too, as in this Gospel. So Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples that was about to give Him up, says, Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denaries, and given to poor people? He never thought of Jesus! Yet Mary's act might naturally have awakened affection. What was He not to her? Judas coolly calculates the lowest selling price of the nard<sup>223</sup>; he falsely puts poor persons forward for whom he had no real care; he would have liked that sum added to his unlawful gains.<sup>224</sup> Nothing can be more thoroughly withering, more calmly true, than the comment of the Holy Ghost in verse 6. But what said Jesus? "Leave her to have kept it<sup>225</sup> for the day of My preparation for burial: for the poor ye have always, but Me ye have not always."

Here is the truth said in Divine love. Not, indeed, that Mary had received any prophetic intimation. It was the spiritual instinct of a heart that had found the Son of God in Jesus, of a heart that felt the danger that hung over Him as man. Others might think of His miracles, and hope that murderous intents might pass away at Jerusalem as at Nazareth. Mary was not so easily satisfied, though she had witnessed His resurrection power with as deep feelings as any soul on earth. And she was led of God to do what had a weightier import by far in the Lord's eyes than in her own. The love that had prompted it was of God, and this is above all price. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." (Song of Solomon 8: 7.) So said he who knew above the sons of men the vanity of human love, with the amplest means ever vouchsafed to the head of any house. But what was Mary's unguent, or the love that brought it out (kept as it had been, and now she knew why at that critical moment), compared with His Who vindicated her, and was about to die for all, even for Judas?

It is, indeed, a scene to dwell on, most instructive and affecting, whether one contemplates the family as a whole, or Mary in particular, whether one may think of the disciples (for Matthew and Mark show that all were unappreciative, some even angry), or of the one whose dark influence acted so ill on the rest, and, above all, when one looks and listens to Him Whose grace formed Mary's heart according to its own nature and ways.

"A (or, the)\* great crowd<sup>226</sup> of the Jews therefore knew [learned] that He was (lit. 'is') there, and came not on account of Jesus only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He raised from (the) dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might kill Lazarus also, because on his account many of the Jews were going away and believing on Jesus" (verses 9-11). "The Jews," as often remarked, are not merely Israelites, but men of Judæa, and greatly under the influence of the rulers in their hostility to Jesus, as in other things. But they are not the rulers, and one sees the difference marked in these verses. The great crowd, however, seemed influenced quite as much by curiosity as by better motive. To see Lazarus who was raised from the dead is a very different thing from believing God. Still, there was reality among some; and hence the deeper and deliberate malice of the chief priests, because many of the Jews were deserting them and believing on Jesus.

\* A few witnesses of the highest antiquity and character (BpmL) read the article, as to which some of the old versions are ambiguous [W. and H. insert, Weiss and Blass omit].

Mary had not at all misread the position of the Lord. The crisis was at hand. Perfectly did He understand to what point every current was flowing; He knew what was in man, in Satan, and in God, and that as the malice of the creature would thus push to the uttermost in rebellious hatred, God would go farther still in redeeming love, but withal in His most solemn judgment of sin. Of this moral glory

how little as yet could any heart conceive! Yet Mary's affection was led of God to divine the enmity growing up rapidly and ruthlessly against the One Who more than ever possessed her heart's homage and love.

But the final testimony must be full. Jesus had already shown Himself Son of God in power by raising Lazarus from the grave wherein he had lain a dead man: a testimony characteristic of John's Gospel, and peculiar to it. Men have raised objections, which only prove their own spiritual incapacity; for here it exactly suits, as it would nowhere else, and it was the right place and time, too. All was Divinely ordered.

## John 12: 12-19.

Matt. 21: 1-11; Mark 11: 1-10, Luke 19: 29-40.

The next testimony is to His Messianic title, and fittingly, therefore, given in every one of the Gospels. It could be wanting to none, and we find it as the next fact recorded by our evangelist.

"On the morrow,<sup>227</sup> a great crowd that came unto the feast, having heard that Jesus is coming into Jerusalem, took branches of palm, and went out to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed (is) He that cometh in Jehovah's name, (even) the King of Israel. And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written, (Zech. 9: 9.) Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt.<sup>228\*</sup> These things His disciples knew not at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and they did these things to Him. The crowd, therefore, that was with Him bore witness, because† He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from (the) dead. Therefore also the crowd met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. The Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves, Ye behold<sup>230</sup> that ye profit nothing; behold, the world is gone away after Him" (verses 12-19).

\* The copula of Text. Rec., with fourteen uncials and most cursives, is not in BLQ and some of the more ancient versions.

† ὅτε DEpmKLI and some of the oldest versions [old Latin, Chrys., followed by Blass]; ὅτε, "when" (Steph., not Elz.), AB, and most of the other uncials, many cursives, etc. [Weiss].<sup>229</sup>

Thus did the crowd welcome Him as Messiah, applying to Him very justly the language of Ps. 118, which the Lord, in Matt. 23, declares shall be said by the repentant remnant who shall see Him when He returns to reign. Till then the house, once hallowed by Jehovah and bearing His name, is but *their* house, and left unto them desolate; as, indeed; they had made it a house of merchandise and a den of robbers. Nor was it mere enthusiasm in the crowd, but God at work; and the Lord Himself sat on the young ass according to the prophecy of Zech. 9. It is remarkable how both Matthew and John omit the clause of the prophet which did not then apply, however sure by and by; for He knew well that He was to suffer then, in order to bring salvation when He comes again in glory. It was but a testimony at the time, and in the word to faith; when He comes, having salvation for His own, it will be in destructive judgment of all that oppose.

Here again it is notified for us that even His disciples knew not these things at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they did these things to Him. He needed not that any should testify either of man or of Himself. Past, present, future, earth, and heaven, were open to His gaze. He Who made all knew all; as John constantly shows in harmony with the glory of His Person, which is everywhere prominent, save what He was pleased, in His capacity of servant, not to know, leaving it in the authority of the Father (Mark 13). In the light of

His glorification the disciples learnt the import of the word and of the facts. It was His resurrection power which impressed the crowd so mightily. They did not draw the full lesson of faith, but concluded that He must be the promised Son of David, and met Him as such; while the Pharisees could not but own among themselves that obviously their stand and opposition were in vain, and the world, the prize of unbelief, gone after Him. Little knew they what is proclaimed just afterwards: "Now is the judgment of this world." In misjudging Him, its own doom was sealed; He sought its salvation, not popularity, but God's will.

## John 12: 20-36.

But another scene completes the circle of the testimony here given before the close.

"And there were certain Greeks of<sup>231</sup> those coming up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee,<sup>232</sup> and asked Him, saying, Sir, we desire to see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and\* Andrew cometh and Philip, and they tell Jesus. But Jesus answered† them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say to you, Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life (soul) shall lose it,‡ and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If anyone serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there also My servant shall be;§ if anyone serve Me, him will My Father honour" (verses 20-26).

\* So a few of the oldest MSS., with a slight variation, while Text. Rec. with most ηασ καὶ πάλιν, Ἄ. κ. Φ. λ., as in the Authorised Version.

† ἀποκρίνεται, "answereth," BLX, etc. [Blass]; ἀπεκρίνατο, "answered," Text. Rec., with the mass of uncials, cursives, and versions [Weiss].

‡ ἀπολλύει, "loseth," BL, 33, etc. [Weiss, Blass].

§ καὶ, "and," is added in Text. Rec., with thirteen uncials, and most other authorities, but not the oldest.

These were Gentiles, Greeks and not merely Hellenists, who desired to see the Lord; and Philip and Andrew name it to Him. It was enough. The Lord opens the great truth. It is not now the Son of God quickening or raising the dead, nor the Son of David coming to Zion according to prophecy, but the Son of man glorified. This He explains after the solemn asseveration, so often found in our Gospel, under the well-known figure of death and resurrection in nature: "Verily, verily, . . . Except the corn of wheat falling into the ground die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it beareth much fruit." He Himself was the true corn thus to produce fruit abundantly, yet even so only by death and resurrection.<sup>232a</sup> This was not, could not be, from defect of power in Him. It was from man's estate that it could not righteously be otherwise before God. Death only can meet the evil, or fill the void, and His death alone. Of all others death were vain-yea, fatal. Death to them must be for themselves to perish. He only could save, but through His death and resurrection; for as He would die, so He could rise, and by the infinite value of His death avail for others so as to raise them righteously. Living, He, even He must abide alone; dying, He bears much fruit in the energy of His resurrection.

Thus was He the Son of man glorified.<sup>233</sup> It was for sin that God at length might be glorified; and now He was. Sin brought in death; His dying for it, by God's grace and to God's glory, laid the basis for the change of all things, even for the new heavens and earth in the eternal state; how much more for all that believe to be meanwhile blessed in a new life before they are changed into the likeness of His glory, when He comes for them! "He shall see a seed, He shall prolong [His] days, and the

pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of [the fruit of] the travail of His soul, [and] shall be satisfied." (Isa. 53: 10.) So said the first of prophets, and this founded on His death-"when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin," in accordance with His own words here seven centuries after, when approached that wondrous hour and act of man's guilt where he meant pain and ignominy, and God inflicted incomparably worse in His unsparing and unfathomable judgment. To Him the hour was come that the Son of man should be glorified. What perfect self-sacrifice! What devotedness to God! What love to man, even to His bitterest enemies! Such was Jesus going down to death- yea, death of the cross; and such the fruit unfailing.

The principle, too, becomes a primary one thenceforth, not ease and honour and advancement for self (which is truly the greatest loss), but suffering and shame, and, if need be, death, now in this world for Christ's sake. Such is practical Christianity. "He that loveth his life [soul] loseth it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.<sup>234</sup> 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." And what an honour! He assuredly knows what it is, and how to give it. But it is not in self-devised and self-imposed abasements; neither in flagellations of the back, nor in lickings of the dust, nor in like heathenish effort that dishonours the body to the satisfying of the flesh. It is in what the Holy Spirit alone can guide and sustain, in serving Christ-a service inseparable from following Him, its beginning life eternal in the Son, its end the same life in glory with Him; for such as serve and follow Him will the Father honour. May we be strengthened to discern and do the truth!

The Lord reverts to thoughts of His approaching death, There is no avoidance of contemplating that which it was part of His perfection to feel, as no man ever did. He estimates it rightly and fully as before, instead of braving it as men do who cannot escape. To Him it was no inevitable doom, but Divine love, that God might be glorified in a guilty world, that sinners might be saved righteously, that the entire creation of heaven and earth (I say not those under the earth, the infernal beings of Phil. 2) might be reconciled and blessed for ever. He, and He only, had authority to lay down His life (φουχήν), as He had authority to take it again. As He is the Resurrection and the Life (ζωή), so no one takes the life He had in this world from Him, but He lays it down of Himself, though also in obedience to His Father, and to the everlasting glory of God, as the fulness of His Person enabled Him to do. None the less but the more did He feel the gravity, humiliation, and suffering of what was before Him. There was the deepest sense of death, not only as man and Messiah, but of its import from man's hand and from God's judgment. Not an element of grief and pain and shame and horror was absent from His heart, compatible with the perfection of His Person and His relationship to God.

"Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but on account of this came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy\* name" (verses 27, 28). He was the life, yet came to die; He was light and love, yet rejected and hated as man never knew before, nor will again. The reality of His manhood, the glory of His Godhead, in no way hindered His sorrow; His being Who and what He was, and perfect in all, only gave Him infinite capacity to feel and fathom what He endured, none the less because He came to endure it all, and had it now before Him in immediate prospect, though none of men saw it but Himself. He had not been perfect man if His soul had not been troubled, so as to feel, "What am I to say?" He had not been Son of God as man had He not in His soul-trouble prayed, "Father, save Me from this hour," and quite as little, "but on this account came I unto this hour," crowned with, "Father, glorify Thy name." To have felt and expressed the first petition perfectly suited Him Who was man in such circumstances; to have added the second was worthy of Him Who is God no less than man in one undivided Person; to have said both was perfection in both, in sorrow as in joy, as to death no less than life.<sup>235</sup>

\* B. by an evident slip, reads μου for σου, to the grievous detriment of the sense.

The Father appreciates and answers accordingly. "There came therefore a voice out of heaven, I both have glorified and will glorify (it) again. The crowd then\* that stood and heard said that it thundered; others said, An angel hath spoken to Him" (verses 28, 29). Augustine and Jerome confound this† with John 17: 5, from which it is wholly and demonstrably distinct; but we must never expect spiritual intelligence, sometimes not even common orthodoxy, from the Fathers so-called. The later passage in our Gospel is the Son requesting the Father that He as the risen Man should be glorified, on the completion of His work, as well as consonantly with the rights of His Person, along with the Father Himself in the glory which the Son had along with Him before the world was.

\* B omits οὖν [so Blass], while ADLX, etc., have it [Weiss].

† So does the venerable but gloss-loving Codex Bezae (conventionally called D), for it actually adds to the text ἐν τῇ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον παρά σοι πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον γενέσθαι.

The passage before us refers to what had just been, and what was going to be, done in this world; for as the Father had glorified His name in the resurrection of Lazarus, so yet more infinitely would He in the rising from the dead of His own Son. The moderns, such as Dean Alford, fail, in meagre, vague, and even erroneous thought, to reach the mark as much as, or more than, the ancients. For how poor it is to tell us that διὰ τοῦτο = ἵνα σωθῶ ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης, that I might be safe from this hour!-that is, the going into and exhausting this hour, this cup, is the very appointed way of My glorification, or, as Meyer says, that Thy name may be glorified, which is to anticipate what follows. It was really to die, though undoubtedly to the glory of the Father by the Son. So, again, ἐδόξασα points to something much more definite than "in the manifestation hitherto made of the Son of God, imperfect as it was (see Matt. 16: 16, 17); in all Old Testament type and prophecy; in creation, and, indeed (Augustine), *antequam facerem mundum*" (in Joan. 52: 4). Lastly, it is losing the exact force to treat πάλιν as a mere intensification of the δοξάζειν, instead of seeing a distinct and higher display of that resurrection power which marked out the Son of God.

As to the question why some said the voice from heaven was thunder, others the speaking of an angel to the Lord, it seems vain to seek an answer. It was merely speculation on the part of the crowd, who all fell short of the truth. Unbelief of Him can weaken or get rid of all testimony till He come in judgment. Yet was it really in grace to them, for "Jesus answered and said, Not on Mine account hath this voice come, but on yours. Now is judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out: and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all\* to Myself. But this He said signifying by what death He was about to die. The crowd then† answered Him, "We heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest Thou that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" Jesus then said to them, "Yet a little time the light is among‡ you. Walk while ye have the light, that the darkness may not overtake you; and he that walketh in darkness knoweth not where he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become sons of light" (verses 30-36).

\* For πάντα with the great mass [Weiss] pmD, and some ancient versions [Latt., Syrhc1], read [as Blass] πάντα, "every one," or "all things," as Aug. in loc. expressly says. But there is the strongest internal reason to stand by the weight of external testimony.

† Most omit οὖν, but not BLX, etc.

‡ ἐν BDKLXMΠ, etc., instead of Text. Rec. μεθ AEF GHSUTΔΛ, etc.

These words, if any, are surely of the most solemn import, and the more, as Christendom now as ever ignores their truth. For men, Christian men, believe nothing less than that "now is the judgment of

this world," even while some of them look for the casting out of its prince in due time.<sup>236</sup> The glory of the Son of man is founded on death. The rejection of the Messiah gives occasion for what is thus incomparably larger and more profound; and thus is God's glory immutably secured, and much fruit borne, even the blessing of those otherwise lost, now blessed with and in Christ, not merely by Him. But if heaven be thereby opened (for the cross and heaven answer to each other),<sup>237</sup> the world is judged. Before God and to faith now is its judgment, and not only when execution takes place publicly and in power. But now it is judged for him who has the mind of Christ, who shares His rejection and awaits glory with Him on high. What does His cross mean morally?

A living Messiah should have gathered the twelve tribes of Israel round Himself as their Chief, raised up of God according to promise; but He was to be lifted up out of the earth, crucified, Satan's seeming victory, but his real and everlasting defeat, and so known to faith, while we wait for the day which shall declare it beyond contradiction. Christ on the cross is a very different object from reigning over His people in grace, and abiding for ever; yet they should have read it also out of the law, for there it is, if dimly. But grace makes Him manifest thus lifted up, the attractive centre for all, Gentile or Jew, spite of their sins, which He was to bear in His own body. A suffering Son of man was, and is, no article of Jewish faith, though certainly revealed in their Scriptures.<sup>238</sup> To their expression of ignorance the Lord replies by telling them how brief was the stay of the light, by warning them of the darkness about to seize on them, and by exhorting them to faith in the light, if they, escaping the darkness, would have the light to characterise themselves.

## John 12: 36-43.

The close was at hand, and a token even then was given that the light would not be always there. "Jesus spoke these things, and, going away, hid Himself from them. But though He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe on Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet which He said might be fulfilled.' 'Jehovah, who believed our report? and to whom was Jehovah's arm revealed?' (Isa. 53: 1.) On this account they could not believe because Isaiah said again, 'He hath blinded their eyes, and He hardened\* their heart that they may not see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and be converted [turn], and I heal them.' These things said Isaiah, because (or, when†) he saw His glory, and spoke concerning Him. (Isa. 6: 10.) Still, however, from among the rulers also many believed on Him, but on account of the Pharisees did not confess, that they might not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (verses 36-43).

\* ἐπώρ. ABpmKLX, etc. (H in a corrupt form); πεπ. Text. Rec., following very many.

† ὅτι, ABLMX, etc.; ὅτε, Text. Rec., most uncials [DIAΛΠ, etc.] and cursives, etc.

Such was the result of the only absolutely perfect testimony ever rendered in this world, the words, and ways, and signs of the Son of God; and this, not where blank ignorance might be pleaded in extenuation, but where God had done all possible to prepare the way by prophecy, and to arouse attention by sign, grace, and truth in the midst of a people used to Divine intervention. But man's unbelief, left to itself and Satan, can shut out every sight and sound from God. So it was among the Jews of our Lord's day, and so it continues till this day. It is still "this generation," which shall not pass away till all God's threats be fulfilled. Of the outward judgments, however, John does not speak, but the Synoptic evangelists; John of having no more Him Who is all. For what is it to lose the light, to be abandoned to that darkness where he who walks in it knows not where he goes? And this is precisely the state of the Jews; the more aggravated because they had the light for a little among them, and did not believe, so that they failed to become children of light, and the darkness seized on them.<sup>239</sup> Thus

was the prince of prophets fulfilled by their unbelief in their own ruin, and this in both the parts of his prophecy, early and late, which speculation vainly seeks to divorce. But we believe the inspired evangelist, not the presumptuous professor, and are as assured that both prophecies are Isaiah's as that they were divinely given and now fulfilled in the Jew so long incredulous.

But as the first citation proves the guilt of rejecting God's testimony, so the second, though really earlier, points to the solemn fact of judicial blindness, never pronounced, still less executed, of God, till patience has had its perfect work and man has filled up the measure of his guilt beyond measure. Under such a sentence of hardening, no doubt, they could not believe;<sup>240</sup> but the sentence came because of wickedness consummated in wilful rejection of God and His will when they did not believe, in spite of the fullest appeals to their hearts and consciences. As the first citation shows utter unbelief when Christ came in humiliation and suffering to do the work of atonement, so the latter conveys the dread word which shut them up in blindness before the light they had so long despised, followed up by the inspired comment that these things said Isaiah when he saw Christ's glory and spoke of Him.<sup>241</sup> It is Jehovah in the prophecy, Christ in the Gospel; but they are one-as, indeed, Acts 28: 25-27 enables us to include the Holy Spirit. How thoroughly confirmed and confirming the still older oracle in Deut. 6: 4, "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah!" John 12: and Acts 28 weaken it in nothing, but add to its force and expressiveness, as they show out more and more the patience of God and the darkness of the Jew after ages of trifling with His mercy and His menaces alike. And the darkness increased as the light shone out.

But ungodliness betrays itself not only in the insubjection of the heart to believe, but in the cowardliness of the soul to confess the Lord (Rev. 21: 8); as we see here that "many from among the chief rulers believed on Him, but on account of the Pharisees did not confess, that they might not be put out of the synagogue." And the motive or moral reason is given: they loved glory from men rather than glory from God. They feared the religious world, being keenly sensible of human glory, but dull to that which is from God.<sup>242</sup> But we must not forget that, if "with the heart man believes to righteousness, with the mouth confession is made to salvation." (Rom. 10: 10.) God makes much of confession of His Son, nor can we safely own salvation otherwise.

## **John 12: 44-50.**

Next comes the final public testimony of our Lord, given in this Gospel. "But Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me; and he that beholdeth Me beholdeth Him that sent Me. I am come a light into the world, that every one that believeth on Me may not abide in darkness. And if anyone have heard My words and not kept\* (them), I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that slighteth Me and receiveth not My words hath one that judgeth him; the word which I did speak, that will judge him in the last day, because I did not speak from Myself, but the Father Who sent Me hath Himself given† Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that His commandment is life eternal. What things then I speak, as the Father hath said to Me, so I speak" (verses 44-50).

\* φουάξει [cf. Luke 11: 28], ABDKLP, etc.; πιστεύση, "believed," EFGHMSUGAA, etc.

† δέδ, ABMX, many cursives, etc.; ἔδ, Text. Rec., DLΓAAΠ, etc.

The Lord spoke with earnestness, as elsewhere and always;<sup>243</sup> and it was due to men in His grace, considering the solemn issues at stake, and the Divine glory concerned. It was a question of His Father Who sent Him, no less than of Himself. To believe on the Son, to behold Him, was to behold and believe on the Father. They were inseparably one, as He had already declared; and he who had the

Son had the Father also. Further, the Lord was come as light into the world (for it was no question of Israel only) that every believer on Him might not abide in darkness.<sup>244</sup> He has the light of life, and not life only; He is light in the Lord. It was therefore ruin to have heard and not kept His words; but such was the grace in which He came, that He could add, "I judge him not, for I came not that I might judge the world, but that I might save the world." How, then, would His glory be vindicated in his case who slights<sup>245</sup> Him and receives not His words? He has that which judges him-the word. "The word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day"; and the more surely, because Jesus spoke not from Himself, as if He sought His own will or glory, but was simply and uniformly subject to the Father, Who not only sent Him, but enjoined what He was to say and speak; the Father's commandment He knew to be life eternal. (Ps. 133: 3.<sup>246</sup>) Jesus was as subject to Him in His utterances as in His doings, being here to declare Him and do His will.