

## CHAPTER I.

<sup>a</sup> Prov. 8. 22,

23, &c.

Col. 1. 17.

1 John 1. 1.

Rev. 1. 2.

& 19. 13.

<sup>b</sup> Prov. 8. 30.

ch. 17. 5.

1 John 1. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Phil. 2. 6.

1 John 5. 7.

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

IN the beginning <sup>a</sup> was the Word, and the Word was <sup>b</sup> with God, <sup>c</sup> and the Word was God.

## CHAPTER I.

## 1—18. Of the nature and office of the Son of God.

1. "In the beginning." St. John's Gospel has been called the Genesis of the New Testament. It takes us back to the "beginning." Yet not alone to the same "beginning" as Moses speaks of, for the New Testament goes farther back than the Old. In Genesis the "beginning" is the beginning of creation. St. John's "beginning" is before all creation. It signifies the eternal existence of that which was without beginning—from everlasting.

"The Word." This title of Christ is used in other places by St. John (See 1 St. John i. 1. and Rev. xix. 13.). He found the expression employed by those who were spreading false teaching in the primitive Church (See *Note*), and at once cleared it in the few almost startling words of this first verse—"thunder by the son of thunder" (*Bengel*)—of the false notions which had gathered round it. It was a true title of Christ, though it had been falsely used. As St. Paul declared to the Athenians the "Unknown God", whom they ignorantly worshipped, so St. John declares to the Church that Divine Word, whom many ignorantly or perversely misunderstood. The title is a most fitting one; for Christ came to declare—to reveal, or make known—God to man (18.), even as a word, which can be heard or read, makes known the thought, which none can hear or see. Christ is *the expression of the mind of God*. "All things", He says, "that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you" (xv. 15.).

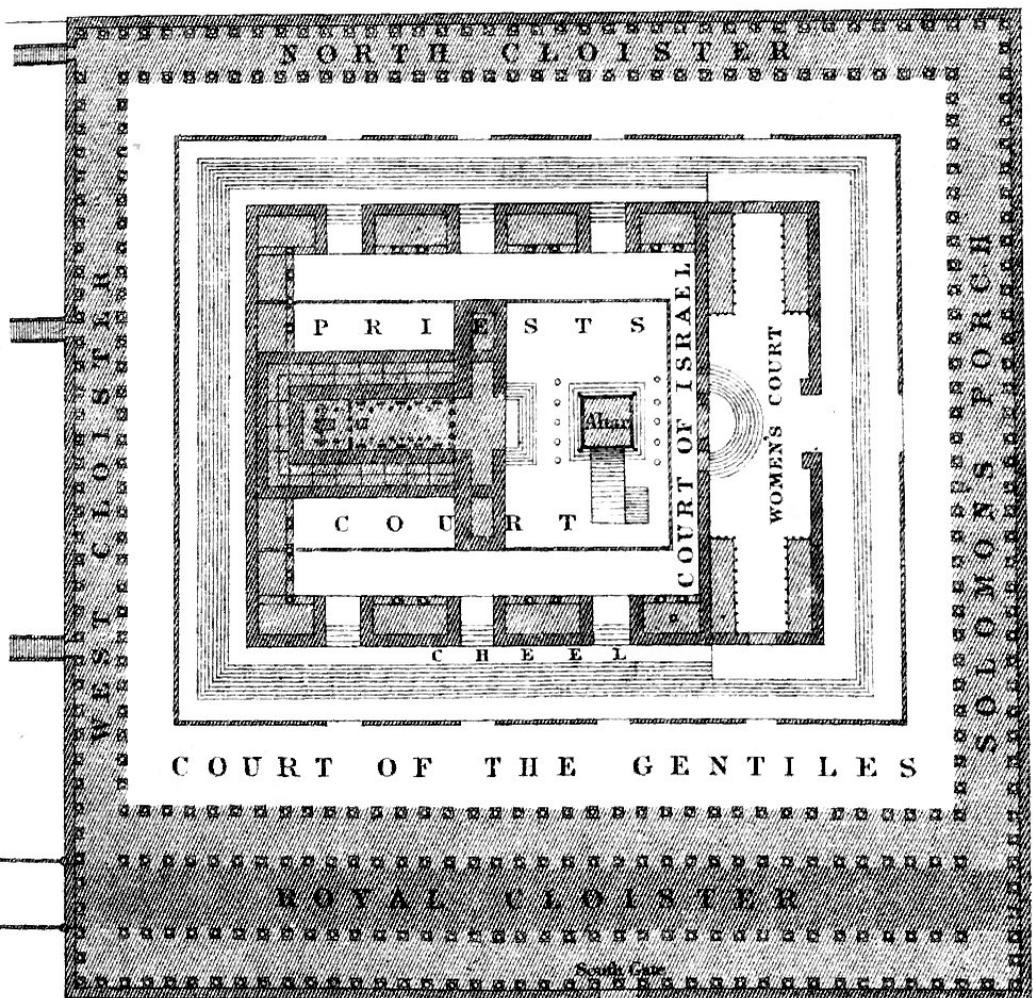
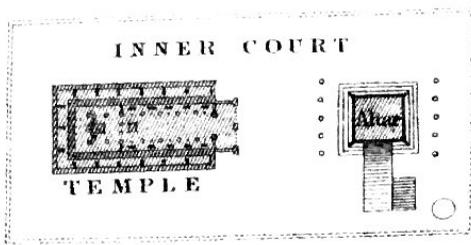
"The Word was with God." This declares the distinct personal existence of the Word. The Word was not a mere attribute of God, like Wisdom or Power or Goodness; nor a mere way of speaking of God's revelation of Himself, as though it were God in His providence, as manifesting Himself to His creatures; nor a mere power put forth for a special work, and so as it were a part of God. The Word is a distinct Person—"with God" from everlasting.

"The Word was God." Neither is the Word in any degree inferior to God. He is not a being sent forth, like some higher Angel, to do God's work. He is "the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father" (Art. ii.). Thus at the very outset does St. John strike the key-note of all his Gospel—The Son of Man very and eternal God (See on v. 18.).

1. "The Word." It appears that before the time of Christ the "Word" and the "Wisdom" of God had come to be used by the Jews in more or less of a *personal* sense. Indeed many passages in the

Old Testament might be supposed to favour such an idea (See, for example, Ps. xxxiii. 6. Prov. viii. 22—26.), while in the Apocryphal Books, which were written nearer to the time of Christ than

# THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON



# THE TEMPLE OF HEROD

- 2<sup>d</sup> The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3<sup>e</sup> All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4<sup>f</sup> In Him was life; and<sup>g</sup> the life was the light of men.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. 1. 1.  
<sup>e</sup> ver. 10.  
 Ps. 33. 6.  
 Eph. 3. 9.  
 Col. 1. 16.  
 Heb. 1. 2.  
 Rev. 4. 11.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 5. 26.  
 1 John 5. 11.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 8. 12. & 9. 5. & 12. 35, 46.

2. "The same was in the beginning with God." St. John here repeats, confirms, and enforces, in a shorter form, the mighty truths declared in the first verse. Before he enters upon the earthly work and earthly sufferings of the Redeemer he would fix firmly in our minds the truth of His eternal Godhead. So when we read of Jesus weary by Jacob's well, or weeping by the grave of Lazarus, or bound and tried and mocked and crucified, we should ever recollect—"This is He who was in the beginning with God, and who was God." The early Christians often likened the eternal union of the Son with the Father to the union of light with the sun.

3. "All things were made by Him;" &c. We are too much accustomed to think of creation as belonging to God the Father alone. Here and elsewhere God the Son is most distinctly declared to be the Creator: and this not only because He is one with the Father, so that what the Father does, that the Son does also; but in some special sense, in which the Creation, as well as the government, of this world is spoken of as being committed by the Father to the Son. Thus St. Paul, speaking of Christ, says, "By Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17.). And again, God is said to have "spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Hebr. i. 2.).

The Evangelist is still exalting the eternal Word, before he follows Him down to this lower earth. For He that created all things cannot Himself have been created, and must be God;—not an inferior being (as the Gnostic false teachers held) employed, as it were, by God in the affairs of this world, but Himself "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead." All spiritual beings and powers, however high, being made by Him, He cannot be one of these, but must be far above all.

4. "In Him was life." In Christ—as the eternal Word, God from everlasting. St. John is not yet thinking of the Word *Incarinate*, visiting this world in the flesh. Life was an eternal property of the

any part of the Old Testament, there are passages speaking of Wisdom still more as if it were a living power distinct from God (See, for example, Wisd. vi. 22. vii. 22—30. ix. 1, 4, 9. viii. 15, 16. Eccclus. i. 1, 4. xxiv. 9, 19—22.). Had such language been simply interpreted of the promised Messiah, no great error would have arisen. But the Jews settled in the Egyptian city Alexandria began to engraft upon this language vain notions taken from the heathen philosophy, with which they had become fami-

liar. They gradually learnt to regard the Supreme God as a Being far removed from all care for, or interest in, this world, and both creating and governing it by inferior powers or beings sent forth by Him, of whom they held the "Word" or the "Wisdom" of God to be one. This was the origin of that Gnostic heresy (See on Title of this Gospel), which so greatly disturbed the early Church, and against which so much of St. John's writings is evidently aimed.

h ch. 3. 19.

5 And <sup>h</sup>the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

i ver. 33.

Mal. 3. 1.

Matt. 3. 1.

Luke 3. 2.

k Acts 19. 4.

6 <sup>i</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 <sup>k</sup>The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

Word; who had life in Himself, and poured it forth upon His creation, both natural and spiritual, as from an exhaustless fountain. He Himself declares that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself", so that "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (v. 25, 26.). And again He speaks of Himself in His great Prayer as having "power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life" (xvii. 2.).

"The life was the light of men." That is, the Life which flowed from the Son of God was the cause of that inward spiritual Light in man whereby he is saved. When *Light* shines in our souls, teaching us the things of God, it is a sign that we have in our souls also the divine *Life*. For if our souls did not live through the *life* which Christ gives, they could not behold the *light* which Christ gives. The Evangelist, like an Eagle (See Introduction), has soared up to the highest heaven: he is now bending his flight downwards to this world and to man.

5. "The light shineth in darkness;" &c. There is here a gradual change in the meaning of the Light. In the last verse it was the sunbeam springing *from* Christ: here it is Christ Himself, the Sun. He is Himself "the true Light" (9.), because He is the fountain of light. "Darkness" signifies the state of the world when Christ came. It was a state of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, which would not accept and embrace the Light. So at the Creation, when God said "Let there be light", that light broke upon a world that was "without form, and void" and wrapped in thickest darkness. But, while the natural darkness yielded to the light of creation, the spiritual darkness resisted and rejected the "true Light."

6. "A man sent from God." How differently does the Evangelist speak of the coming of him who was only "a man", and of the coming of the Word who "was God." So too in the prophecy of the sending of St. John the Baptist (Mal. iii. 1.), the strongest contrast is seen between the earthly messenger who was to prepare the way, and the "Messenger of the covenant", who was "the Lord". And yet there are some who teach that Christ was no more than "a man sent from God"!

How well does the divinely given name "John"—which means "The Lord is gracious" (See on St. Luke i. 13.)—accord with the gracious tidings which the Forerunner was sent to proclaim!

7. "For a witness." As the ray of morning light witnesses to the rising sun.

"That all men through him" &c. "Through him" is to be understood of St. John the Baptist, not of the Light. "All men" must be limited to those who heard his witness. He came that all who heard him might believe on that true Light to which he bore witness.

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

9 <sup>1</sup> That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and <sup>m</sup> the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.

11 <sup>n</sup> He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

12 But <sup>o</sup> as many as received Him, to them gave He <sup>2</sup> power to become the sons of God, *even to* them that believe on His name :

<sup>1</sup> ver. 4.  
Isai. 49. 6.  
<sup>1</sup> John 2. 8.  
<sup>m</sup> ver. 3.  
Heb. 1. 2.  
& 11. 3.  
<sup>n</sup> Luke 19. 14.  
Acts 3. 26.  
& 13. 46.  
<sup>o</sup> Isai. 56. 5.  
Rom. 8. 15.  
Gal. 3. 26.  
2 Pet. 1. 4.  
1 John 3. 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Or, *the right, or, privilege.*

8. "Not that Light." And yet the "true Light" speaks of him as "a burning and a shining light" (v. 35.). So a single ray of light is bright when we cannot see the sun; but the ray is not the sun. It may be noted that when Jesus calls the Forerunner a "shining light", the word used for "light" is not the same as that used in this place, which signifies the glorious light of day, but is literally a 'lamp'.

9. "The true Light." Christ calls Himself "the Light of the world" (viii. 12. ix. 5. and compare xii. 46.).

"Which lighteth every man." Being Himself the Fountain of all spiritual light. No man has light in himself, however proud he may be of his natural powers; for all true light comes from Christ. He, by His Spirit, who is the "Spirit of truth", and by His written word, which is the voice of truth, leads men into all truth.

10. "He was in the world." That is, when He was "made flesh and dwelt among us" (14.). The Creator came into the midst of His creation, and it knew Him not! Wise in its own eyes, yet "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. i. 21.), and when He came to save it, rejected Him! The Evangelist's words are uttered in sorrowful astonishment.

11. "His own." In the Greek there is a difference between the first and the second of the words thus translated. The first time the meaning is 'His own possession or inheritance'; the second time it is 'His own people.' It was not merely to the world which He had made that the Son of God came. He came to the land of His inheritance,—to the nation which He had chosen,—to those called to be "a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. vii. 6.); and even *they*, with much light and knowledge granted them, "received Him not."

12. "As many as received Him." So that not all rejected Him. Both out of the "world" (10.), and out of "His own" (11.), there was a remnant who "received Him." Both from Jews and Gentiles there was an election who became the new chosen people, the new Israel, the Church of the living God. These "received" Christ by "believing on His Name"; and to this their first faith—itsself the gift of God—was granted the priceless privilege here spoken of, namely the "power to become the sons of God." It is remarkable that St. John does not say that the Lord made these believers sons of God, but that He gave them "power to become" so; teaching us that our Faith has

# ST. JOHN, I.

- <sup>b</sup> Ex. 20. 1, &c. Deut. 4. 44. & 5. 1. & 33. 4. <sup>c</sup> Rom. 3. 24. & 5. 21. & 6. 14. <sup>d</sup> ch. 8. 32. & 14. 6. A. D. 27. 31st Year of our Lord's life. <sup>e</sup> Ex. 33. 20. Deut. 4. 12. Mat. 11. 27. Luke 10. 22. ch. 6. 46. 1 Tim. 1. 17. & 6. 16. 1 John 4. 12, 20. <sup>f</sup> ver. 14. ch. 3. 16, 18. 1 John 4. 9. <sup>g</sup> ch. 5. 33. <sup>h</sup> Luke 3. 15. ch. 3. 28. Acts 13. 25. 17 For <sup>b</sup> the law was given by Moses, *but* <sup>c</sup> grace and <sup>d</sup> truth came by Jesus Christ.
- 18 <sup>e</sup> No man hath seen God at any time; <sup>f</sup> the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared *Him*.
- 19 ¶ And this is <sup>g</sup> the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?
- 20 And <sup>h</sup> he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.
- 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou <sup>i</sup> Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou <sup>k</sup> <sup>2</sup> that prophet? And he answered, No.
- 22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?
- <sup>1</sup> Mal. 4. 5. <sup>Matt.</sup> 17. 10. <sup>k</sup> Deut. 18. 15, 18. <sup>2</sup> Or, a prophet?

holiness perseverance, and upon perseverance salvation. The fountain of grace is exhaustless. Blessed are they that drink thereof.

17. "For the law" &c. St. John contrasts the Law, in its sternness and its shadow, with the Gospel, in its richness of grace and revelation of the truth. No doubt the Law had in it some degree both of grace and of truth, but the fulness of these came with Christ.

18. "No man hath seen" &c. This verse seems to be a comment upon the word "truth." Christ has "declared"—that is, revealed, made clear to man—that which can be seen and known of the Father, whom "no man hath seen." By speaking of the Son as "in the Bosom of the Father" St. John would declare the intimate knowledge which the Son has of the Father's thought and character. He comes to us declaring the Father's will, and that will is laid open to Him in the closeness of His unity with the Father.

## 19—37. The testimony of St. John the Baptist.

19. "The Jews." That is, as commonly in St. John's Gospel, their rulers, probably the Sanhedrin, or great council of the nation (See on St. Matt. xxvi. 3.). There was a wide-spread notion among the people that St. John the Baptist was himself the Messiah (See St. Luke iii. 15.).

21. "Art thou Elias?" This question was plainly asked in a literal sense, and therefore the Baptist answers, "I am not." Doubtless his appearance would lead to the enquiry (See on St. Matt. iii. 4.). That he *was* the Messenger prophesied of under the name of Elias our Lord expressly says (See on St. Matt. xi. 14. and St. Luke i. 17.).

"That prophet." That is, the prophet of whom Moses spoke (Deut. xviii. 15, 18.), who would be raised up like unto himself. It seems the Jews did not understand this prophecy as speaking of the Messiah, or were doubtful whether it referred to the Messiah or not (See on St. Matt. xvi. 14.).

## ST. JOHN, I.

23 <sup>1</sup> He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

A. D. 27.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 3. 3.  
Mark 1. 3.  
Luke 3. 4.  
ch. 3. 28.

Isai. xl. 3.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

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

26 John answered them, saying, <sup>m</sup> I baptize with water: <sup>n</sup> but there standeth One among you, whom ye know not;

<sup>m</sup> Matt. 3. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Mal. 3. 1.

27 <sup>o</sup> He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

<sup>o</sup> ver. 15, 30.  
Acts 19. 4.

28 These things were done <sup>p</sup> in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

<sup>p</sup> Judg. 7. 24.  
ch. 10. 40.

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25. "Why baptizest thou" &c. The Jews were familiar with baptism as a sign of admission into a new faith. They themselves baptized proselytes (See on iii. 5. and for "proselyte" see on St. Matt. xxiii. 15.). They were therefore prepared, as their question shows, to find Christ, or Elias, or "that prophet" baptizing. What offended them was that one whom they did not know, and whose claims they did not allow, should take upon himself to gather disciples around him, and baptize them.

26. "There standeth One" &c. Plainly what is here related took place after our Lord's Baptism and Temptation in the wilderness to the former of which the Baptist refers in 32 and 33. At the end of the forty days our Lord seems to have returned for a short time to the place where John was baptizing, before going into Galilee. The Baptist's words do not at first sight appear to answer the question of the Pharisees. But they may be understood thus: 'You ask me why I baptize. It is not in my own name, or for my own glory, or to gather disciples to myself. I baptize with water, it is true. But I point you to Another greater than I am. I am nothing. I claim no power, no greatness. I am but the Forerunner, sent to prepare the way of the Lord.' Of course, though the Baptist does not here say so in words, he implies that He who stood among them would baptize with a better baptism than that of water, as indeed he plainly declared at other times in his teaching (See St. Matt. iii. 11.).

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24. "Pharisees." See on St. Matt. iii. 7. The Pharisees at this time were the most powerful party among the Jews. Perhaps St. John mentions the Pharisees, because this would account for the enquiries made and objections raised; the Pharisees, who were strict observers of the Law, being naturally offended at one like John the Baptist taking upon himself to preach and baptize.

26. "I baptize with water." See on St. Matt. iii. 6.

28. "Bethabara." All the oldest copies of this Gospel have "Bethany" instead of "Bethabara" here. Of course, if Bethany was the true reading, it does not refer to the Bethany on the Mount of Olives, but to another village of the same name, not now known, on the East bank of the Jordan.

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29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold <sup>q</sup>the Lamb of God, <sup>r</sup>which

<sup>2</sup> taketh away the sin of the world.

30 <sup>s</sup>This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me: for He was before me.

31 And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, <sup>t</sup>therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 <sup>u</sup>And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and It abode upon Him.

33 And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, <sup>x</sup>the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

ch. 5. 32.    <sup>x</sup> Matt. 3. 11.    Acts 1. 5. & 2. 4. & 10. 44. & 19. 6.

<sup>q</sup> ver. 36.  
Exod. 12. 3.  
Isai. 53. 7.  
Acts 8. 32.  
1 Pet. 1. 19.  
Rev. 5. 6,  
&c.  
<sup>r</sup> Isai. 53. 11.  
1 Cor. 15. 3.  
Gal. 1. 4.  
Heb. 1. 3.  
& 2. 17.  
& 9. 28.  
1 Pet. 2. 24.  
& 3. 18.  
1 John 2. 2.  
& 3. 5.  
& 4. 10.  
Rev. 1. 5.  
<sup>2</sup> Or, *beareth*.  
<sup>s</sup> ver. 15, 27.  
<sup>t</sup> Mal. 3. 1.  
Matt. 3. 6.  
Luke 1. 17,  
76, 77.  
& 3. 3, 4.  
<sup>u</sup> Matt. 3. 16.  
Mark 1. 10.  
Luke 3. 22.

29. "The next day." After the questioning by the Pharisees.

"Behold the Lamb of God," &c. These are wonderful words, and could only be spoken by one inspired by the Holy Ghost. They plainly foretell the Sacrifice of Christ, and teach the great doctrine of the Atonement. We can hardly doubt that John the Baptist had in his mind the words of the great prophet, (who prophesied of the Baptist himself as the "Voice crying in the wilderness," and) who spoke of the Messiah thus: "He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter". "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows". "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. liii. 4, 6, 7.). Nor need we hesitate to believe that when God opened the Baptist's eyes to know the Messiah (33.), He taught him to see in Him the fulfilment of types and prophecies,—the Lamb of whom every sacrifice was a shadow, and of whom Isaiah spoke so marvellously. (Compare Rev. xiii. 8.). By "taketh away" is meant 'taketh upon Himself so 'as to remove from us.'

31. "I knew Him not." This is to be understood of that perfect certainty, with which after receiving the sign he preached Christ as the Messiah. Before our Lord's Baptism the Baptist had doubtless known Him as his own Kinsman, and had probably recognized Him as One greater and holier than himself. But till that day he had not known Him as the "Lamb of God" (See farther on 33. and on St. Matt. iii. 14.).

"That He should be made manifest." The Baptist always speaks of himself most humbly, as only preparing the way for One greater. He baptized in order to lead men to Christ, and to prepare them for His public appearance and ministry.

33. "He that sent me" &c. God had sent him, and God made known to him (in what way we are not told) that the visible descent of the Holy Ghost would be to him the sign and proof of the Messiah.

## ST. JOHN, I.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is A. D. 27.  
the Son of God.

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

36 and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

¶ ver. 29.

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

38 ¶ Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where<sup>2</sup> dwellest Thou?

<sup>2</sup> Or, *abidest.*

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But how then could St. John forbid our Lord, when He came to be baptized, saying, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" (St. Matt. iii. 14.) This was *before* the sign was given, and yet St. John seems to know Him. Possibly, even as the Lord approached, the Spirit within him made him conscious that the expected One was come, and prepared him for the sign which was shortly to follow. But at least the Baptist might see in our Lord One so holy as to lead him to shrink from baptizing Him, without having that assurance that He was the Messiah which he received in the visible descent of the Holy Ghost.

34. "The Son of God." Which the Father's own voice had proclaimed Him to be.

35. "The next day after." That is, after the Baptist had first pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God. This, as we have seen (See on 26.), was immediately upon our Lord's return from His Temptation.

"Two of his disciples." One of these was St. Andrew (40.). It is generally thought that the other was the Evangelist St. John himself, who always shrinks from naming himself.

37. "Followed Jesus." Not yet as His disciples, but simply (as we see from the next verse) in a literal sense, wishing to make further acquaintance with One pointed out to them as the Lamb of God.

In these two the "Voice crying in the wilderness" had prepared the way of the Lord. The Baptist led them to the Lamb of God. They had been baptized with the baptism of repentance: they were going to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. So it often is. "Elias must first come." The stern preacher of repentance is he who leads the sinner to Christ.

### 38—42. The first disciples of Christ.

38. "What seek ye?" This is said in kindness, to encourage the two to speak freely to Him.

"Where dwellest Thou?" They wished doubtless to seek Him in His home that they might learn from His own Sacred Lips truths which their former master had but dimly hinted at.

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39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was <sup>2</sup> about the tenth hour.

<sup>2</sup> That was two hours before night.  
<sup>3</sup> Matt. 4. 18.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was <sup>2</sup> Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

<sup>3</sup> Or, the Anointed.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, <sup>3</sup> the Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 16. 18.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: <sup>4</sup> thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by

<sup>4</sup> Or, Peter.

interpretation, <sup>4</sup> A stone.

39. "Abode with Him that day." That is, for the remainder of that day, from the 10th hour, which would be 4 o'clock by our reckoning. How blessed to these two must those hours have been!

40. "One of the two." And we may well suppose that the other was St. John the Evangelist himself. The words are those of one very familiar with what he relates.

41. "He first findeth" &c. "The proof of our having really found Christ is seen in our finding our brother and bringing him to Christ. "We find Christ by caring for the souls of our brethren" (*Bede quoted by Wordsworth*). "He first—That is, Andrew found his brother Simon before John was able to find his brother James: but be sure the Disciple of Love was not much later in bringing his brother to Christ. How genuine was the zeal of these men towards God, which would not let either rest till he had conveyed the good tidings to his brother!" (*Burton*.)

42. "When Jesus beheld him." This is not merely 'when Jesus saw him.' It signifies a steadfast look, such as is frequently recorded of our Lord (See on St. Matt. xix. 26.). We may well suppose that look would be so searching and piercing as to make the person looked upon feel that his secret heart was known to that Eye.

"Thou art Simon" &c. Probably these words imply that Jesus knew him miraculously, as in the case of Nathanael afterwards (47, 48.), but possibly they are only spoken to contrast the old name with the new, which is now first given. "Cephas" is the Jewish word, as "Peter" is the Greek, for 'rock' or 'stone'; and the name is given prophetically, partly in respect of Peter's character as bold and deter-

42. "A stone." "Or Peter," as in the margin. It is said above that "Peter" signifies 'Rock or Stone.' The truth is that in the Greek there is a difference between the two words, signifying 'Rock' and 'Stone,' the former being 'Petra,' and the latter 'Petros,' this latter being the name 'Peter.' As arguments have been drawn from this difference, it is well to say that these have no weight, since the word 'Petra,' being feminine, could not be made the name of a man. But this is scarcely worth notice, when

we recollect that our Lord probably spoke in the language of the country, and would use "Cephas", which means a Rock, and not 'Petros', the Greek word, which is more generally used for a 'stone.' The Jewish language of our Lord's time was not the pure original Hebrew, which ceased to be spoken from the time of the captivity, but Syro-Chaldaic, a mixed language, partly derived from the land in which a whole generation of Israelites grew up—the land of their captivity.

43 ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow Me.** A. D. 27.

44 Now <sup>b</sup> Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. b ch. 12. 21.  
c ch. 21. 2.  
d Gen. 3. 15.  
& 49. 10.  
Deu. 18. 18.  
See on Luke 24. 27.

45 Philip findeth <sup>c</sup> Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom <sup>d</sup> Moses in the law, and the <sup>e</sup> prophets, did write, Jesus <sup>f</sup> of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. e Isai. 4. 2.  
& 7. 14. &  
9. 6. & 53. 2.  
Mic. 5. 2.  
Zech. 6. 12.  
& 9. 9.

See more on Luke 24. 27. f Matt. 2. 23. Luke 2. 4.

mined, and partly in respect of his being a foundation-stone of the Church of Christ (See on St. Matt. xvi. 18.).

### 43—51. Philip and Nathanael.

43. "Jesus would go forth" &c. This is the return of Jesus to the country in which He had hitherto dwelt, after the great events of His Baptism, Temptation, and second visit to the place where John was baptizing, and where He gathered the first little company of disciples, who had themselves probably travelled from Galilee to Judæa, for the purpose of hearing the Baptist.

"Findeth Philip," &c. This is the first call actually made by our Lord Himself. We must observe that Christ is not yet choosing His Apostles. He is only gathering disciples. From these He afterwards chose the Twelve (See St. Luke vi. 13.). Blessed they who follow whenever the Lord calls. The simple unquestioning obedience of these poor unlearned men ended in their being princes in the kingdom of heaven.

44. "Bethsaida." A village on the West shore of the Sea of Galilee, a little South of Capernaum (See on St. Luke ix. 10.).

45. "Philip findeth Nathanael." Nathanael is generally allowed to be the same as Bartholomew (See on St. Matt. x. 3.). At first sight it appears as though this finding of Nathanael took place immediately upon the call of Philip, and before our Lord started on His journey Northwards to Galilee. But Alford suggests, with some reason, that, as Nathanael belonged to Cana of Galilee (See xxi. 2.), and as our Lord seems to have gone there at once on His return to Galilee (ii. 1.), it may have been in his home in Cana that Philip found him.

"Moses in the law." Probably Philip had in his mind the prophecy of Moses that God would raise up a Prophet like unto himself, a prophecy which he had learnt rightly to apply to the Messiah (See on 21.). Still of course this is not the only place in the Books of Moses in which the coming of Christ is foretold.

"The Son of Joseph." For so He was commonly thought to be, and Philip did not as yet know better. It seems probable that Philip, living in a neighbouring village to Nazareth, knew our Lord before this time, if not personally, at least by name; and our Lord's question,

43. "Into Galilee." This visit to Galilee (ending with ii. 12.) was a very early one, taking place between our Lord's Baptism and His first Passover, and both this and probably also that related in chapter iv. were earlier than the first visit to Galilee related by the other Evangelists, who omit the first portion of our Lord's ministry (See Note on iv. 1. and Note on St. Matt. iv. 12.).

- A. D. 27. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, <sup>g</sup> Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.
- <sup>h</sup> Ps. 32. 2. & 73. 1. ch. 8. 39. Rom. 2. 28. 29. & 9. 6. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold <sup>h</sup> an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!
- 48 Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.
- 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto Him,

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, “Philip?” (xiv. 9.) would have the greater force, if Philip had known our Lord before.

46. “Can there any good thing” &c. This is asked in wonder that so great an honour could belong to so small and poor and unknown a place as Nazareth. But God’s ways are not as our ways.

“Come and see.” “Manifestly an echo of Christ’s ‘Come and see’ of the day preceding” (*Trench.*). Philip cares not to answer Nathanael’s objection, being sure that, if he can once bring his friend into the presence of Christ, his guileless mind will be fully satisfied, and all doubts will vanish away.

47. “Behold an Israelite indeed,” &c. This was the first meeting between Jesus and Nathanael; and our Lord shows Himself One who “needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was “in man” (ii. 25.). He read Nathanael’s heart and character. By an “Israelite indeed” He means one living up to the true spiritual calling and privileges of the chosen people,—one not merely of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, but a child of Abraham by his faith,—one belonging to the true “Israel of God” (Gal. vi. 16.). The chief feature in Nathanael’s character was *guilelessness*. He was truthful, open, candid, and free from deceit and hypocrisy. This made him ready to receive the truth freely. Possibly our Lord had in His mind the Psalmist’s words, “Blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit there is no “guile” (Ps. xxxii. 2.).

48. “Whence knowest Thou me?” We should not understand this question as meaning ‘How is it Thou canst read my character so truly?’ as though Nathanael thought he deserved the high praise pronounced upon him. It is rather ‘How is it Thou knowest any thing about ‘a stranger such as I am, so as to speak as if Thou couldst read the ‘heart?’ Probably Nathanael thought Philip had been praising him, with a friend’s too favourable language, to our Lord. Jesus however at once shows him that He needed no such help of man, for He reveals to him what he had been doing before Philip found him, as though to say, ‘If I could see thee then, though out of sight, can I not see thy ‘heart now?’ It is probable that Nathanael had been doing something more than the mere words of our Lord declare. He may have been engaged in prayer, or studying the prophecies concerning our Lord, or occupied in some other way, which Jesus showed that He knew.

“I saw thee.” Plainly not with natural sight, but by Divine power.

Rabbi, <sup>i</sup>Thou art the Son of God; Thou art <sup>k</sup>the King of Israel. A. D. 27.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. <sup>1</sup> Mat. 14. 33.  
<sup>k</sup> Mat. 21. 5.  
& 27. 11, 42.  
ch. 18. 37.  
& 19. 3.

51 And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>1</sup>Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. <sup>1</sup> Gen. 28. 12.  
Matt. 4. 11.  
Luke 2. 9,  
13. & 22. 43.  
& 24. 4.  
Acts 1. 10.

49. "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God;" &c. By both the titles here given Nathanael confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah. David represents God as calling Christ "My King" and "My Son" (Ps. ii. 6, 7.). Nathanael was convinced by our Lord's miraculous knowledge that His claim to be the Messiah was true. So the Woman of Samaria was convinced (iv. 29.). We may compare this confession of Nathanael with that of St. Peter, and the blessing pronounced upon it by our Lord (St. Matt. xvi. 16—19.). In neither case had "flesh and blood" revealed it, but God Himself; and to Nathanael, as well as to the more eminent Apostle, it was granted to be one of the foundation-stones of the Church.

51. "Verily, verily, I say." This repetition of the "Verily" is only given in St. John's Gospel. Mark the tone of solemn authority conveyed in such an expression. Jesus speaks "as One having authority" (St. Matt. vii. 29.). The original word for "Verily" is "Amen", and the meaning is 'Truly' or 'Assuredly.'

"Hereafter ye shall see." Literally, 'Henceforth ye shall see.' Though spoken to Nathanael, this promise is in the plural, "Ye shall see," as embracing many besides himself. The meaning is, "From this time forth ye shall see such wonderful acts of grace and power as will prove that heaven, once closed by the sin of Adam, is now again thrown open by Me. Ye shall see the true fulfilment of that which Jacob saw in his dream, when he beheld "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending on it." The constant communication between heaven and earth, which Jacob's ladder prefigured, has now commenced: heavenly messengers are ever on the wing between them, ascending with the prayers of faithful people, and descending with a never-failing store of grace and blessing. My presence makes, as it were, a heaven upon earth, wherein angels are continually ministering to Me and Mine" (*Peter Young's Daily Readings*). The descent of Angels "upon the Son of Man" was literally manifest at His Agony and Resurrection; but perhaps the promise will be most literally fulfilled when the Son of God comes again, and "all the holy Angels with Him" (St. Matt. xxv. 31.). "No doubt it is very hard amid the distractions of the world to believe the unseen glories of our Christian state: but let a man strive in earnest to be like Nathanael, a Christian not in word only, but in reality; and his eyes will gradually open to see the glories in the midst of which he lives: the mists of earth will fade away, and he will come to perceive, like Jacob of old, that he is standing on the very threshold, as it were, of heaven, with light and glory streaming all around" (*Peter Young*).

## CHAPTER II.

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

**A**ND the third day there was a marriage in <sup>a</sup> Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

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

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

## CHAPTER II.

## 1—11. The Marriage at Cana.

1. "The third day." That is, after the events last related. According to the Jewish way of speaking the "third day" means the next day but one.

"Cana." A village not far from Capernaum, still called by the same name.

"The mother of Jesus was there." Plainly by what follows she was very familiar in the house, which was probably that of some near relative. Doubtless Joseph was dead before this time.

2. "Jesus was called," &c. This again shows an intimacy greater than mere acquaintance. It was plainly already known to this family that Jesus had within the last few days gathered around Him a little band of disciples, whom they made welcome with Him. Probably St. John was himself amongst these disciples.

By His presence at this marriage feast our Lord gives His sanction and blessing to innocent social enjoyments. He would teach us that the Christian's duty is not to condemn and avoid, but to hallow and purify, occasions of social intercourse. Let our rule be so to enter into society as that we should welcome Christ's presence with us, and so to act in society as we should act if He were present, and then we shall be safe.

We must also observe the high blessedness of Christian marriage, "which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence, "and first miracle that He wrought, in Cana of Galilee" (*Marriage Service*). Blessed are they who seek in all the great events of life to have Christ for their guest!

3. "They have no wine." Plainly this remark was made with the hope of some miraculous supply of the want. Had the Lord already told His mother that the time was come when He should do mighty works and manifest forth His glory? It may have been so. Or she may have gathered this herself from the wonders attending His Baptism and Temptation, and His first public appearance as Leader of a band of disciples.

1. "Galilee." See Note on i. 43.

<sup>a</sup> See Josh. 19. 28.

- 4 Jesus saith unto her, <sup>b</sup> Woman, <sup>c</sup> what have I to do with thee? <sup>d</sup> Mine hour is not yet come. A. D. 27.
- 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do *it*. b ch. 19. 26.  
c So 2 Sam. 16. 10.  
& 19. 22.  
d ch. 7. 6.
- 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, <sup>e</sup> after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. e Mark 7. 3.
- 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.
- 8 And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it*.
- 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted <sup>f</sup> the water that was made wine, and knew not whence f ch. 4. 46.

4. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" "Woman" was a word of respectful address at that time, and is used by our Lord in speaking to His mother from the Cross (xix. 26.). Still the rest of the question implies some gentle blame, as though the blessed Virgin Mary had shown an impatient anxiety for the display of His miraculous power. It was time she should understand—and Jesus had probably told her—that henceforth He must stand forth as the Messiah, His Divine power and will no longer subject to human control. Therefore she should have waited patiently, knowing that He would act at the right moment and in the right way. It is as though He said, 'Thou forgettest that I must now act for Myself, and no more be guided by thee.'

"Mine hour is not yet come." This probably means, 'The moment for the display of My power is not yet come.'

5. "His mother saith" &c. This shows that the rebuke in our Lord's last words was no very stern one. Doubtless He showed by His manner that, while He checked her impatience, He was yet about shortly to do the miracle. The Virgin Mary's words to the servants show her familiarity with the house (See on 1.).

6. "Six waterpots of stone," &c. St. John, writing for Gentile readers, is careful to explain Jewish customs, and here shows that these waterpots were not placed where they were with any view to the miracle, but for the purposes of washing the hands and the vessels used in the feast, according to the traditions which the Jews so carefully observed (See St. Mark vii. 3, 4.). The "firkin" is a large measure containing  $4\frac{1}{2}$  gallons (though some make it  $8\frac{1}{2}$  gallons), so that the amount contained by the six jars was very large. Mark the freedom and bountifulness of Christ's gifts. They are more than we either desire or deserve. And observe how He, who but a little before refused to minister by a miracle to His own extreme need, is more than ready to minister to the wants of others. "He will do nothing at the suggestion of Satan; though all at the suggestion of love" (Trench.).

8. "The governor of the feast." Probably some friend of the family, who was appointed, according to custom, to preside as chairman (to use a modern expression). It was his business to taste the wine put on the table, and to see to its being distributed to the guests. (The office is spoken of in the Apocryphal book Ecclus. xxxii. 1.)

A. D. 27. it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but thou hast kept the good wine until now.*

g ch. 1. 14. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, <sup>g</sup> and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.

h Matt. 12. 46. 12 ¶ After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and <sup>h</sup> His brethren, and His disciples: and they continued there not many days.

10. "Every man at the beginning" &c. The ruler of the feast is here stating what was the too common experience on like occasions. His words are spoken in pleasantry, and mean, 'Other men are accused of giving their best wine first, and, when men have drunk so much as to have blunted their taste, then bringing out inferior. You have done just the opposite,—namely kept your best to the last.' It is hardly worth saying that no excess in the slightest degree could possibly have occurred at this marriage feast, for our Lord would neither have contributed to any such sin by a miracle, nor have been present at all in that case. No doubt the large amount of wine created was not consumed on this occasion.

11. "This beginning of miracles." These words seem at once to shut out the reputed miracles of our Lord's Childhood related in the false gospels of the early ages. Bishop Hall writes upon these words,—“Could there be a greater miracle than this, that, having been thirty years upon earth, Thou didst no miracle till now?”

This miracle has a peculiar fitness as the “beginning” of our Lord's miracles, for it well sets forth, as a parable, the nature of His great work on earth. That work may be said to be “an ennobling of the common, and transforming of the mean, a turning of the water of earth into the wine of heaven” (*Trench.*). Whether for each separate Christian, or for His Church at large, Christ keeps His best gifts for the last. He has changed the weak and poor ordinances of the Law into the “new wine” of the Gospel. He will change the lesser gifts and blessedness of His Kingdom here into the full and boundless delights of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

“His glory.” That, namely, which the Evangelist has already spoken of as “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (i. 14.). As in the multiplying of the loaves, so in the present miracle, Christ stands forth as the Creator dealing as He will with His creatures.

“His disciples believed on Him.” “Again and again they believed, new degrees of faith being attained” (*Alford.*).

12. “To Capernaum.” See on St. Matt. iv. 13. We know nothing of this brief visit to Capernaum except what is here told us. It was earlier than the time spoken of by St. Matthew (See Note on i. 43). “His brethren.” See Note on St. Matt. xiii. 55.

13 <sup>i</sup> And the Jews' passover was at hand, and A. D. 27.  
 Jesus went up to Jerusalem,  
 14 <sup>k</sup> and found in the temple those that sold oxen  
 and sheep and doves, and the changers of money  
 sitting:  
 15 and when He had made a scourge of small  
 cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the  
 sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers'  
 money, and overthrew the tables;

<sup>i</sup> ver. 23.  
 Ex. 12. 14.  
 Deut. 16. 1,  
 16.  
 ch. 5. 1.  
 & 6. 4.  
 & 11. 55.  
<sup>k</sup> Mark 11.  
 15.  
 Luke 19. 45.

## 12—22. Visit to Jerusalem, and first Cleansing of the Temple.

Compare the second Cleansing of the Temple, St. Matt. xxi. 12—16.

13. "The Jews' passover." This was the first of the four Passovers of our Lord's public ministry, which lasted for a little more than three years, beginning and ending with a Passover. It is very remarkable that both at the beginning and at the ending of His public ministry our Lord should have performed the same act of authority. This first cleansing of the Temple is related by St. John alone; the second is related by the other three Evangelists. Can we doubt the weighty significance of an act thus twice solemnly performed? Surely it must be meant to teach us a most important lesson.

14. "In the temple." That is, doubtless, in the outer court—the "court of the Gentiles," where a market had been held for the convenience of the strangers coming up to Jerusalem for the feasts. Even this, the least sacred portion of the Temple, is in the Lord's eyes "holy ground."

15. "A scourge" &c. Doubtless in order to drive the animals, rather than the buyers and sellers themselves, out of the sacred place. But perhaps we may regard this scourge rather as the *sign and symbol* of our Lord's righteous wrath than as an instrument actually used by Him in its execution. It is plain that the buyers and sellers yielded at once to His authority, probably struck with conviction at the appearance of power and majesty which He presented, as the soldiers sent to take Him were afterwards struck in the Garden of Gethsemane, when they "went backward and fell to the ground" (xviii. 6.). Still our Lord's acts on this occasion were plainly acts of strong indignation and righteous violence. They are in truth a fulfilment of the great prophecy of Malachi,—“The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple; even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver” (Mal. iii. 1—3.). Jesus is generally presented to us in exceeding love and tenderness. Here we have a vision of the “wrath of the Lamb.” By His act of vengeance He teaches the truth which His Apostle declares,—“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. iii. 17.). That anger, resentment,

A. D. 27. 16 and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not <sup>1</sup>My Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, <sup>Ps. 69. 9.</sup> What sign shewest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?

<sup>m Mat. 12. 38. m ch. 6. 30.</sup> 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, <sup>n Mat. 26. 61. & 27. 40. Mark 14. 58. & 15. 29.</sup> "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

and indignation, are not *in themselves* sinful is plain to a thoughtful mind. God has implanted no sentiment or feeling in human nature which has not its proper object and use. As one of the wisest of writers has said, "That passion, from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge,—even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent, but a generous movement of mind. It is, in itself, and in its original, no more than indignation against injury and wickedness" (*Bp. Butler*). Anger is above all righteous when aroused by wrongs done to God. (See also on St. Mark iii. 5.)

16. "An house of merchandise." A graver charge is brought against the profaners of the Temple three years afterwards, when they had not only again established their market in the holy place, but had made that place a "den of thieves" by their dishonesty. "Surely they still make God's House "a House of merchandize," who carry thither anxieties about their secular concerns; and allow thoughts about trade—hopes and fears about the market—to find place in the Sanctuary of God" (*Burton*). "The more men accustom themselves to honour the house and ordinances of God, the more they will grow in inward holiness: and the holier they are in themselves, the more will they reverence the things and places which belong to God" (*Young's Daily Readings*).

17. "The zeal of Thine house" &c. Our Lord's unwonted wrath called to the minds of the disciples these words of the Psalmist, which mean, 'Zeal for the purity and honour of Thy house hath taken possession of my whole soul, consuming me with a burning desire to cleanse it of all that defiles.'

18. "Answered." Not any thing our Lord had actually said, but the claim to authority implied in His acts.

"What sign" &c. The same question was asked of our Lord upon the second occasion of His performing the same act of authority (See St. Matt. xxi. 23.), but was met by our Lord in a different way.

19. "Destroy this temple," &c. Our Lord answers the Jews with a dark mysterious saying, which neither they, nor His disciples themselves, could understand at the time. The answer is in truth the same as that which our Lord gave on other occasions, when He said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (St. Matt. xii. 39. xvi. 4.). The sign of Jonas would only be understood when our Lord

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was A. D. 27.  
 this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up  
 in three days?

21 But He spake ° of the temple of His body.

22 When therefore He was risen from the dead,  
 His disciples remembered that He had said this  
 unto them; and they believed the scripture, and  
 the word which Jesus had said.

° Col. 2. 9.  
 Heb. 8. 2.  
 So 1 Cor. 3.  
 16. & 6. 19.  
 2 Cor. 6. 16.  
 P Luke 24. 8.

rose from the dead; and the raising up of the temple in three days would also receive its explanation then. Our Lord spoke thus darkly because the Jews would not have received the truth, had He told it to them plainly. He uttered His prophecy with a view to its fulfilment, leaving it to be misunderstood and perverted until the time when its real meaning would be clear to those who had eyes to see. That our Lord performed miracles sufficient to convince all who were open to conviction is plain from what follows (23.). This saying of our Lord seems to have produced a great impression, for we find it brought against Him, though in a perverted form, at His trial (St. Matt. xxvi. 61.), and also mockingly brought against Him while He hung on the Cross (St. Matt. xxvii. 40.).

20. "Forty and six years" &c. The Jews were speaking of the Temple then before them, rebuilt and beautified by Herod the Great. Herod at least designed and began the work, but it had been going on for nearly thirty years since his death, and was at the time still unfinished.

21. "The temple of His Body." Because in it dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9. See on i. 14.). St. Paul compares the body to a temple (1 Cor. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21, 22.). It is indeed but a tabernacle in which the spirit abides for a short season here on earth.

22. "They believed the scripture." That is, of course, the Old Testament Scriptures, no others being in existence. But what part of these Scriptures did they believe after the Resurrection, which they did not believe before? Plainly St. John is referring to those passages in which the Resurrection was prophesied, among which Psalm xvi. 10. (explained by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 31.) would be a striking example. St. John does not mean that the disciples disbelieved any of these prophecies before, but that they did not understand them, and that their fulfilment *confirmed their faith*. Observe how St. John writes of himself and St. Peter at the sepulchre. "As yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead" (xx. 9.). Both our Lord's own words concerning the "temple of His Body", and the passages in the Scriptures speaking of the Resurrection, became plain to them after Christ was risen. Doubtless both He Himself would unfold them (See St. Luke xxiv. 27, 45.), and the Holy Ghost, given at Pentecost, would lead them to a right understanding of them (See xiv. 26. xvi. 13.). Our Lord frequently uttered things which could not be understood at the time (as for instance in the great discourse at Capernaum on the Bread of Life in Chapter vi.), but which would be unfolded in due time, and so display His prophetic power.

A. D. 27.

23 ¶ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.

24 But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all *men*,

25 and needed not that any should testify of man: for <sup>a</sup> He knew what was in man.

¶ 1 Sam. 16. 7.  
1 Chr. 28. 9.  
Matt. 9. 4.  
Mark 2. 8.  
ch. 6. 64.  
& 16. 30.  
Acts 1. 24.  
Rev. 2. 23.

## CHAPTER III.

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

**T**HERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

## 23—25. Result of our Lord's visit to Jerusalem.

23. "Many believed." Yet not with all their hearts, as the next verse shows. They were convinced of Christ's divine power, as Simon the sorcerer was of Philip's (Acts viii. 13.), but were not prepared to submit their whole hearts to Him.

"The miracles." The multitude of our Lord's miracles is amazing. We are only told a very few of them as samples of the rest (*See the last verse of this Gospel.*).

24. "Did not commit Himself" &c. That is, 'did not *trust* Himself 'to them.' He did not open all His heart to them because they would not open all theirs to Him. They did not ask Him to depart like the Gadarenes (See on St. Luke viii. 37.), but they did not beseech Him to tarry with them like the Samaritans (iv. 40.). Some among them were passing into a more hopeful state like Nicodemus (See iii. 2.), but they were not yet capable of receiving what Christ had to give.

25. "Needed not" &c. See how he knew Nathanael's heart (i. 47.) and Peter's (St. Matt. xxvi. 34.). He that made the heart, shall he not know it? Verily "the Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19.), and "He knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. xlv. 21.).

## CHAPTER III.

## 1—21. Our Lord's Conversation with Nicodemus.

1. "Nicodemus." Nicodemus is mentioned only by St. John. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin or great Council of the Jews (See on St. Matt. xxvi. 3.). Others of this Council besides Nicodemus believed secretly in Christ but had not courage to confess their belief (See xii. 42.). It seems (from 2.) that Nicodemus was one of those mentioned in the last chapter (ii. 23.) who believed from

23. "In the feast day." The word "day" is not in the original, as shown by its being printed in small type (See on St. John viii. 6.). It would have been better to omit it, since the feast lasted a week, and there is no reason to limit what is related to one day.

2 <sup>a</sup> the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for <sup>b</sup> no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except <sup>c</sup> God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, <sup>d</sup> Except *a man* be born <sup>e</sup> again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

A. D. 27.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 7. 50.

&amp; 19. 39.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 9. 16, 33.

Acts 2. 22.

<sup>c</sup> Acts 10. 38.<sup>d</sup> ch. 1. 13.

Gal. 6. 15.

Titus 3. 5.

James 1. 18.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

1 John 3. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Or, from above.

seeing our Lord's miracles. It is very interesting to mark the gradual growth of faith and of courage in this disciple. Here he comes to Jesus by night through fear. Some time afterwards he is bold enough to speak in our Lord's behalf before the "Chief Priests and Pharisees" (See vii. 50—52.). At the Crucifixion he can shrink back no more, but, doubtless stricken in heart at the divine majesty of that Death, and beholding the fulfilment of the words spoken to him at this first interview with Jesus (See 14.), he openly confesses Christ by joining another once timid disciple, Joseph of Arimathæa, in giving to their Lord an honourable Burial (See on xix. 39.).

2. "Came to Jesus by night" It was spiritual darkness with him, as well as natural, when he came: but he came to the "Light of the world", and light began to dawn upon his soul. By his address we see plainly that he did not yet know Christ as the Messiah. He only saw in Him a "Teacher come from God." Yet he was honestly seeking more light, and behold how bright a flood of light was poured upon him as he listened to Christ's wondrous words! It is surely true of spiritual knowledge that "he that seeketh findeth"; and we see too that God does not despise even the timid seeker. He will not quench the smoking flax (See on St. Matt. xii. 20.).

3. "Jesus answered" &c. The words of Jesus are not a direct answer to the words of Nicodemus, but the word "answer" is very often used in the Gospels in a wider sense to signify any sort of reply, even sometimes to unexpressed thoughts (See St. Luke vii. 40.).

"Except a man be born again," &c. The word "again" in this expression may be translated 'from above' (See *Margin.*), and so to be "born again" seems to be the same as to be "born of God", an expression which St. John often uses (See on 1 St. John iii. 9. iv. 7. v. 1, 4.), for that which is "from above" is "of God." By the "kingdom of God" is certainly here meant the kingdom as existing *here on earth*. This is our Lord's constant use of the expression (See on St. Matt. iii. 2.). Thus by seeing the kingdom of God is not meant (as many think) reaching heaven. On the other hand we must not understand the expression as meaning the mere formal entrance into the visible Church or Kingdom. It rather speaks of an entrance in the truest and fullest sense into the privileges and blessedness of that kingdom, which Christ came to set up on earth, so as to see and comprehend its mysteries and hidden glories. Our Lord then in this

3. "Verily, verily." See on i. 51.

"Except a man." It may be worth while to point out that the word "man" is not in the original, either here or in verse 5. Ignorant persons have some-

times used the English expression as an argument against Infant Baptism, where—as the original word is quite general,—'Except one be born', or 'Whosoever is not born' &c.

## ST. JOHN, III.

A. D. 27.

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

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

• Mark 16. 16. e  
Acts 2. 38.

verse declares plainly the necessity of the new birth in order to a spiritual insight and entrance into His kingdom. Of the nature of this new birth He speaks more fully in the following verses. The words however plainly refer to the ignorance of Nicodemus as to our Lord's true nature and office. They show him the secret of his unworthy notions of Christ. He had not the new birth; therefore he could not see the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

4. "How can a man" &c. We can hardly suppose Nicodemus to ask this question seriously. No doubt he failed to catch our Lord's real meaning, but he could not have imagined that He spoke of a second *natural* birth. His question therefore must be taken as a sort of exaggerated way of expressing his inability to understand Christ's saying. St. Augustine uses the words of Nicodemus to illustrate the truth that there is but "one Baptism", which may not be repeated, saying, "He knew but the one birth which is from Adam and Eve; that which is from God and the Church he knew not yet. He knew but the parents which beget unto death; he knew not yet the parents which beget unto life. Whereas there be two births, he understood one. One is of earth, the other of heaven; one of the flesh, the other of the Spirit; one of mortality, the other of eternity; one of male and female, the other of God and the Church. And both these births are single; neither of them can be repeated. As of the natural birth there can be no repetition, so neither of Baptism." The question of Nicodemus and answer of our Lord concerning the one sacrament should be compared with the question of the Jews and answer of our Lord concerning the other (See on vi. 52, 53.).

5. "Born of water and of the Spirit." Our Lord thus enlarges, and in part explains, His simpler words "born again" (ver. 3.). He declares the outward sign, and the inward Agent, of the new or heavenly birth. That in the mention of Water our Lord speaks of Baptism can hardly be doubted. To understand it otherwise is to explain away the simple sense of the words. The wise and pious Hooker gives this rule:—"I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst." And with regard to the unanimous consent of the primitive Church, the same writer affirms that "Of all the ancients there is not one to be named, that ever did otherwise expound or allege this place than as implying external Baptism." It should be added here that all ancient writers from the very first use the term 'regeneration', or 'new birth', solely of Baptism and its effects, and never in the sense, often given to it in modern days, of 'conversion' or 'renewal.' It is no doubt partly from giving to the word 'regeneration' as used in our Baptismal Service this novel meaning that much of the difficulty and confusion which often surround the subject have arisen. Our Church uses the word in its primitive sense, of the new birth into the family of God's

## ST. JOHN, III.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and A. D. 27.  
 that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

adopted children in Baptism. She finds her Baptismal service on this verse, quoting it in the very opening sentence, which says:—Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin; and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost.”

But it must be asked, Of what water would Nicodemus think when he heard Christ's words? It was the custom of the Jews to baptize proselytes, that is, converts to the Jewish religion (See on St. Matt. ii. 6. xxiii. 15.), and to speak of them as *new-born*. Thus Nicodemus might have thought of this, and perhaps it is to his dulness in not doing so that our Lord refers when He asks, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” (10.). But we can hardly doubt that Nicodemus would at once think of that wonderful man preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, to whose baptism the “Pharisees and lawyers” as a body refused to come (See St. Luke vii. 30.). “When he heard of being born again *of water* for the kingdom of God, “it would have flashed upon the mind of Nicodemus with as much clearness as though Christ had spoken it—Hast thou then forgotten “him who came baptizing in the wilderness—My forerunner? Did “not he testify that you must become new men, if you would enter “the kingdom of heaven, even as you require it of the Gentiles, when “you baptize them as Jews?” (*Stier.*). But St. John the Baptist had expressly declared that while he baptized with water, Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost (See on St. Matt. iii. 11, and St. John i. 33.). What then the Baptist had separated, Christ here unites, *thereby prophetically declaring the true nature of that holy Sacrament which He Himself was about afterwards to ordain*. If it be thought strange that Jesus should speak thus of a Sacrament not yet fully ordained, it is to be noted that while in this discourse we have prophetic words concerning the one Sacrament, in the 6th Chapter we have prophetic words concerning the other (See on vi. 53.). Also our Lord in like manner speaks beforehand under the figure of a fountain of water of the Holy Ghost, “which they that believe on Him should “receive” (vii. 37—39.). The truth is, although Baptism as a Christian Sacrament, administered in the Name of the Holy Trinity, was not yet instituted, yet many in “John's Baptism” openly sealed and confirmed their repentance and obtained remission of sins, and, being thereby brought to Christ, received afterwards the Holy Ghost, and so were fully “born again.” It was such cleansing and renewal, signified in the washing of baptismal water, and wrought by the Spirit of God, which Nicodemus lacked.

It only remains to add that, whereas we have occupied much time with the “Water”, because that needs the most explanation, yet the “Spirit” is infinitely greater, inasmuch as the one is the shadow and the other the substance; the one the outward sign and the other the thing signified; the one the means and the other the grace. We believe, according to the teaching of our Church, that, where Baptism is duly administered, and where man resists not God's grace (as did Simon the sorcerer in Samaria, See Acts viii. 13, 21.), there the inward grace always accompanies the outward means. But we do not asser

- A. D. 27. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born <sup>2</sup> again.
- <sup>2</sup> Or, from above.  
<sup>f</sup> Eccles. 11. 5.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 2. 11. 8 <sup>f</sup> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.
- <sup>s</sup> ch. 6. 52, 60. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, <sup>s</sup> How can these things be?
- 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

that the inward grace can never be given without the outward means, for that would be to limit God's power and mercy (See on Acts x. 47.).

6. "That which is born" &c. That is, the nature we receive from our natural parents is, like their own, fallen, corrupt, sinful; while the nature which is implanted in us by the Spirit of God in our new birth is, like its Author, spiritual and divine. We must take notice that under the term "flesh" here is included the whole natural man, his soul quite as much as his body; and that the "Spirit" does not mean man's spiritual part, for that is part of his corrupt nature—his "flesh", but that divine Gift which is added to man's nature, and is the presence within him of the Spirit of God.

7. "Marvel not." It is thought by some that there was a pause in our Lord's discourse between the last verse and this, during which "Nicodemus kept silence awhile, sunk in thought,—a pause which we "could desire for many of our readers" (*Stier.*). At all events he ceases for a while to argue, and, showing his wonder by his look, silently drinks in the precious teaching vouchsafed him.

8. "The wind" &c. Jesus would say, 'Thou marvellest when I tell thee of the Spirit's hidden work: yet think if there be not like 'marvels in the world of nature.' The *effects* of the wind are readily seen and felt, and yet it is itself invisible, and hidden in its movements. So the *effects* of the new birth and of the Spirit's presence are plain, while the working of that Spirit Itself is a hidden mystery. To question in what manner or at what moment the Spirit's work in our souls began is of less importance than to ask 'Are we bearing the fruits 'of the Spirit now?'

9. "How can these things be?" Nicodemus is still marvelling. But this second question is far humbler than the first. He feels his ignorance, and seeks to be enlightened. Yet it would have been better to have been able to say, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." He is in fault in that he thinks he must understand in order to believe.

10. "Art thou a master of Israel," &c. As an appointed teacher of others Nicodemus ought surely to have known something of these things. The very types of baptism in the Scriptures might have taught him much, or at least have prepared him to receive readily Christ's teaching. Thus the Spirit of God brooding upon the face of the water before the Creation; the Flood wherein Noah and his family were saved by water (See 1 St. Pet. iii. 20, 21.); the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea (See 1 Cor. x. 2.); the cleansing of Naaman

## ST. JOHN, III.

11 <sup>h</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak **A. D. 27.** that We do know, and testify that We have seen; and <sup>i</sup> ye receive not Our witness. <sup>h</sup> Matt. 11. 27.  
ch. 1. 13.  
& 7. 16.  
& 8. 28.  
& 12. 49.  
& 14. 24.  
<sup>i</sup> ver. 32.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? <sup>k</sup> Prov. 30. 4.  
ch. 6. 33,  
38, 51, 62.  
& 16. 28.  
Acts 2. 34.  
1 Cor. 15. 47.  
Eph. 4. 9, 10.

13 And <sup>k</sup> no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.

the Syrian by washing in the Jordan (See 2 Kings v. 14.); these might have prepared a Jewish teacher to accept the truths which Jesus was revealing. But indeed the fault of Nicodemus was the fault of all the Jews. They lacked all spiritual insight into their own Scriptures. They erred, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (St. Matt. xxii. 29.). They read the letter, and not the spirit. Thus were they "blind leaders of the blind" (St. Matt. xv. 14.).

11. "We speak." Some have supposed our Lord to be speaking here in the name of the blessed Trinity. This may be so: but it seems simpler to suppose that by "We" He means "I", according to a form of speech which (though not met with elsewhere in holy Scripture) is familiar to us, and is the usual form in these days with royal persons. By testifying that which He had seen, Christ signifies that the truths He was revealing were such as to Him were as perfectly clear as though seen with the bodily eye,—or perhaps rather that they were among those things which in His eternal unity with the Father He had divinely seen and known as the Father's will (Comp. 32. viii. 26, 28. xv. 15.).

"Ye receive not." 'Ye Jews'—not Nicodemus only, though including him, as addressed to him.

12. "If I have told you" &c. By "earthly things" our Lord means the things He had spoken concerning the new birth, which is a matter belonging to our earthly life, though of heavenly origin. By "heavenly things" He means such higher mysteries of His kingdom and of His nature as He only revealed by degrees, and many of which He saw fit never to reveal at all. Observe how He says even to His chosen Apostles just before His Death, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (xvi. 12.). Much less could one like Nicodemus bear them.

13. "No man hath ascended" &c. That is, so as to "speak" and "testify" what he himself has "seen" (11.), and to reveal to man "heavenly things" (12.). "He alone who had been in heaven, and "was still in heaven, could reveal heavenly truths" (*P. Young.*). We need not understand Christ to say that He Himself had as yet ascended up into heaven, though the words at first sight seem to say so. The meaning is plain. No man had ascended up to heaven so as to learn heavenly things. He only can reveal these who came down from heaven to take to Himself our human nature and to become "Son of man", but who in His Divine nature is still "in Heaven", the eternal Word, Himself God, and "with God" (i. 1.). Yet Jesus says—"the Son of *man* which is in Heaven," calling Himself by His strictly *human* title; and this teaches us that the Divine and Human natures of our

A. D. 27. 14 <sup>1</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so <sup>m</sup> must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but <sup>n</sup> have eternal life.

16 <sup>o</sup> For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Lord are not to be separated, for, from the hour of His Incarnation, "two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the Manhood, were joined together in One Person, never to be divided, "whereof is one Christ" (Art. ii.). Thus, even *in His human nature*, Christ, the "Son of man", the One undivided Christ, was both in heaven and on earth. And thus also now the same undivided Christ is, *in His human nature*, both in heaven and on earth. Yet then His human *Body* (which is only a part of His human nature) was on earth: now it is in heaven.

14. "As Moses lifted up" &c. Christ does not wholly keep back from Nicodemus the "heavenly things", which as yet he was not fitted to understand. In all God's teaching, He reveals to us more than we can understand. His plan is to state to us truths, which, conveying little to the careless, unfold themselves more and more to the earnest and thoughtful believer. Christ has already spoken wonderful "heavenly things" concerning His own nature (in 13.). He now proceeds to declare the very central truth and mystery of the kingdom of heaven, namely Redemption through His own Death. The type of the Brazen Serpent (See Numbers xxi. 6—9.) is so familiar to most that it is not necessary to explain it minutely. No type could more strikingly picture to us that Saviour, of whom it is written that God "made Him "to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21.).

"Lifted up." The usual expression for crucified (See viii. 28. xii. 32, 33.).

15. "Believeth." This answers to the *looking* of the bitten Israelites. Jesus seems to say to us, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the "ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isai. xlv. 22.). "And when He bids us thus look to Him, it is not surely "of any single act, still less is it of any mere passing feeling of the "mind that He speaks. What He means is that our whole lives should "be one continued looking unto Him, one continued act of faith in "that undeserved and complete deliverance, which He wrought for "us upon the Cross. Jesus Christ, lifted up upon the Cross, should "draw our whole hearts to Him" (P. Young.).

16. "For God so loved the world," &c. "Comfortable words" indeed, as our beautiful Communion Service calls them! These are not words to comment upon, but to *feel*. In this glorious verse every word is a sermon. Mark the greatness of the Father's love:—"God "so loved". Mark the breadth of that love:—"God so loved the "world". Mark the pricelessness of the Sacrifice:—"His only-begotten "Son". Mark the freedom of the offer of salvation:—"Whosoever". Mark the condition of salvation:—"Believeth". Mark the peril of

17 <sup>p</sup> For God sent not His Son into the world A.D. 27. to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. P Luke 9. 56. ch. 5. 45. & 8. 15. & 12. 47. 1 John 4. 14.

18 <sup>q</sup> He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. q ch. 5. 24. & 6. 40, 47. & 20. 31.

19 And this is the condemnation, <sup>r</sup> that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. r ch. 1. 4, 9, 10, 11. & 8. 12.

20 For <sup>s</sup> every one that doeth evil hateth the s Job 24. 13, 17. Eph. 5. 13.

unbelief: "Perish". Mark the greatness of the salvation:—"Everlasting Life."

17. "God sent not" &c. God's purpose in sending His Son into the world was wholly love. It is quite true that the *result* of Christ's coming is the condemnation of many (See on 18, and on ix. 39.), but its *purpose* was the salvation of all. "So then, as much as in the "Physician lieth, He is come to heal the sick. That man is his "own destroyer, who will not observe the orders of the Physician" (*St. Augustine.*).

18. "Condemned already." Not so much *God*-condemned for not believing, as *self*-condemned by not believing. And this "already", for, being in a state of condemnation by nature, the unbeliever remains in that state, and escapes not from it (See on 36.). Moreover in one sense the judgment is being evermore pronounced, for to God's eye each one's state is always perfectly clear. "The Lord knoweth them "that are His". "He knoweth the wheat on His own threshing-floor, knoweth the chaff; knoweth the corn, knoweth the tares" (*St. Augustine.*).

"In the name" &c. To believe in the name of any one is an expression signifying simply to believe in that person.

19. "This is the condemnation," &c. That is, This is the ground, or reason, of the condemnation of him who refuses to believe—namely that he has had the offer of the Light, and yet chooses darkness. By "Light" we can hardly doubt that Jesus speaks here, as elsewhere, of Himself—the "Light of the world" (See viii. 12. ix. 5. xii. 46. and compare i. 9.). This beautiful title our Lord adopts in respect of the truth which He came to reveal.

"Because their deeds were evil." Men did not reject Christ and His teaching because their reason is not satisfied, but because their hearts were not changed. Very often unbelief has its root more in the heart than in the head. Many believe not because they do not *wish* to believe. They love sin too well to accept that which would at once require them to forsake sin.

20. "Every one that doeth evil" &c. Not only "doeth", but *loveth* evil,—doeth it as his habit and practice. Such an one dare not come to the Light, for he knows, if he did, his evil would stand out clear in all its hideousness. His deeds would be "reproved",—that is, shown forth in their true character. Observe how St. Paul speaks, surely with the present passage in his mind, "All things that are

A. D. 27. light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be <sup>2</sup>reproved.

<sup>2</sup> Or, discovered.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judæa; and there He tarried with them, <sup>t</sup>and baptized.

<sup>t</sup> ch. 4. 2.

23 ¶ And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to <sup>u</sup>Salim, because there was much water there: <sup>x</sup>and they came, and were baptized.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Sam. 9. 4.  
<sup>x</sup> Matt. 3. 5, 6.

“reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light” (Eph. v. 13.).

21. “He that doeth truth.” A very remarkable expression, showing the close connection between truth and righteousness. We must not say that “truth” is here put for ‘righteousness’, but rather that to ‘do truth’ means to do that righteousness which the truth teaches us to do. Such an one is not afraid of the Light, but, desiring nothing so much as to gain more light and self-knowledge, and to correct and amend whatever is still amiss, comes gladly to the Light that he may become such as God would have him to be.

“Wrought in God.” Wrought in the power of God, and in the conscious presence of God.

With these words does Jesus dismiss His timid disciple. He had come in the darkness to the “true Light.” So far well. But the body may come when the spirit stays behind. Nicodemus had come outwardly. Jesus was preparing him to come inwardly—to come laying bare all his soul before the Light, that in the blaze of that Light he might see—first himself, and then the infinite love of God.

## 22. Jesus baptizing by His disciples.

22. “The land of Judæa.” That is, the country districts. Our Lord was “in Jerusalem at the passover” (ii. 23.) shortly before this, and it is probable the conversation with Nicodemus took place there. So that this departure would only be from Jerusalem the capital city into the surrounding parts of Judæa.

“Baptized.” Not Himself, but by His disciples, as we are expressly told (iv. 2.). But of what sort was this Baptism? We are not told, and therefore we know not, whether any greater grace accompanied this Baptism of Christ than accompanied that of St. John. “There was probably at that time not much difference between the two baptisms, neither being accompanied by the gift of the Spirit, and both of them having for their object to draw disciples to Christ” (P. Young.).

## 23—36. Testimony of St. John the Baptist.

23. “Ænon near to Salim.” The situation of these places is not known, but they were probably in Judæa (See iv. 1—3.).

“Much water.” Literally, ‘many waters,’ probably springs or streams.

## ST. JOHN, III.

24 For <sup>v</sup> John was not yet cast into prison. A. D. 27.

25 Then there arose a question between *some* of <sup>v</sup> John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. Matt. 14. 3.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, <sup>to</sup> whom thou barest witness, behold, the same <sup>to</sup> baptizeth, and all *men* come to Him. ch. 1. 7, 15, 27, 34.

27 John answered and said, <sup>a</sup> A man can <sup>2</sup> receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. a 1 Cor. 4. 7. Heb. 5. 4. James 1. 17.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, <sup>b</sup> I am not the Christ, but <sup>c</sup> that I am sent before Him. b Or, take unto himself. ch. 1. 20, 27. c Mal. 3. 1. Mark 1. 2. Luke 1. 17.

29 <sup>d</sup> He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but <sup>e</sup> the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. d Matt. 22. 2. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Eph. 5. 25, 27. Rev. 21. 9. e Cant. 5. 1.

25. "About purifying." That is, probably, which of the two baptisms, that of John or that of Jesus, was the more effectual in purifying and cleansing from sin. It is possible (as Alford supposes) that the disciples of John, jealous of their master's honour, taught the necessity of his baptism "for the remission of sins" and as a preparation for faith in Christ; while the "Jews," with whom they disputed, may have been some who, knowing of Christ's baptism, urged that John's could not be necessary to prepare men for Christ whom John preached, since Christ Himself was now baptizing. But the actual question in dispute can only be guessed at.

26. "The same baptizeth," &c. Plainly St. John the Baptist's own disciples brought this report. They were jealous of the success of Christ's Baptism (See also iv. 1.), and showed by their language concerning Him how ignorant they were of His true nature and office.

27. "A man can receive" &c. Perhaps this would be more clearly expressed in English if it were, 'A man can *take to himself* nothing.' The Baptist seems to mean, 'I cannot take to myself any greatness or authority beyond what has been given me from Heaven. My place is to be the lowly Fore-runner, and more than that I may not be.' St. John's whole speech is an abasing of himself and exalting of Christ.

29. "He that hath the bride" &c. The Baptist declares the wide difference between Christ and himself by describing Christ as the Bridegroom and himself as only the Bridegroom's friend. Christ is frequently spoken of as the Bridegroom, whose bride is His Church, which He espoused when on earth, and will come to take home at the end. St. John, like a bridegroom's faithful friend and attendant,

24. "John was not yet cast into prison." See Note on St. Matt. iv. 12. This is the only mention by St. John of the Baptist's imprisonment, which took place shortly after this, and ended in his martyrdom.

28. "I said," &c. The Baptist plainly refers to his words as recorded in i. 20, 30.

A. D. 27. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

<sup>f</sup> ver. 13. 31 <sup>f</sup> He that cometh from above <sup>g</sup> is above all:  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 8. 23. <sup>h</sup> he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh  
<sup>g</sup> Matt. 28. 18. of the earth: <sup>i</sup> He that cometh from heaven is  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 1. 15, 27. above all.  
<sup>i</sup> Rom. 9. 5. above all.  
<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 47.

32 And <sup>k</sup> what He hath seen and heard, that He  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 6. 33. testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 15. 47. testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.  
<sup>1</sup> Eph. 1. 21. testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.  
<sup>1</sup> Phil. 2. 9. testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.

33 He that hath received His testimony <sup>1</sup> hath  
<sup>k</sup> ver. 11. set to his seal that God is true.  
<sup>1</sup> ch. 8. 26. set to his seal that God is true.  
<sup>1</sup> & 15. 15. set to his seal that God is true.

34 <sup>m</sup> For He whom God hath sent speaketh the  
<sup>1</sup> Rom. 3. 4. words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit <sup>n</sup> by  
<sup>1</sup> John 5. 10. measure unto Him.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. 7. 16. measure unto Him.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. 1. 16. measure unto Him.

rejoiced in his Lord's voice and in his Lord's honour. When he heard that "all men" flocked to Christ, his pure unselfish "joy" was "fulfilled."

30. "He must increase," &c. That is, in honour and glory and greatness before men. His name must spread; mine must fade away.

31. "He that cometh from above" &c. The Baptist is setting forth with all the strength he can the boundless distance between Christ and himself. Mark his testimony to Christ's Divine nature. He is "above all"—the Most High—and this is twice repeated. Whereas he himself, the Fore-runner, is "of the earth", "earthly", and "speaketh of the earth." That is, he is a mere man, of no heavenly origin like Christ, not able to reveal heavenly mysteries, but, though a prophet, and more than a prophet, only speaking as an earthly messenger, things learnt on earth, things given him to speak as an "earthen vessel."

32. "What He hath seen" &c. The Baptist here says of Christ what Christ has already said of Himself in His conversation with Nicodemus (See on 11.).

"No man receiveth" &c. So the great prophet mourned eight hundred years before, crying, "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isai. liii. 1.). By "no man" St. John means 'scarcely any one', for in the next verse he speaks of some who did receive Christ's testimony. How instructive is the contrast,—"All men come to Him" (26.), and "No man receiveth His testimony"! It is easy to flock to Christ, and join the company of His professed disciples, and yet not to accept simply and fully His Divine teaching and commandments. As many once thronged and pressed around our Lord (See St. Luke viii. 45.), and yet only one touched Him in faith, so many even now "come to Him", yet but few heartily and honestly "receive His testimony."

33. "Hath set to his seal." That is, 'hath set his seal to God's 'truth',—'hath solemnly and distinctly affirmed his belief that God is 'true', inasmuch as he has accepted the words and witness of Him whom "God hath sent," and who "speaketh the words of God" (34.). To refuse and reject Christ's testimony is as much as to say that God is not true, for Christ's words are God's words,—Christ's testimony is God's truth (See viii. 26. xii. 49, 50.).

34. "By measure," That is, in any *limited* measure. To man

## ST. JOHN, IV.

35 ° The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. A. D. 27.

36 P He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

o Matt. 11. 27.  
& 28. 18.  
Luke 10. 22.  
ch. 5. 20, 22.  
& 13. 3.  
& 17. 2.  
Heb. 2. 8.  
P ver. 15, 16.  
Hab. 2. 4.  
ch. 1. 12.  
& 6. 47.  
Rom. 1. 17.  
1 John 5. 10.

### CHAPTER IV.

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

**W**HEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and <sup>a</sup> baptized <sup>a</sup> more disciples than John, ch. 3. 22, 26.

God gives His Spirit by measure, "dividing to every man severally "as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11.). Not so with Christ; for "in Him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9.). God giveth the Spirit in perfect fulness to His beloved Son (See on St. Matt. iii. 16.).

35. "Hath given all things" &c. And therefore, with "all things", the fulness of the Spirit. Again observe how the Baptist's words agree with Christ's own, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father" (St. Matt. xi. 27. and compare St. John xiii. 3.). This bestowal of all things by the Father upon the Son is one of those mysteries belonging to the eternal relations of the Three Persons of the everblessed Trinity to each other, and also to the union of our Lord's Godhead and Manhood, which we feel ourselves too feeble to grasp here on earth. We must accept the "testimony", and hope to know more elsewhere (See however upon St. Matt. xxviii. 18.).

36. "Hath everlasting life." Here, as elsewhere, we find "everlasting life" spoken of as a *present* possession (Compare vi. 47, 54. 1 St. John v. 11, 12.). It is not 'shall have', but "hath." For in truth the spiritual life here is but the first imperfect stage of the heavenly life hereafter. Our "everlasting life" is already begun on earth. "Everlasting life" is spoken of in the same manner as the "kingdom of heaven." Each is present with us here on earth; though each to be purified and perfected hereafter in heaven.

"The wrath of God abideth on him." Mark the word "abideth." There is no need for that wrath to be called forth upon him. He is already by nature under it—a child of wrath—and he only remains so. He escapes not from it, when he might (See on 18.).

Very marvellous is the depth and clearness of this testimony of the Baptist to our Lord. It is hard to believe that after this he could have had any very serious doubts as to Jesus being the true Messiah, though he may, in the loneliness of his prison, have been sorely perplexed, and may have desired some comforting assurance of the truth which he did not really doubt (See on St. Matt. xi. 3.).

### CHAPTER IV.

#### 1—42. Christ at Sychar.

1. "The Pharisees had heard" &c. The success and popularity of

- A. D. 27. 2 (though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples.)  
 3 He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.  
 4 And He must needs go through Samaria.  
 5 Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground<sup>b</sup> that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 33. 19. is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground<sup>b</sup> that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.  
 & 48. 22.  
 Josh. 24. 32.

Christ would, He well knew, stir up the jealous hatred of the Pharisees. This He would not do, both for their sakes, and because His hour was not come. Therefore He left Judæa for Galilee; a great Example of avoiding enmity by every lawful concession.

2. "Jesus Himself baptized not." Yet in the verse before it is said that Jesus baptized. "Jesus baptized, and baptized not. Yes; He baptized, in that it was He that cleansed: He baptized not, for that it was not He that dipped." The earthly minister performed the outward act: the heavenly Master gave the inward blessing. And it is so still. The Baptism of Christ's ministers is Christ's Baptism. Therefore "let a man draw near without fear to the minister who is beneath; for he hath the Master who is above" (*St. Augustine*).

4. "Through Samaria." Which lay between Judæa to the South and Galilee to the North (See *Map*.) In travelling from one to the other the only way to avoid passing through Samaria was to cross the river Jordan twice, travelling along its Eastern bank for the whole length of Samaria (See on St. Matt. x. 5.).

5. "Sychar." The same as the ancient Sichem or Shechem. This was the first place in which Abraham stopped when, at God's call, he came into the land of Canaan. It was here that God promised to give the land to his seed, and here that he built an altar to the Lord (See Gen. xii. 6, 7.). Jacob afterwards came there, and bought a "parcel of a field", on which he too built an altar (Gen. xxxiii. 18—20.). It appears that this field was the special "portion" which Jacob, when dying, "gave to his son Joseph", although in the history of the gift Jacob

3 "He left Judæa," &c. It is a very doubtful question whether this visit to Galilee (See *Note* on i. 43.) is the same as that related by the first three Evangelists immediately after their accounts of the Temptation (See St. Matt. iv. 12. and *Note*. St. Mark i. 14. St. Luke iv. 14.), or whether that journey to Galilee should not be placed still later, namely, between the fifth and sixth chapters of this Gospel. In other words the question is, whether the history to the end of the third or to the end of the fifth chapter of this Gospel is to be put in between the Temptation and the departure to Galilee of the other Gospels. The chief argument turns upon the time when John the Baptist was cast into prison, by which St. Matthew and St. Mark date our Lord's departure into Galilee. It seems probable from the first verse of this chapter that St. John was still baptizing, and therefore not yet imprisoned. If so, then this visit to Galilee was not the same as that referred to by the other Evangelists, but a second earlier and short visit, from which our Lord returned to Jerusalem for the Feast named in v. 1. The events in chapter v. took place at Jerusalem, and in vi. 1. we again find our Lord in Galilee for the third time since His Baptism. He had probably been there for the greater part of the year before the Passover which marks the date of chapter vi. (See vi. 4.): and it is thought that the journey to Galilee named by the other Evangelists immediately after the Temptation was that which began this long sojourn there, taking place soon after the events named in chapter v. Thus the other Evangelists omit from their record the first year of our Lord's public ministry, namely from His Baptism, which took place before this the first of His four Passovers (See on v. 1.) to the journey to Galilee, which followed His second.

## ST. JOHN, IV.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, A. D. 27. being wearied with *His* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink.

8 (For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of

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describes it as a portion which he "took out of the hand of the Amorite" by force (Gen. xlviii. 22.). This may be accounted for by supposing that the Amorites had overrun the district, and seized upon this possession of Jacob, and that he had afterwards recovered it out of their hands. Here too it was that "the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel "brought up out of Egypt" were buried (Josh. xxiv. 32.). Shechem or Sychar lay in the heart of Samaria, between mounts Ebal and Gerizim (See *Map.*), on the latter of which the Samaritans had built a temple in opposition to that at Jerusalem (See 20.).

6. **Jacob's well was there.**" Few spots in all the Holy Land can be so certainly made out as this. The well is there to this day, and being very deep is much sought on account of the coolness of the water. We have no account of the making of this well by Jacob in the Old Testament, but we read of Abraham and Isaac digging wells (See Gen. xxi. 25. xxvi. 18—22.), so that it was the custom in those days.

"**Wearied with His journey.**" Blessed weariness! How near does this seem to bring the Saviour to us! And what force does it give to His loving sympathy with the weary, when He cries, "Come unto Me, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (St. Matt. xi. 28.)!

"**Sat thus.**" That is, 'in His weariness'—'being thus wearied.'

"**The sixth hour.**" That is, noon; the Jews reckoning the hours from six in the morning (See *Note.*).

7. "**A woman of Samaria.**" "Samaria" here means the province, not the city, for this woman belonged to Sychar. "She 'came to draw "water' from the well, little suspecting that before her return to the "city she should draw her first draught of living water out of the Well "of Salvation!" (*Burton.*).

"**Give Me to drink.**" Probably the woman had let down her pitcher and drawn up the water before Jesus spoke to her. Whether He now drank of the water, or in His thirst for this woman's soul forgot His own bodily thirst, we know not.

9. "**How is it**" &c. The woman knew Jesus to be a Jew either by His dress or His language.

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6. "*The sixth hour.*" Some have tried to make out that St. John, writing long after the other Evangelists, and in Asia Minor, used the same mode of reckoning the hours as we do now, that being a method known in the East. But this does not seem correct (See *Note* on xix. 14.), and it is better to suppose St. John to be speaking after the Jewish method.

A. D. 27. me, which am a woman of Samaria? for <sup>c</sup> the Jews  
 c 2 Kings 17. have no dealings with the Samaritans.  
 24.  
 Luke 9. 52,  
 53.  
 Acts 10. 28.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou  
 knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith  
 to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked  
 of Him, and He would have given thee <sup>d</sup> living  
 water.

a Isai. 12. 3.  
 & 44. 3.  
 Jer. 2. 13.  
 Zech. 13. 1.  
 & 14. 8.

11 The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast  
 nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from  
 whence then hast Thou that living water?

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

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

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“The Jews have no dealings” &c. These words are not part of what the woman said, but an explanation put in by the Evangelist to account for her surprise at our Lord’s request. The Jews would hold no familiar intercourse with the Samaritans, nor ask any favour of them (See on St. Matt. x. 5.); and “it may be thought that our Saviour’s request, and gracious manner,—so full of Divine Love and gentleness “unspeakable,—at once opened the heart of this woman” (*Burgon.*), so that she gladly entered into conversation with Him.

10. “The gift of God.” Namely, that great and most blessed gift which I am about to offer thee—the “living water”—“the water that I shall give” (14.). By “living water” is meant water freshly flowing from a spring, a beautiful image of the life-giving purifying Spirit (See vii. 38, 39.). We must not pass by the words, “Thou wouldest have asked.” Without asking there is no receiving. Our Saviour elsewhere tells us that God will “give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him” (St. Luke xi. 13.).

11. “Sir, Thou hast nothing” &c. Like Nicodemus (See iii. 4.), and the Jews at Capernaum (See vi. 52.), the woman of Samaria takes our Lord’s words literally, when they are meant spiritually. Or perhaps, more strictly, she speaks *as if* she took them literally, not understanding them, but with a dim feeling that they may contain some farther meaning.

“The well is deep.” Said to be thirty five yards deep, and to contain below that five yards in depth of pure fresh water.

12. “Art Thou greater” &c. The woman seems to be thinking of our Lord’s words, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink” (10.), and her question seems to mean, ‘Canst Thou give us any greater gift, or any better water, than this which Jacob gave us? Dost Thou make Thyself out to be greater than he?’ Observe this Samaritan woman claims to be sprung from Jacob—“our father Jacob.” The Samaritans were in reality a mixed race, partly Jews and partly Assyrians (See on St. Matt. x. 5.), but they were anxious to claim the rights and privileges of Jews, and ready to boast of their Jewish descent, doubtful though it was.

14 but <sup>e</sup> whosoever drinketh of the water that I <sup>A. D. 27.</sup>  
 shall give him shall never thirst; but the water <sup>e ch. 6. 35,</sup>  
 that I shall give him <sup>f</sup> shall be in him a well of <sup>58.</sup>  
 water springing up into everlasting life. <sup>ch. 7. 38.</sup>

15 <sup>g</sup> The woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me <sup>g See chap-</sup>  
 this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither <sup>6. 34.</sup>  
 to draw. <sup>& 17. 2, 3.</sup>  
<sup>Rom. 6. 23.</sup>  
<sup>1 John 5.</sup>  
<sup>20.</sup>

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and  
 come hither.

14. "The water that I shall give him." This is plainly the gift of the Holy Spirit, for on another occasion when our Lord used similar language, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," the Evangelist adds this explanation,—"But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (vii. 37—39.). This "Water" Christ gives, and yet He says "I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter" (xiv. 16.). It is the gift equally of the Father and of the Son.

"Shall never thirst;" &c. That is, shall never thirst for the unsatisfying draughts of this world's pleasures. But then the drinking of the heavenly water must be a *continued* drinking. One short draught does not satisfy for ever. There must be a constant, daily, resort to the well, and an eager drinking of the water. Yet for this drinking the thirsty have not to take a weary journey, and then to draw the water with labour from a deep well. There is "a well of water springing up" within them. He that seeks his refreshment in this water "shall never thirst", because the moment he needs it the supply is ready. True, some who "have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" (Hebr. vi. 4.), do "fall away", and thirst again for the polluted and poisonous draughts of sinful pleasure. But the defect is not in the water, but in their sinful hearts. The spring of living water fails not, but furnishes abundant strength and refreshment to bring the faithful pilgrim to "everlasting life." This saying—"shall never thirst"—describes that "joy and peace", which are the fruit of the Spirit, and the portion of the Christian (though only in a gradual, and always in a very imperfect, measure) here below.

15. "Sir, give me this water," &c. The woman could not have failed to see that there was *some* deep spiritual meaning in our Lord's words, yet she certainly did not as yet discern that meaning. So her words here, like those of Nicodemus as to the new birth (See on 11, and on iii. 4.), are rather a way of expressing her inability to understand Christ, than a proof that she understood Him to speak of any actual water. It is admirably said, "She does not clearly know what she says or would say: she wavers between the dawning apprehension of the higher meaning, and the clinging of her mind to the lower" (*Stier.*).

16. "Go, call thy husband." Why this sudden command? Probably

A. D. 27.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband :

18 for thou hast had five husbands ; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly.

<sup>b</sup> Luke 7. 16.

& 24. 19.

ch. 6. 14.

& 7. 40.

<sup>i</sup> Judg. 9. 7.

<sup>k</sup> Deut. 12.

5, 11.

<sup>l</sup> Kin. 9. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Chron. 7.

12.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. 1. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Tim. 2. 8.

19 The woman saith unto Him, Sir, <sup>h</sup> I perceive that Thou art a prophet.

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

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, <sup>l</sup> when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

because the time was come for other dealings with this poor woman's conscience. Jesus was speaking to her of the gift of the Holy Ghost. This she fails to understand. And now He leads her round by another road. The first work of the Holy Ghost is to *convince of sin* (See on xvi. 8.). So Jesus suddenly lays His Finger (but oh how tenderly!) upon the sore of her great sin, and gently unfolds it to her. She must feel that, before she can go on to learn other lessons of the Holy Spirit.

18. "Not thy husband." That is, 'not thy lawful husband.' We need not fear to imagine the look and manner of grave yet tender rebuke with which our Lord would speak these words. The practice of divorce had grown very common among the Jews, and although the Samaritans are said to have been more strict, yet it is probable this woman had been divorced more than once. At any rate her conscience was sufficiently instructed to know that she had *now* no right to the honoured name of wife. Surely our Lord here gives us an example of very gentle dealing with one living in sin, tenderness being ever more likely to awake a conscience not desperately hardened than severity.

19. "A Prophet." The first step towards the higher and truer confession she afterwards made, when she said, "Is not this the "Christ?" (29.).

20. "Our fathers" &c. There seems a strange and sudden change of subject here, which has led some to think that the woman wished to turn the conversation away from herself and her former life. But this is most unlikely. If (with Alford) we imagine a short thoughtful pause after the words "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet," we can easily understand the woman gladly seizing the occasion to seek for guidance on a question which had probably troubled her mind,—the great question between the Jew and the Samaritan.

"This mountain." Mount Gerizim, to which she would probably point, and on which the Samaritans had built a rival temple to that at Jerusalem.

21. "Woman, believe Me," &c. Our Lord decides not the question between Jerusalem and Gerizim, though He might have done so, and practically does so in the next verse ; but He seeks now to lead His hearer's thoughts to higher truths. He says not then, 'Believe Me, 'Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship,' but 'Believe Me,

## ST. JOHN, IV.

22 Ye worship <sup>m</sup>ye know not what: we know <sup>A. D. 27.</sup>  
 what we worship: for <sup>n</sup>salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the <sup>m 2 Kings</sup>  
 true worshippers shall worship the Father in <sup>17. 29.</sup> spirit  
 and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to <sup>n Isai. 2. 3.</sup>  
 worship Him. <sup>Luke 24.</sup>  
<sup>47.</sup>

24 <sup>o</sup>God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him <sup>P ch. 1. 17.</sup>  
 must worship *Him* in spirit and in truth. <sup>q 2 Cor. 3.</sup>  
<sup>17.</sup>

‘this local and national religion, which was to prepare mankind for  
 ‘a spiritual and catholic worship, is drawing to an end: very soon it  
 ‘will be made clear that every place is equally acceptable to God, and  
 ‘no one place honoured with His Presence to the shutting out of  
 ‘others.’

“Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem.” That is, in  
 neither of these places *only*. And yet how soon was this saying true in  
 the very letter, the temples themselves of the Jews and the Samaritans  
 being destroyed.

22. “Ye worship” &c. Although the Samaritans in our Lord’s time  
 worshipped the one true God, yet, as they rejected all the Old Testament  
 except the five books of Moses, and had invented a worship of their  
 own, they plainly had very ignorant and imperfect notions of that which  
 they worshipped. The Jews, on the other hand, had a very full know-  
 ledge of God revealed to them in the Scriptures. St. Paul thus writes  
 of them, “To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the  
 “covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and  
 “the promises; whose are the fathers; and of whom as concerning the  
 “flesh Christ came” (Rom. ix. 4, 5.). Observe how our Lord makes  
 Himself as one of His people, when He says, “We know”—meaning  
 ‘We Jews.’ “Salvation” here signifies the whole preparation for, and  
 working out of, the scheme of salvation.

23. “The hour cometh, and now is.” A form of expression signi-  
 fying that the time is very close at hand.

“In spirit and in truth.” What is the sense of this most important  
 expression? It is plain it is not aimed, as some carelessly think, against  
 all external worship and outward rites. To condemn these would be  
 opposed “not only to the practice and experience of the Christian  
 “religion in all ages, but also to the express ordinances of the Gospel  
 “itself” (*Joseph Meade.*). The words seem to mean:—1, *Without any*  
*outward representation* (such as had been the great snare and sin of  
 both Jews and Samaritans in older times), but with a distinct view of  
 the spirituality of all real worship; and 2, *Without types and shadows*  
 (such as those which had hitherto formed the main part of the Jewish  
 worship), but with a clear view of the truth which such types and  
 shadows prefigured. Thus the saying would point 1. against all gross  
 and carnal worship, which was always a breach of God’s plain Command-  
 ment; and 2. against the typical worship of the Jew, which, though  
 appointed by God Himself, was now at an end, being fulfilled in  
 Christ. So far as to the application of the words to the time, place, and  
 occasion, of their utterance. The next verse will lead us to wider  
 thoughts concerning them.

24. “God is a Spirit.” Rather, ‘God is Spirit’,—not one among  
T t

A. D. 27. 36 *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*

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

38 *I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

39 *And many of the Samaritans of that city be-*

'still wants four months to harvest. Lo, I say (but of another harvest, which ye see not), the fields are already ripe for the sickle.' Christ was gazing in Spirit upon the harvest of souls now all but ripe for gathering in. He had been sowing the seed in His conversation with the woman; and lo! instead of four months, a few hours brings the ingathering of the harvest. The whiteness of the ripening corn in the East has often been remarked by travellers.

36. "He that reapeth" &c. That is, in that spiritual harvest of which Christ was speaking, and to labour in which the Apostles were to be sent forth. What are the "wages" the reapers of that harvest will receive? No doubt in part the rejoicing together named at the end of the verse. But also in part the very gathering in of the fruit itself. For what wages so great as saved souls? "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" writes St. Paul—"Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess. ii. 19.).

"That both he that soweth" &c. Christ speaks of Himself as "He that soweth." He is evermore the Sower, and He promises to the reapers of His harvest that they shall rejoice with Him.

38. "I sent you to reap" &c. The very word 'Apostle' means 'one sent forth.' The Apostles were sent forth to reap that which Christ Himself had sown, thus fulfilling the proverb—plainly a common saying at the time—mentioned in the verse before. In the present verse by "Other men" our Lord must surely signify Himself, the expression being quite accounted for by the figure of earthly sowers and earthly reapers which runs all through this passage. To bring in the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament here (as many do) is to confuse the sense of the passage; and it has been justly said that, if these were meant by the "Other men", our Lord should have said 'We', not "ye", "are entered into their labours", for otherwise He leaves Himself out of the work altogether. We may observe that, while it was most true that the Apostles were to reap where Christ had sown, yet were they ever to be scattering fresh seed in their Master's Name; and so the work of every Minister of Christ should be one of mingled sowing and reaping (See on St. Matt. xiii. 18.).

39. "Many of the Samaritans" &c. The harvest is already beginning, though this is only the gathering of the first-fruits. The real ingathering of the Samaritans took place when Philip the Deacon preached in Samaria, and "the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did", and "were baptized, both men and women" (Acts viii.

## ST. JOHN, IV.

believed on Him <sup>2</sup> for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. A. D. 27.  
\* ver. 29.

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

41 And many more believed because of His own word;

42 and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for <sup>a</sup> we have heard *Him* <sup>a</sup> ch. 17. 8.  
<sup>1</sup> John 4. 14. ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

43 ¶ Now after two days He departed thence, and went into Galilee. A. D. 28.  
32nd Year  
of our  
Lord's life.

44 For <sup>b</sup> Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 13. 57.  
Mark 6. 4.  
Luke 4. 24.

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6, 12.), St. Peter and St. John going thither from Jerusalem to lay their hands on the newly-baptized converts (See Acts viii. 14—17.), we may notice how far more ready these Samaritans of Sychar were to believe and to accept the Messiah than the Jews were (Comp. St. Luke xvii. 15, 16.). As the publicans and harlots were to the rest of the Jews, so were the Gentiles (and the Samaritans were in great part Gentile in origin, See on St. Matt. x. 5.) to the Jews. They had not the same stumbling-blocks of pride and prejudice to surmount. They were more candid and teachable.

41. "Because of His own word." There is no record of any miracle performed by our Lord at Sychar, unless indeed we so call His wonderful knowledge of the woman's past life, which is not a miracle in the common sense of the word. The people believed because of His *word*. Thus were they "more noble" (Acts xvii. 11.) than the Jews of Jerusalem, many of whom "believed in His Name, when they "saw the miracles which He did" (ii. 23.). How blessed was this faith which needed no miracle! It is such a faith that God looks for at our hands. We have not miracles, but we have the same "word", which satisfied the people of Sychar, and which made them the first-fruits of that Catholic Church which Christ came to found, and which, though founded among the Jews, was to gather in its embrace all the nations of the earth.

### 43—54. The Healing of the Nobleman's Son.

44. "For Jesus Himself testified," &c. It is difficult to see how this can be a reason for our Lord going into Galilee ("His own country"), unless we accept the view (*Alford's*) that Jesus was seeking quiet and retirement, and would best find it where He was least esteemed. It seems however better (with most ancient interpreters) to understand "Galilee" here as if it were 'the rest of Galilee, passing by Nazareth.' So St. John speaks of "Judæa" (iii. 22.) for the rest of Judæa, as opposed to Jerusalem. This is made more probable by our Lord's own words at Nazareth, in which He speaks of that place as "His own

A. D. 23.

• ch. 2. 23.

&amp; 3. 2.

d Deut. 16.

16.

45 Then when He was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received Him, <sup>c</sup>having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast: <sup>d</sup>for they also went unto the feast.

e ch. 2. 1, 11.

2 Or,

*courtier,*or, *ruler.*

46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, <sup>e</sup>where He made the water wine. And there was a certain <sup>2</sup>nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

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

f 1 Cor. 1. 22.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, <sup>f</sup>Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

“country”, as opposed to other parts of Galilee (See St. Luke iv. 23.). On the present occasion we find our Lord going to Cana (46.), a place North of Nazareth, which He must therefore have avoided. The meaning then would be, that Jesus went into various parts of Galilee, avoiding Nazareth, because He “Himself testified, that a prophet hath “no honour in his own country.” This testimony, it is true, was uttered at a later time than the present, when our Lord visited Nazareth (See St. Luke iv. 14—31. and *Note* on verse 3 of this chapter.), and was rejected by His own countrymen; but St. John does not say our Lord spoke these words now: he only mentions this, Christ’s testimony at a later time, to account for His now visiting Galilee without going to Nazareth, as we should have expected.

45. “The Galilæans received Him.” That is, received Him with honour. Yet this reception was not lasting, else those terrible woes would not have been afterwards uttered against the cities of Galilee (See St. Matt. xi. 20—24.). These Galilæans only received our Lord because of those miracles, which had already so impressed many of the Jews (ii. 23.) and Nicodemus among them (iii. 2.). They had not the simple-minded faith of the Samaritans who believed “because of His “own word” (41.).

46. “A certain nobleman.” In the original language this means ‘a certain royal person’, that is, probably, one belonging to the court of King Herod. It is a guess which has some likelihood in it that this may have been Chuza, Herod’s steward, whose wife Joanna was among the holy women who attended upon our Lord (See St. Luke viii. 3.).

48. “Except ye see signs” &c. Christ often answers rather the state of heart from which words proceed than the very words themselves. Probably in the midst of this nobleman’s real anxiety for his son there was the secret feeling, ‘If He can really cure my son, I will believe in ‘Him.’ But our Lord’s words are not spoken to the nobleman only.

47. “Come down.” As the word ‘up’ is used of going towards a capital city, so ‘down’ is used for going towards a place on the sea-coast (always of course on the lowest level). Capernaum was on the Sea of Galilee (See *Map.*). Cana was probably among the hills, and so on considerably higher ground than Capernaum (See on St. Luke iv. 31.).

49 The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die. A. D. 28.

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

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth.

52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

They are not 'Except thou seest', but "Except ye see." Thus they take in the Jews standing by. "The Jews require a sign" (1 Cor. i. 22.), and Jesus doubtless contrasts them in His mind with those Samaritans for whom His word was enough (41.). Yet in this answer there is mingled blame and encouragement. The nobleman's faith was weak, but Jesus will not quench the "smoking flax" (St. Matt. xii. 20.). So His words, while blaming the weakness of faith, almost imply that He will not refuse to do the miracle.

49. "Sir, come down" &c. How often do trouble and sorrow teach the first lesson of "effectual fervent prayer." The nobleman is scarcely to be blamed for not seeing that our Lord could as easily raise the dead as heal the sick, for even Martha and Mary failed to see this at a later time (See xi. 21. 32.). Yet he thought of no power which could heal at a distance. His only idea of help was in our Lord's actual presence at his son's bed-side. Compare the faith of the Gentile Centurion of the same city with this nobleman. The one said, "Sir, come down ere my child die." The other said, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (St. Matt. viii. 8.).

50. "Go thy way;" &c. "There is here again something to be learned by a comparison of the Lord's dealing with this man and with the Centurion of the other Gospels. Here, being entreated to come, He does not; but sends His healing word. There, being asked to speak that word of healing, He rather proposes Himself to come. For here, as Chrysostom well brings out, a narrow and poor faith is enlarged and deepened; there a strong faith is crowned and rewarded. By not going He increases this nobleman's faith; by offering to go He brings out and honours that Centurion's humility. Nor shall we fail to observe by the difference of His conduct in the two cases how far was our Lord from being an "accepter of persons." He will not come but only send, to the son of this nobleman; He is ready to visit in His own Person the servant of that centurion" (*Abp. Trench.*).

"The man believed" &c. This was the first step towards the fuller belief mentioned afterwards (See 53.). He believed the miracle would take place, but yet He waited for the certainty before his heart was altogether won for Christ.

52. "Yesterday at the seventh hour." It would seem that the distance need not have prevented the nobleman reaching Capernaum the same evening, if the conversation took place at one o'clock in the day (See Note on 6.); but if he had travelled to Cana in the morning,

A. D. 28. 53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

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

## CHAPTER V.

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

Lev. 23. 2.  
Deut. 16. 1.  
ch. 2. 13.

**A**FTER <sup>a</sup>this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

he might well have been unable to reach home that night, as the journey would be one of several hours on foot. Possibly, when once believing that his son would live, he lingered a while with Christ. At any rate he did not reach home till the next day. There is no need to suppose that the servants set out directly the cure took place, or that they had gone far. Probably they did not start to meet their master till the morning.

"The fever left him." It was no *beginning to amend*. He was suddenly well. The fever left him as suddenly as the winds and waves calmed at the Lord's word of power (See on St. Matt. viii. 26.).

53. "Himself believed." "We may hence see that there are degrees of faith, as of other virtues, which have their beginning, their increase, and their perfecting. This man's faith had its beginning, when he asked for healing for his son: its increase, when he believed the Lord's words, "Thy son liveth": lastly it was perfected, when he "received the servants' news" (*The Venerable Bede, quoted by Trench*).

"His whole house." So it was with Cornelius (Acts x. 24.), and so with Lydia (Acts xvi. 15.), and so with the Philippian gaoler (Acts xvi. 34.). One man's faith brings a blessing to many.

54. "The second miracle." Not the second in this same visit to Galilee, but the second great Galilæan miracle, the first being the turning water into wine, also at Cana (See ii. 1—11.), but on a former visit to Galilee. These two miracles are noteworthy, and perhaps specially selected by St. John, as the instruments of confirming—the former the faith of the disciples (see ii. 11.), and the latter the faith of this hitherto unbelieving household. Jesus does not despise a faith built up, or at least established, upon the evidence of miracles, but He loves better still a faith that needs not such evidence (See on 41.).

## CHAPTER V.

## The Miracle at the Pool of Bethesda, and Conversation arising therefrom.

1. "A feast of the Jews." It is impossible to say with any certainty what this feast was. Perhaps on the whole it is best to understand it of the Passover, in which case it would be the second Passover

2 Now there is at Jerusalem <sup>b</sup> by the sheep <sup>A. D. 28.</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew <sup>b</sup> *Neh. 3. 1.*  
*tongue* Bethesda, having five porches. & 12. 39.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,  
of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of  
the water. <sup>2</sup> Or, gate.

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

since our Lord's Baptism, the first being that at which He cast out the  
buyers and sellers from the Temple, as already related by St. John  
(See ii. 13.), the third that named as the time of the miracle of the  
Feeding of the Five Thousand (See vi. 4.), and the fourth, of course,  
that at which our Lord was crucified. His public ministry would,  
according to this reckoning, last rather more than three years, perhaps  
three years and a half, since it is plain that at least some months must  
have passed between our Lord's Baptism and His first Passover.

2. "Bethesda." This word means 'House of mercy.' The pool  
seems to have been within a building, and to have been surrounded  
by a portico divided into five portions, called here "porches," for the  
shelter of the sick people who came there. Some have supposed this  
pool to be the same as that of Siloam (See ix. 7.), partly because there  
appear to be some traces of an ancient portico in the latter, and partly  
because the spring which supplies the pool of Siloam is not constant  
in its flow, but at certain times bubbles up with great force and then  
sinks again. But there is no sufficient reason to consider these two  
names as describing the same pool. Indeed the most careful researches  
would place Bethesda to the North-east of the city, while Siloam is  
a well-known spot, and lies to the South-east (See Map of Jerusalem,  
and also Bible Atlas, published by the Christian Knowledge Society,  
Map xi. Note 5.).

3. "Impotent." That is, 'weak and powerless.' "Halt" means  
'lame.'

4. "For an angel" &c. This verse has from very ancient times  
afforded to Christian writers a beautiful emblem of the blessing of the  
waters of Baptism to the healing of the soul by the descent of the  
Holy Spirit.

"The Church is the true Bethesda, the real 'house of mercy', to  
"which the diseased and helpless sons of men may resort for health.  
"*There* is the saving Fountain, which God has opened for sins and  
"for uncleanness. *There* are the true healing waters;—the sacred wash-  
"ing of Baptism, and the tears of Repentance, which are effectual for

4. "For an angel" &c. This verse, to-  
gether with the last clause of the verse  
before, is not found in some of the  
oldest and best copies of St. John's Gos-  
pel, and it is possible that it was origi-  
nally an explanation written by some  
one in the margin, to describe what was  
generally believed concerning the heal-  
ing merits of the pool. It is marvellous  
how few words there are in the Bible  
about the genuineness of which there  
is any doubt. But it must be allowed  
that it is doubtful whether St. John wrote  
this verse.

A. D. 23. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

c Matt. 9. 6.  
Mark 2. 11.  
Luke 5. 24. 8 Jesus saith unto him, <sup>c</sup> Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

“the healing of all kinds of spiritual maladies, by virtue of the saving Blood of Christ, the one great Sacrifice for sin. And the Angel who descended to trouble the waters, what is he but a type of the Holy Spirit, who broodeth over the water of Baptism, and opens the fountain of tears in the penitent? And no doubt there are special seasons of grace, when the Good Spirit secretly pleads with men,—with the heathen to bring them to Baptism, with backsliding Christians to lead them to repentance” (*Peter Young*).

5. “A certain man was there.” Jesus chose out one only of all that “great multitude,” partly perhaps in compassion for his long sufferings, but chiefly, we can hardly doubt, with a special view to his spiritual state, and the fruit which his healing of body would produce in his soul. For thirty eight years this poor sufferer had patiently waited in hope that God would at last show him mercy. What a lesson that men ought always to hope, and not to faint! And what a rebuke to our restlessness and impatience under little trials! May we not also see in this miracle a pledge that even the hardened sinner need not despair? There is surely healing for the soul, as well as for the body, after many years of infirmity. God be thanked that it is so.

6. “And knew,” Certainly by His divine and supernatural knowledge.

“Wilt thou be made whole?” This question seems to be asked in a tone of gentle compassion, to draw the poor sufferer’s attention to One both willing and able to help him.

7. “Sir, I have no man,” &c. The poor man seems to have for the moment fancied our Lord’s words showed a willingness to help him in reaching the water, and to have answered accordingly, perhaps expecting Him to say, ‘I will stay and assist thee when the moment comes, Truly he “wist not who it was” (13), or he would have cried, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me” whole (St. Matt. viii. 2). “The most helpless in himself, he was, for that reason, nearest to the help of Christ” (*Churton*).

8. “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” Upon the poor sufferer’s utter helplessness, and upon a faith which cannot be supposed to have been more than in its birth, the voice of Omnipotence falls in startling power. As in the healing of the palsied man let down from the roof (See St. Matt. ix. 6.), the command to take up his bed was to give proof of his perfect soundness in the presence of them all.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and <sup>a</sup> on the same day <sup>a</sup> A. D. 28. ch. 9. 14. was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: <sup>e</sup> it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. Ex. 20. 10. Neh. 13. 19. Jer. 17. 21, &c. Matt. 12. 2. Mark 2. 24. & 3. 4. Luke 6. 2. & 13. 14.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, <sup>2</sup> a multitude <sup>2</sup> Or, from the multitude that was. being in *that* place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: <sup>f</sup> sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto <sup>f</sup> thee. Mat. 12. 45. ch. 8. 11.

10. "It is the sabbath day:" &c. The Jews—that is, the chief persons among them—here, as so often (See on ix. 16.), make the charge of breaking the Sabbath a plea for finding fault with our Lord's acts. It is needless to say that their real motive was not zeal for the Sabbath but hatred of Christ.

11. "He that made me whole," &c. The poor man's faith is already fast growing. He is sure that One who could make him whole could not command any thing wrong. His boldness is like that of the man born blind, who argued so well from the miracle performed upon himself that Jesus was of God (See on ix. 30—33.).

13. "Jesus had conveyed Himself away." The original word here means 'glided away,' and suggests the idea that our Lord rendered Himself invisible, as is more plainly told us in other places (See viii. 59. and St. Luke iv. 30.).

14. "In the temple." Whither he had doubtless gone to offer his thanks to God.

"Sin no more," &c. It seems probable from these words that the healed man had been guilty, either of some great sin in early life, or of some long-indulged sinful habit, which Christ's words would at once bring home to his conscience. It is possible that his long and severe affliction had been the direct consequence of his sin, though we cannot say this with any certainty. Indeed we must not forget the danger of rashly assuming that suffering is the fruit of sin. Against this our Lord plainly warns us (See St. Luke xiii. 2.), though in the present case His words seem to imply that there had been special sin. But what must that be which is a "worse thing" than the thirty-eight years of weary suffering? No torment which could be inflicted in this world, but that which is "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is "not quenched." The awful peril of falling back into sin once repented of is fearfully pictured to us by our Lord in His saying concerning

A. D. 28.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath day.

17 But Jesus answered them, <sup>g</sup> My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews <sup>h</sup> sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, <sup>i</sup> making Himself equal with God.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 9. 4.  
& 14. 10.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 7. 19.

<sup>i</sup> ch. 10. 30, 33.  
Phil. 2. 6.

the return of the unclean spirit once gone out of a man (See St. Matt. xii. 43—45.).

15. "Told the Jews." Certainly not in order to gain favour with them by a betrayal of his Benefactor, but hoping (we may rather suppose) to win honour for One who had done so great things for him.

16. "Persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him." Observe this as being said of so early a time in our Lord's ministry (See *Note* on iv. 3.). Truly He was "despised and rejected of men."

17. "My Father worketh" &c. Jesus reasons that "He is no more a breaker of the Sabbath than God is, when He upholds with an energy that knows no pause the work of His creation from hour to hour and from moment to moment" (*Trench.*). Man needs rest, and his Sabbath must be a day of rest. But God needs no rest, and when it is said He rested on the seventh day, it is only of the work of creating that it is said: for God's love works eternally in upholding and in blessing His creation. Thus when a Sabbath is employed in works of mercy, it is employed most nearly as God employs His rest of ceaseless lovingkindness. So Christ says, 'I am only acting as My Father acts in working works of mercy on the Sabbath-day.'

18. "Making Himself equal with God." These perverse Jews see what many learned men have refused to see, namely that in calling Himself Son of God, Jesus makes Himself equal with God. They see that He speaks of Himself as Son of God in a real and true sense, far above that lower sense in which we are adopted to be sons of God. The Son is of the same nature as the Father, and that nature, being God, admits of no higher and lower. That which is God, whether the Father which begets, or the Son which is begotten, is the *Highest*, infinitely above all else, infinitely great and glorious and holy. But we must note that this is true of Christ's *Godhead* only. In His *Manhood* He is inferior to God, "Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, but inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood" (*Athanasian Creed*). St. Augustine states this great doctrine most forcibly thus:—"Concerning the Word I repeat what ye already know; "The Word was God": here is that which is equal to the Father. "But "The word was made flesh": here is that which is inferior to the Father. So the Father is both equal and greater: equal to the Word; greater than the flesh: equal to Him by whom He made us; greater than He who was made for us. This sound Catholic rule,

19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, A. D. 28.  
 Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>k</sup>The Son can do ver. 30.  
 nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father ch. 8. 28.  
 do: for what things soever He doeth, these also & 9. 4.  
 doeth the Son likewise. & 12. 49.  
& 14. 10.

20 For <sup>l</sup>the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth 1 Matt. 3. 17.  
 Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will ch. 3. 35.  
 shew Him greater works than these, that ye may 2 Pet. 1. 17.  
 marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and

“which ye must know, and hold fast, and never let slip, we should apply to the things we understand” [that is, such things as are plainly spoken about our Lord]. “And those things which we may not understand, we should keep to be at some future time, when we shall be able, explained by this rule.”

19. “The Son can do nothing of Himself.” This does not mean ‘The Son is powerless by Himself,’ but ‘The Son cannot in His very nature, and because of His oneness with the Father, act separately from the Father.’ They are One, and their work is one.

“What He seeth the Father do.” The “seeth” here is not spoken of sight as commonly understood, but is a human word used by the Saviour as best shadowing forth that entire unity of nature, by which the mind of the Father was perfectly known to the Son (See on 30. and compare viii. 26—28. xii. 49, 50. xiv. 10.).

“What things soever He doeth,” &c. When our Lord says He Himself does the works which the Father does, He does not mean that He does *like* works, in imitation of the Father, nor that He does *some* of the same works; but He means that *all* which the Father does He does also, at the same time and in the same sense and manner. There is no distinction in their work. It is all one. So it is said of the Word, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (i. 3.). Yet might this be equally said of the Father.

20. “Sheweth.” Answering to the “seeth” above (19.). This showing is not a revealing to the Son of the works *when done*, but a communicating to the Son, through the Oneness of the Godhead, of the eternal will and counsel of the Father. Well does St. Augustine say on this passage, “If there are times when words fail, though the mind is clear; how much more must words fail, when the subject is one the mind cannot grasp.”

“Greater works than these.” That is, greater than these which ye have seen. When it is said that the Father “*will show*” the Son these greater works, it seems as though the words were spoken rather in the sense of an unfolding of these greater works to the world than of an unfolding them to the Son Himself, for the next few verses show that these works were already known to our Lord. Yet we must remember (always applying the rule above given; See on 18.) that some things were hidden from our Lord’s human Nature (See on St. Matt. xxiv. 36.).

21. “The Father raiseth up the dead,” &c. To ‘quicken’ is to

A. D. 28.

quickeneth *them*; <sup>m</sup> even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.

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

23 that all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. <sup>o</sup> He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>p</sup> He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me,

<sup>m</sup> Luke 7.  
14. & 8. 54.  
ch. 11. 25,  
43.  
<sup>n</sup> ver. 27.  
Mat. 11. 27.  
& 28. 18.  
ch. 3. 35.  
& 17. 2.  
Acts 17. 31.  
1 Pet. 4. 5.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 John 2.  
23.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. 3. 16.  
18. & 6. 40,  
47. & 8. 51.  
& 20. 31.

make alive. Resurrection and Judgment are two things belonging, as all would hold, to the Father. They are powers wielded by God alone. Jesus here claims these powers as His own, thus declaring Himself to be God, and One with the Father. These are the "greater works" which the Father will show in due time. Observe how these two works are not only infinitely "greater" than the miracles already worked by Christ, but absolutely the *greatest* works possible. Nay, we may say that they are "a summary of all Divine working. There is absolutely "no work of God which is not either a producing, sustaining, restoring, "Quickening; or a deciding, rejecting, destroying, *Judgment*." "The "two works correspond to omnipotence and omniscience, perfect power "and perfect knowledge" (*Stier*). This quickening—life-giving—power has to do with both the natural and the spiritual life. In this verse both are included. Afterwards Jesus separates them, speaking of the gift of spiritual life first (in 25.), and then of the gift of natural life (in 28.). When our Lord says "The Son quickeneth *whom He will*," He speaks of His power. He is "the Resurrection and the Life" (See on xi. 25.). But He cannot will except what the Father also wills.

22. "The Father judgeth no man." Just as life-giving power, though belonging to the Father, is committed by Him to the Son, so is also Judgment. The Father does not judge the world in His own Person, but through the Son.

23. "That all men should honour" &c. This is one end and object of the giving of "all power" (St. Matt. xxviii. 18.) to the Son. By Him the Father quickens the dead; by Him the Father judges the world; that all men should see that "in this Trinity none is afore, or "after other: none is greater, or less than another: but the whole "Three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal" (*Ath. Creed*). How greatly does this verse condemn the Socinians or Unitarians, who profess to honour the Father, while they dishonour the Son by denying that He is equal to the Father and true God. No man can truly honour the Father except by giving equal honour to the Son.

24. "Verily, verily," &c. Christ begins to unfold more fully what He has said concerning the power of Resurrection and of Judgment committed to Him. Observe, He does not say 'believeth on Me', but "believeth on Him that sent Me," for to believe on the Son without believing on the Father is as impossible as to honour the Father without honouring the Son. Besides to believe on the Father who sent the Son is to believe that He sent Him—to believe on Him as sending the Son—and so is to believe on both the Father who sent and the Son who

hath everlasting life, and shall not come into con- A. D. 28.  
demnation; <sup>a</sup> but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is <sup>a</sup> 1 John 3.  
14.  
coming, and now is, when <sup>r</sup> the dead shall hear the <sup>r</sup> ver. 28.  
Eph. 2. 1, 5.  
& 5. 14.  
Col. 2. 13.  
voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall  
live.

26 For as the Father hath life in Himself; so  
hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; <sup>a</sup> ver. 22.  
Acts 10. 42.  
& 17. 31.

27 and <sup>s</sup> hath given Him authority to execute  
judgment also, <sup>t</sup> because He is the Son of man. <sup>t</sup> Dan. 7. 13,  
14.

is sent. Such a believer, Christ says, already "hath everlasting life." He has already entered even here upon that life which, when perfected, shall be his for ever. For the spiritual life here is but the first imperfect stage of the eternal life hereafter. This verse is well chosen as the Gospel in the Communion of the Sick.

25. "The dead shall hear" &c. By the "dead" is here meant the spiritually dead,—those "dead in trespasses and sins." Thus this verse is a continuation of the last, which speaks of a resurrection to spiritual life. The quickening power of Christ having been spoken of (See 21.), we here find that power shown forth in the *spiritual* resurrection, as a little farther on (See 28, 29.) it is shown forth in the *bodily* resurrection. By "the voice of the Son of God" we should understand not simply our Lord's own voice and words, but those of His ministers who speak in His Name, and of His Gospels which record His sayings. Christ here calls Himself "Son of God," not, as His custom is, "Son of Man." This is doubtless in part because He is here speaking of an act of Divine power.

26. "For as the Father hath life" &c. Life in its fullest sense—uncreated Life, Life which can quicken others and make them live,—this belongs in the eternal nature of things to God alone. It belongs also to Christ as God (See on i. 4.). And yet it is true to say that the Son has eternally received this Life from the Father; not as having ever been without it, but inasmuch as the Father is the supreme Fountain of Life. So too Christ says, "I live by the Father" (vi. 57.). This is the same mysterious truth which is taught in the Nicene Creed, in which Christ is said to be "Begotten of His Father before all worlds."

"And hath given Him authority" &c. As with Life, so with Judgment. This right is so closely bound up with that of creation,—the giving of life carrying with it the right to take account of the life given,—that this too, though shared equally by the Son, yet in its nature flows from the Father, who is the supreme Fountain of right and law and justice and judgment as well as of life (See on 21.). Observe however the very remarkable difference. Christ receives *Life* as Son of God: He receives *Judgment* as Son of Man. The former power He, as it were, shares with the Father. The latter the Father, as it were, leaves wholly with Him. Why? Because He is Son of Man; that is, that we may not have a Judge who "cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15.). We shall be judged by Him who is "not ashamed to call" us "brethren" (Heb. ii. 11.).

A. D. 28. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

<sup>u</sup> Isai. 26. 19. 29 " and shall come forth; <sup>x</sup> they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 15. 52. <sup>1</sup> Thes. 4. 16. have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

<sup>x</sup> Dan. 12. 2. 30 <sup>y</sup> I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I

<sup>Mat.</sup> 25. 32, 33, 46. hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because

<sup>y</sup> ver. 19. <sup>z</sup> I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me.

<sup>z</sup> Mat. 26. 39. <sup>ch.</sup> 4. 34. & 6. 38.

28. "The hour is coming," &c. Compare this verse with 25. That speaks of spiritual resurrection; this of bodily. Therefore our Lord does not say "The hour is coming *and now is*," but only "The hour is coming," for it was not yet at hand. Nor is it now merely "The dead shall hear," but "All that are in the graves shall hear."

29. "And shall come forth;" &c. Surely this bodily resurrection is very clearly foretold by the prophet Daniel, when he says, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2.). The Resurrection of the good is so much more present to the minds of the writers in the New Testament that when we read such glowing descriptions as that of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (1. iv. 15—17.), we are apt to forget that the wicked shall also rise to judgment. St. Paul however declares this most plainly in his speech before Felix, affirming "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15.). It hardly needs to be pointed out how all Scripture supposes an intermediate state, between death and judgment, in which the spirit, apart from the body, awaits, either in joyful hope, or in torturing dread, its final sentence of bliss or woe (See on St. Luke xvi. 23.).

30. "I can of Mine own self" &c. This is a repetition of what Christ had already declared (See 19.); only there He spoke with regard to the one act which the Jews found fault with; here He speaks with regard to the mighty power of Resurrection and of Judgment which He has just claimed as belonging to Himself. Christ's meaning is that in the exercise of these great powers He can do nothing apart from, and therefore nothing contrary to, the Father. "His working and His judgment all spring from his deep unity of will and of being with the Father" (Alford.).

"As I hear, I judge." The hearing in this verse is, like the seeing before (in 19.), not literal actual hearing, but a word imperfectly expressing (as all human language must imperfectly express) the manner in which the Mind of the Father is, through eternal unity of nature, perfectly made known to the Son. By judgment here our Lord seems to mean not only the great eternal Judgment of which He has just spoken, but also every declaration of the Divine will and of Divine truth which He revealed when on earth. "For judgment" was He already "come into this world" (ix. 39.), and many of His sayings, both of approval and of condemnation, were but a forestalling of the final sentence.

"I seek not Mine own will," &c. Christ, as Man, had a separate

31 <sup>a</sup> If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. A. D. 28.

32 <sup>b</sup> There is Another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true. <sup>a</sup> See chap. 8. 14.  
Rev. 3. 14.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt. 3. 17.  
& 17. 5.  
ch. 8. 18.  
1 John 5. 6, 7, 9.

33 Ye sent unto John, <sup>c</sup> and he bare witness unto the truth. <sup>c</sup> ch. 1. 15,  
19, 27, 32.

34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. <sup>d</sup> 2 Pet. 1. 19.

35 He was a burning and <sup>d</sup> a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. <sup>e</sup> See Matt. 13. 20.  
& 21. 26.  
Mark 6. 20.

36 But <sup>f</sup> I have greater witness than *that* of John: for <sup>g</sup> the works which the Father hath given Me to <sup>f</sup> 1 John 5. 9.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 3. 2.  
& 10. 25.  
& 15. 24.

human will, yet never one contrary to the will of God. This is plainly shown in His prayer in the Garden, "Not My will, but Thine be done" (See on St. Matt. xxvi. 39.). Thus "I seek not Mine own will" means, not 'I seek not to *indulge* Mine own will', but rather, 'I seek not to *have* a will of My own; I sink and lose My human will in the Divine.'

31. "If I bear witness" &c. Our Lord is passing to a slightly different subject. Having laid claim to so great powers, He desires not to rest His claim on His own word alone, for no one is accepted as a trustworthy witness in favour of himself, but to bring forward other witnesses. Of course if our Lord had no other witness than His own word, that would be as true as if confirmed by a hundred witnesses. What He means is, 'If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not valid,—is not such as will be accepted as true.' This was actually the case, for afterwards when Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world," we read, "The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true" (viii. 13. Compare also our Lord's answer in 14.).

32. "There is Another" &c. This certainly means the Father, as our Lord afterwards more expressly declares in 37.

33, 34. "Ye sent unto John," &c. Our Lord would say, 'Ye have a witness too concerning Me, such as ye can well understand, for ye yourselves appealed to John, who told you the truth. I do not indeed rest My claims on any human witness, for I have higher, but I remind you of what John told you, that ye may see that I am only claiming to be what he said of Me, and ye once thought much of him.'

35. "He was a burning" &c. Though shining, like the moon, with reflected light, and paling away when brought into the living Light of the Sun of righteousness. The words in the original are, 'He was the lantern, set on fire and shining', and St. Augustine refers to the words "I have ordained a lantern for Mine Anointed"—or 'for My Christ'—(Ps. cxxxii. 18.) as prophetic of the Baptist.

36. "The works" &c. Our Lord, having spoken of St. John the Baptist's witness for the sake of His hearers, who had once been willing to listen to him, now turns again to the witness of the Father, and to the ways in which that witness was borne. First it was borne by Christ's own works. These plainly showed to all who were not wilfully blind that the Father had sent Him and was with Him. "The works that

finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me.

37 And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.

38 And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.

40 And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men.

A. D. 28.  
<sup>h</sup> Matt. 3. 17.  
 & 17. 5.  
 ch. 6. 27.  
 & 8. 18.  
<sup>i</sup> Deut. 4. 12.  
 ch. 1. 18.  
 1 Tim. 1. 17.  
 1 John 4. 12.  
<sup>k</sup> ver. 46.  
 Isai. 8. 20.  
 & 34. 16.  
 Luke 16. 29.  
 Acts 17. 11.  
<sup>l</sup> Deut. 18.  
 15. 18.  
 Luke 24. 27.  
 ch. 1. 45.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. 1. 11.  
 & 3. 19.  
<sup>n</sup> ver. 34.  
 1 Thess. 2. 6.

“I do in My Father’s Name, they bear witness of Me”, our Lord says on another occasion (x. 25.). By these works Nicodemus was convinced, for “no man”, he said, “can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him” (iii. 2.).

37. “And the Father Himself,” &c. That is, ‘Not only through My works, but of Himself, and in more direct ways, has the Father borne witness to Me.’ Our Lord may refer to the Father’s Voice heard at His Baptism (—The Transfiguration was after this—), but He also certainly refers to the witness borne by the Father in holy Scripture, for the words “Search the scriptures” (39.) seem closely joined to this verse. The connection seems to be this: ‘The Father has Himself borne witness of Me. Now you have not seen and heard Him outwardly—He has not spoken to you face to face: nor again have you the inward witness of His word abiding in you, as is proved by your not believing Me. Yet you have His witness in your hands, if you are not too blind to see it, for those very Scriptures, in which you think you can find eternal life, are full of His witness to Me.’ Assuredly, if the Jews could not find Christ in the Scriptures, they could not find “eternal life.” If the Scriptures (that is, of course, the Scriptures of the Old Testament) testified of Christ, how mightily does Christ here testify of them!

39. “Search.” Our Lord does not say ‘Read’ but “Search”, for the Scriptures are a mine, in which many precious jewels lie far below the surface. It may be named that the word translated “Search” may be quite as correctly translated ‘Ye search’, and many so understand it.

40. “And ye will not come to Me,” &c. The meaning seems to be this: ‘You think you will find eternal life in the Scriptures, and yet, though those Scriptures testify of Me, you will not come to Me for that life, which I alone can give you.’ Surely these words may warn us that it is very possible to have an intimate acquaintance with the Bible, its truths and its doctrines, and yet to be personally a stranger to Him whom that Bible everywhere sets forth.

41. “I receive not honour” &c. Before it was “testimony” (34); now it is “honour”,—a wider word, which takes in all distinction and exaltation which man can bestow on man. This our Lord neither sought, nor would accept. He sought only the will of His Father; He accepted only that honour which would also honour His Father.

## ST. JOHN, V.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of A. D. 28.  
God in you.

43 I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 ° How can ye believe, which receive honour one ° ch. 12. 43.  
of another, and seek not p the honour that cometh p Rom. 2. 29.  
from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the  
Father: q there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, q Rom. 2. 12.  
in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have  
believed Me: r for he wrote of Me.

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

r Gen. 3. 15.  
& 12. 3. &  
18. 18. & 22.  
18. & 49. 10.  
Deut. 18.  
15, 18.  
ch. 1. 45.  
Acts 26. 22.

## CHAPTER VI.

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

42. "But I know you," &c. Christ sets the Jews in strong contrast with Himself, revealing to them the secret of their want of faith in Him. He knew them by His Divine insight, and saw their hearts empty of the love of God, and full of the love of self. His Heart was full of the love of the Father, and empty of the love of self.

43. "If another shall come" &c. Our Lord doubtless speaks of those "false Christs and false prophets" (St. Matt. xxiv. 24.), who should deceive so many; and perhaps also of the Antichrist who was to come (1 St. John iv. 3.).

44. "How can ye believe," &c. The love of human praise is fatal to a living faith. For the one seeks a visible earthly reward, the other an invisible and heavenly.

45. "Do not think" &c. Christ came not to judge, but to save the world. He would say, 'Do not think I speak in a spirit of anger or of vengeance. I have no desire to be your accuser. You have your accuser nevertheless, even Moses.'

46. "He wrote of Me." Notably in that prophecy in which he said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken" (Deut. xviii. 15.). But no less truly in his accounts of the types and ordinances which foreshadowed Christ, such as the passing of the Red Sea, the Brazen Serpent, the Manna, the smitten Rock, the Paschal Lamb.

47. "If ye believe not" &c. The Jews were more likely to believe Moses' writings than Christ's words, partly because the written word would carry more weight with them than the spoken, and partly because

A. D. 29.  
33rd Year  
of our  
Lord's life.

**A**FTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 <sup>a</sup> And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 23.  
5, 7.  
Deut. 16. 1.  
ch. 2. 13.  
& 5. 1.

they professed to believe Moses, but did not believe Christ. Those who reject or neglect the light and the evidence God has given them will not be likely to learn new truths or advance to higher knowledge.

## CHAPTER VI.

### 1—13. The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

St. Matt. xiv. 13—21. St. Mark vi. 30—44. St. Luke ix. 10—17.

This (as has been observed on St. Matthew) is the only Miracle related by all four Evangelists. It is therefore one of extreme importance. Nor can we doubt that this importance arises from its bearing on Sacramental doctrine, or, more strictly, from its close connection with the wonderful discourse upon the Bread of Life, which follows in the latter part of this chapter.

1. "*The sea of Tiberias.*" Tiberias being a Roman, not a Jewish name, the lake would probably be best known by this name to Gentile readers (See Introduction to this Gospel.). Tiberias was a town on the Western shore of the lake towards its southern end (See Map.).

2. "*Followed Him.*" Christ and His Apostles went in a boat, while the people (as we learn from the other Gospels) went on foot round the head of the lake.

3. "*A mountain.*" Probably a hill, or rising ground, not far from the shore, where He awaited the arrival of the multitudes whom He already saw approaching. He had leisure neither to eat nor to rest. Instead of eating Himself, He fed the hungry: instead of resting Himself, He gave rest to the weary and heavy-laden. How lovely a Pattern of tenderness and unselfishness and self-sacrifice for others!

4. "*The passover,*" &c. The third of our Lord's last four Passovers (See on v. 1.), and thus the close of the second year of His public

1. "*After these things.*" This is not to be understood as meaning '*Immediately*' after, but simply at another and a later time. It seems probable that a whole year is passed over between chapters v. and vi. (See on v. 1. and *Note* on iv. 3.). Our Lord was at Jerusalem during the events recorded in chapter v. We now find Him at once in Galilee. It would appear that after the visit to Jerusalem recorded in chapter v. our Lord, hearing of the imprisonment of St. John the Baptist (See St. Matt. iv. 12.), again went

into Galilee, where took place the events recorded by St. Matthew up to the end of his chapter xiii. He then, having heard of the death of St. John the Baptist, and longing for retirement in His grief, as well as wishing to take the Apostles, who had just returned from their first short missionary tour, apart into a quiet place for a little time (Compare St. Matt. xiv. 13. with St. Luke ix. 10.), crossed the Sea of Galilee as we read in this place.

## ST. JOHN, VI.

5 When Jesus then lifted up *His* eyes, and saw A. D. 29. a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do.

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ministry. Observe that St. John explains for his Gentile readers that the Passover was "a feast of the Jews." But why is it mentioned here at all? It has been thought by many that this verse is put in to account for the number of people assembled at Capernaum and ready to start in large companies for the feast at Jerusalem. It is quite true that the approach of the Passover might account for large numbers of persons gathering in various cities before starting for Jerusalem. But if we consider St. John's object in recording the following miracle, namely to bring in the discourse concerning the "Bread of Life", we may well suppose that his mention of the Passover was to connect that discourse, as well as the miracle out of which it arose, with the great event which took place at the next Passover, just one year afterwards, when so new and bright a light was thrown upon the dark and mysterious words of the present chapter concerning eating and drinking Christ's Flesh and Blood. That this whole chapter is to be read with a reference to the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we cannot doubt. In that Sacrament "He who is the true Bread of Life from heaven is ever "distributing Himself to the hungry and weary multitudes who are in "this desert place—the wilderness of this world, and are going up to "the heavenly Jerusalem to celebrate an everlasting festival" (*Wordsworth.*).

5. "He saith unto Philip." We need not understand this as said when our Lord first saw the multitudes. He had been healing and teaching them for some time first, and doubtless during this time the crowd had been increasing. The real meaning seems to be, 'When 'Jesus saw how great a multitude was come, He saith unto Philip'. But the Apostles had, as we gather from St. Matthew, first spoken to Him of the difficulty of finding food, and then He turned to Philip with the question here recorded (See latter part of *Note* on St. Matt. xiv. 15.). Some however suppose that this conversation took place at the very first, as soon as the multitude approached, and that then our Lord left the subject unfinished, and proceeded to His work of healing and teaching, the Apostles at a later hour coming to Him to request Him to send the people away.

6. "To prove him." That is, 'to try him.' Our Lord would try Philip's faith, not to satisfy Himself concerning it, for He knew what was in man, but to show Philip his own short-coming. Philip's answer shows that his faith was as yet but dim; and indeed our Lord had occasion after this to reprove the dimness of Philip's faith, when He

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5. "*Philip.*" Some have ventured to say that our Lord questioned Philip because he would be familiar with the country, since he was of Bethsaida, and this miracle was near Bethsaida. But there were two Bethsaidas, and Philip doubtless belonged to the better known one on the Western shore of the lake near Capernaum, the scene of the miracle being a small village to the North East of the lake (See on St. Luke ix. 10.).

A. D. 29.

b See Num.  
11. 21, 22.

7 Philip answered Him, <sup>b</sup>Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: <sup>c</sup>but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the

said, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" (xiv. 9.).

7. "Two hundred pennyworth" &c. St. Mark records this answer, though without giving the name of the speaker (See on St. Mark vi. 37.). It is strange to find that same Philip who bore such true witness to Christ when he first saw Him (See i. 45.) now so slow in discerning His power.

9. "What are they among so many?" Nothing—to the eye of sense: enough and more than enough—to the eye of faith. Is not a like question sometimes asked by the unbeliever with regard to the simple elements by which the Saviour dispenses to so many His Sacramental blessing? 'What are they—the consecrated bread and wine—to feed the hungry multitudes?' Christ answers not; but blesses, and breaks, and feeds.

10. "Make the men sit down." It must have been at this point that the Apostles began to see what Jesus was about to do. There was no visible preparation for the feast, yet they at once begin to prepare for it, possibly also leading the multitude, as they ranged them in order, to expect some display of miraculous power.

"Much grass." It being the early Spring, for the Passover was nigh (4.).

"The men sat down." It is remarkable that the word here translated "men" means '*men*' in the strict sense, as opposed to women and children, and thus confirms St. Matthew's account, which expressly gives the number as five thousand "besides women and children." Probably the women and children would not be many, women in the East appearing but little in public, and, as on this occasion, sitting apart from the men. Besides, if the multitude was composed in a great measure of those assembled at Capernaum in order to travel together to Jerusalem for the Passover, this would account for the great majority being men, as they alone were obliged to attend the Feasts.

11. "When He had given thanks." That this act was a very marked one is plain, for not only is it recorded in all four Gospels, but St. John again refers to it farther on as though it had been a very noticeable feature in the miracle (See 23.). Probably our Lord performed this act of blessing and thanksgiving very solemnly, and after calling the attention of all present to His act. We cannot help remem-

## ST. JOHN, VI.

disciples to them that were set down; and likewise A. D. 29.  
of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

14 ¶ Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth <sup>d</sup> that prophet that should come into the world.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. 49. 10.  
Deut. 18.  
15, 18.  
Matt. 11. 3.  
ch. 1. 21.  
& 4. 19, 25.  
& 7. 40.

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bering that in the institution of the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper Jesus took the bread and the cup into His Hands and gave thanks, before distributing them to His disciples.

“The disciples to them that were set down.” Jesus uses a human ministry. They distribute; yet the gift is not theirs but His. Doubtless Judas Iscariot took part in this wondrous service. So may evil and faithless ministers dispense Christ's gifts now. Yet “neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men” (Art. xxvi.).

“As much as they would.” “Of that multitude we may fitly say, that in them the promise of the Saviour, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (St. Matt. vi. 33.), found a practical fulfilment. They had come taking no thought, for those days at least, of what they should eat or what they should drink, only anxious to hear the word of life, only seeking the kingdom of Heaven; and now the meaner things, according to the word of promise, were added unto them” (Abp. Trench.).

12. “Gather up” &c. Thus is all waste of His bountiful gifts condemned by the Divine Giver.

13. “Twelve baskets.” One for each Apostle. These baskets, as the original word implies, were of a large size (but see on St. Matt. xv. 37.), being used for carrying burdens in on the back. There is no need to suppose that the Apostles went to the scene of this miracle provided with these baskets. They might easily have borrowed them from some of the people.

### 14, 15. The effect of the Miracle.

14. “This is of a truth” &c. By “that prophet” the people plainly meant the Prophet of whom Moses spoke as to be raised up among them like unto himself (See on i. 21. and St. Matt. xvi. 14.). No doubt their conviction that Jesus was that Prophet arose from the resemblance of the miracle they had witnessed to the feeding of the Israelites with manna in the desert (See on 31.).

A. D. 29. 15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.

16 ¶ And when even was *now* come, His disciples went down unto the sea,

17 and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

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

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

20 But He saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

21 Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

15. "To make Him a king." When even the Apostles themselves seem to the last to have looked for some temporal greatness in their Messiah (See Acts i. 6.), it is not surprising that the common people thought of a temporal kingdom, and wished to make Him their King. But He received not honour from men. Having sent the disciples away by sea, and dismissed the people, He withdrew into the mountains alone to pray.

### 16—21. The Walking on the Sea.

St. Matt. xiv. 22—36. St. Mark vi. 45—56.

17. "It was now dark," &c. Our Lord was training His disciples to higher and higher degrees of faith. In a former storm He was with them in the ship, so that they could turn to Him at any moment (See St. Matt. viii. 23—26.). Now He leaves them seemingly in great peril alone. "He will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of His bodily presence: . . . this time He puts them forth into the danger alone, "even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest, "that they may find their own wings, and learn to use them" (*Trench.*). Observe Jesus "*constrained*" (St. Mark vi. 45.) the disciples to go in the boat. It was *His* doing, not their own. So when troubles and trials beset Christ's servants, and it is dark around them, they must not think that He has forsaken them, or is far away. Perhaps He has sent His servants into the trouble, as He sent His disciples into the storm, to teach them that, even in the darkest dreadest hour, He is near to save.

21. "Immediately the ship" &c. This seems to be another miracle, not mentioned by the other Evangelists. Is it not thus with many in the voyage of life? They seem to make little progress; they are yet far

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which A. D. 29. stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto His disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with His disciples into the boat, but *that* His disciples were gone away alone;

23 (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)

24 when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 ¶ And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?

from the point they aim at. But if Christ comes and finds them toiling onward, He will do the rest, and take them immediately to the land whither they are going.

#### 22—24. The people follow Jesus to Capernaum.

22. "The day following," &c. It would seem that a considerable number of those who had been sent away the evening before, having probably found shelter for the night in the neighbouring villages, assembled again next morning, hoping to find Jesus. They had seen Him retire into the mountain, and they had seen the disciples set off in the only boat which was there at the time. But He was nowhere to be found.

23. "Howbeit there came" &c. St. John mentions this to account for there being boats there in which the people could cross the lake to Capernaum. The only boat there the evening before was that in which the Apostles had embarked. But during the night, or very early in the morning, some other boats belonging to Tiberias (which was on the West side of the lake, near Capernaum,) had put in near to the scene of the miracle. Some suppose that, being out on the lake, these boats may have taken refuge from the storm, which would prevent their reaching Tiberias; but they may have come over on purpose to bring some of the people back.

24. "Capernaum." Where our Lord chiefly resided, when in Galilee (See on St. Matt. iv. 13.).

#### 25—71. Great Discourse upon the Bread of Life.

25. "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?" There is no reason to suppose they suspected a miracle, though they felt our Lord's presence at Capernaum to be mysterious. "They little thought that they had to do with Him of whom it had been written, "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known" (Ps. lxxvii. 19.)" (*Burton*). Observe, the following discourse took place in the synagogue at Capernaum (See 59.),

A. D. 29. 26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

<sup>2</sup> Or, *Work not.* 27 <sup>2</sup> Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed.

<sup>2</sup> ver. 54. ch. 4. 14. <sup>1</sup> Matt. 3. 17. & 17. 5. Mark 1. 11. & 9. 7. Luke 3. 22. & 9. 35. ch. 1. 33. & 5. 37. & 8. 18. Acts 2. 22. 2 Pet. 1. 17. 28 Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, <sup>2</sup> This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.

26. "Ye seek Me, not" &c. Our Lord, instead of answering their question, lays bare their inmost hearts, showing them how plainly He read their secret motives, and knew the real reason of their desire to follow Him. In the great miracle they had beheld, they had but seen a pledge of earthly plenty and prosperity, and no deeper or truer thoughts of its meaning entered their carnal minds. When they took so low a view of the one miracle, which they had witnessed, they did not deserve to be told of the other, which they had not witnessed.

27. "Labour not" &c. Our Lord now begins to draw out gradually and step by step the great truths and lessons intended by the miracle of the Feeding of the five thousand. He turns this great miracle into a great parable. By the command, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth", no one would be silly enough to understand our Lord to forbid literally working for our daily bread. St. Paul gives the command "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10.). The real sense is, 'Seek not so anxiously for the meat that perisheth'; the words having nearly the same meaning as "Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat" (St. Matt. vi. 25.).

"That meat which endureth" &c. As with the mention of "living water" to the Woman of Samaria, so now with the mention of the enduring meat, our Lord would awaken in His hearers a desire for fuller knowledge of His meaning. That meaning He gradually unfolds. At present He explains not this meat, except by saying that it is His own gift.

"Sealed." That is, marked as His own, displaying Him to the world as that beloved Son in whom He is well pleased, and to whom He hath given "all power in heaven and in earth."

28. "What shall we do," &c. The people saw that our Lord spoke of some spiritual blessing, and bade them "labour" to obtain it, and their question is drawn from this word—"labour". It is as though they asked, 'What dost Thou mean by "labour"? What works dost Thou bid us do?'

29. "This is the work of God." "The work of God" here, as in the last verse, means, not work done *by* God, but work done *for* God—the work which God requires.

"That ye believe" &c. The people had asked about "works."

## ST. JOHN, VI.

30 They said therefore unto Him, <sup>h</sup>What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost Thou work? A. D. 29.  
Matt. 12. 33.  
& 16. 1.  
Mark 8. 11.  
1 Cor. 1. 22.

31 <sup>i</sup>Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, **He gave them bread from heaven to eat.** Ex. 16. 15.  
Num. 11. 7.  
Neh. 9. 15.  
1 Cor. 10. 3.  
Ps. 78. 24.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Jesus tells them but of one work; and that not a work such as they thought of, although containing in itself indeed all works, as the bud contains in itself the flower and fruit. For faith is the root and germ of all holiness. Mark how this answer resembles that of St. Paul to the gaoler at Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31.). Belief is one end of the chain, salvation the other. There are other links between. Yet the first link must be grasped before we can touch any other. Doubtless these Jews, who were zealous in works, needed to be drawn away from their trust in legal obedience to a living faith. Some there were who needed to learn that faith without works is dead. So to the rich young man who asked, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?", Christ answered, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (St. Matt. xix. 16, 17.).

30. "What sign shewest Thou" &c. This verse must be taken with the next. Christ has claimed faith in Himself as the one great work of God. The Jews are offended at this claim, and demand some sign sufficient to establish it, rejecting the late miracle of the feeding of the five thousand as being a small thing in comparison with the miraculous feeding of the Israelites, numbering more than a hundred times as many, for forty years in the wilderness. They would thus set up Moses as being greater than Christ.

32. "Moses gave you not" &c. Our Lord is here drawing a contrast between Moses and God, the force lying upon the words "Moses" and "My Father." There is also a contrast between the manna and the "true Bread", but it is the Giver rather than the gift which stands out most strongly in this verse. Christ would teach His hearers that even the bread their fathers ate in the desert, which was not the "true Bread", was not given by Moses, but by God Himself. Mark how our Lord, according to His frequent custom, answers not the question asking for a sign, except by leading the questioners to higher thoughts concerning Himself; for what were all miracles and signs to the one great miracle and sign—Christ Himself, "God manifest in the flesh"? The manna in the desert was but a poor type of Him.

33. "He which cometh." The word "He" is not expressed in the Greek, which would be better translated 'that which cometh.' It seems from the next verse, as well as from our Lord's explanation

- A. D. 29. 34 <sup>1</sup>Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.
- <sup>1</sup> See chap. 4. 15.  
<sup>m</sup> ver. 48, 58.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. 4. 14.  
& 7. 37.
- 35 And Jesus said unto them, <sup>m</sup>I am the bread of life: <sup>n</sup>he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.
- <sup>o</sup> ver. 26, 64. 36 <sup>o</sup>But I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not.
- <sup>p</sup> ver. 45. 37 <sup>p</sup>All that the Father giveth Me shall come

in the verse after, that the Jews did not yet understand that He was speaking of a Person.

34. "Lord, evermore give" &c. This petition reminds us at once of that of the Samaritan woman, "Sir, give me this water" &c. (iv. 15.). The Jews saw that Christ spoke of some great blessing under the figure of the Bread, and, though they probably had even less faith than the woman of Samaria when she asked for the water, yet there is no reason to suppose that they asked in mockery. They possibly thought our Lord was speaking of some miraculous gift He was about to bestow upon them. But may not this request, however ignorant, teach us to make a like request not ignorantly; and, when we know who is the Bread of Life, to pray concerning this spiritual Food, as we do of the bodily, "Give us this day our daily bread"? We may notice that it is the same word in the Greek which is translated "Lord" here, and "Sir" in the request of the woman of Samaria. It is simply a term of respect.

35. "I am the bread of life." Our Lord now first distinctly declares that it is of Himself that He is speaking. He is the Bread of life—the living, and life-giving, Bread. The manna in the desert, no less than the bread with which the five thousand had been fed, was a type of Himself. How marvellous is the truth which thus slowly unfolds itself!

"He that cometh to Me" &c. "Cometh" and "believeth" in this verse are but two parts of the same act,—the coming the outward, the believing the inward. By never hungering and thirsting is signified the complete supply of all their spiritual needs (See on the like promise in iv. 14.). A living faith, bringing us to Christ and uniting us with Him, will find all it wants in Him.

36. "But I said unto you," &c. Our Lord may very possibly refer to some saying not recorded (as in x. 26.); or He may be referring to His saying that though they had not seen the Father, yet whom He had sent (and whom therefore they had seen) Him they believed not (See v. 37, 38.).

37. "All that the Father giveth Me" &c. Christians are here spoken of as one body, for "all that", in this place, does not mean 'all those whom', but 'the whole which'—that is, 'the whole number, 'or body, which the Father giveth.' God gives this number as it were in a mass, as one gift, to the Son; yet each one of the number must come to Him separately to be saved (See farther on 44, 45. and compare xvii. 24.). It is full of instruction and warning to find Judas Iscariot numbered among those whom the Father had given to the Son, and shows that this giving by God, and this coming by man, is no security for final perseverance (See on xvii. 12.),

## ST. JOHN, VI.

to Me; and <sup>q</sup>him that cometh to Me I will in A. D. 29.  
no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, <sup>r</sup>not to do Mine own will, <sup>s</sup>but the will of Him that sent Me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, <sup>t</sup>that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of Him that sent Me, <sup>u</sup>that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

42 And they said, <sup>x</sup>Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?

**"Him that cometh" &c.** This is surely one of the most precious promises in all the Gospel; and should help to teach us that little lesson which it is so blessed to learn,—**"Fear not."**

**38. "For I came" &c.** Jesus speaks here as Son of Man (See on v. 18.). He came to carry out the Father's merciful will. That merciful will He declares very fully, saying, **"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"** (St. Luke xii. 32.); and again, to Nicodemus, **"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (iii. 16.). Let us then take care not to speak (as some do) as though the Father were all wrath and the Son all love. The Son is but fulfilling the counsels of the Father's love.

**39. "I should lose nothing."** God is **"not willing that any should perish"** (2 St. Pet. iii. 9.). Nor will any perish, who seek life in the Bread of life.

**"Raise it up."** The Resurrection is spoken of in this and the next verse, partly lest any should think that Christ was come to destroy bodily death, and partly to show that, although bodily death remained, yet the life which was received from the Bread of life would extend to the whole man, body soul and spirit, giving glory and immortality to all. Here, as so often, the Resurrection is spoken of with regard only to the saved (See on St. Luke xx. 35.).

**41. "The Jews then murmured" &c.** Nothing could be more startling to the unbelieving Jews than the mighty claims so calmly and simply put forth by our Lord. No wonder they murmured, believing Him, as they did, to be the son of Joseph.

**42. "Whose father and mother we know."** It seems on all accounts probable that Joseph was dead before the time of our Lord's public ministry. Nazareth however is not very far from Capernaum

A. D. 29. 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

44 <sup>y</sup> No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 <sup>z</sup> It is written in the prophets, **And they shall be all taught of God.** <sup>a</sup> Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me. Isai. 54. 13.

46 <sup>b</sup> Not that any man hath seen the Father, <sup>c</sup> save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father.

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, <sup>d</sup> He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.

(See *Map.*), and the family of Joseph may very well have been known in this latter place. Besides some of the people now assembled at Capernaum may have come from Nazareth. The words "we know" need not imply personal acquaintance. The people may simply mean that they knew who Jesus' father and mother were.

43. "Murmur not." Our Lord does not correct them as to His true Parentage, for they could not receive the truth. He only begs them not to judge so hastily, but to cease their murmurings, while He goes on to unfold more fully what He had been before saying about those who came to Him, which would itself account for the murmurings and unbelief of His hearers.

44. "No man can come" &c. Must man then wait contentedly, and without any effort, until God draw Him? Surely no. "The words," says St. Chrysostom, "do not take away our free will, but show that we greatly need assistance. Christ says not that the unwilling come, but that he comes who receives much help." St. Paul says, "Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God that worketh in you" (Phil. ii. 12, 13.). May we not equally say here, 'Come to Christ, for it is God who draweth you?'

45. "It is written" &c. The prophet Isaiah says plainly, addressing the future Church of God, "All thy children shall be taught of God." But alas! among those children how many are there who turn a deaf ear to God's teaching. It is only those who hear and learn of the Father who truly come to the Son for salvation.

46. "Not that any man" &c. This is to correct any false notion the Jews might conceive of the being taught of God. "Beyond the reach of bodily sense", says St. Augustine, "is this school, in which the Father is heard, and men are taught to come to the Son. Here we have not to do with the ear of flesh, but with the ear of the heart."

"He which is of God," &c. We cannot fail to mark how constantly our Lord asserts His Divine nature and heavenly origin. No one, not being God, could speak as He speaks throughout this great chapter. He alone of men had truly seen the Father, for He was in the beginning with God.

47. "He that believeth" &c. See how faith is again put in the foremost place (as in 29.). If afterwards we find in this discourse great

48 <sup>e</sup> I am that bread of life.

A. D. 29.

49 <sup>f</sup> Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

o ver. 33, 35.

f ver. 31.

50 <sup>g</sup> This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

g ver. 51, 53.

51 I am the living bread <sup>h</sup> which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he

h ch. 3. 13.

blessings spoken of as springing from a sacramental partaking of Christ, let us remember that to such partaking faith is necessary, for (as the 28th Art. says), "the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received "and eaten in the Supper is Faith." What is here stated as to the believer's present possession of everlasting life was stated still more fully and clearly by our Lord on a former occasion (See on v. 24.). The true believer's earthly warfare is rather to hold fast that which has been given to him than to gain that which he has not.

48. "I am that bread of life." By Bread of Life we understand Life-giving Bread. This seems spoken in close connection with the verse before. Christ is the Bread of Life because he that believeth on Him "hath everlasting life."

49. "Your fathers did eat" &c. The people had first brought forward the Manna as being something far more wonderful than the bread with which the five thousand had been fed (See 31.). Our Lord then declared that there was a Bread of Life greater than that Manna, and of which both the Manna and the five loaves in the miracle were but types (See 32.). He now unfolds the matter farther, declaring—1st. that He Himself is that Bread of Life, and 2nd. that to eat of that true Bread would convey a life to the eater which the Manna could not give. The death mentioned in this and the next verse seems to mean bodily death. We must plainly give the same meaning to the word in both verses, and in the former it can hardly mean spiritual death. But this creates a difficulty, for the feeding on Christ, the Bread of Life, does not save from bodily death. No; but it gives a pledge of *Resurrection*. And this appears to be the key to the explanation. The Israelites, who ate the Manna, were dead, and the Manna gave them no pledge of rising again. It was wholly concerned with the present life, and had no power beyond. But the Bread of Life is not for the present life only. It is the pledge of the Resurrection. Those who truly eat of It shall rise again and *in the body* live for ever, as our Lord says still more plainly a little farther on (See 54.).

51. "My flesh." Here is a great and marked advance in the gradual unveiling of the truth by our Lord. The Bread of Life was *Himself*, in the fulness of His twofold nature, as perfect God and perfect Man. Now He begins to limit His saying to *one special part* of Himself,—to a part belonging to His Human Nature only,—even to His Flesh. How startling these words must have been to His hearers! No wonder they asked the question in the next verse.

Mr. Burgon in his Plain Commentary traces out the divisions of this great discourse as follows: "On a review of the entire chapter, "it will perhaps be thought that from ver. 26 to ver. 34 inclusive is "as it were introductory of the subject: that ver. 35 to ver. 50 treats "of the Incarnation of Christ, and of Faith therein as the means of

A. D. 29. shall live for ever: and <sup>i</sup>the bread that I will  
 give is My flesh, which I will give for the life  
 of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 10.  
 5, 10.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 7. 43.  
 & 9. 16.  
 & 10. 19.

<sup>l</sup> ch. 3. 9.

52 The Jews therefore <sup>k</sup> strove among themselves,  
 saying, <sup>l</sup> How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily,

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“life: while ver. 51 to ver. 58 is a building of the doctrine of the  
 “Holy Eucharist on the doctrine of the Incarnation; the Divine  
 “Speaker in that place advancing a step in His solemn discourse by  
 “the mention for the first time of His *Flesh*. From the lesser acts  
 “of Faith He thus goes on to speak of the highest of all.”

“I will give.” This promise Christ fulfilled upon the Cross. It  
 was there that He gave His Flesh for the life of the world. Observe  
 how this connects what follows with the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is  
 Christ’s Body sacrificed for us which is to be the food of His people.  
 So in the Institution of the Lord’s Supper He says, “This is My  
 “Body, which is given for you”—given for you, that is, in the Sacrifice  
 of the Cross. This *giving* of His Flesh by Christ is one link of con-  
 nection between this discourse and the Sacramental ordinance, being  
 spoken of in both.

52. “How can this Man” &c. How like this question is to that  
 of Nicodemus, when our Lord was speaking of the Sacrament of Bap-  
 tism, “How can a man be born when he is old?” (iii. 4.).

53. “Verily, verily,” &c. As in answer to the question of Nico-  
 demus (See on iii. 5.), so now in answer to the question of the Jews,  
 our Lord *enlarges* His former words, unfolding the mystery still farther,  
*but not explaining it*. In each case too He enforces His reply with  
 the same solemn “verily, verily,” (See on i. 51.).

Observe another step in the discourse. Here first is the “Blood”  
 named with the “Flesh.” Who that considers our Lord’s words calmly  
 and fairly can doubt that He has in view the holy Sacrament which  
 He was about to institute just a year afterwards? It has been said,  
 ‘Christ cannot be speaking of a sacrament not yet ordained.’ Can  
 those who speak thus remember of whom they speak? Surely it should  
 be enough to remind them of what is said in the next chapter, when  
 our Lord speaks of the “rivers of living water”, and St. John adds,  
 “This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should  
 “receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus  
 “was not yet glorified” (vii. 39.). If Christ could speak beforehand  
 of one thing, why not of another? Besides, in speaking of His Flesh  
 and Blood, our Lord is certainly speaking beforehand of His Sacrifice  
 on the Cross. They are His Flesh and Blood *as offered and sacrificed*  
 for us. And, if His Death was necessary to the right understanding  
 of the very words “Flesh” and “Blood”, it is not strange if the  
 Sacrament instituted before He died was necessary to the right un-  
 derstanding of *eating and drinking* His Flesh and Blood. When all  
 the ancient fathers understand this passage as being spoken concerning  
 the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; and when our Church so applies  
 it in the exhortation to the assembled Communicants, saying, “Then  
 “we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us” (See 56.); we need not fear  
 to accept this, which is certainly the plainest and most simple meaning.

I say unto you, Except <sup>m</sup> ye eat the flesh of the A. D. 29.  
 Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life <sup>m</sup> Matt. 26.  
 in you. 26, 28.

54 <sup>n</sup> Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My ver. 27, 40,  
 blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up 63.  
 at the last day. ch. 4. 14.

55 For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood  
 is drink indeed.

In saying this we would not deny that there is a purely spiritual way in which our Lord's words may be fulfilled; for our Church teaches that, when the Sacrament may not be had, one who has a lively faith in the death of Christ upon the Cross for him, "earnestly remembering "the benefits he hath thereby, and giving Him hearty thanks therefore, "he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ "profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the Sa-  
 "crament with his mouth" (*See the Rubric at the end of the Communion of the Sick.*). Only we say that the Sacrament is the *chief* means and way in which our Lord's words in this discourse are to be fulfilled.

"Ye have no life in you." That is, no spiritual life, none of that life which the Bread of Life imparts. What a warning word is this to those who refuse to come to the Lord's Table! It must be a perilous thing to have "no life" in us! "They which by Baptism have laid "the foundation and attained the first beginning of a new life, have "here their nourishment and food prescribed for *continuance of life* "in them. Such as will live the life of God must eat the Flesh and "drink the Blood of the Son of Man; because this is a part of that "diet which if we want we cannot live" (*Hooker.*).

54. "Whoso eateth." The Greek word for "eateth" here, and in the following verses, is a different one from that which has been used up to this point. It means something more than mere eating, being a strong word, implying eagerness of desire for the food eaten. "It "shows the need of coming to Christ in the Holy Communion with "spiritual hunger, and with devout cravings and earnest longings and "yearnings of a famished soul for heavenly food" (*Wordsworth.*).

"Hath eternal life;" &c. The blessings promised to eating the Bread of Life before (See 50, 51.) are now promised to the eating and drinking of the Flesh and Blood, for this is the very meaning of eating the Bread of Life (See on 58.). These blessings are eternal life and the resurrection of the body. Mark how the Church speaks in delivering to her people the sacramental gifts:—"The Body of our Lord "Jesus Christ which was given for thee"—or—"The Blood of our "Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee—preserve thy *body and* "soul unto everlasting life."

55. "My flesh is meat indeed," &c. Surely such words as these—and indeed all the words in the whole of Scripture referring to the Holy Communion—are utterly opposed to the Romish notion of making the Sacrament an object of worship and adoration instead of a means of participation in Christ. It is always as "spiritual food and sus-  
 "tenance" that it is spoken of in God's word.

- A. D. 29. 56 He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, ° dwelleth in Me, and I in him.  
 o 1 John 3. 24, & 4. 15, 16.
- 57 As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.
- P ver. 49, 50, 51. 58 ¶ This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

56. "He that eateth" &c. How marvellous is this oft repeated expression,—left as it is in all its difficulty,—a mystery, which none may fully fathom! How must this "hard saying" (60.) have dwelt in the minds of the Apostles, and been pondered by them, during the year which passed before the next Passover came! And then what light must have broken in upon them! As their Lord took the Bread and said, "Take, eat; this is My Body";—as He took the Cup and said, "Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood";—they cannot have helped remembering these words at Capernaum. They had heard the scoffers ask, "How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?" Here surely is an answer. He gives it now—He gives it thus. They do not ask, 'How can this be?' They see—they know—they feel—it is so. Their Lord *does* give them His Flesh and Blood to be their meat and drink. The Bread they break is the Communion—that is, the partaking—of the Body of Christ: the Cup they drink is the Communion—that is, the partaking—of the Blood of Christ (See 1 Cor. x. 16.).

"Dwelleth in Me," &c. How blessed is this close union, and how truly is Christ present with and in those who are thus united to Him! There is indeed no need to say, "Who shall ascend up into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above" (Rom. x. 6.). He is closer to us than the one that kneels next to us at His altar. We could not have a more instructive commentary upon this verse than St. Augustine's:—"This then it is, to eat that meat and drink that drink; namely to dwell in Christ and to have Christ dwelling in us. "And therefore he who dwelleth not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwelleth not, without doubt doth neither eat His Flesh nor drink His Blood: but rather doth unto judgment to himself eat and drink the Sacrament of so great a thing."

57. "As the living Father" &c. The Son draws His life from the Father. And just as He lives by thus eternally deriving life from the Father, who is the Fountain of life (See on v. 26.), so does he who sacramentally feeds upon Christ live by drawing his spiritual life from Him.

58. "This is that bread" &c. Thus we see that in speaking of His Flesh and Blood our Lord has not been speaking of something different from the Bread of Life which He spoke of before. He has only been explaining it and declaring its fuller meaning (See on 54.); and He ends His most wonderful discourse with the glorious promise which He has uttered before to such as partake of that heavenly Bread (See 51.). "Lord, evermore give us this Bread" (34.).

59 These things said He in the synagogue, as A. D. 29.  
He taught in Capernaum.

60 <sup>a</sup> Many therefore of His disciples, when they <sup>ver. 66.</sup> had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who <sup>Matt. 11. 6.</sup> can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 <sup>r</sup> *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man <sup>r</sup> ascend up where He was before? <sup>Mark 16. 19.</sup>  
<sup>ch. 3. 13.</sup>  
<sup>Acts 1. 9.</sup>  
<sup>Eph. 4. 8.</sup>

63 <sup>s</sup> It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh <sup>s</sup> 2 Cor. 3. 6.

59. "In the synagogue." Probably therefore this discourse would have a peculiarly solemn character, even though the Jews permitted public questioning and conversation in their synagogue such as would seem to us irreverent.

60. "Who can hear it?" That is, 'Who can listen to it?' 'Who can stay and hear it?'

61. "When Jesus knew in Himself." The disciples had not dared openly to express their murmurings. But Jesus, as so often, answers their thoughts and secret whisperings, which were perfectly known to Him.

62. "What and if" &c. The meaning of this verse seems to be, 'If My saying as to eating My Flesh offends you, what will you say when you see,' (as some of them did see), 'that very Flesh ascending up to heaven from whence I came?' Their carnal and literal notions of our Lord's words were a stumbling-block to them then; but they would be a still greater stumbling-block when they saw Him visibly present no more. If it was hard to understand how He could give them His Flesh to eat while He was with them, it would be harder, with their carnal notions, when He was gone away. Thus does He rebuke a low, carnal, literal view of the giving of His Flesh to eat, and raise His disciples to higher thoughts, leading them to see that His doing so must be after some heavenly and spiritual manner. Our Lord twice speaks of His Ascension in this Gospel, though the Evangelist gives no account of it (See xx. 17, and compare the words of our Lord to St. Mary Magdalene there with this passage.).

63. "It is the Spirit" &c. All through our Lord's discourse He had spoken of the gift of life. He now declares that that gift must flow from the Holy Spirit, so that whatsoever He had said concerning the Bread of Life, and concerning His Flesh and Blood, took for granted the presence of the life-giving Spirit. So that those disciples who thought so ignorantly of a mere carnal feeding left out of sight the true source of all life,—that by which the heavenly food could alone convey life.

"The flesh profiteth nothing:" That is, hath no power to convey life. By the "flesh" we should naturally understand the same flesh spoken of in the foregoing discourse,—that is, Christ's own Flesh.

- A. D. 29. profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.
- t ver. 36. 64 But <sup>t</sup>there are some of you that believe not.
- u ch. 2, 24, 25. For <sup>u</sup>Jesus knew from the beginning who they were  
& 13. 11. that believed not, and who should betray Him.
- x ver. 44, 45. 65 And He said, Therefore <sup>x</sup>said I unto you, that  
no man can come unto Me, except it were given  
unto him of My Father.
- y ver. 60. 66 <sup>y</sup>From that *time* many of His disciples went  
back, and walked no more with Him.
- 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye  
also go away?
- 68 Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to

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But, as St. Augustine asks, *Does Christ's Flesh profit nothing?* This would seem to contradict the many verses which have told us that His Flesh profiteth much. The sense then must be, 'The flesh—*apart from the Spirit*—in the way in which ye think of it—the flesh, 'as a mere carnal substance,—this profiteth nothing to the giving 'of life.'

"The words that I speak" &c. Literally this is, 'The words 'which I spake', and this, which seems at first of little importance, helps us to the meaning. For our Lord refers to some words which He *had* spoken, not to His words in general. What are these "words" but the "Flesh" and the "Blood", which were causing such perplexity to His disciples? But how does our Lord call these words—the "Flesh" and the "Blood"—"Spirit" and "Life"? Probably because they are, in their true and profitable sense, spiritual and life-giving words, speaking of things which are spiritual and heavenly in their nature, channels of grace and life to the partaker. These are no mere carnal substances, such as the Jews and many of the disciples fancied: they are—for they are filled with, and they impart,—Spirit and Life.

64. "Some of you that believe not." This was among His professing disciples. Among the Apostles there was but one such (See on 70.). It was not the hardness of His sayings, but the hardness of their hearts, which was the real cause of offence.

65. "Therefore said I" &c. Our Lord seems to mean, 'It was 'My knowledge that some would not believe which caused Me to say 'but now that no man can come to Me—that is, as a true believer,— 'except God draw him' (See 44.). He would imply that those who believed not lacked that Divine drawing which alone could bring them to Him. Were they then willing to be drawn, and yet God drew them not? No; God drew them not because they were not willing.

66. "Many of His disciples." Not of His true believing disciples, but rather of those who followed Him, joining the company of His disciples, yet not truly His.

68. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Our Lord's sorrowful and touching question at once draws out from St. Peter one of his noble and clear-sighted confessions. To whom indeed could they go for wisdom and grace and light? They might find some dark places, yet

## ST. JOHN, VI.

whom shall we go? Thou hast <sup>z</sup>the words of A. D. 29.  
eternal life.

<sup>z</sup> Acts 5. 20.

69 <sup>a</sup> And we believe and are sure that Thou art  
that Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 16. 16.  
Mark 8. 29.  
Luke 9. 20.  
ch. 1. 49.  
& 11. 27.

70 Jesus answered them, <sup>b</sup> Have not I chosen you  
twelve, <sup>c</sup> and one of you is a devil?

<sup>b</sup> Luke 6. 13,  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 13. 27.

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon:  
for he it was that should betray Him, being one of  
the twelve.

## CHAPTER VII.

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

were they not with Him who was the true Light? If He could not make all mysteries plain to them, could any other do so?

“Thou hast the words” &c. That is, the words Thou speakest are words full of eternal life—life-giving words. In the “words” St. Peter here speaks of would be included those concerning the Flesh and Blood, which our Lord declared to be Life (See on 63.), though it is not to be supposed that the Apostle spoke of those only.

69. “We believe and are sure” &c. This confession is the same as that made by St. Peter in the “coasts of Cæsarea Philippi”, when it received so high a mark of favour and approval (See St. Matt. xvi. 16—19.). Observe how Christ there says that the truth was revealed to him by God, which exactly answers to what our Lord has here said about coming to Him being the gift of God (See 65.).

70. “Have not I chosen” &c. This is also a “hard saying.” It is a great mystery that Christ, knowing “from the beginning . . . “who should betray Him” (64.), should nevertheless choose Judas to be one of the Twelve. The words are even more mysterious in which Judas is said to be one of those whom the Father had given to Christ (See xvii. 12.). Yet it is not hard to see many truths which could in no way be better taught than by the presence of the traitor among the Apostles. It teaches us that privileges and nearness to Christ cannot save; that there is great spiritual peril in the holiest offices; that calling and election do not ensure salvation; that, in the counsels of God’s love, there is even an election of some who are lost. By “a devil” our Lord seems to mean under the power of the evil one, Satanic in his hypocrisy and dark intentions. Not that the darkest of his deeds was as yet conceived. Only he was training himself in Satan’s service. We can well imagine with what terrible searchings of heart all the Apostles but one must have heard these fearful words. As at the Paschal Supper a year later, many a conscience must have whispered to itself, “Is it I?” Probably this was needful for the Apostles to keep them humble and watchful.

70. “Chosen.” It should be observed | very different sense in xiii. 18.  
that our Lord uses the same word in a | 71. “Iscariot.” See on St. Matt. x. 4.

**A. D. 29.** **A**FTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: <sup>a</sup>for He would not walk in Jewry, <sup>a</sup>because the Jews sought to kill Him.

<sup>b</sup> Lev. 23. 34. **2** <sup>b</sup> Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 12. 46. **3** <sup>c</sup> His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest.

**4** For *there is no man that doeth any thing in*

## CHAPTER VII.

## 1—13. As to our Lord going up to the Feast of Tabernacles.

1. "He would not walk" &c. It seems not improbable that our Lord had been up to Jerusalem for the Passover (His third—See on v. 1.) immediately after the events recorded in the last chapter, when the Passover "was nigh" (vi. 4.). If so, the enmity which was aroused by the miracle of the healing of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda at the Passover before (See v. 1, 16, 18.) doubtless broke out afresh, and is here mentioned as the reason why Jesus would not stay in Jewry (that is, Judæa). How long did these Judæan Jews cherish their malice and hatred against One, whose wisdom and holiness put them to shame! And how differently did He behave to them! He would not afford opportunity to their wicked passions, but withdrew from them, and thus set an example of doing good to those who hated Him.

2. "The Jews' feast of tabernacles." This Feast was kept in the autumn, early in October, in memory of the dwelling of the Israelites in Tabernacles, or Tents, in the wilderness. It was also called the Feast of Ingathering, being kept after the last ingathering of the harvest (See Deut. xvi. 13—17.).

3. "His brethren" &c. By "His brethren" is meant His near relatives, either children of Joseph by a former marriage, or children of the Virgin Mary's sister, the wife of Cleopas, and so cousins of our Lord (See on St. Matt. xiii. 55.). Their request on this occasion seems to arise from a false view of our Lord's mission, and an expectation of earthly greatness, which they were anxious to see Him assume. They could not understand His staying away from the capital Jerusalem, and spending His time among the less important cities and villages of Galilee. By "Thy disciples" in this verse is meant those in Judæa, and especially in Jerusalem, for "many believed in His name" there (ii. 23.).

4. "For there is no man" &c. Christ's brethren thought that His doing His miracles in so retired a region as Galilee was unaccountable if He desired to obtain that renown and glory which they supposed

1. "After these things." Like other such expressions, this need not refer to the time immediately following the events in the last chapter. Indeed we find that it was six months afterwards,

for the time of the last chapter was the Passover (See vi. 4.), whereas the events of this took place at the Feast of Tabernacles (See 2.).

## ST. JOHN, VII.

secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. A. D. 29.  
 If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world.

5 For <sup>d</sup> neither did His brethren believe in Him. d Mark 3. 21.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, <sup>e</sup> My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. e ver. 8, 30.  
ch. 2. 4.  
& 8. 20.

7 <sup>f</sup> The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, <sup>f</sup> because I testify of it, that the works thereof are <sup>g</sup> evil. f ch. 15. 19.  
g ch. 3. 19.

8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; <sup>h</sup> for My time is not yet full come. h ver. 6.  
ch. 8. 20.

9 When He had said these words unto them, He abode *still* in Galilee.

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

Him to seek. They scruple not even to reproach Him with a backwardness, or perhaps a cowardice, in not claiming His due.

5. "For neither did His brethren" &c. The foregoing verses show this was so, and yet it is a difficult verse. If St. James the Less and St. Jude are of the number of "His brethren," then it is hard to understand how they can be said not to believe in Him. Either "His brethren" must mean *others* of His kinsmen, and not these, or else "believe" must be understood here as meaning 'believe in Him as God,' or 'believe in Him so fully as to trust that what He did was right.' They may have had faith, but not a true and complete faith. How lonely was Jesus in the world; how little understood, even by those nearest to Him! His servants must not murmur if even those they love do not enter into all their feelings, or sympathize with all their thoughts.

6. "My time" &c. By "My time" here is meant 'The time for showing Myself to the world.' The expression is like "Mine hour is not yet come" at the marriage feast in Cana (ii. 4.).

"Your time is always ready." This may mean, 'You are always in a hurry, and cannot bear delay;' or it may mean, 'You can go up to Jerusalem, and show yourselves to the world, whenever you like,' for the reason given in the next verse.

7. "The world cannot hate you." Mark how "the world", which God made "very good", is constantly used for all that is evil. Man's sin so abounded that the evil in the world soon defaced and outweighed the good. Thus the very name—"the world"—came to stand for that which most prevailed in the world, namely, its evil. By the words "The world cannot hate you", our Lord means 'The world has no reason to hate you—can see no ground for hating you.' These "brethren" of our Lord set themselves in no marked opposition to the habits and wishes of the world, and so drew down on themselves no ill-will or enmity (Compare 1 St. John iii. 12, 13.).

10. "Not openly," &c. That is, our Lord did not join the great company who travelled up together, as was the custom (See on vi. 4.) to Jerusalem, but went up privately, and so as not to attract attention.

**A. D. 29.** 11 Then <sup>i</sup>the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He?

**ch. 11. 56.** 12 And <sup>k</sup>there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him: for <sup>l</sup>some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but He deceiveth the people.

**ch. 9. 16. & 10. 19. i ver. 40. Mat. 21. 46. Luke 7. 16. ch. 6. 14.** 13 Howbeit no man spake openly of Him <sup>m</sup>for fear of the Jews.

**ch. 9. 22. & 12. 42. & 19. 38.** 14 ¶ Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

**Mat. 13. 54. Mark 6. 2. Luke 4. 22. Acts 2. 7.** 15 <sup>n</sup>And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this Man <sup>2</sup>letters, having never learned?

**Or, learning. ch. 3. 11. & 8. 28. & 12. 49. & 14. 10, 24.** 16 Jesus answered them, and said, <sup>o</sup>My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.

**P ch. 8. 43.** 17 <sup>p</sup>If any man will do His will, he shall know

13. "No man spake openly" &c. That is, no one spoke openly in His favour. None had courage to brave the anger of the Pharisees, who had agreed "that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (ix. 22.).

#### 14—53. Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.

14. "About the midst" &c. The Feast lasted eight days (See Neh. viii. 18.). For the first few days our Lord seems to have continued in private. He now startles both friends and foes by his sudden public appearance in the Temple, as One who had a claim to speak God's message to the people.

15. "How knoweth" &c. By "letters" in this place is meant 'learning', which would imply the knowledge of the Scriptures, that being the main province of Jewish learning. By the words "having never learned" is not meant having been brought up without any education, but, having never been under the instruction of any of the great Rabbis, or Teachers, who were supposed to have the key of the knowledge of the Scriptures. It is plain from this question that Christ showed a wisdom and knowledge in speaking of the Scriptures which astonished His hearers, as His "understanding and answers" had done many years before.

16. "Not Mine, but His that sent Me." That is, not Mine, as though springing from Myself alone, and apart from the Father (See on v. 19, 30.).

17. "If any man will do" &c. In the Greek the word "will" is far more marked than in the English. It is literally, 'If any man *wills*, or *desires*, to do God's will.' Thus a promise of spiritual knowledge is given to singleness and stedfastness of will. An earnest desire and striving to do what is right will help us to understand much of true doctrine (See I Cor. ii. 14, 15.). Who does not know by experience how greatly the truth of Divine doctrines is borne in upon the soul when we are making real efforts after holiness; and, on the other hand, how often doubting and disbelief attend upon careless and sinful living? "Love", says St. Bernard, "is the proper cure for doubt."

## ST. JOHN, VII.

of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether I* A. D. 29.  
speak of Myself.

18 <sup>a</sup> He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own <sup>a</sup> ch. 5. 41.  
glory: but He that seeketh His glory that sent <sup>& 8. 50.  
Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is  
in Him.</sup>

19 <sup>r</sup> Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* <sup>r</sup> Ex. 24. 3.  
none of you keepeth the law? <sup>s</sup> Why go ye about Deut. 33. 4.  
to kill Me? ch. 1. 17.  
Acts 7. 38.

20 The people answered and said, <sup>t</sup> Thou hast a Mat. 12. 14.  
devil: who goeth about to kill Thee? Mark 3. 6.

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have <sup>t</sup> ch. 5. 16, 18.  
done one work, and ye all marvel. & 10. 31, 39.  
& 11. 53.

22 <sup>u</sup> Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; <sup>u</sup> Lev. 12. 3.

**“Of Myself.”** That is, as teaching something different from, and not in accordance with, God’s truth,—something having an origin not of God. In reality it was impossible that Christ could speak any thing not of God, since He was One with God.

18. **“Seeketh his own glory.”** It is impossible not to be struck with the absence of self-seeking in our Lord. With utter consciousness of His rights and power, He never asserts these for His own sake. There is an entire absence of display such as no other leader of men ever manifested.

**“He that seeketh” &c.** These words are not to be understood as a general saying, spoken of any man who seeks God’s glory. They are spoken only of our Lord Himself.

19. **“Did not Moses” &c.** Our Lord in these words seems to be referring to His saying, “If any man will do His will,” &c. (17.). It is as though He said, ‘Moses taught you God’s will, when he gave you the law, and yet, though you profess to believe in Moses as sent by God, you do not keep the law he gave you. Nay, you break one of the plainest of God’s commands in seeking to kill Me. How then can you know of the doctrine whether it be of God?’

20. **“Thou hast a devil:” &c.** This charge was brought more than once against our Lord by the unbelieving people, who saw and felt His power. Thus they accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub. It is possible that those who spoke did not really know of the designs of the rulers against our Lord’s life.

21. **“I have done one work.”** Our Lord is speaking of His healing of the impotent man at Bethesda related in the fifth chapter. This took place about a year and a half before, but our Lord had been little in Jerusalem during this time, and His re-appearance there seems to have roused up the recollection of the old charge brought against Him of breaking the Sabbath. The marvelling spoken of here seems to be marvelling not at the healing itself, but at its being done on the Sabbath.

22. **“Moses therefore” &c.** Our Lord’s argument seems to be as follows: ‘Moses gave you the law of circumcision (See Lev. xii. 3.), commanding the rite to be performed on the eighth day (not that

A. D. 29. (not because it is of Moses, <sup>x</sup> but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man.

<sup>z</sup> Gen. 17. 10. 23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, <sup>2</sup> that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at Me, because <sup>y</sup> I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

<sup>0</sup> Or, without breaking the law of Moses. <sup>y</sup> ch. 5. 8, 9, 16. 24 <sup>z</sup> Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

<sup>z</sup> Deut. 1. 16, 17. Prov. 24. 23. ch. 8. 15. James 2. 1. 25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill?

<sup>a</sup> ver. 48. 26 But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. <sup>a</sup> Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 13. 55. Mark 6. 3. Luke 4. 22. 27 <sup>b</sup> Howbeit we know this Man whence He is:

'circumcision was first ordained by Moses, for it came from Abraham himself, and Moses only repeated the old command.). Now in order to keep this command you violate the law of the Sabbath, thus allowing by your acts that there may be a higher law to which that of the Sabbath should give way. Well then, if you allow that the Sabbath may be broken in order to fulfil the law of circumcision, which you count of higher importance, why are you angry with Me for setting aside the strictness of the Sabbath in making a man "every whit whole", and thus obeying the yet higher law of love and mercy?'

23. "Every whit whole." In soul as well as body, as we can hardly help gathering from the history of the miracle (See v. 14.).

24. "Judge not" &c. The meaning is, 'Let not personal feelings and prejudices sway your judgment. Be not led away by your love of Moses and hatred of Me, but judge honestly and candidly.' This the Jews never did.

25. "Is not this He," &c. This seems a strange thing after the "Who goeth about to kill Thee?" (20.). But we must notice that this is said by "some of them of Jerusalem", who knew the designs of their rulers against our Lord's life, whereas the "people" who asked the question in the former case may have been those gathered from other parts for the Feast, who would not be aware of these wicked designs upon His life.

26. "Do the rulers" &c. The people of the city were surprised that those who were plotting against Christ's life now left Him alone when He seemed in their power. They even began to wonder whether the rulers were themselves convinced that He was the Christ.

27. "Howbeit we know" &c. They thought Him to be simply an inhabitant of Nazareth, and Son of Joseph and Mary. In saying, "But when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is", they did not refer to his earthly birthplace, for they knew that Christ was to be born at Bethlehem (See St. Matt. ii. 4—6.). They probably meant that His origin and birth would have something strange and mysterious about them, gathering this from such words as "Who shall declare His generation?" (Is. liiii. 8.). They knew not how great a mystery and miracle His Birth really was.

but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence A. D. 29.  
He is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, <sup>c</sup>Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and <sup>d</sup>I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me <sup>e</sup>is true, <sup>f</sup>whom ye know not.

29 But <sup>g</sup>I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me.

30 Then <sup>h</sup>they sought to take Him: but <sup>i</sup>no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.

31 And <sup>k</sup>many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this *Man* hath done?

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

33 Then said Jesus unto them, <sup>l</sup>Yet a little while

<sup>c</sup> See chap. 8. 14.

<sup>d</sup> ch. 5. 43. & 8. 42.

<sup>e</sup> ch. 5. 32. & 8. 26.

Rom. 3. 4.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 1. 18. & 8. 55.

<sup>g</sup> Mat. 11. 27. ch. 10. 15.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 19. Mark 11. 18.

Luke 19. 47. & 20. 19.

<sup>i</sup> ch. 8. 37. ver. 44.

<sup>k</sup> ch. 8. 20. Mat. 12. 23.

ch. 3. 2. & 8. 30.

<sup>l</sup> ch. 13. 33. & 16. 16.

28. "Ye both know Me," &c. These words seem spoken in sorrowful irony (See on St. Mark vii. 9.). The Jews had said that they knew whence Jesus was. He cries to them as it were, 'Ye say ye 'know Me, and whence I am, and yet I come from One whom ye know 'not!' He really implies that they did *not* know Him nor whence He was (See viii. 19.).

"I am not come of Myself," &c. That is, not as you suppose,—not as a mere man might come, whose birth and parentage might be known to all.

"He that sent Me is true," &c. This means, 'He that sent Me 'truly exists, though ye know Him not.' Thus Christ tells the people whence He is, though, instead of believing, they only become more enraged against Him.

30. "His hour was not yet come." Therefore God withheld His enemies from their deadly purpose, for He "stilleth the raging of the "sea...and the madness of the people" (Ps. lxxv. 7.). The same thing is said again in the next chapter (See viii. 20.).

31. "Many of the people" &c. The common people among the Jews were fickle and easily led, as we see by their joyful welcome of Jesus on Palm-Sunday, and their angry demand for His Crucifixion on Good Friday. It is partly this changeableness, and partly the fact that they were very much divided, some holding with Christ and some with the Pharisees, which causes the differences we meet with in various places as to their feeling towards our Lord. Here many of them believe: a little before they rejected His claims (See 27.).

32. "The Pharisees and the chief priests." Probably assembled in their high council, or Sanhedrin (See on St. Matt. xxvi. 3.).

33. "Yet a little while." Namely about six months, the Feast of Tabernacles being in the autumn, and the Passover, at which Feast our Lord suffered, in the spring.

A. D. 29. am I with you, and *then* I go unto Him that sent me.

<sup>m</sup> Hos. 5. 6. 34 Ye <sup>m</sup> shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto <sup>n</sup> the dispersed among the <sup>2</sup> Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

<sup>n</sup> Isai. 11. 12. James 1. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 1. 2 Or, *Greeks*. 36 What *manner of* saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

<sup>o</sup> Lev. 23. 36. 37 <sup>o</sup> In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, <sup>p</sup> If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.

<sup>p</sup> Isai. 55. 1. ch. 6. 35. Rev. 22. 17.

“I go.” This surely expresses our Lord’s own free will in dying. As He says in another place, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself” (x. 17, 18.).

34. “Ye shall seek Me,” &c. When Christ returned to His Father, the day of mercy and grace for the Jewish people was over. They had no longer the priceless privilege of His Presence among them. He was gone and they could find Him and hold intercourse with Him no more. How well had it been for them if they had even then redeemed the time, and turned to profit that “little while” which was left!

35. “Will He go,” &c. The Jews knew not our Lord’s meaning when He said He should go unto Him that sent Him. They were so earthly in all their notions that they fancied He was speaking of some long journey, and they asked in scorn and ridicule whether He would go and “teach the Gentiles,” whom they despised. Yet their question had its truth, though not as they meant it; for, now that the Jewish nation is in blindness, Christ is, in His Spirit and in His Word and in His Church, teaching the Gentiles, and gathering them to Himself. When their “fulness” shall have “come in”, then shall the blindness be taken away from Israel (See Rom. xi. 25.).

37. “In the last day,” &c. The Feast of Tabernacles lasted eight days, and the last day was a specially solemn one. On each of the other days of the Feast it was the custom for the priests to bring water in a golden vessel with great pomp from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple, where it was solemnly offered to God and poured out upon the altar, during which ceremony the proper Psalms (cxiii.—cxviii.) were sung (See on St. Matt. xxi. 9. and xxvi. 17.). On the eighth day the ceremony of the bringing of the water did not take place, the Psalms only being sung. It was probably at the time when on the other days the water was brought (by some supposed to be in remembrance of the water which flowed from the rock, as the “tabernacles” were of the tents in the wilderness), that our Lord stood forth and proclaimed Himself the true Fountain of living Water—the true Rock, which that in the wilderness foreshadowed.

“If any man thirst.” We are at once reminded of the Prophet’s

38 <sup>a</sup>He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, <sup>r</sup>out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. A. D. 29.  
Deut. 18. 15.

39 (<sup>s</sup>But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet <sup>t</sup>glorified.) r Prov. 13. 4.  
Isai. 12. 3.  
& 44. 3.  
ch. 4. 14.  
s Isai. 44. 3.  
Joel 2. 28.  
ch. 16. 7.  
Acts 2. 17,  
33, 38.

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is <sup>u</sup>the Prophet. ch. 12. 16.  
& 16. 7.

41 Others said, <sup>x</sup>This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come <sup>y</sup>out of Galilee? u Deut. 18.  
15, 18.  
ch. 1. 21.  
& 6. 14.

<sup>x</sup> ch. 4. 42. & 6. 69. <sup>y</sup> ver. 52. ch. 1. 46.

words, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Is. lv. 1). It is ever the law of God's best gifts, that they should be desired in order to be had. The waters are only for the thirsting. Blessed thirst for which so rich a supply is waiting!

38. "As the scripture hath said." This does not refer to any one particular passage, but to all those passages which speak of the refreshing streams of God's Good Spirit (Such as Is. xxx. 25; xxxv. 6, 7; lv. 1; Ezek. xlvii. 1—9; Zech. xiv. 8.).

"Out of his belly." That is, from his inner man—from his heart. This passage is best understood by comparing it with our Lord's words to the Woman of Samaria (See on iv. 14.).

39. "This spake He" &c. St. John explains our Lord's words, showing us that, as before Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of Baptism (in iii.), and in the synagogue of Capernaum of the Lord's Supper (in vi.), so here He speaks of that which could as yet be understood only in part. We must not forget that the Holy Spirit was the Strength and Comforter of God's people even under the old covenant, and was bestowed by our Lord in a very marked manner while He was yet on earth (See xx. 22.); but nevertheless such a full and abundant stream of grace as is here spoken of could only receive its fulfilment after the mightier Gift of Pentecost. By "should receive" is meant 'were about to receive,' that is, at Pentecost. The above words will show that when St. John says, "The Holy Ghost was not 'yet given,'" he means, 'not yet given in His fulness of grace and power.'

"Not yet glorified." The Psalmist teaches us that when Christ ascended up on high He received (and gave) gifts unto men, and that the chief of those gifts was that the Lord God (doubtless God the Holy Ghost) should dwell among them (Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 18. with Eph. iv. 7, 8.).

40. "When they heard this saying," &c. Doubtless there was something peculiarly solemn and impressive in our Lord's words and manner. By "the Prophet" is meant that Prophet of whom Moses prophesied (See on i. 21.), which it is plain by the next words some at least did not understand to be Christ.

41. "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" "The same difficulty had once occurred to the simple-minded, truth-loving Nathanael,— "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (i. 46.)—but when invited to "come and see" and judge for himself, he went, and was "convinced. So these objectors might have found a way out of their

A. D. 29. 42 \* Hath not the scripture said, That Christ  
Ps. 132. 11. cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town  
Jer. 23. 5. of Bethlehem, <sup>a</sup> where David was?  
Mic. 5. 2.

43 So <sup>b</sup> there was a division among the people  
Matt. 2. 5. because of Him.  
Luke 2. 4.

44 And <sup>c</sup> some of them would have taken Him;  
1 Sam. 16. but no man laid hands on Him.  
1, 4.

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and  
ver. 12. Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye  
ch. 9. 16. not brought Him?  
& 10. 19.

46 The officers answered, <sup>a</sup> Never man spake like  
ver. 30. this Man.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye  
Matt. 7. 29. also deceived?

48 <sup>e</sup> Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees  
ch. 12. 42. believed on Him?  
Acts 6. 7.

49 But this people who knoweth not the law are  
1 Cor. 1. 20, cursed.  
26. & 2. 8.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (<sup>f</sup> he that came  
ch. 3. 2. <sup>2</sup> to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

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“difficulty, if they had desired it” (*P. Young*). They were quite right in what they said in the next verse, as to Christ’s lineage and birthplace, but they cared not to enquire whether it were not true of Jesus.

45. “To the Chief Priests and Pharisees.” Probably again assembled in their high Council, and awaiting the bringing of the Prisoner whom they so eagerly longed to get into their power.

46. “Never man spake” &c. These soldiers were overawed by the majesty and power of Christ’s words. They dared not to lay hands on Him. And now they return, and themselves preach Christ to their unbelieving masters, declaring openly the effect of His words upon themselves.

48. “Have any of the rulers” &c. Though they thus spoke, and perhaps thus thought, yet it was not true that none of the Rulers or Pharisees had believed. We learn shortly afterwards that *many* of these believed, though secretly for fear of the rest (See xii. 42.); and already we know that they had one secret believer among them, namely Nicodemus, while possibly Jairus was of their number, and Joseph of Arimathæa.

49. “This people” &c. They meant, ‘These common people’—‘these low ignorant soldiers’—“are cursed” in their folly and sinfulness. How little thought they where the folly and sin really lay!

50. “Nicodemus.” This timid disciple has already made some advance in boldness (See on iii. 1.), and here openly pleads on our Lord’s side. It seems probable that he not only was actuated by a feeling of justice in claiming for Jesus a fair hearing, but also was in hope that His presence might impress and convince some of the Council, as it had already made such an impression on the soldiers.

## ST. JOHN, VIII.

51 <sup>g</sup> Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear A. D. 29.  
him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou  
also of Galilee? Search, and look: for <sup>h</sup> out of Galilee  
lee ariseth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. 1. 17.

& 17. 8, &c.

& 19. 15.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 41.

Is. 9. 1, 2.

Matt. 4. 15.

ch. 1. 46.