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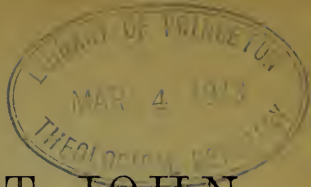
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THE
GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.





THE

GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

A Series of Discourses

BY

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“Johannes redet schlecht und einfältig wie ein Kind, und lauten seine Worte (wie die Weltweisen sie ansehen) recht kindisch. Es ist aber eine solche Majestät drunter verborgen, die kein Mensch, so hoch er auch erleuchtet ist, erforschen noch ausreden kann.”—LUTHER, *Auslegung des Evangel. Johannis*, 1, 5.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

A VALUED friend, to whose judgment on a critical question I shall always defer, has sent me the following observations upon certain passages in the 11th and 16th Discourses of this volume. I have made no alterations in the text.

John v. 3, 4.

It is implied at page 143 that certain "honest and earnest men" are unwilling to believe that St. John wrote the verse relating to angelic interposition in the cures wrought by the pool of Bethesda, merely because they consider the doctrine unworthy of him. It may be so: but it is at least possible to assent fully to the doctrine, and yet reject the verse, along with the last clause of the preceding verse, on purely outward and critical grounds. Of the six most important Greek MSS. two (and those, perhaps, the best) omit the whole passage, ἐκδεχομένων—νοσήματι, two the clause, ἐκδεχομένων—κίνησιν, and two the verse, ἄγγελος—νοσήματι: not more than one or two tolerable Greek MSS. support the received reading. Of important early versions three omit the whole passage (including the recently discovered "Curetonian" Syriac, probably the earliest and most important of all), another (and two MSS. of a second) omits the verse, and two others omit or obelize part of the

verse. Of early patristic evidence there is hardly any either way. Origen's commentary between iv. 54 and viii. 19 is unfortunately lost. Tertullian in one place shows an acquaintance with the belief about the angel, and probably with the whole passage. With this exception, the passage appears to be known in either form to no Father previous to St. Ambrose, no Greek Father previous to St. Chrysostom: they and their successors follow the common text. The only important early authority in its favour is the Old Latin version, (with which must be taken Tertullian;) and yet *its* MSS. differ surprisingly in the details of the verse, presenting it for the most part in a shorter form than the Greek MSS., which likewise differ considerably among themselves. In short, all the familiar phenomena of interpolation are present in the most flagrant shape. In all probability the passage was added by degrees in the second century in the Western Church, and passed over to the East in the fourth century.

John vii. 53—viii. 11.

At page 229 "some of the Fathers" are said to have "disliked the moral of" the story of the woman taken in adultery, and therefore to have been "glad to believe it not genuine." It is needless to go into the overwhelming critical evidence against its genuineness,—a matter quite distinct from its truth and authority. But surely the charge here made is founded on an oversight. The earlier Fathers (with the doubtful exception of Eusebius, who has been reasonably supposed to allude to the same incident, as recorded by Papias, and in the Gospel according to the Hebrews) nowhere refer to the narrative, apparently for the simple reason that it was entirely unknown to them. Origen's commentary on this part of the chapter is lost; but in a minute recapitulation, included in his remarks on verse 22, he passes at once without observation from vii. 52 to viii. 12. St. Chrysostom and St. Cyril ignore the passage in the same manner. There is really no reason whatever to suspect fraud

here. St. Ambrose warns his readers of the danger of reading the story carelessly (*otiosis auribus*), but does not appear to doubt its genuineness. St. Augustine, arguing against an excessive rigour on the part of injured husbands, rebukes certain persons (*modicæ fidei vel potius inimicis veræ fidei*), who, as he fancied, banished it from their MSS. because it seemed to be more lenient to women than to their guilty selves. St. Jerome states that it was found in many Greek and Latin MSS., and proceeds to rest an argument upon it. Surely these three Fathers, if any, would have been "glad to believe it not genuine."

Both passages are pretty fully discussed by Dr. Tregelles (*Account of the printed Text of the Greek New Testament*, pp 236-246), with the help of some evidence not before accessible.

P R E F A C E.

I MADE many attempts to write a commentary on the Gospel of St. John. All of them proved abortive; though each of them made me more alive to the duty of endeavouring to impart to others some of the lessons which I had received from it. At length I was convinced that unless I studied the Gospel first of all with reference to my own congregation, and used it as a lesson-book for them, I never should be able to express what was in my mind to men whom I did not know. Critics, I doubt not, will know excellent reasons why a book of Scripture cannot be satisfactorily expounded in pulpit discourses. I certainly shall not dispute their opinion. No one is more aware than myself that I have not satisfactorily expounded *this* book of Scripture. I have not hoped to do that. But I believe I may have given my hearers and my readers some encouragement to seek a better Expositor of it than I or any much wiser teacher can be. If a few have been led by my words to hope for that guidance, and to place themselves under it, I trust they will ask for themselves and for me, that we may never desert it for any other, least of all for our own.

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DISCOURSE I.

THE JEWISH FISHERMAN, THE CHRISTIAN DIVINE.

[Lincoln's Inn, Septuagesima Sunday, January 20, 1856.]

ST. JOHN I. 1.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

AN eminent man, who died not long since in Germany, was wont to divide the life of the Church into three periods. That before the Reformation he called the Petrine; the three centuries since the Reformation, the Pauline; one he maintained was at hand, which would last to the end of this dispensation—that he named the Johannine. The classification is perhaps too ingenious to be true; and there are many reasons why we ought not to treat all the years before the sixteenth century as belonging to the same division. Nevertheless, there is something in the observation concerning St. John which has commended itself to minds of a very different order from his who put it into this shape. Some have supposed that St. John is to displace the earlier writers of the New Testament, because his teaching is more profound, or more charitable, or more simple than theirs. Some suppose that he was especially appointed to explain, unfold, bring

out into their fullest light, all that previous Prophets and Apostles had presented under different aspects, in forms suitable to their own times and circumstances. Wide as this difference is, both may agree that the writings of St. John, much as they may have been studied hitherto, deserve a fresh and a more earnest study. Both may hope that if they have been intended for the illumination of our days, the meaning of them may come forth to us with greater clearness than it did to our forefathers; not because we are wiser than they, but because a larger experience, perhaps an experience of more intense doubt and ignorance, may make us more ready to welcome the divine interpreter, and less eager to anticipate his discoveries by the conclusions which ask to be corrected by them.

There are three books in our canon which we attribute to St. John, besides the two short letters to Gaius and the Elect Lady. Of these, his Gospel appears to me a perfect summary of *Christian Theology*, his First Epistle of *Christian Ethics*, his Apocalypse of *Christian Politics*. I do not despair of seeing even this last book come forth, out of the hands of soothsayers and prognosticators, as a real lesson-book respecting the dealings of God with the nations, respecting the method and the issues of His righteous government. The craving there is in the minds of men for a faithful history of the past, which shall be also a faithful guide to the future, will surely be satisfied some day; this book may teach us how it shall be satisfied. It requires even less faith to expect that when we are tired of speculations about the maxims and principles of morality, which do not make our morality better, while yet their very failure convinces us that there are principles which we did not create and which must bind

us, we may turn to an old and simple document, which sets forth the commandment that has life—which tells us what the end of our existence is, what has deranged it, how each man may recover all that he has lost, and be what he was created to be.

I had thought at first that these Bible ethics might be more suitable to a congregation of men, busy in the world and valuing higher maxims only as they can test them by their application to its daily occasions, than what I have called by the more imposing name of Theology. I should have acted upon that thought if I had believed that St. John's theology was of that stamp which has made the word agreeable to schoolmen, offensive to those who would turn words into acts. If theology is a collection of dry husks, the granaries which contain those husks will be set on fire, and nothing will quench the fire till they be consumed. It is just because I find in St. John the grain which those husks sometimes conceal, for which they are sometimes a substitute; it is just because theology in his Gospel offers itself to us as a living root, out of which all living powers, living thoughts, living acts may develop themselves; it is just because there is nothing in him that is abstract, because that which is deep and eternal proves itself to be deep and eternal by entering into all the relations of time, by manifesting itself in all the common doings of men; it is therefore, I believe, that he makes his appeal, not to the man of technicalities, not to the school doctor, but to the simple wayfarer, and at the same time to the man of science who does not forget that he is a man and who expects to ascertain principles only by the honest method of experiment.

To all such, I am sure, the careful study of the fourth

Gospel will prove of unspeakable worth and interest. A preacher may do much to hinder such study; he may also do something to promote it. He will hinder it if he seeks to make texts give out a sense which he has first put into them. He will hinder it if he seeks to stifle any doubts which the words themselves may excite; any that are suggested by the contradictions of the world, and the perplexities of the reader's own mind. He will hinder it if he breaks the continuity of the narration by taking a passage here and there to inculcate a particular moral, without considering how it is related to the passages that precede and that follow it and to the general scope of the Evangelist. He may promote it so far as he believes that he is a fellow-learner with those whom he is teaching; so far as he is convinced that the words of the Evangelist are clearer and diviner than any which he, of his own wit or by the help of inferior books, can put in their place; so far as he desires that his own eyes, and those of all students, may be purged that they may see what is actually in the words; so far as he believes that there is One who is above the words, above the writer of them, to whom they point, and from whom all the wisdom that is in them comes; so far as he trusts for himself, and encourages all to trust, that this Teacher wills us to come to the knowledge of His truth, and will withhold no help that we need in the pursuit of it. Beseeching the Holy Spirit of God to keep alive this temper in your minds and in mine, I would begin the examination of St. John's Gospel to-day, desiring, if God permit, that we may go through with it to the end.

When I talk of St. John as a Theologian, I adopt the title which was given to him at a very early time. In our own day that title has awakened a suspicion about the

genuineness of this Gospel. He is spoken of by the other Evangelists as a fisherman mending his father's nets ; as one of two Apostles whom our Lord called Sons of Thunder ; as giving some warrant for that designation by desiring to call fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village ; as showing signs of a special ambition by his prayer that he himself and his brother might sit one on Christ's right hand and one on His left in His kingdom ; as exhibiting the sectarian and exclusive temper of his nation, by forbidding a man to cast out devils in Christ's name who did not follow with His Apostles. Was there anything in these early characteristics to prepare one for expecting that he would be the divine, not of a Jewish synagogue but of a Christian Church ? True, he is spoken of as being present on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane. On both occasions his eyes were heavy, like those of the other disciples, with the sight of glory and the sight of suffering. When others forsook and fled, he did so likewise. In the Acts of the Apostles he appears, no doubt, in a conspicuous position, but it is still expressly as a Jewish Apostle. If he is joined with St. Peter in healing the sick man, it is when they are going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer. He endures the reproaches and the scourges of the Sanhedrim. But after the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, we hear no more of him ; he vanishes out of sight. St. Paul calls him one of the Apostles of the Circumcision, but alludes to him no further. When we meet with him again, not in the sacred record but in the mist of ecclesiastical traditions, there are reports of him as adhering to the Jewish observance of the Passover, as in some sense representing the dignity of the high-priest. How could we suppose from such intimations that he

would open a Gospel with the words I read to you in the text, words which seem to intimate an acquaintance with heathen speculation, even with a high philosophy? Does that language belong at all to the simplicity of the first century? Is it not much more in accordance with the spirit of the next age, when plain narratives were combining themselves with curious speculations, and Christian teachers were introducing what they had learnt in the porch or the academy among the doctrines and the exhortations which had been uttered to fishermen on the lake of Tiberias or to the crowds who were gathered round the mount?

From what I said of my reasons for selecting this Gospel as a subject for discourses in the pulpit, you will anticipate part of the answer which I should give to these suggestions. If the Gospel is what those who make them, say that it is, they are right. If its theology is of an abstract, artificial character, compounded of elements drawn from all heterogeneous sources, let it be attributed to an age—I do not determine whether the second century was or was not such an age—in which an artificial habit of mind prevailed, in which system-building had become a profession. If there are *no* traces of such a disposition in the fourth Gospel,—if it is, in its language, in the construction of its sentences, in the style of its narrative, the simplest of all the Gospels,—then we may have good cause to think that it savours more of the fisherman to whom it has been for so many ages ascribed, than of the learned convert from some Gentile school, the ingenious blender of Jewish and Gentile dogmas, whom critics of this age have imagined to be its manufacturer.

I do not, however, desire to avoid a part of the inquiry which these remarks may not seem at first to meet. All

the accounts of St. John in the New Testament, all that we can guess of him from other sources, certainly lead us to think of him as one whose mind had been cast in the Hebrew mould, who had learnt the lore of a child of Abraham, who had not, in the same sense that St. Paul did, thrown himself among the inhabitants of the Greek cities, and become as '*one without law, that he might gain those that are without law.*' St. John's position in the city of Ephesus, during his latter years, does not affect the opinion that he was essentially a Jew. Jerusalem had fallen, or was about to fall; nowhere, perhaps, would he be more likely to find a colony of men attached to the customs of his forefathers than in that city. Confessedly, he had no part in founding its Church or converting its Gentile inhabitants; that had been St. Paul's work. And we may admit without scruple the evidence, imperfect though it be, that St. John in that city did preserve some of the characteristics of his childhood and of his education, even when the world to which those strictly belonged was passing away.

How do these admissions affect our belief that he was the writer of the sentences which introduce the Gospel that bears his name? I believe they strengthen that belief exceedingly. I can conceive nothing more thoroughly Hebrew than these sentences. I pass over the resemblance, which will strike you all upon this day,¹ between these verses and those at the commencement of the Book of Genesis; though the correspondence between their style

¹ Septuagesima Sunday, when the first chapter of Genesis is read. Schleiermacher, who is not likely to exaggerate the resemblance of the New Testament to the Old, dwells on this point. See "Homilien über das Evangelium Johannis;" edited after his death by Sydow.

and the style of Moses, is one of those internal correspondences which we feel the more strongly the more we reflect. But I would beg you to notice the essential *difference* between this kind of writing and that of any person who had been brought up in any school of philosophy whatsoever, whether one purely Greek, or where Greek and Hebrew elements were mixed as they were at Alexandria. Would you expect in such a person the broad, simple, assertive tone, '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*'? Would not the *true* philosopher try to vindicate his name by proving that he was a *seeker* after wisdom? Would not the *false* philosopher, if he were ever so much inclined to dogmatise, at least produce some plausible arguments in support of any statements which he advanced? Where, but in the writings of the Old and New Testament, do you meet with such an adventurous proclamation as this? Where, even in the Books of the Old and New Testament, do you meet with one that is quite a parallel to it?

And then look at the contents of the sentence. What have you been hearing of, all through the Psalms and the Prophets, but of God's word, which was to give Joshua courage, which David delighted in and fed upon, which was a fire in the heart of Jeremiah? On the surface of the Bible this language encounters you. I mean, that your eye cannot wander over a page without being arrested by expressions of the kind; you become so familiar with it that you forget the peculiarity of it. But if you stop for a moment to think, you will perceive that whenever the word of God is spoken of, something most vital and most inward is intended. It is a quick, penetrating power, entering into

the man, affecting his heart and his reins, standing out in the sharpest contrast to the idols which speak to the eye. The 'word of God' is the favourite expression in the writers of the Old Testament, because they are testifying of an invisible Lord who speaks to man's spirit; because they are denouncing all attempts to make the objects of men's senses into their lords. How frightful, then, to an old Prophet would have been the thought of confounding the mere letters of a book, which could be seen, handled, copied out, with the words of the Lord! No doubt these words might have characters found for them; they might be handed down in these characters from age to age: it would be a glorious witness of their enduring quality if they were so. But it would remain unalterably true, that as words coming forth from the mouth of God, and not to return to Him void, they addressed themselves to the wills, hearts, consciences of men; into these only could they enter.

Whence did they proceed? Solomon, the wise king, had spoken of a divine Wisdom, from which his was derived. He had spoken of that Wisdom as brought up with God—as His counsellor—as an object to be sought for, embraced, loved by men. The Prophets had spoken of the Word of God coming to them. The Word ruled them, searched them, judged them. They were not the speakers; the Word was the speaker. Could such language be uttered continually in the ears of earnest men and be disregarded? It was not disregarded; it moulded the very heart of all true Israelites. But soon it was forced upon them in another way. After the Babylonian captivity, they were brought into contact with heathens; they were obliged to learn what heathens had been thinking of. Elsewhere they heard of great mythological conceptions, of

the Lion, the Eagle, the Ox, the Man, which represent different aspects of the Divinity. But in the city of Alexandria they heard how Greek sages, in their struggle to get rid of mythological fancies, had spoken of a Logos or Reason in themselves, which lifted them above themselves. It was strangely connected with the power of speech; it pointed to the very source of speech and thought. It was often described as an eye, blinded in most, and yet of which those in whom it was open could only say, 'It makes us know what the privilege is of being men, what the responsibility. Now we are sure that man has something to do with the Divinity, as all the traditions of our fathers tell us that he has. But what he has to do with the Divinity, who can inform us? for the traditions only bewilder us when they try to explain.' Was it strange that a Jew should say to himself, 'Why, my oracles have been telling me from the very first of a Word that speaks to men, a Word of God; a Word that withdraws them from the idolatry of sense, and the pursuit of sensible things; a Word that has taught them how to rule themselves; a Word that has taught them how they may seek after their Creator, and hold converse with Him.' Men of cultivation as well as of honesty might be easily overwhelmed by this twofold discovery; they might vacillate between their Gentile lore and their Jewish; they might mix them sometimes confusedly together; they might resort to allegories for the sake of explaining the connexion, which the simpler student of either would reject as unsatisfactory and frivolous.

These descriptions apply, in some measure, to those commentaries on the Old Testament which are contained in the Apocryphal books called 'The Wisdom of Solomon,' and 'Ecclesiasticus.' The characteristic of these books is

their recognition of a divine Wisdom, which the writers sometimes speak of as if it were abstract, quite as often as if it were personal and substantial. These modes of speech are confessedly derived from the Scriptures. They speak of no history but the Hebrew history; probably they were acquainted with no other. Still it is probable that they were holding intercourse with Gentiles, perhaps were explaining the Hebrew books to them. But all the peculiarities I have mentioned became far more marked and definite in Philo the Alexandrian, who was an old man when he went on an embassy from the Alexandrian Jews to Caligula. In him the idea of a divine Word, who unites God and man, and holds converse with the spirit of man, becomes the ground of all his thoughts. Every book in the Bible speaks to him of such a Being. The belief in Him alone explains to him the life of patriarchs, lawgivers, prophets. Yet he admits that such a Being must also have been the source of all wisdom to Gentile philosophers. It is his privilege, as a Jew, to explain to them their own conceptions of such a Being. Moses could declare that that was which Plato felt must be.

All must see, if we had not positive evidence of the fact, how much such thoughts, coming forth at such a time, must have affected Jews, may have affected Gentiles. Yet Philo wrote avowedly for the learned. He wished to put himself at a distance from all others. It was a satisfaction to him that he could, by the use of dark allegories, keep the profane vulgar at a distance. How, then, could his thoughts blend with those of the men who came preaching that One who was called a carpenter's son, One who had chosen fishermen as His disciples, was the King of men and the Son of God? *'To the poor the gospel is*

preached,' was the maxim which they were to exhibit in their lessons and their lives. How could such doctrines as Philo's be addressed to the poor?

And yet the disciples were obliged to speak of Jesus as the Son of Man who sowed the word in men's hearts, which sprang up and bore fruit, thirty and sixty and an hundred-fold. They were obliged to speak of Jesus, the Son of Man, as opening a kingdom of heaven which was within men. They were obliged to speak of that kingdom as the kingdom of His Father. They were obliged to say that the Son of Man had opened it to all, because He was also the Son of God. They were obliged to say that they could only testify of this kingdom because He had given them the Spirit of His Father. And when St. Paul learnt that he, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, was called to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, it was '*by a revelation of the Son of God in him*' Whom he was '*to preach to the Gentiles.*' To the Corinthians, among whom he had determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he still spoke of Jesus Christ as the '*Wisdom of God*' and the '*Power of God.*' To the Ephesians he spoke of their having '*been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy, and without blame before Him in love.*'

What was the consequence? Jews said, 'You are exalting a man into the place of God; you are denying the words which you were taught on your mother's knee, "*The Lord our God is one Lord.*"' Gentiles said, 'You are robbing us of the belief we have had of friendly beings of another world, who have sympathised with ours, who have had loving converse with sages and heroes, who have mixed with us as men among men.' Philosophers said, 'What has your teaching to do with all those glimpses of

‘light in the reason which wise men have spoken of, which they have been sure that they received?’ Disciples of Philo asked, ‘What has this human Teacher of yours to do with that Word of God whom our master discovered in all the history of the Old Testament?’ Disciples of John the Baptist (still numerous, and probably much connected with the Alexandrian teachers, as in the instance of Apollos) said, ‘Our master preached repentance and turning to the living God. You say he spoke also of a Teacher who was to come after him. Do you mean that he wished us to turn away from the living God to this future Teacher?’ Christian men began to ask themselves whether Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, *because* He was born in a wonderful manner of the Virgin? They began to dream of Him as a demigod, or a superior angel, half human, half divine. Other Christians began to boast that they were sons of God *only* because they were baptized men, and that their sonship was a sentence upon all the world before them and around them. A cloud of opinions—vapours gathered from all quarters—was floating about in the world; was nowhere, perhaps, denser than in the great emporium of Ephesus. A great convulsion was at hand. St. Paul had said a great *apostasy* was at hand.

Then, if we may believe the tradition of centuries, spoke out the old man of Ephesus, the Galilean fisherman, the Son of Thunder,—he whose brother had been taken by an early death to the right hand of his Master,—he who was himself to linger till the end of the age,—the passionate Jew, who had desired fire to come from heaven;—then spake he who had been on the Mount, and in the Garden, and at the Last Supper: ‘*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The*

same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; which were born not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

Except at the close of the first century, when the Old Testament age was passing into the New, I conceive these verses could not have been written. Except by the most earnest of Jews, the most simple of Christian Apostles, I believe they could not have been written. But if they are, as they are sometimes supposed to be, merely a doctrinal proem to an actual Gospel, I admit they must have proceeded from some one else. I hope to show you hereafter that they explain every narrative which follows, as every narrative which follows illustrates them. I hope you will find that the whole Gospel is a Theology just as much as these verses; because it is a Gospel to mankind, a Gospel to the conscience of each man, from God and concerning God.

DISCOURSE II.

THE WORD THE LIGHT OF MEN.

[Lincoln's Inn, 1st Sunday in Lent, February 10, 1856.]

ST. JOHN I. 14.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

WHEN I spoke to you last, I proposed to examine St. John's Gospel carefully and in order. It was impossible not to pause earnestly upon the opening sentence, '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*' What does that text say to us? 'It declares,' some will answer eagerly and decisively, 'the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Be it so; but the name *Jesus Christ* is not introduced till the seventeenth verse of the chapter. If we are sitting at the feet of an Apostle or Evangelist, we cannot change his method for a method of our own. The writers of the other Gospels start from the birth of Jesus, or from the preaching of John the Baptist. We cannot understand them unless we go with them to Bethlehem or to the wilderness. St. John leads us back to the beginning of all things. We cannot understand him, if we assume events that were to take place in the fulness of the time.

Acting upon this principle, I reminded you that the expression 'word of God' is one of continual recurrence as well as of most solemn import in the books of the Old Testament. I could not find that, in its lowest sense, it ever meant less than a message from the invisible God to the mind and spirit of man. The assertion that God speaks to men by His word, and that men are capable of hearing that word, was the great testimony for the truth which was implied in heathen superstitions, the great testimony against these superstitions. Idolaters were not mistaken in thinking that they needed intercourse with that which was higher than themselves; they *were* mistaken in seeking, in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, for Him who was nearer to them than He was to all the things He had made, who was the Lord of their hearts and reins. The more you study the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, the more you meditate the earliest and simplest book of the Bible—that which tells of the Voice which spoke to Adam in the garden, of the Voice which called Abram to go forth whither he knew not—the more, I am persuaded, you will feel that this is the most characteristic peculiarity of these records, that which connects them with each other, that which has given them their power over mankind.

Nevertheless, the life of the men who were said to receive these communications was eminently practical and manly. They did not pore over their own thoughts; they went forth and did the work which was given them to do, feeding flocks, bringing up children, fighting enemies. It is evident that their belief in the invisible did not in the least interfere with their business in this visible world. That they were to till and subdue by the same charter which assured

them that they were God's servants, and that His word was directing them. While they kept their faith in the unseen Teacher, the firmament over their heads became a clear daily and nightly witness respecting Him and themselves. The stars told them what their seed should be; the sun, going forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, carried the message of *their* God into all lands. It was when the faith in the invisible grew weak, that they bowed their heads and worshipped the forms which once testified to them of their greater nobleness and sublimer origin. And with this came another idolatry, in its essence grander, in its results baser. The man felt that beings of his own kind had more power over him than all the hosts of heaven. He did homage to their goodness, their wisdom, their beneficence, their strength. He confessed the king, and was raised to a higher sense of his own freedom and kingship. The king became a giant and a tyrant; *he* became a dwarf and a slave. What should raise men out of either oppression? What should set them free from the yoke which creatures below their own kind and of their own kind had imposed upon them? The Jew was taught that the Lord God was his King; that He broke the yoke of the Pharaoh and of the Pharaoh's gods; that He claimed the most abject slaves as His servants. The Israelite was brought under an order which had this foundation. In the strength of it, kings were to reign and decree judgment; they were to preserve the people from lapsing into the idolatry which would destroy their obedience and their freedom. They were to reign by the word of the Lord.

But what was this word of God which held men back who had fierce inclinations in their hearts, and who had swords to execute them in their hands? It could not be

a statute; that had no such power. It could not be a set of moral maxims; they had no such power. It could not be a promise, or a threat, about the world that is, or the world to come; neither had such power. The Prophet, living amidst the signs of decay and ruin in his own polity, amidst the earthquakes which were shaking all nations, under the overwhelming power of empires that sought to put out the life of nations, began to attach another and deeper sense to the word of God, not incompatible with the older use, but involved in it; not a metaphor or allegory deduced from it, but a higher truth lying behind it. The Word of God came to him, spoke to him in the very depths of his heart. He spoke to it, sympathised with it. But dared he say *it* any longer? No; in some wonderful manner this Word must be a Friend, a Person; One who could work with him, reprove him, illuminate him. This Word must be the Teacher, the Friend, the King of Israel. This Word must one day prove Himself to be the Lord of the whole earth. Awful discovery! which makes him tremble, and yet which makes him bold; which sometimes draws forth from him the cry, *'Woe is me! for I am an unclean man, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts;'* which again gives him all his hope both for himself and for his people. At every step of his own experience and of his nation's experience, new visions unfolded themselves out of this vision. It must be that all those various objects in nature which men were worshipping, that all the living order of nature in which those things were comprehended, proceeded from this living Word. It must be that all the races of men, all their polities, were under His guidance and government. It must be that all the light that had entered

into any man's heart had come from Him. It must be that the darkness which was in any man's heart had come from rebellion against Him.

In various ways and in different measures this truth was unveiling itself to the Prophets of old: I have had other opportunities of pointing out to you the steps of its manifestation. When I quoted the first fourteen verses of St. John's Gospel, at the close of my last sermon, I wished to show you that he had gathered up into one distinct statement, one full revelation, that which it had taken ages to spell out. I wished you to feel that there was, in one sense, no novelty in his proclamation, because he was saying that which was implied in all the past history and literature of his people; yet that there was, in another sense, the most important novelty, because that which had been implied could now for the first time be expressed. I hinted to you that in this case, as in every case, the expression did not come, till all the doubts which called for the expression had been awakened, and had become clamorous. In fact, these doubts were leading Jews, heathens, disciples of Jesus, very near indeed to the gulf of atheism. Was there an absolute Being dwelling in His own perfection? Was there a Word who uttered His mind? How was this duality compatible with the unity of the divine nature? Here was the first grand difficulty, one which did not more exercise the Jew, who had lived to proclaim that unity as the primary truth of the universe, than the Gentile philosopher who had arrived at it as a final result, as an escape from the polytheism which the vulgar must still be left to believe in. St. John uses no such phrases as unity or duality. We have the broad, old, simple Hebrew language, the language for human beings, not for speculators. We hear of a living God, not

of a notion. And this God is, as the old record had said, a Creator. Men had been asking in all countries how is the world related to God? Did He make it as an artificer makes a dead instrument? Did it flow from Him as a thought flows from the meditative man? Or is it self-made? Is God Himself a part of it, merely the spring of its movements? St. John answers, '*The world was made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life.*' It was no dead instrument turned forth by a mechanist. It was no part of Himself. It was no order moving by itself without Him. It was a world of living, productive forces, governed by a Person. His own life was quickening the movements of His creatures; His own wisdom was directing them. The philosophical puzzle is met by words which, I think, you will find are adapted to the physical science of the nineteenth century, as much as they were to the theological doubts of the first century; which show where theology and physical science meet, how they are distinguished, how they are reconciled. And yet the language is still the child's language, the fisherman's language. It is Moses, not Plato, who is revived in the Ephesian teacher.

Then come verses which meet the troubles of the heart and conscience of man, as those meet the troubles of his intellect,—which speak to him of himself, as those speak of the world. How simple they are! How entirely they accord with what I have been showing you were the thoughts of old Patriarchs and Prophets! And yet what worlds of speculation they encounter! what theories about the conscience they come in contact with! what webs or mythology they unravel! Above all, how they explain the thoughts of those who cannot reason, and yet are subject to

those laws about which all reasoning is conversant! ‘*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness does not take it down into itself.*’ What have not those words been to men, who have been for years trying to reconcile the contradictory phenomena of their own spirits! ‘Word of God, thy light has been shining in me, flashing into my heart, discovering the dark places and passages there! The darkness tries to comprehend, to hide, to quench thy light! Thanks be to Thee, it cannot.’

The transition appears great from this sentence—so general, yet so individual,—concerning the beginning of the world and the latest days of it—to the words, ‘*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*’ No doubt we are reminded by the change that the writer belonged to a particular age—to an age in which there were many disciples of John the Baptist still alive, who were inclined to claim for him the very highest honour that could belong to a divine messenger.¹ The Apostle was especially likely to know what followers of the Baptist would say and feel respecting him, since he had probably been one of them. But he does not forget the subject with which he was occupied before, when he turns to his old master and to those who were paying him an extravagant homage. He introduces John that he may declare what every man sent from God in the former times had done,—what every such man in that time, in all time to come, must do: ‘*The same came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*’ ‘You who listened to John, if there are any of you yet on earth, what was

¹ There could be few, if any, such left in the century to which the Gospel is assigned by those who deny it to St. John.

‘ the effect of his speech, his look, his baptism upon you? ‘ I will tell you what it was upon me. As he said “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,*” my darkness was ‘ revealed to me. That darkness was discovered by the ‘ divine light of which he spoke. He came to bear witness ‘ of this light, that you and I might believe in it.’ Here was one mighty, unspeakable cause of gratitude to him. But, ‘ *He was not that Light, but was sent that he might witness of the Light.*’ So was it with John preaching by the side of Jordan. Was the saying less true of Jeremiah preaching beside the temple that was to be desolate, of Ezekiel preaching by the river Chebar? Was it less true of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, of St. Paul at Antioch? Was it less true of Bernard, of Francis of Assisi, of Luther, of any man who in later days has awakened men out of a slumber of death? What can be said of each except this: ‘ *The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light*’? What would each have said of himself but this: ‘ *I am not that Light, but am come that I may bear witness of that Light*’?

The Apostle says this; but he has something greater and deeper to say. He says, ‘ *That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*’ ‘ We may have felt, when we heard the preacher in the wilderness, ‘ as if there were some new light shining then for the first ‘ time into our hearts. We may have supposed it was ‘ kindled by the speaker. But no star arose in the firmament at his bidding; that which struck us with such ‘ wonder had been with us from our birth. When any ‘ man comes into this order of ours, he finds the Word ‘ there.’ ‘ *He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.*’ Think of all the

strange dreams of immortality that have visited human beings; their sense of a law of right and wrong; their acknowledgment of powers which assert the right and avenge the wrong! Think how these great facts of humanity have affected the condition of men in every region of the world,—how politics, legislation, civil society, have been shaped by them! Think of the confusions respecting immortality, respecting the boundaries of right and wrong, respecting the justice and injustice of the invisible kings and judges whose power has been confessed and feared! Think of the superstitions, oppressions, slaveries, that have grown out of these confusions! And then read once again this sentence, ‘*He was in the world*’—He from whom light came—‘*and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.*’ See if you have not there the clear, scientific explanation of these strange facts; the universal law which tells you how they could exist together. See if that scientific explanation, that universal law, is not brought to an experimental test; so that every man, every child may know, from that which has passed in himself, what it means. ‘*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*’ The light came into men’s hearts, as into its proper native dwelling-place. The Word from whom that light issued asserted His right over all the feelings, instincts, impulses, determinations of these hearts, as over His own rightful domestics and subjects. But the light was repelled; the rightful Ruler was treated as an intruder by these domestics and subjects. There was anarchy and rebellion, where there should have been subordination and harmony. A usurper had reduced those into slavery who would not have the service which is freedom. ‘*But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to*

become sons of God ; which were born, not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.' The last words seemed to speak of an order subverted, of a creation which had lost its centre. These declare that the order was preserved ; that the centre still proved its power to attract, and to retain in their orbits, the bodies which were intended to move around it. There were those that confessed the Light ; there were those that entertained it, that sought to walk in it. There were those who submitted themselves to the government of their true Ruler. And they attained the stature of men ; they learnt themselves, they manifested to others whence they had come, what was their parentage. *'To them gave He power to become sons of God.'* They were sons of men, born to the same condition as others of their kind ; but He made them know that in their inmost being they were not born of earthly or human seed, but had their life from above, from Him who liveth and abideth for ever.

Up to this point, I conceive, the Evangelist has not even touched upon any principle or fact specially belonging to the Christian theology, to the new dispensation. He has been unfolding the principle of the old. He has been discoursing of that law and government under which all had lived, whether they were prophets or people, whether they were true prophets or false, whether they were Gentiles or Jews. He has claimed the high prerogative of a Jew, the prerogative of interpreting the condition of mankind ; of declaring in what relation those stood to God who had been ignorant of their relation, or who had seen it dimly, or had denied it. Even when he speaks of John, it is as the Prophet of the old world ; as winding up the witness which previous Prophets had borne to the Word,

from which all the light that was in them had streamed out. He says nothing yet of any future Teacher to whom John pointed. And, as we shall see hereafter, when he does come, in due order, to the part of John's teaching in which he spoke of One whose shoe's latchet he was not worthy to unloose, it is that he may quote the memorable language, '*He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for He was before me. And of His fulness have all we received, and grace answering to grace.*' You cannot hear that fragment of a divine discourse without perceiving that the object of the Evangelist is to carry us into the past before he speaks of the future; that he regards the especial grandeur of the new time as this, that it reveals that which had been of old, that which had been from the beginning. But it was absolutely necessary to the coherency and continuity of the Apostle's statement that he should not introduce these words of the Baptist—wonderfully as they illustrate the account of his mission which had been given previously—till he had first made that announcement which is contained in the text: '*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*'

This, my brethren, I regard not as the text of my sermon, but of St. John's Gospel. I conceive that Gospel is nothing more nor less than the setting forth how Jesus Christ proved Himself in human flesh to be that Word of God in whom was life, and whose life was the light of men, who had been in the world, and by whom the world was made, and whom the world knew not; how in that flesh He manifested forth the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father; how He manifested the fulness of grace and truth. It is because the theology of St. John comes forth

in these human facts that I affirmed it to be a theology not merely different from the systematic school theology, but the great deliverance from it. I should, therefore, be departing from my object and belying my professions, if instead of waiting for the gradual discovery of the meaning of these words in St. John's story, I began with thrusting my own meaning into them. All I ought to do,—and this I must do, for the very purpose of showing you how strict and beautiful the Apostle's method is, and how much wrong we do to ourselves and him when we forsake it,—is to point out, very shortly, the connexion which I trace between this verse and the one that immediately precedes it.

The Evangelist had said of those who received the Word, '*to them gave He power to become the sons of God.*' A new expression—to a certain extent, a new thought—is brought before us here. We had heard of the Word as One in whom is life; we had heard that His life was the light of men. All the language concerning Him had been such as applies—not to an abstraction, not to an essence, but—to a Person. But now it is said that those who accept His government, who are penetrated by His light, acquire a *power* which they had not before. They discover a *relation* which had been hidden from them. It was the greatest of all their earthly blessings that they had fathers according to the flesh. A higher blessing is conferred upon them now; they can act as if they had a heavenly Father. *As if* they had a heavenly Father! But are they never to know certainly whether they have or not? Is the power of becoming sons not to be associated with the clear consciousness that this is their proper and original state? '*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*' He became a man among men. We beheld Him, and we know that He was

—what He told us that He was—not an independent Being, but a Son. He was not merely a Light of lights. We are sure that He was the ground of all human sonship; that He was the only-begotten of a Father. That higher, more blessed, more perfect name thenceforth mingled itself with all our thoughts of that God whom no man hath seen or can see; it turned our thoughts into trust and worship. The Absolute Truth and Goodness shone forth through Him. The only-Begotten revealed Him who had been from the beginning. He opened a new dispensation, because He made us know that God who had been speaking to us in the old.

DISCOURSE III.

THE TEACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

[Lincoln's Inn, 2d Sunday in Lent, February 17, 1856.]

ST. JOHN I. 29.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

JOHN the Baptist is represented throughout this chapter as speaking of One who had been before him, though He was coming after him. This is the burden of his discourse. It has been asked by the bold critics of another country, whether such language does not presume a belief in the preexistence of our Lord, which might belong to one of his apostles, but could scarcely belong to his forerunner. English divines ordinarily reply, that the question is one which cannot be entertained. 'How can we dispute the right of the Divine Wisdom to make a special revelation of this doctrine to one person or to another?'

This may be the right method of treating such an objection; but if the remarks which I made in my two last sermons were true, we are not under any necessity of resorting to it. I endeavoured to show you that the principle which St. John asserts in the opening verses of his Gospel, was far from being characteristically a doctrine of

the New Testament. It belongs to the Old. It is involved in the words, acts, lives of the Jewish Prophets. It could not indeed be enunciated by them as it is enunciated by the beloved disciple. There is a largeness in it which could not be fully realized till the barrier between Jews and Gentiles had been broken down. Still it was as a Jew—as an interpreter of the Jewish records—that the writer of the fourth Gospel spoke of the Word of God. He was not using new language, which would have startled his hearers. He was expressing, in simple and familiar language, what others of his countrymen had hidden from the vulgar under learned phrases and dark conceits. Why is it difficult to believe that, in doing so, he was recording some of the lessons which he had first received from the preacher in the wilderness? Was it strange that he, the last of the Prophets, should utter in more distinct terms that which all the Prophets before him had been imperfectly uttering? External evidence would be in favour of such a supposition. The Baptist was a contemporary of teachers who notoriously spoke of the light in men's hearts and of the Word from whom it issued. Many of *his* disciples became, we know, afterwards blended with *their* disciples. There was, however, one all-important distinction between him and them. He spoke to the hearts of the multitude,—to the publicans and the soldiers; they spoke to students. He appealed to those who were conscious of folly and sin; they spoke of the illumination which was granted to the righteous and the wise. And that is just the difference which we have recognised between the statements of the Apostle, the disciple of the Baptist, and those Alexandrian teachers whom some suppose him to have imitated. It is not only that his style is

simple and childlike. Throughout he speaks of the light as making men aware of the *darkness* that is in them. Throughout he speaks of the light as lightening *all* men.

Are these reports of the Baptist inconsistent with those which we derive from the other Evangelists? Are we not told that he came to level the hills, and exalt the valleys? Are we not told that he bade his countrymen not say within themselves that they had Abraham to their father, because God was able of the stones to raise up children to Abraham? What finer commentary can we find on these announcements than the words, '*He testified of the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*'?

Still the reader of St. John's Gospel will continue to ask himself, 'Is not the lesson which I am taught here, in some sense or other, a more advanced lesson than that which was imparted even by the first Evangelists,—*à fortiori*, than that which was imparted before the day of Pentecost, before the resurrection, the death, even the preaching, of Jesus Christ?' I think, my brethren, that there is a confusion latent in this word '*advanced*'—a confusion which besets other studies as well as theological. We speak of Bacon's discovery of the true method of physical investigation, as the greatest step in advance which it was possible for the man of science to take. But in another sense that discovery involved a retrogression. The schoolman, who had proceeded with the greatest satisfaction to himself in building a tower of speculations respecting nature, is stopped in his work and bidden to look back to his foundations. Classifications and generalizations which had appeared convenient and indispensable, are disallowed, because they hinder direct

intercourse with the facts. And the laborious collector of facts, though he is commended for his diligence, is told that every one of them must be submitted to tests before we can know what it is worth. Is it not true, in this and in all similar instances, that the greatest progress consists in the assertion and elucidation of first principles; that when they are asserted and elucidated, all faithful effort is seen to have been directed to the search for them,—all unfaithful, self-seeking efforts, to the construction of systems on hypothetical sand?

Applying this remark to the case before us, I conceive we may freely say, as some of the early Fathers said, that St. John's Gospel is the most spiritual and divine of all the Gospels. And we may maintain its claim to that honour, by showing that it leads us to a grand primary truth, affecting all human beings, capable of being apprehended by those who have least of what is called culture, capable of making itself manifest to the consciences of the most guilty. Does not his Gospel, *for this reason*, establish the truth of the other Gospels and Epistles, which had been unfolding the ways of God to men? May it not, for the same reason, have brought a number of false gospels to the test, and have scattered a number of windy theories and popular systems, which, under philosophical or theological pretences, were separating God from His creatures? Nor can I find anything inconsistent with reason and probability—or with the doctrine of Scripture that the Spirit of God brings back to the remembrance of those whom He is teaching the lessons they received, the states of mind they passed through in days long past—in the supposition that the Apostle owed his clear perception of this universal truth, in a great measure, to the vividness with which

the experiences of his youth were revived in him; the sixty or seventy wonderful years which had passed over his head since he stood by the Jordan, and saw the shaggy form and awful eye of him who first spoke to him of a kingdom of heaven, helping him to take in the meaning of the words which seized and possessed him then, though he was not able to seize and possess them.

I have been anxious to make these observations, because it seems to me that the passage of St. John's Gospel of which I am to speak to-day will be utterly obscure to us—nay, that the whole Gospel will be obscure—if we forget them. St. John can in nowise separate the idea of the Baptist from that of a witness concerning the Light, a messenger to declare the divine Word that in Him all men might believe. This he considers the fundamental, radical meaning of his mission, apart from which his baptism of repentance had no sense or purpose whatever. But to identify *a man* as connected with this teaching—as the subject of it—this was the difficulty. To do this the Baptist needed a special, formal revelation, accompanied by an outward sign. The baptism of Jesus, and the visible token that the Spirit was given Him, are said to have been the assurance which was required. While he was without it, he was a preacher of the Word who was with God and was God. He was a preacher of a light of men. He was announcing, as the prophets of old had announced, that a day of the Lord was at hand; that there would be a manifestation of the light. Thenceforth he began to mingle his previous message with announcements concerning *the Word made flesh*. These announcements are not repeated as if they were parts of a continuous discourse, like his words to the crowds that had flocked to

him from every part of Palestine. They come forth as if they were the effect of sudden intuitions—lightning flashes which must often have been followed by periods of dimness and darkness. John knew that a crisis was at hand which would try the hearts of all men. He knew that he was sent by God to speak to their hearts of Him, as being the same now that He had been in the days of their fathers. He knew that whatever good was awaiting his countrymen must come from a fuller revelation of God. This was the preparation, the only possible preparation in his own mind, for the recognition of Jesus as the Christ,—the only way in which he could prepare his countrymen for *such* a Christ.

We are all aware—we dwell upon the assertion—that the Jews were at this time expecting a Christ, but that their expectations were of a wrong kind; that they pointed to a deliverer different in most respects from the One who had been promised them. We cannot, perhaps, exaggerate this error, but we may make considerable mistakes when we try to state in what it consisted. We sometimes say that the Jews were looking for a great *Prince*. Undoubtedly they were. If they read the Prophets, they must have looked for a king. The other Evangelists say that Jesus proved Himself to be a King, and so fulfilled the words of the Prophets. We shall find that St John says the same. ‘Yes,’ we go on, ‘a King in a certain sense, but not a *temporal* king’ What! is not our Lord said to have been born in the days of Herod—to have been baptized when He was about thirty years old—to have been tempted forty days—to have kept annual feasts—to have risen the third day—to have tarried forty days among His disciples after the resurrection? All the acts which are recorded of Him

in the Gospels were acts done in time. 'Yes,' we resume, 'if you define temporal in this exact manner. But the Jews thought He was to be an "earthly" king.' And were not all the powers by which He showed Himself to be a king, exercised upon earth for the sons of earth, for the removal of the plagues and diseases to which earth is liable? We make another experiment. We say, they supposed that He was to be a *Jewish* king. Could they suppose otherwise? Was not David to have an heir to his throne? Do not the Evangelists take pains to speak of their Master as the Son of David?

The Jews of that time cannot be fairly condemned on these grounds; and yet our conviction that they were under some grievous mistake, gains strength from all we read of them—nay, from our very failures to define the quality of it. May not St. John himself explain the error which had caused him such unspeakable sorrow, better than we can? Have we not the explanation here?

The Jews looked for one who was *coming* to be a leader and deliverer. He might come with the manifest tokens of royalty. He might come as one of the old prophets had come. It was not impossible that he might be born in some humble station, for David had been a shepherd. It was probable that he would be born in a lowly *village*, for Bethlehem was associated with the name of David. He *might* be this John, for his coarse food and raiment certainly did not show him not to be an Elijah, or an Isaiah, or a Daniel. And John had given this proof of power, that he was drawing multitudes to hear discourses that had no apparent charm—that were stern and terrible. It was not at all impossible, nay, it might be presumed, that when the Christ came, He would introduce some new

ordinance, or give a new force to one already in use. The river of Jordan had a sacred historical importance; to wash men in that might denote that he was preparing Israelites for conquests like those of Joshua. No doubt, other signs might be added to this in due time; there would probably be strange appearances in the heavens,—some of the tokens which had accompanied the rare visits of angels that are recorded in the Old Testament. For who could tell whether the Christ might not *be* an angel, the visitant from another region? Who could tell whether He might not be an old seer returning to the earth again? There were all these possibilities. One was stronger in this mind, and one in that. Which was the truest, the scribes hoped in due time to discover, by studying the letter of the divine oracles, and ascertaining what particulars of time and place were indicated in them as necessary conditions of the deliverer.

What was there faulty in such speculations? What was there to complain of in the test which was applied to ascertain their worth? St. John suggests *this* answer to us. They were expecting one that should come after all prophets, not one that had been before all. They were looking for a son of David, a prophet, an angel; they were not looking for One who had been with God, and was God. They were looking for one whom they should recognise with their eyes; they were not looking for One whose light had been always shining in their hearts. They were looking for a king who should reign over men; they did not think that that King must be One who had from the beginning been the Light of men. They thought of one who should be born into the world; they did not think that He who was to be born into the world was One

who was in the world, and by whom the world was made, though the world knew Him not.

It was precisely to bring this information, in the only way in which it could be brought to any human being, that we are told the man John was sent from God. And because the whole mind of the Prophet was possessed with this conviction, he was able to receive the communication which told him that a Man, without any signs of royalty, without any signs of prophetic dignity, One who had apparently been born and brought up in Galilee, One who had given no proof that He possessed any power of commanding the services of multitudes or of individuals,—was that Christ in whom all the characteristics of King and Prophet were to meet. This Man, he says, this carpenter's son, was He of whom I spake, '*He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for He was before me.*' Possibly a better translation of the last clause might be found, but the one we have is good enough; it conveys the sense of the original, though it be a little diluted. The next verse, as I said last Sunday, is naturally connected with this. Both, I believe, must be taken as part of John's witness. Here is that divine Word of God, out of whom all grace has issued. Each right and true man has had some grace, denoting him to be of divine origin. In Him dwelt that fulness of grace and glory, of which these were the scattered rays. Then the Evangelist comments upon this witness, and connects it with what he had said in the fifteenth verse. '*For the law was given through Moses, but the grace and the truth became through Jesus Christ.*' Outward law, literal commands, tables of stone, had been given through a mere man, a mere servant or messenger. But all the grace and the truth, which were the essence of

the law, which could not be expressed in letters, but only in the lives and acts of human beings,—these became parts of any man's character through Jesus Christ. For these belonged to the nature of God Himself,—these constituted His being. In Himself they could not be seen: '*No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,*' He it is who in all ages has brought forth the divine perfection, in distinct qualities, and has exhibited them to men, and in men.

So far we have the testimony of John, originally addressed, it would appear, to his own disciples—now illustrated and expounded by the matured wisdom of one of them. Next we have the record of John, '*when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask Him, Who art thou?*' They had a right to know. A new pretender had started up. Slight as his credentials seemed to be, the people were crowding about him. He was baptizing, not Gentiles, but Jews; he was treating the most religious and exalted as if they were impure, as if they needed the same cleansing as those needed who had not been born in the covenant. What did it all mean? The messengers must get some clear distinct satisfaction on this point before they returned to their masters. '*And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ.*' The questioners must have been surprised. If he did not actually claim a title which so many had claimed, they might have expected a little hesitation. He might have left the point open; he might have allowed his scholars to assert the dignity for him. There was another possibility. Malachi had said that an Elijah would come. John certainly had few marks of grandeur about him; but he dwelt in a desert; he did not fear the face of kings; he

could have denounced Ahab and Jezebel, as he afterwards denounced Herod and Herodias. He evidently understood the question literally, for the messengers intended it literally. They supposed that Elijah had been carried away into some invisible region, and that from thence he himself would descend. Seeing, therefore, that John was not one who trafficked with words in a double sense, or who would convey a falsehood in the terms of truth, he answered to this demand also, '*I am not.*' But Isaiah, Jeremiah, all the Jewish seers, had not only spoken of a great Conqueror,—they had spoken also of a Sufferer. A few might try to identify the characters. The prevailing opinion among the Jews was of course then, as it is now, that they were separated,—one description denoted a King, the other a Prophet. If he was not a King, was he that Prophet? And again he answered, '*No.*'

The messengers have exhausted their guesses; they begin to be provoked. It will not do to go back merely with a set of negatives. '*Then said they, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us: What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*' You see how carefully he associates his message with that of the old prophets; how confident he is that he is preparing a way just as they were; how sure he is that it is the way of the Lord—that wonderful road between the unseen Being and the heart of His creatures, of which they had one and all spoken. So far he was using language which belongs to every psalmist and every prophet. In adopting the words in the 40th chapter of Isaiah, as the description of his calling and his work, he proved more distinctly that he was '*sent to bear*

witness of the Light, that all men through Him might believe.' For the burden of that chapter is, that Jerusalem should lift up her voice, and say to the cities of Judah, '*Behold your God;*' and it is the beginning of a series of prophetic inspirations, in which the Jew is represented as holding up the true image of God to all nations, that the images which they had made of Him might be confounded. John was preparing the way, then, for a declaration or manifestation of God; he was clearing away the thorns and briars which blocked up the path between the Word of God and the conscience of man.

St. John significantly intimates how little language of this kind could be intelligible to the Jewish emissaries, for he adds, '*They that were sent were of the Pharisees.*' Very characteristically they relieved themselves of the embarrassment which the Scripture always caused them, when it could not be measured by lines and rules, when it appealed to the hearts of living men, by asking, '*Why baptizest thou, then, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elias, neither that Prophet?*' They had an excuse for urging that demand. It was an audacious thing for a man to practise such a rite, to press it upon all, to speak of it as a baptism for repentance and the sending away of sins, if he had not some divine authority for what he was doing. Yet he had produced none. And now he refused all the titles which would seem to have been the warrants for such an innovation. Nor does he tell the Pharisees when or how he received his commission. His answer is, '*I baptize with water: but in the midst of you there standeth One whom ye know not; He it is who, coming after me, was preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy that I should unloose.*' More is not said here. The messengers are

not told what this Person who is in the midst of them would do, which John could not do; that announcement is reserved for another occasion. The thought which he still dwells upon is, that there is a mysterious Being in the midst of them, their Lord and his; One who has power to command, One whom he is bound to obey. By speaking of the latchet of the sandal, he clearly intimates that this Person is among them in a visible form. But neither in that form, nor in His own proper nature, do they know Him. They would know Him as little if they were told His name, if He stood out before them, even if He exhibited His power to them, as they did then. I am warranted in believing that *this* is the sense of the words; for we shall find how continually our Lord resorts to the same phrase in His conversations with the Jews, and assures them that though they saw Him, they *knew* Him not.

We have now reached the words of the text. They are carefully separated by the Evangelist from the discourse with the Pharisees. '*These things,*' he says, '*were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming to him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*' But though the sentence formed no part of *that* discourse, it is immediately joined to the words which have recurred so often: '*This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me; for He was before me.*'

It is evident, then, I think, that we shall never enter into the force of this wonderful sentence, which has exercised more power over eighteen centuries, than perhaps any which was ever spoken or written, if we take it apart from the context of John the Baptist's life and of his preaching. All have felt that the preacher must have meant those to

behold the Taker-away of sin, who had come confessing their sins, and to whom he had spoken of the remission of sins; that upon others the words must have fallen as dull, dead words, in which they had no interest. Is it not equally true that the words, '*sin of the world*,' must have been connected by them with what they had heard of One who was in the world, and whom the world knew not? and with what they had heard of 'a light which lighteneth every man who came into the world, and of a darkness that had not comprehended it? I do not mean that this discovery to each man of his own darkness, this perception of a light near him which he had resisted, this conviction in each man that his sin *was* the sin of the world, were of themselves sufficient to unfold the infinite mystery which lay in the Baptist's words. I say of them, what I said of the verse, '*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth;*' all this Gospel is written to expound them. We must decipher them by degrees, as the Apostle and Evangelist himself deciphered them; he will lead us along with him, if we are content to follow. And do not let us be chary and timid in the demands we make upon him. Let us endure no half explanations that rob us of any portion of the meaning which must be hid in such an utterance. Let us have no imperfect substitute for any syllable of it. For the sake of our own inmost being, for the sake of our brethren, we want the whole meaning in its fullest strength. If we are told that there is One who takes away *sin*, we must not be content that He should be shown to take away some accident or consequence of sin. If He is said to take away the sin of the *world*, we must not be told that the world is a metaphor for a few

individuals. We must ask why He who takes away sin is called a *Lamb*,—why he is called the Lamb of *God*? If a lamb is associated in our minds with innocence and purity, we must learn how that idea is fulfilled in *this* Lamb. If it was connected in the mind of every Jew with the sacrifice of the Paschal feast, we must ask how this Lamb includes whatever is expressed in that sacrifice and that feast? I do not anticipate St. John's answers to these demands; but as he has himself excited them, I am sure he will prove himself to be an honest and a God-inspired man, by telling us how they were satisfied for him, how they may be for us.

One thing more he must tell us also, and may God open our hearts to receive his instruction! John the Baptist says, that he had come baptizing with water, in order that He might be manifested to Israel who would baptize with the Spirit. Here is evidently the turning-point of the two dispensations; here the teaching of John melts away into the teaching of Jesus; here the witness of the servant is changed for the witness of the Son. Seeing, then, that St. John takes so much pains to mark this transition; seeing that the office of Christ, as the Baptizer with the Spirit, is evidently that which he will especially dwell upon in the after portions of his Gospel,—let us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that what we have heard respecting the Word will be a preparation for this more especially Christian lore, provided we have not only heard with our outward ear, but have suffered the light which is shining now, as it shone of old, to penetrate our consciences and hearts, and to turn them from their own darkness to the God who dwelleth in perfect light, in whom is no darkness at all.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE LAMB OF GOD AND THE SON OF GOD.

[Lincoln's Inn, 3d Sunday in Lent, February 24, 1856.]

ST. JOHN I. 46.

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

I MADE no attempt to explain the verse which I took for my text last Sunday. I merely endeavoured to show you how it was connected with those which preceded it. I was sure that it would receive abundance of light from those which come after it. A series of ages, I said, had confessed the force of the words. We must take care that we do not allow the strength of any one of them to evaporate in our hands.

Some have been surprised that John should speak of a *Lamb* who beareth or taketh away the sin of the world. Was there not another image which would present itself more naturally to a subject and a student of the law of Moses? Might not the scapegoat, upon whose head the priest's hands were laid, over whose head the sins of the people were confessed, be said more strictly to bear away sins than the Paschal Lamb? Did not the scenery by which John was surrounded far more naturally recal the

animal who went away into a land not inhabited? Why should the man whose food was locusts and wild honey go to a feast for his emblem? Why should the preacher in the wilderness think of the *Paschal* feast, which belonged to the city and the family?

A modern preacher would attach great weight to these considerations. As a rhetorician, he would be careful to choose the topics which are most likely to impress his immediate audience. There can be little doubt that among (what he would call) the types of the Old Testament, the scapegoat would seem to him far the most impressive. I am not drawing too much upon your reverence for the man who was 'more than a prophet,' if I ask you to believe that he may have had reasons, almost as good, for his course. Some of these we may see more clearly hereafter; one of them, I think, we may divine now. The disciples whom John was addressing had heard his call to repentance, had received his baptism of repentance. They had the sense of a sin close to themselves, *in* themselves. To men who have this awakened consciousness, sin presents itself as a present burden; as such, the most ignorant, the most simple, feel it and speak of it. We often fancy that the conscience of poor men only responds to palpable pictures of future torments. Multitudes of religious tracts and books, Romish and Protestant, are composed upon this calculation; they are written *for* the people. There is one English religious book written *by* a man of the people, by one who had endured all possible anticipations of future misery himself, the habits of whose school would have led him to press them as the most powerful motives upon others. The genius of the book has been confessed of late years by scholars; its power has been felt by peasants in this land,

and in all lands into the language of which it has been translated, almost since it issued from the writer's gaol. To what is the *Pilgrim's Progress* indebted for this influence? Certainly to the strength with which the feeling of evil, as an actual load too heavy to be borne, is brought home to its readers. It is the man groaning with the burden upon his back, whom rich and poor sympathise with, whom each recognises as of his own kindred, who is suffering something which is incommunicable, and yet which every other man is suffering from, or has suffered from, or should suffer from. So it is with the tinkers and ploughmen of England, when they are aroused out of their sensual sleep; so it was with the fishermen and publicans who were gathered about the Jordan. They knew they had a burden, an actual burden, upon them. John's baptism had given them a pledge and witness that it might be taken from them. Already it seemed to be lightened; sometimes they could think they were free from it. How could they be delivered from it altogether? To confess themselves to God was an infinite relief; they rose up happier men. But did the confession really ascend to God? Was it possible in deed and truth to approach Him? Was there nothing to intercept the communion? Was there any one who could interpret them to Him, and Him to them? Was there any one who knew what they were feeling? Was there any one who could bear the burden that was crushing them, not into an uninhabited land, but into the very presence of God? For was not this burden, after all, a sense of separation from a Being to whom they ought to be united, apart from whom they could not live? Had not the light which had come from Him into their hearts brought this discovery with it? The scapegoat:

contained, no doubt, a deep lesson to those who pondered it well; but it was not *this* lesson—it was not one which those could take in who were feeling sin as an inward torment pressing upon their hearts. The Paschal *Lamb* spoke of a deliverance from bondage; it spoke of a deliverance as coming from God; it spoke of an offering to God. The thoughts which the name suggested might not be distinct; they might be hard to reconcile with each other. But the cravings which it met, though importunate, were also apparently contradictory. It awakened hopes; the satisfaction of them might come hereafter.

But if John had merely spoken of an animal, let it have what associations with Jewish or with human feeling it might—let it be the aptest symbol in the world—the impression upon disciples who had been stirred in the inmost depths of their souls as his had been, would have been a very faint one. It was because he pointed to an actual Man, and said of Him, ‘*Behold the Lamb of God,*’ that he spoke with power. Those who were suffering from a burden might desire to cast it upon God, might doubt if any one but He could sustain it. But who could understand their grief, who could feel its pressure, except a Man? All their sympathies and wishes pointed to a Man. Yet hitherto John had discoursed of a Light and of a Word. To that message their hearts had replied. It was that which had effected all the change within them. Was he now altering the tone of his preaching? Was he beginning to tell them of some one of whom they had not heard before? He removes that suspicion at once. The old sentence recurs again, but with a variation: ‘*This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a MAN which is preferred before me; for He was before me.*’ He goes on: ‘*And I knew*

Him not. This assurance jars with some of the thoughts which pictures that are dear to us have awakened in our minds. We can hardly separate the infant Christ from the infant Baptist. We feel as if the reverence expressed in the words, '*His shoe's latchet I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose,*' had begun in the earliest years of their sojourn upon earth, and had been maturing ever since. I rather fancy we weaken the effect which we might derive from the artist's symbols, by endeavouring to give them an historical value to which they can certainly make no pretension. It is not that these pictorial traditions are based upon passages in the other Evangelists, and that they are only at variance with St. John. St. Luke speaks of Jesus as being taken by His parents into Galilee after His circumcision. He speaks of John being in the deserts until the day of his showing to Israel. St. Matthew interposes the flight into Egypt between our Lord's nativity and His dwelling at Nazareth. Both surely favour, rather than contradict, the strictest interpretation of the saying, '*I knew Him not.*' I do not say that we are absolutely obliged to adopt that strictest interpretation. But we are, I conceive, obliged to conclude that no external acquaintance or relationship had the least effect upon John's knowledge of Jesus, in that character in which He was revealed to him at His baptism. The Apostle is evidently very anxious to impress us with *this* conviction. Few as are the words of his old Master which he reports, these are emphatically repeated. It belongs, I think, to the very design of this Gospel, to show us that John came to testify, first, of the Light of the world, then of that Light as manifested. '*That He should be manifested to Israel,*' he says in the next verse, '*therefore am I come baptizing with water.*'

That He might be revealed as what He is; that through His flesh the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father might shine forth; that the inward eye of men might be purged to behold Him in His true character and in His true relation to them,—this has been the end of my preaching, and of the outward rite that accompanied it.

‘And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.’ That there should be an outward sign visible to the eye, a Dove lighting upon the head of a Man,—that there should be a Voice speaking to Him,—this is a great scandal to many readers and critics in our day. ‘Are not these,’ they say, ‘the ordinary tokens of mythical narratives? Are they not what always awaken our suspicion in the records of the Old World or of the Middle Ages?’ Yes, brethren, in the Old World and in the Middle Ages, men alike felt the need of outward signs to testify of inward realities. They felt it because they *were* men, separated from each other by place, by customs, by language, by religion,—but alike in being men; alike in their conviction that there must be an outward world which they could see, and an inward world which they could not see. It is equally true that in the Old World and in the Middle Ages, the sensible thing was confounded with the spiritual, the sign was substituted for the thing signified; and that hence arose all kinds of superstition and idolatry. It is true, also, that in those days and in later days—in *these* days most especially—

people create for themselves a middle world, neither sensible nor spiritual, in which there are no signs, because there is nothing to be signified; in which there are only forms and abstractions of the intellect, some of which are distinguished as religious forms, some as ethical or philosophical, pleasant to the vanity of those who have need of nothing, and can keep themselves alive by talking and disputing, but vague, unreal, utterly tormenting to men who are seeking a home and a father. St. John does not dwell in this limbo of vanity. He is *like* the writers of legends, in so far as he assumes that there are signs, and that there are realities which correspond to the signs. He tells us that when God was about to reveal the greatest of all realities to the spirits of men, He vouchsafed a sign of it which was discernible by the eye. He is *unlike* the writers of those legends, in so far forth as they rested in signs, or forgot in the signs that which they denoted. The Dove is to him the sign of a Spirit, which would enable Him in whom it dwelt without measure, to rule his own senses and the world of sense. The Voice was a witness that a Man who had flesh and blood was really and actually the Son of God.

John the Baptist has still more to declare concerning signs, and that which they signify. He had baptized with *water*. The water had spoken in language clearer than any which can be put into letters, of cleansing, of purification. Those who had received it had come to it because they were sure that they needed the blessing of which it testified. They had come because they believed, more or less clearly, that God had ordained the rite, and that He alone could bestow the blessing. But the preaching of repentance for the remission of sins had made them

aware that the evil was in a region which the water could not reach. Had it, then, been all a delusion? Was this rite, new at least for Jews, a mere phantasy, less powerful even than the rite of circumcision which had not prevented them from being treacherous to each other, and from blaspheming the name of God? Was the stern speaker of truth a mere mocker, trifling with the consciences which he had himself aroused? If his baptism was from himself, he was. If it was bearing witness of One who had come to men in past days, and given them power to become sons of God, the baptism was good because it was His sign and instrument. But the sign of what? Surely the sign of some process that was taking place in the spirits of men. And if so, would not that process be declared whensoever He was declared? Would not the baptism thenceforth be the assurance that a power adequate to the purification of that which was defiled, to the restoration of that which was decayed—adequate to the renewal of the whole man—was bestowed by Him who had in all times given those who received Him power to become sons of God? ‘*Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is He which shall baptize with the Holy Ghost.*’

‘*Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God.*’ The words, ‘*which taketh away the sin of the world,*’ are not repeated, at least not in the best manuscripts. They had been spoken once. Now the Lamb of God had been connected with a new and higher name. John had borne record that this was the *Son* of God. All the dignity and wonder of the former title were attached to Him still. There was an awe about *this* which must have made the disciples wonder, but yet which

attracted them. ‘*They heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*’ The story of their intercourse is most simple. There is no mysterious concealment; there are no surprising incidents. ‘*Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day; for it was about the tenth hour.*’ What is there in such a record to detain us for an instant? Only *this*, brethren; it is the beginning of the history of Christendom, of the whole new world. This meeting of these two men—one of whose names we do not know, the other whom we do know to have been a Galilæan fisherman—with Jesus of Nazareth, is the first step in a movement which has in some way or other changed the life, polity, relations of mankind. If it is so, we may consider with ourselves, in some quiet hour, *why* it is so? Perhaps we may find some other explanation than that which St. John gives—that the Man to whom these disciples came was the Light of men, and that He proved, by contact with those who had least light of their own, that He was *their* Light. Or perhaps we may find that interpretation, on the whole, the best: and then we shall not seek further, but lay that to heart.

The three next verses bring us a step further in the history; they are still of the same character. ‘*One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonu. thou shalt be called Cephas, which*

is by interpretation, A stone.' We found how hard it was for the Pharisees to make out a conception of the Christ, though they pored continually over the Scriptures, and had a series of interpreters to assist in divining the sense of them. And here this unlettered fisherman—unlettered probably in the strictest sense—boldly tells his brother that he has found the Christ. He is sure that he has. He can bid him come and see whether it is a mistake. 'What fanatical confidence!' every scribe would have exclaimed—nay, did exclaim—as soon as he learnt what these fishermen were believing. Should not most of us say the same if we spoke our minds? For what had Andrew to convince him? He had seen none of the miracles upon which we say the evidence of Christ's mission rests. We may be sure that he had not heard Jesus say that He was the Christ; for He scarcely ever did say so. And on what, then, was his faith grounded, that faith which England has accepted for somewhat more than a thousand years? I do not know, unless the Light of the world made him feel that He was the Light of the world—unless the King of men made him feel that He was his King. But I also do not know, brethren, upon what your faith and mine is founded—on what the faith of all the men that have believed during the last eighteen hundred years has been founded—upon what the order and civilization of all the earth has been founded, except it be upon that same revelation of a Light and of a King, which made Andrew say these words to his brother Simon.

And now He who has received this name from a disciple, bestows a name upon a disciple: '*Thou art Simon; thou shalt be called a Stone.*' The creatures were brought to the first Adam, that he might say what was the name of each.

If this was the second Adam, He could say to any one of His human creatures, 'That is thy name; understand by it what is the work I have given thee to do.' Simon Peter, after many perplexities and falls, did learn fully the meaning and force of his new name. He declared to the Jews at Pentecost, he declared to Cornelius the heathen, that Jesus had been proved to be both Lord and Christ. A society of Jews and Gentiles grew up which recognised Jesus as its Corner-stone. Lest they should fancy that he or any mere man could be a rock or resting-place for them, he wrote an Epistle specially to show that his Master is the Corner-stone, elect, precious, on which men are builded together a spiritual house; that such a spiritual house cannot be overthrown; that any spiritual house which is built on any weaker foundation, which has any other stone or rock, must be destroyed.

'*The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*' Philip does not go in search of the Lamb of God, as those did who heard John speak. Jesus is said to find him, and to speak the words, 'Follow me,' which he obeys. The effect is the same as in the former case—only Philip is, perhaps, a little more courageous: he speaks confidently of this as the Person to whom all the holy men of old were pointing. He speaks so even while he makes the offensive announcement, 'He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' From what place the new teacher came, was nothing to the young disciple. He had proved Himself to him to be the King

over his heart. Whose son He was called was nothing. In the most living sense He must be what John had called Him—the Son of God. Hereafter doubts and questions might arise upon these points; the Prophet's words respecting the city of David might have to be reconciled with this apparently Galilæan origin of the new Teacher; explanations might be given respecting His parentage. For Philip all this was premature and unnecessary. The deepest knowledge must come first; the other would follow when it was wanted.

The same truth forces itself upon us still more mightily in the answer of Nathanael to his friend: '*Nathanael said to Philip, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus saith unto Him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.*'

Nathanael, who was apparently a Galilæan, might not have the same prejudice against Nazareth which would have been natural in an inhabitant of Judæa. But there is another prejudice, often hinted at by our Lord, which is quite as hard to overcome. Can a prophet appear in *our* neighbourhood, close to us? Must he not come upon us from some more sacred region? The Galilæans, who were despised by others, must have learnt to despise themselves. All their habits of mind must have prepared them to expect that Jerusalem, or some place near it, would be the seat and birthplace of the great King. There was, therefore, at least as much ground for doubt and unbelief in this man's

mind as in that of any learned scribe. Nevertheless he comes, and he is hailed a genuine Israelite, an Israelite without guile. The first title might seem only to claim the dweller in any part of Palestine as of the same stock, a true child of Jacob; but that which is joined to it marks out the man himself as a wrestler with God—one who had sought to purge his soul from deceptions—one who believed that God desired truth in his inward parts, and would make him to know wisdom secretly. It was a wonderful commendation; but what was the warrant for it? Till then Nathanael supposed that his face had not been known to the speaker; how much less his heart. *Had* they met for the first time? Had he never sat and kneeled beneath the fig-tree, the favourite place of secret devotion to the pious Israelite? Had he never wrestled for light to himself, for blessings to his country? for the scattering of its worst enemies—which were also his own—covetousness, pride, falsehood? for the revelation of its promised Deliverer? *‘There, before Philip called thee, I saw thee;—I had conversed with thee.’* Nathanael heard and wondered; there was no more debating within him about Galilee or Judæa, Nazareth or Bethlehem. A flood of light was poured into his soul, not through chinks and apertures in the prophetic oracles, but from the clear heaven where God dwelt. ‘Rabbi, Thou art He whom I have sought after with cries and tears, that none but Thou hast known of. Thou hast often been with me before. I behold Thee now. Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.’

And then came a promise and assurance of a mightier blessing, of a fuller revelation hereafter to him, and to multitudes unborn, *‘Because I said, I saw thee under the fig-*

tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

'Faithful and true Israelite! the vision to thy progenitor
'who first bore that name shall be substantiated for thee,
'and for those who trust in me in lonely hours, through
'clouds and darkness, as thou hast done. The ladder
'set upon earth and reaching to heaven,—the ladder upon
'which the angels of God ascended and descended,—is a
'ladder for thee and for all. For the Son of Man, who
'joins earth to heaven, the seen to the unseen, God and
'Man in one, He is with you; through Him your spirits
'may arise to God,—through Him God's Spirit shall come
'down upon you.'

DISCOURSE V.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

[Lincoln's Inn, 4th Sunday in Lent, March 2, 1856.]

JOHN II. 11.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.

THE word '*Miracles*,' which our translators have adopted in this verse, gives little trouble to a reader. He thinks of some singular, glaring effect, which makes men wonder, and which they can refer to no known principle. That effect he calls a miracle. To produce astonishment is the immediate object of him who works it; to convince those who see it, and those who are told of it afterwards, that he is not subject to ordinary laws, and has the power of setting laws aside, is his ultimate object.

Such thoughts, I say, are suggested naturally enough by the word *Miracle*. It is otherwise with the word '*Sign*' (*σημείον*), which St. John uses himself. That word is simpler in sound than the other, but it gives rise to a longer and more troublesome inquiry. Outward display, the excitement of wonder, departure from rule, have no necessary or natural connexion with it. The name drives us to the question, 'A sign of what?' And all these

qualities—supposing they were present in the sign—would not help us to answer the question. In the case before us the act of turning water into wine—in which the miracle is supposed to consist—cannot be separated from the other parts of the narrative: together they constitute the sign. And to find the signification of the sign, we must have recourse to the first chapter of the Gospel; we must ask St. John himself to tell us why he has introduced it, and how it bears upon the subject of the history.

‘ *On the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.*’ On the third day, no doubt, after the events which we were speaking of last Sunday. What were those events? A preacher who had drawn crowds by his word, who had attached to him some devoted disciples, had spoken of One mightier than he, who was coming after him, but had been before him. He had pointed to a certain man. He had said of Him, ‘ *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.*’ He had said that he came baptizing with water, on purpose that this person might be manifested to Israel as the Son of God, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. Two of those who heard these words, we are told, followed Jesus. They invited others, saying that they had found the Christ. One or two more Jesus Himself called to come after Him.

What expectations were these men likely to form of their new Master? All their deepest impressions had been received from John. Would not He whom John declared to be greater than himself exhibit all His characteristics in a higher degree? They had first seen Jesus in the desert. Might not that be His favourite home? Would not He be more of a solitary, more of an ascetic, than His predecessor?

Would not He, whose origin was said to be heavenly, be more withdrawn from the things of earth, than the man who said he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of His sandal? This was a reasonable supposition. There was another, which would strike many as even more reasonable. The Christ was associated with thoughts of royalty. He might be the very reverse of John; not one who could converse familiarly with disciples; not one who could speak words of friendly admonition to publicans and soldiers; but one who would walk aloft, asserting the dignity of His descent, claiming to rule the people, impatient of even seeming to belong to them.

On the third day came a sign which showed how far either of these expectations corresponded to the truth. There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus was sitting there beside His mother. This is the appearance He made to those disciples who had heard Him described by such magnificent titles,—to those disciples who had learnt to look upon the desert life, the life that is withdrawn from all family relations and sympathies, as the specially holy and prophetic life. And yet it is clearly no august regal marriage which is taking place at Cana. A homely, rustic wedding,—one in which there is feasting and merriment, but no pomp. To this He is bidden; and those fishermen who had joined Him are bidden too. They are called His disciples. They had but lately seen Him or known Him, but they are already fast bound to Him. As His disciples they go with Him, not into a far-off desert, but to a wedding-feast in a little town.

Here is surely the sign of a change,—a change the very reverse, perhaps, of what we were looking for. We are coming nearer to the common earth, to those bonds which

connect the inhabitants of earth with each other, to those which touch all earthly feelings and earthly interests. The next incident surely does not weaken this impression. The wine at the feast is said to have failed. We might easily have formed some vague notion of a festival that was different from all others, marked by no vulgar events; at least we might have wished that these should be kept out of sight—that we should not be informed of them. St. John, the divine, the theologian, does not indulge us in this wish. He is determined that we should understand it to have been an ordinary wedding-feast, at which men drank as at others: ‘*The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine.*’ Whatever meaning we may discover in the words when we know who spoke them and to whom they were spoken, they are plain words, the announcement of the plainest fact. Some interpreters suppose that Mary only intended to say, ‘Let us withdraw, that the deficiency may not be apparent.’ I like their honesty, their determination to find the simplest sense they can; but if we consider what *must* have been the intercourse between Mary and her Son for so many years; if we remember that a crisis had come in His life, which must have appeared to her the fulfilment of all her expectations concerning Him; if we remember that He was now gathering about Him a set of disciples; it surely is most reasonable to suppose that these words expressed her desire that He should, and her belief that He would, put forth some unwonted power which had been latent in Him hitherto. The old Scriptures told how Elisha had used his divine powers for the relief of ordinary necessities,—to heal, for instance, the waters which might have poisoned the sons of the prophets. Was it strange that a devout reader of

these Scriptures should think that her Son might prove He had divine endowments in like manner? It belongs to the very nature of a woman, to the finest part of her nature, to think that power is best exerted in individual cases, for individual needs. What we are apt to regard as too mean and minute occasions for a divine might, she measures by a wiser and more loving rule. The distinctions of little and large are forgotten, as they ought to be, when the Eternal is in question. The most blessed of women ought to have exhibited this tendency in its highest degree. In doing so, she was not degrading Him whom she loved and revered most; she was judging rightly for what ends His powers on earth would nearly always be put forth.

But yet there *was* a weakness in this feminine eagerness. There was a thought that a mere circumstance or necessity could determine the exercise of an internal energy. And this is what He appears to rebuke in the next sentence. '*Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.*' A comparison of this passage with one in the seventh chapter of our Gospel, in which Jesus uses a similar expression to His brethren when they urged Him to go up to the feast at Jerusalem that He might make Himself known openly, shows that He designed to tell His mother that no events or outward motives could decide when it was right for Him to do a work,—that the Spirit which He had received without measure was regulating His acts—that He must be always doing His Father's business. Such an intimation, conveyed to the one who in all this world knew Him best, who had most inward sympathy with Him, was no discouragement to her faith,—rather was certain to awaken it. The power

would come forth, not in obedience to her call, but to a more lofty, more divine, impulse. She could say, therefore, to the servants, without hesitation or anxiety, '*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*'

I believe, my brethren, that all these passages in the story just as much belong to the sign, are quite as essential elements of it, as anything which follows. Nothing can be more simple or brief than the passage which comes next. '*There were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew:) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 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.*' It cannot have escaped you how carefully St. John informs us that not even the ruler of the feast, the taster of the wine himself, knew whence the wine came; he merely makes an idle, merry observation about it. Most of those who sat round him were probably just as ignorant and as little concerned about the matter as he was. The servants may have wondered at what they saw; but their wonder had so little to do with the intention of the act that the Apostle does not stop to notice it. Very little, then, of the notion which we affix—honestly and etymologically affix—to the word *miracle* has any application here. There was no effort to produce surprise; if surprise was pro-

duced, it led to no conviction. Not one of those who tasted the water that was made wine, *simply on that ground* believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

What, then, was signified by this act? What force lay in it? I can only beg St. John to tell us. He says, '*This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.*' What glory did He manifest? In all fairness and reason, we must again consult the writer of the words about the sense which he puts upon them. He had said, '*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*' I said, when we met with this passage in the last chapter, that it was evidently the text of the whole Gospel. The Gospel would either show how the Word made flesh manifested His glory to those among whom He dwelt, and how that glory was as of the only-begotten Son full of grace and truth, or it would fail of its purpose, it would belie its name. Of the Word it has been said before, '*that all things were made by Him: that in Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.*' The manifestation of His glory, we might surely then expect, would include a manifestation of Him as one who exercised creative power, as one in whom the Life that quickens all things dwells inexhaustibly. One might expect that this Life, if it was exhibited upon *things*, would still be in some very remarkable sense an illumination of *men*. But one would be certain that that illumination *could* not be outward to the eye. As life is internal, as all its movements and operations are secret, though its effects are so palpable; so the Light which proceeds from this Life—that which is emphatically the Light of *men*, as distinguished from mere

animals—must be light penetrating into the inner being, filling the heart, reason, and conscience, scattering darkness in *them*, preparing *them* hereafter,—since the Light is not put into any one to be hid under a bushel, but to be set upon a candlestick,—to show forth what had so marvellously affected and changed them, to the world.

Now, if we consider the sign in Cana of Galilee with these thoughts in our minds,—which we have not invented for ourselves, but derived straight from the Evangelist,—I cannot doubt that all its different aspects will come out very harmoniously before us.

The first aspect of it is that which is brought before us in our own Marriage Service. Christ is said to have ‘adorned and beautified the holy estate of matrimony with His presence and first miracle that He wrought in Cana of Galilee.’ This has been the conclusion at which the reason of the most thoughtful men has arrived, and to which the instinctive feeling in all has responded. If Jesus was the Word made flesh, if the order of the world was established by Him, then His acts upon earth would be done for the purpose of vindicating this order. By them He would claim it as His. By them He would say that it did not belong to the evil one. Marriage, as one of the fundamental parts of this order, as one of the earliest institutes of humanity, as one that had suffered most from abuse, would be one of the first over which He would assert His dominion. And because the ordinance is one in which all are interested, we should look for the assertion to come in some distinct and yet very general way; not, I mean, in a broad proclamation, or in a maxim which is forgotten speedily or frittered away in the application to each individual instance; not again in some case clothed with cir-

cumstances that take it out of the common range of cases, not the wedding of a king or of a saint, but one of which every peasant as well as every king might say, 'This tells me to whom *I* must look to bless my wedlock, because He 'is the Author of it.'

Then, again, that part of the story which refers to the mother of Jesus becomes, I think, clearer when we contemplate it in this light. Romanists are puzzled by it, Protestants exult in it, because it seems to put a kind of slight upon the Virgin. But Protestants and Romanists agree that Jesus had a divine Father and a human mother. If this act was one of the manifestations of Him as the Son of God, can anything be more natural or consistent than that it should be introduced by words which declare that He could not be in subjection to any earthly authority, while yet the act itself was an act of ministry to even the commonest necessities of the sons of earth? Is not this apparent contradiction the accomplishment of His work, the exhibition of Him in His complete character? He will *not* be the servant of His creatures, not even of His mother; He obeys the Will, which all are created to obey. He *will* be the servant of His creatures: He is come into the world for that end. He is doing the will of His Father when He is stooping to the lowest of all.

But if this be our judgment of two parts of the sign, it must, I think, greatly modify, if not alter altogether, the apprehensions which we have formed of the third part, that which concerns the turning of the water into wine. We cannot regard the main characteristic of the marriage and the marriage-feast as being their commonness, their similarity to what is going on in every part of the world—to what is going on among ourselves; and then make

essence of that which our Lord did at the feast consist in its uncommonness, in its unlikeness to everything that is done elsewhere—to everything that is done among ourselves. We must abandon one habit of feeling or the other. Which we shall abandon depends, it seems to me, upon the strength or the weakness of our faith in St. John's assertion, that in Him who sat at that feast was life and that all things were made by Him. If we take those words literally, if we suppose the Evangelist to mean what he says, then we must assume that what happened then was but an instance of the working of a universal law. We shall conclude that all living processes—be they slow or rapid, be they carried on in the womb of nature or through the intervention of human art—have their first power and principle in Him, that without Him nothing could become that does become. Such a belief undoubtedly carries us into great depths and heights. It increases the wonder with which we regard every dynamical discovery. But it does not interfere with any discovery. It gives solemnity and awfulness to the investigations of science. It forbids trifling in them. It stimulates courage and hope in them. It makes all superstitious dread of them sinful. The Word, who is the Light of men, will Himself teach those who seek humbly and diligently to enter into those operations of life of which He is the first Mover.

But there are other thoughts connected with this word *Life*, which it is impossible to sever from it in any case, and which suggest themselves more directly than any others when the subject is a wedding-feast and the turning of water into wine. Life has a relation to joy, which is as close as the relation of death to sadness. Our minds become confused upon this point. We talk of the burden

of life. We talk of death as delivering us from this burden. But these are careless expressions, against which the conscience of man rebels. The Scripture is in harmony with the conscience. It speaks of our carrying about with us a burden of *death* from which we need to be delivered. If it ever speaks of the moment of departure from the world as a moment of deliverance, it is because, as the poet says, 'Death itself there dies.' In creating the wine, then, which is said in the old Scriptures to make glad the heart of man, which had been a symbol of joy as well as of life to the heathen—the symbol of high inspirations even when it was actually acknowledged to be the cause of the lowest animal degradation—the Son of Man was claiming to be the Giver of all joy, to be the Redeemer of all joy, even in its humblest earthliest forms, from that which had made it base and inhuman. In what sense the Source of Joy was also the Man of Sorrows, St. John will tell us in due time. There is something which binds this very story of the feast at Cana to His deepest sorrow. Mary has not appeared before in this Gospel; she never appears again till we meet her beside the cross. She knew that a sword was to pierce through her soul, at the very time when she was asking her Son to prove Himself the Lord of nature and the Giver of delights to man. One work did not interfere with the other. He could not be really the Word made flesh unless He fulfilled both.

And now, then, we may understand why we are told so expressly in the text that '*He manifested forth His glory, and that His disciples believed on Him.*' Who were these disciples? One of them must have been that Andrew who told his own brother Simon, '*We have found the Christ.*' One would have been that Philip who said to Nathanael,

'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets, did write.' One would have been that Nathanael who said, '*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*' Not one of these had received a sign or a miracle to impart to them these convictions. The witness of John concerning the Light, met by the witness in their own hearts, the manifestation to those hearts that Jesus was the Light of whom they had heard,—this was their preparation for the marriage-feast and for what passed there. Because they *had* acknowledged Jesus and *had* become His disciples, with a feeble, imperfect, confused knowledge of course, but with a desire of the knowledge which they should receive from continual converse with Him; *therefore* the sign of the water being made into wine had a meaning for them which it had not for others; *therefore* it was to them a manifestation of His glory; *therefore* it gave them a belief in Him, as answering to John's testimony, which they had not had before. An outward exercise of power strengthened their belief in a power which lay entirely beyond the region of their senses. They were sure that a sign had been given them that He who blesses marriage, He through whom all things live, He from whom all men derive their light and joy, was actually dwelling among them.

I have been the more careful in considering this subject, my brethren, because St. John records it as the *beginning* of the signs which Jesus did. It is not recorded in the other Evangelists. It is told here as if the whole scene had come back to the mind of the old Apostle; as if he had been at that feast, and felt himself transported there again from his chamber at Ephesus. I think there must have been a reason why that day was brought again to his remembrance, why he was enabled to describe it so briefly yet with such

distinctness. People in that age, as we know from St. Paul's Epistles, as we might have guessed if we had not this decisive information, were prone to set great store by the powers which had been bestowed upon the Church to manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit within it. From magnifying the powers, they had passed, by a natural process, to magnify the outward effects of these powers ; then, to exult in them because they were strange and peculiar. St. Paul had urged the Corinthians to remember that all gifts were bestowed for use, and not for show ; that it was better to speak five words which could be understood and might be profitable, than to speak a thousand words in an unknown tongue, unless it were interpreted. In spite of these exhortations, the *sign* was no doubt gradually losing itself in the *miracle*. The unseen Presence, which could not be recollected without a sense of awful responsibility, was far less thought of than the display which could be made in the eyes of the ignorant. Whenever such a temper begins to prevail, we may be sure that tricks, impostures, lies in the name of Christ and of God, will spread rapidly ; the spirit of falsehood will creep into the heart which has confessed its allegiance to the Spirit of truth. Ephesus, we know from the Acts of the Apostles, had been a favourite home of the magician and the enchanter. In the first fervour of their belief in Him who is the way and the truth and the life, the Christians had burnt their books and abjured their lying trade. But St. Paul, as he told the elders of the city, dreaded that after his departure grievous wolves might come in among them. There was no sheep's clothing these wolves were more likely to wear than this. Reverence for Christ's miracles might be made an excuse for practising all old heathen arts and enchantments in His name. How suitable a work for

the aged disciple of Christ to lay his axe to the root of this deception! How fitting a thing was it for him to say, 'You talk of the miracles of the Christ. I remember the first of them all. I remember what it taught me then, what it teaches me still. It was not an enchantment; it was not a wonderment. It was a sign of His presence in whom is all grace and truth, who was manifested that He might put down all falsehoods whatsoever, and who will put them down at the last.'

It was the beginning of signs. I do not say that our examination of it will save us from the trouble of examining each new sign as it comes before us. By rigorously adhering to that name, as St. John does, we assume that each has a signification of its own. We shall find them all very different from this in their circumstances, in some of their internal characteristics. But I believe that if we follow out the line of thought into which I have endeavoured to lead you this afternoon, and if we make St. John's first chapter the expounder of his object in every subsequent narrative, we shall be delivered from innumerable difficulties by which the study of miracles generally, and of each particular miracle is beset. To those who tell us that a Church which can work miracles is a true Church—to those who speak of miracles done with a serious purpose in former days, or of miracles done for the amusement of men that crave for some new thing in our days—we may make the same answer. The Scriptures teach us to care for no miracles except so far as they are signs. Of what are your miracles signs? Do they signify that the Word who was made flesh is not continually acting in the affairs of men now? If so, they contradict those signs which we confess to be true signs, those which have

signified to us and to our forefathers that all life is in Him, that all light is from Him. Or *do* they say this? Then they say what every marriage is saying just as clearly; what our ordinary food and wine, what the growth of trees and flowers, what the plough of the husbandman and the laboratory of the chemist are such pledges of as your miracles can never be. God may perform wonders to break the chains of sense, to make us aware that He is always at work. We are sure that He will not enact wonders to rivet the chains of sense upon us, to turn away our thoughts from Him to some low earthly agent. Only a wicked and adulterous generation seeks for such wonders, for such signs. The signs which will be given to it, if it does not repent, are signs of fire and of blood, the slaughter of the first-born, the cry in the Temple, 'Let us depart.' But if we receive the beginning of signs which Christ gave us in Cana of Galilee, all common things will become sacraments of His presence. The husband and the wife will confess that He has united them. We shall receive the water and the wine both as His gifts. He will drink the new wine with those who come at His bidding to give thanks for the blood which He poured out for the redemption of the world.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

[Lincoln's Inn, 5th Sunday in Lent, March 9, 1856.]

ST. JOHN II. 16.

Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

THE first three Gospels have been sometimes called the *Galilean* Gospels; the fourth, the *Jerusalem* Gospel. The distinction would be a very false one, if it implied that our Lord's relation to Jerusalem was not present to the minds of the earlier Evangelists, or that St. John overlooked His relation to Galilee. In the ninth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, we are told that Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem. All the chapters which follow refer to events which took place in that journey, and contain discourses relating to the end of it, and to the city itself. In the thirteenth, we hear of His sending a message to Herod, that a prophet could not perish out of Jerusalem; in the nineteenth, of His looking down upon Jerusalem and weeping over it. The climax of the narrative, not only of St. Luke, but of St. Matthew and of St. Mark, is the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, to be hailed as a king, to die as a malefactor. On the other hand, St. John presents his Master to us in

the midst of Galilæan disciples. He carefully omits any allusion to the birth at Bethlehem; he records the first manifestation of His power and nature as given at Cana.

But though these observations show how easily the supposed difference between these narratives may be exaggerated and perverted, they do not prove it not to exist. We have no hint in the first three Evangelists of Christ's presence at any of the Jerusalem feasts, between that in His twelfth year and that which preceded His crucifixion. The scene of the most memorable acts and discourses recorded in St. John, is laid at Passover, Tabernacle, Dedication feasts, to which He had come up from Galilee. The three Evangelists speak of Him continually as teaching in the synagogues; only at the close of His ministry as teaching in the Temple. The second manifestation of our Lord spoken of by St. John is when He drove out of the Temple those who were selling and buying in it.

This narrative is the most signal instance of discrepancy between St. John and the other Evangelists which we shall meet with in our whole course. An act similar, in nearly every particular, to that which our Gospel appears to connect with the period immediately after Christ's baptism—before the Baptist's imprisonment—is said in the others to have been performed when He was about to keep the last passover. 'May not these reports,' it has been asked, 'refer to the same transaction? Need we suppose that St. John troubled himself about chronology? May not his recollections of events at which he was present have been united by some other thread than one of years or days? Oftentimes we may have observed how a word evokes a train of slumbering thoughts. Why may not he who had just been speaking of the first *sign* which Jesus did, have

‘ been led on by that name to the question of the Jews in ‘ the eighteenth verse, “ *What sign shewest Thou that Thou doest these things?*” ’

Such a method of removing a grave difficulty might be reasonable enough. But is there a grave difficulty—is there any difficulty—to be removed? There is no internal improbability in the supposition that our Lord inaugurated His ministry by one act of purification, and wound it up by another. If we accept the one Evangelist as an authority for the first, the three for the second, we gain, I think, what more than compensates us for an apparent repetition. We acquire a deeper sense of the meaning of the Temple, of the relation in which it stood to the Jews, to mankind, and to Christ. We understand better what the three Evangelists mean when they say that the disciples thought that the destruction of the Temple must be the end of the age, of their world; what St. John means when he speaks of the temple which would be destroyed and raised again.

Some commentators upon the Scriptures, who really wish to understand them, but who feel entangled by the habits and notions of their own time, lament that they cannot reproduce the state of feeling which belonged to the Jew when he gazed upon his temple, or entered within its precincts. ‘ What help,’ they say, ‘ lies in the descriptions of the most accurate and lively travellers? What should we gain by beholding them with our own eyes? We need to annihilate time as well as space. The mind of the people who gazed eighteen hundred years ago upon these spots will not come back to us merely because we are able to receive a tolerably correct impression of the spots themselves.’

I confess, my brethren, that I am quite unable to sympathise with these complaints. I do not think it requires

any effort of imagination to realize the state of mind of an ordinary Jew, as he walked through the city of David, or stood upon the holy hill, in the days of Herod and of Pilate. If we realize the state of mind of an ordinary citizen of London, walking in our streets, or entering the Abbey which contains the sepulchres of our kings and poets, we shall not need any other aid to bridge over the chasm which divides us. Occupation with everything that is before us, with the news of the hour, with the private business which we have most in hand, indifference and torpidity about the past,—these would be our general characteristics. They may be varied by our greater or less interest in architecture—our desire to maintain or confute some architectural theory—by national pride, if we should be making our buildings known to foreigners—by a certain painful sense that we ought to put our minds into a sentimental attitude. Do you suppose the case would have been different with the Jews? Do you suppose there was any charm in the outside of the Temple, which forced a sensual money-getting race into a more elevated or more serene habit of feeling than that which we drop into? Do you suppose that their sacred traditions, their glorious history, their divine calling, must have broken the charm of custom for them, or have lifted the incubus of the world from their hearts? If you do, you adopt a notion which the Scriptures confute in every line. They never tell us that the gravitation of the Jewish soul to earth was less strong than that of other men. They never represent the Jew as wanting one bad and base tendency which belongs to you and me. The evidence which the Bible has produced of its veracity to people of all conditions, in all countries, the most unlike

outwardly to those of whom it speaks, is this, that it shows us creatures in all *inward* respects like ourselves, as little capable of being moved by present signs or by records of the past, out of chillness and death, as we are.

Accordingly, what spectacle is it which the passage I am considering brings before us? The spectacle of no appalling crime, of none of those hideous and revolting acts which we know from the Jewish historian were perpetrated at the time, and in which the religious sect of the day had its full share. It is a spectacle which had become familiar to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which every Pharisee had continually before his eyes when he went into the Temple to pray,—most glaringly, it is probable, during the most sacred festivals. Within, the priests offered the regular sacrifices; without, in another part of the house, there was a market for sheep and oxen; there were seats for the money-dealer. The practice was so regular, so sanctioned by prescription, that no one thought anything of it. The pious Jew was no more scandalized by it than the pious Englishman is scandalized by reading an advertisement for the sale of a living. If we have distinctions which satisfy our consciences between the disposing of an actual cure of souls and of the right to endow another with such a cure,—if a line, sometimes invisible to the naked eye, separates the sin of Simony from deeds which laymen may lawfully do, and by which clergymen may lawfully benefit,—the people of Jerusalem had distinctions just as recognised, quite as capable of being defended in argument. The *holy* place might not be approached by any profane feet; that was sacred indeed to the Lord. But the outer court—why might not that be left for ordinary traffic? Perhaps the separation of the priests from

the mere throng of worshippers—above all, from the Gentile who might be found among them—was better marked by the concession of this privilege. At all events, it *was* a privilege guaranteed by usage to the trader. If it was disturbed, would he not probably become disgusted with his country's sanctuary altogether? Might he not betake himself to some Roman temple,—to a worship which was more associated with amusement, if not with business?

I do not know that this calculation was altogether a wrong one. I do not suppose that if the Sanhedrim had chosen or had been permitted by its masters to prohibit these markets, any moral benefit would have been gained for the nation. For what had made the Temple holy and dear to any Jew of that day or of former days? Not its situation, not its having been built by the wise king, not its having been restored after the captivity, not the goodly stones with which Herod had adorned it. No! but the sense of an invisible glory; the belief that God—whom no man had seen at any time—had been pleased to meet His people there. Could any Jewish laws restore this conviction when it had departed? Could regulations to protect a certain enclosure from pollution give rise to anything, except despicable subterfuges, except the vilest hypocrisy, when the only ground and warrant for these regulations was forgotten, when those who would have made them as little confessed the Divine presence as those whom they would have excluded. For this—this was the secret of the Jewish desecration of the Temple. The priests who ministered at the inner shrine did not, for the most part, believe in the Divine presence more than the people who sold sheep and oxen without. A trade was going on in both places.

There it was a traffic with God; here it was a traffic among men. The awe of One who dwelt with them, who revealed Himself to them, whose righteousness was their strength, had been exchanged for the fear of One who might call them to account for their treacheries to each other if they withheld their customary and toilsome services from Him.

The preacher in the wilderness had been taught that, when a nation has reached such a condition of rottenness as this, it is not enough to lop off withered branches; the axe must be laid to the root. When the Scribes and Pharisees came to him, he told them to bring forth fruits of repentance, fruits which would show themselves in the Temple as well as the market. But he did not visit either the Temple or the market. Jesus concerned Himself with both. *'He went into the Temple, and found them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. 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.'*

Some who read this story say, that it offends their notion of our Lord's dignity. Could He, with His own hand, chastise these traders? Some say, it offends their notion of His benignity. Could the All-Merciful exhibit such wrath against a tolerated, perhaps an unconscious, profaneness? Before we consider these opinions, it may be well to hear what the disciples felt, when they saw Him with the scourge by whom they had sat at the feast, whom they had hailed as the Giver of the marriage blessing, as the Inspirer of joy. *'They remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.'* These words

came unbidden into their minds. His look, His voice, expressed all that they had ever heard of the vehement earnestness with which kings and prophets of old had felt the pollutions of God's Temple, and had sought to purge it of them. Josiah and Ezekiel revived in Him. He had forgotten Himself. He was possessed by the spirit that possessed the men of old. There was a fire burning in Him that could not be quenched, till it had consumed all the chaff from the threshing-floor.

Such was their impression at the moment. Looking back upon it after all later events had interpreted it, St. John felt that this was a manifestation of grace and truth, as much as the making the water wine, or the healing the sick. For he had learnt that a gracious Being must be intolerant of that which is ungracious, that a true Being must seek to destroy falsehood—that falsehood most which is nearest the heart of a nation, the altar of God. He felt that this wrath must have reached its highest point in the most gracious, most true Being, in Him from whom all had received their portions of grace and truth. He felt that this wrath must have been least restrained in Him by any thoughts of what would look well in the eyes of men. What were all the notions which he had formed about dignity or comeliness? The Word made flesh was making it manifest that every punishment of every wrong doer was administered by Him; that whatever agents He may employ to purify his Church, to inflict vengeance upon those who have defiled it, the rod is really in His hand,—that it is He who directs and measures every blow.

But St. John saw more in the act than this. He had said in his former chapter, not only, '*We beheld Him who was full of grace and truth, Him of whose fulness we had*

all received,' but 'We beheld His glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father.' He teaches us to recognise a manifestation of *this* glory, also, in the driving the money-changers out of the Temple. '*Jesus said to them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.'*

The zeal which devoured Jesus was surely a zeal for the house of that God to whom Solomon had prayed, '*Lord, wilt thou in very deed dwell upon earth?*' It was for the house of that God whom kings and prophets had worshipped between the cherubim. But which of these had dared to use the language which He used? Which of them had ever said, '*It is the house of my Father?*' It was a *new* name,—a wonderful and awful name. And yet the whole force of the testimony which Christ bore for the old building—for the house in which their fathers worshipped—lay in this name. If that house was not to be a house of merchandise—if it was ever to be that again which holy men had believed and found it to be—this new name must remove its debasement, this new revelation must restore its greatness. No other could suffice to undo the hypocrisy of the priests, because that hypocrisy came from their thinking that the house was theirs—from not believing that there was any relation between themselves and Him to whom they offered their worship and their sacrifices. If there was a man who could call it '*my Father's house,*' heaven and earth were not at the distance they thought and hoped,—their Judge was very near. On the other hand, no revelation but this could have brought the outer court once more into union with the inner court, could have made both parts of the house of God. For the reason why the people traded in that court, and felt they had no business any-

where else, was that they had no belief that God cared for them, or that there was any fellowship between them and Him, except through those priests who were the barriers to all fellowship. If Jesus of Nazareth, the poor man, one of them, could say, 'It is my Father's house,' the publican might feel then,—even the Gentile might feel afterwards,—that there was a house for him; not a place for selling sheep and oxen, and changing money, but a refuge from the weariness of merchandise, from the haggling and lying of the world, in the presence and heart of a Friend who giveth to all liberally, of One who is altogether righteous and true.

In after days we shall find the Jews felt the boldness of this language, and made it their principal charge against Jesus that He dared to use it. On this occasion it seems to have fallen dead upon their ears. Their question is not, '*What sign shewest thou seeing*' thou sayest this, but '*seeing thou doest these things?*' They meant nothing more, I suppose, than, 'Why dost thou, a mere Galilæan stranger, take upon thee to drive out these oxen? A prophet might do it—perhaps even a zealot, if he was a Levite, and claimed the honours of his ancestor Phinehas, might do it—but what sign canst thou produce that such an office belongs to thee?' I do not find more in *their* demand than this; but the answer of our Lord refers to His previous words as well as to theirs. He could not give them a sign that He had a right to cleanse the Temple, which would not also be a sign that He had a right, in the strictest sense, to call the Temple 'His Father's house.' You must recollect that this was the claim He had to make good, if you would understand Him when He says, '*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*'

The sentence was, of course, enigmatical. The Jews regarded it simply as the language of a fanatic or a madman. '*Forty and six years,*' they said, '*was this Temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?*' St. John evidently indicates that it was not much more intelligible to him and to his fellow-disciples, when they first heard it, than to their countrymen. But he says a time came when they did understand it. '*He spake of the temple of His body. 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 that Jesus had said.*'

Are we to suppose that the *third* day of the resurrection was the key which unlocked our Lord's meaning? No doubt that was an outward help in the discovery of it; but it would have been a most imperfect help, if they had not attached a meaning to the resurrection which had nothing to do with days or years. By raising Jesus from the dead, God declared Him to be His Son. This was St. Paul's language to the Romans,—this was the very substance of his preaching. By raising Him from the dead, He declared that in Him all the building fitly framed together grew to be an holy temple in the Lord. This was his language to those Ephesians among whom the son of Zebedee was now dwelling. It was the resurrection, then, which taught the disciples that the body of Christ was that real temple of God, of which all stone temples had been the symbols,—that in this only the fulness of God dwelt,—that in this the prayer of Solomon, that God, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, would dwell with men upon earth, could be actually fulfilled. Some critics say there is an awkwardness in supposing that our Lord pointed to His own body when He spoke of destroying the Temple; and

that if He did not, the Evangelist would seem to charge Him with using words in a double sense,—so deceiving His hearers. I do not see why we should imagine Him to have pointed to His body; why His eyes may not have been fixed on the building which He had called His ‘Father’s house.’ He did mean, that, if they destroyed *that* house,—if their money-worship, falsehood, hypocrisy, brought it to utter ruin, and it was at last given up to Roman soldiers;—there was a house not made with hands, which was all that Solomon’s, in the very best and noblest conception of it, had tried to be. He meant certainly more than this. He meant that they might and would try to destroy the outward fabric of *this* more glorious temple; but that in three days the dead body would come back from the tomb, and be proclaimed to the world as God’s own everlasting habitation. You may call this a double sense of words, if you like; but by *such* double senses deceptions are not caused or promoted—they are cleared away. The Jew was labouring under a terrible deception; he was practising a continual equivocation. The Temple of the Lord was a sacred place to him,—he gloried in possessing it; yet he did not in his heart believe that God was meeting His creatures, holding any intercourse with them, caring for them. The building itself, therefore, acquired a reverence in his mind which was apart from reverence to God, nay, fatal to that reverence. God was absorbed in the Temple. The inward thought of the priest was, that if it perished God would perish. Hence arose infinite contradictions in his practice, alternations of scrupulosity and profaneness. Now the money-changer is permitted to sit within it,—now a cry is raised that a Stephen speaks evil words against the holy place, and must be stoned. There was but one way of breaking down this

habit of mind: it was to affirm and prove that the Temple was not a fiction,—that the belief of the elder men respecting it was not a fiction,—that God and man were not divided,—that the prophecy of their complete fellowship was not an idle prophecy leading to nothing,—that men might draw nigh to God, as to a father, on the holy hill of Zion; because there was an only-begotten Son, whose body was filled with that Spirit which would raise it out of the grave.

No; our Lord did not deceive the Jews when He gave them the fullest, truest sense of their own Scriptures, of their own calling and history. If any words, any acts could have undeceived them, they would have been His. Alas! when money-worship has reached the vitals of a nation, when it has entered into the house of God, the very words and acts of the Son of God may not purge it of its delusions,—they may take their shape and colour from these delusions. May God avert the *omen* from our land, from our Church! May He enable us to believe that every building in which He permits us to worship Him, and to present before Him the finished sacrifice of Christ, is indeed the house of our Father, because of His Father! May every chastisement He sends to us, individually or nationally, be viewed by us as a scourge with which He is cleansing His temple of them that sell and them that buy in it,—of our corrupt traffickings with our own consciences and with Him! May He help us to believe in Christ's incarnation and passion, that we may attain to the full glory of His resurrection, and may find in it the proof that His body was the temple of the Holy Ghost, and that ours are to be temples holy and acceptable unto Him!

DISCOURSE VII.

THE NEW BIRTH.

[Lincoln's Inn, Palm Sunday, March 16, 1856.]

ST. JOHN III. 3.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

IT is undoubtedly right to connect the beginning of this chapter with the latter verses of the preceding one. 'Now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.' I must ask you here, as everywhere else in St. John, to substitute the word *signs* for *miracles*. Our unfortunate adoption of this last word—which cannot be referred, as some of our careless translations may be, to the following of the Vulgate, for it has *signs*—has sadly weakened and perplexed the Evangelist's statements. Here, for instance, he does not tell us *what* the acts of Christ were which were done at the passover. He does not say whether He healed the sick, or cast out devils. He fixes our attention on this point,—that the acts were received by many of those who were gathered at the feast as signs. 'They believed on His

name.' The word *name*, in every part of Scripture, expresses that which is invisible. It is the contrast to an idol, or that which may be seen. Even idolaters recognised the *name* of the god as that which was expressed by the outward image, as that which only the mind could recognise. We cannot, then, give less force to the phrase, '*They believed on His name,*' than this,—they confessed a power within Him which put forth these outward manifestations of itself. We should not try to be more definite when we are describing the vague feelings of a people. One moment they might think, '*Some divine power is at work in Him; He is a Prophet.*' At another, '*He is the Deliverer, the King we are looking for.*' The passover was a time at which such opinions were most likely to be discussed, when parties were most likely to be formed about any new leader. The words which follow, '*But Jesus did not commit Himself to them,*' indicate, I think, that such a party was ready to gather itself round Him. He did not covet their support. He did not show the least desire to make use of their services, as one claiming to be the Christ might have done. But the language was capable of another sense. It might denote the caution of a chieftain who was waiting till he had sounded the dispositions of his followers, till he had assurance from some competent witnesses of their fidelity. The notion of such prudence in One who came to give His life for the world, of such need of information in Him whose life was the light of men, was utterly revolting. St. John adds, that the reason of His not committing Himself to this party was, '*that He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify concerning Man: for He knew what was in Man.*' They were not to discern and choose Him; He was to

discern and choose them. He was not a King that a faction was to set up; He was the original Lord of men—ruling them not as a stranger, not as one who is separate from them, but as one possessing the most intimate knowledge of that which is distinct and peculiar in each man, and of *the* man that is in all.

That there should be many in the crowd at the passover—many of the ignorant expectants of a Christ—who thought that Jesus had given sufficient signs of His right to the name, is not surprising. They might be all the more willing to recognise Him, because He seemed to be of their class. But these signs had affected some to whom the thought of a Galilæan peasant must have been utterly scandalous. *‘There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs which thou doest, except God were with him.’* The words express more than an individual opinion. Nicodemus must have been conversing with other members of the Sanhedrim. A suspicion that a new *Teacher*—perhaps a Prophet—with some unusual powers, had appeared, might be diffusing itself through the body. *Whence* the powers were derived, whether the prophet was true or false, were still questions to be asked. It was a further question whether the Prophet had any claim to be considered the Christ. The people might easily arrive at that conclusion; a ruler would be disposed to reject it. Yet it might be the true one. Nicodemus would evidently like to know. He could not take the rash step of putting himself under the banner of one who might lead him to rebellion; but he would ascertain the fact privately, if he could.

The reply meets the thought in the heart of the speaker, not the words he had uttered. ‘You wish to know whether I am about to set up a kingdom. “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*”’ The phrase ‘kingdom of God,’ or ‘kingdom of heaven,’ is one which is continually recurring in the first three Evangelists; it may be said to be nearly their most characteristic phrase. It is not characteristic of St. John; he uses it rarely. But if we want a commentary upon every passage in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in which it is to be found; if we want to know why we hear of it in connexion with the parables,—why the Gospel which the Apostles were to preach is called the Gospel of this kingdom,—I should point you to this verse and to the conversation which follows it. Nicodemus was expecting, in some way or other, to *see* the kingdom of God. Signs were to show who the divine King was; He would present Himself in such wise to His people, that they should have no doubt of Him and His authority. All this he thought would be granted by God, if He fulfilled His promises, and raised up the Son of David to sit upon David’s throne. Was the hope a wrong one? Could less than a clear demonstration be a warrant for accepting any being clothed in human flesh as the divine Prince and Deliverer? Verily, nothing less. They must see the kingdom of God. It must reveal itself to them with an evidence which they could not gainsay. It must lay hold upon them as its subjects, *de facto* and *de jure*, with a compulsion not weaker but mightier than that with which the Roman empire had laid hold of them. The arguments of the Christ must be as decisive in their own kind as the arguments of the Cæsar.

But were they of the same kind? Our Lord says,

'*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*' This language does not occur for the first time in our Gospel. We heard before that the divine Word '*came to His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; which were born not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.*' Here is the announcement of another kind of birth from that which we call the natural birth. And yet it is not a portentous, *unnatural* birth. If the doctrine which is the foundation of this Gospel is true; if the Word that was with God and was God is Creator of men; if His life is the light of men; those who entertained His light, those who did not refuse to be penetrated by His life, became what they were meant to be: they fulfilled the purpose of Him who called them into existence. The power which He gave them to become sons of God was a power to become *men*, in the true sense of that word—to rise above the condition of animals.

When, therefore, our Lord tells Nicodemus that only those who were born again, or born from above (there is a justification for each rendering—*ἄνωθεν*, perhaps, unites the force of both), can see the kingdom of God, He tells him that the vision of the true state of man,—of that order which is intended for men,—is only given to those who receive the Light which lighteneth all men. Theirs is the nobler, better birth—the divine birth; and theirs is the power of perceiving that kingdom which surrounds all men, to which all are subject, but which, being the kingdom of God, and not the kingdom of the Cæsar, does not act upon men through material armies, and tax-gatherers at the receipt of custom,—does not manifest its power and

majesty to the outward eye. This kingdom is over the man himself, not over his accidents and circumstances; he must be a man, not a creature of these accidents and circumstances, in order to see it; and that capacity of being a man he must derive not from flesh and blood, but from the Father of his spirit.

This conversation by night must have been remembered and recorded by Nicodemus himself. As he repeated it to St. John,—probably long after that day when he came with spices to anoint the body of Jesus in the tomb,—the words which had been spoken to him, and the words which he had spoken, must have come fresh to his memory; the meaning of the one, the deep ignorance of the other, seen by the light that fell upon them from the experiences and the revelations of after years. As he was an honest man, he did not suppress or soften his own answer to the ‘*Verily, verily,*’ of Christ. ‘*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?*’ In truth, he had no cause to be ashamed of himself for having stated his difficulty in that rough way. To veil it under seemingly phrases would have been no evidence of enlightenment.

The Jewish doctors, it is said, not uncommonly described the Gentile as one who became a little child, who began his life anew, when he was received by baptism into the privileges of their outer court. If so, Nicodemus must have been familiar with the expression; but it must have been to him, and to most who availed themselves of it, a mere figure of rhetoric—one of those counters which pass among religious people, which have a certain value at first, but which become at length so depreciated that they serve no purpose but to impose on those who take and those who give them. However little Nicodemus might know of

Jesus, he did know that He was not resorting to figures of rhetoric—that if He spoke of a birth, He meant a birth; and he must have perceived that what He said did not apply to sinners of the Gentiles, but to him, the religious ruler of the Jews. It was, therefore, a good and healthy sign, a proof of the power of the new Teacher, that he forgot the conventionalisms of the Sanhedrim, and spoke out coarsely and naturally, as a peasant might have done. Our Lord, surely, passed this judgment upon him; for, instead of rebuking him for his question, He meets it in the most direct manner possible: '*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.*' The object of Nicodemus in coming to ask Him about His kingdom, is still kept prominently forward; but there is a noticeable change in our Lord's words. He had spoken of *seeing* the kingdom of God; He now speaks of *entering* into it. Each expression may, unquestionably does, involve the other; still they are distinct. To *see* a kingdom, is to have an apprehension of its reality and of its nature; to *enter* into a kingdom, is to become a subject of it. And then the thought forces itself upon us, 'How can any one choose to become a subject of God's kingdom? *Is* he not a subject of it necessarily? If God is the King of kings and Lord of lords, can he escape out of His kingdom? *Is* he not bound by the laws of it, whether he likes them or no?' We cannot state this difficulty to ourselves too frequently; we cannot meditate upon it too earnestly. Our consciences tell us that we *are* the subjects of God's kingdom; that its laws do bind us; that they avenge themselves upon us when we break them. But our consciences tell us, also, that there is rebellion in us against that which holds us so fast, which

executes its decrees so certainly. This is the contradiction, it exists—it is a fact, *the fact*, of our lives. No theories can get rid of it. But who shall tell us *how* to get rid of it? Before we can understand what could remove it, before we can even ask with any seriousness to have it removed, we must know and feel how deep the contradiction is. Suppose the government of God should be a government over our wills, rebellion in those very wills must be the most fearful we can conceive of. And the entering into the kingdom of God must import the return of the spirit of man to its allegiance,—the claim of a voluntary spiritual being to be under the will with which it is its misery to be at strife. John had come preaching, ‘*the kingdom of God is at hand,*’ calling men to repentance, baptizing with water, proclaiming One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. When Jesus says to Nicodemus, ‘*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,*’ He takes up the teaching of his forerunner, He expounds his act, He announces the fulfilment of his promise. The being baptized with water, He declares to be the act of submission to the Father of spirits,—the sign which a man gives that he accepts His government, that he surrenders himself to it. It is a surrender,—that is the only word we can find,—a confession by the human will of its impotency. It must be guided, governed, inspired, or it can do nothing, it can only struggle against its blessedness. The acceptance, therefore, of this water-sign, by a creature conscious of his own irregular strivings, of his separation from God, is the expression of a desire that God would act upon his will, would raise it to its proper condition, would quicken it to the acts and impulses which belong to it,—in other words, would baptize it with the Spirit.

We see, then, how water and the Spirit are connected with the entrance into the kingdom of God,—the kingdom over the spirit of man. Our Lord goes on to explain that He had used the word *birth* in its relation to both, not carelessly, but strictly. ‘*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*’ One is as true and actual a birth as the other. The coming forth of the fleshly creature into light, its beginning to breathe, the voice which accompanies that breathing, are not more undoubted facts—very mysterious facts *they* must appear to all who reflect upon them—than the coming forth of a spirit out of its darkness, than the sense of light which startles it, than its breathings, than its cry.

I have introduced this thought concerning breath and the voice of the new-born child, because it seems to me to connect itself with the words which follow, and to remove a confusion which our translation of them has introduced into our minds: ‘*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*’ The philological objections to this rendering of the words are very numerous. In the first place, *ἀνεμος*, not *πνεῦμα*, is the proper word for *wind*. But suppose, by reducing the wind to a faint low breathing, we escape from that objection, there is the second, that *πνεῦμα* is used twice in the same sentence in different senses. Yet this is a slight fault compared with the next. We actually attribute *will* to the wind; it blows where it listeth, *ὅπου θέλει*. After this flagrant departure from all scriptural and spiritual analogy, it is scarcely necessary to mention another, which is, nevertheless, not unimportant.

and is of the same kind. $\Phi\omega\nu\eta$ is the articulate voice of a living being; it is here changed into a natural sound. Now, wherever violence is done to the truth of language, I believe more or less of violence is done to some higher truth. What need have we to introduce the sighing and sougling of the wind, in order to make our Lord's explanation more clear and forcible, if we understand Him to say,—‘ All the breathings of God's Spirit are free, not ‘ fixed and fettered by material or mechanical conditions. ‘ You hear His voice continually; but whence the Spirit ‘ comes, whither it is going, you know not. And so it is ‘ with him that is born of the Spirit. The process of birth ‘ cannot be perceived by you; you hear the voice which ‘ indicates birth, you see the signs and tokens of life; but ‘ how the spiritual being came to be what he is, you know ‘ not.’ If we take this to be what our Lord told Nicodemus, and what He is telling us, are we not to learn that, at every moment of the day, the Spirit of the eternal God is moving around us, speaking to us, acting upon us; but that His mightiest operation, that which alone fulfils His purpose towards us, is when He enables us to become the willing servants and children of our Father in heaven?

‘ *How can these things be?* ’ asked the doctor of the Sanhedrim, in a bewilderment which many of us can well understand. It was, indeed, a strange new world into which he was transported; it seemed to him a world of dreams, because he had been himself so much amidst dreams, because he had known so little of realities. ‘ *Art thou a master of Israel,* ’ was the rejoinder, ‘ *and knowest not these things?* ’ ‘ What hast thou been learning all thy life? what ‘ hast thou been teaching thy countrymen? Hast thou not ‘ been reading of an unseen God, who holds converse with

' men,—of a God of the spirits of all flesh? Hast thou not
 ' believed that this God is a living God, as He was when
 ' He appeared to Moses in the bush? when He touched
 ' the lips of Isaiah with fire in the Temple? Hast thou not
 ' understood that He is thy God, as much as He was the
 ' God of any Israelite to whom the commandments were
 ' spoken on the Mount? Hast thou not bidden the people
 ' of Israel of this day to believe that He is *their* God?'
 ' *Verily, I say unto you, That which we have known, we*
speak; that which we have seen, we testify.' 'This is the
 ' characteristic of every true teacher, of every called prophet.
 ' This has been the characteristic of John; this is mine.
 ' We do not speak things that we have learnt by report—
 ' things that have been transmitted to us; we speak the
 ' truths with which we have been brought face to face.' '*And*
ye receive not our testimony.' 'These things we tell you of,
 ' because they are about you, because you are created to
 ' know them, and have fellowship with them. And you turn
 ' away from them in search of things that are at a distance
 ' from you—of formalities and trifles which you call by lofty
 ' names, which give rise to endless disputings, but which do
 ' not concern you as human beings in the least.' '*And if I*
have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye
believe if I tell you of the heavenly things?' 'If these things
 ' which have to do with your daily lives, which bear upon
 ' your ordinary business, which you can test by the ex-
 ' perience of your failures and your sins,—if *these* seem to
 ' you incredible, how will it be if I speak to you of God
 ' Himself, of His purposes, of His nature?'

His words imply that He has a right to speak of these things also, that He is *able* to speak of them. On what ground could a power so amazing rest? He goes on to declare the

ground of it: 'For no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.' Of all paradoxes, this appears to be the greatest. And yet if the heart of this ruler—if the heart of any man—has been delivered from the oppressive fears and superstitions that connect themselves with the thoughts of a distant heaven in *space*, which looks coldly and drearily down upon earth—of a distant heaven in *time*, which stands aloof from all human sympathies; if ever the belief in heaven has been regarded as a spring of hope and energy to the sons of men; if ever they have learnt not to think of earth as a place in which they were to cozen and lie for threescore years and ten, and heaven as a place to which some might escape, if they made compensations to the Ruler of it for the evils which they had done in the other region of His government; that deliverance, those better and nobler thoughts have come from the paradox which is uttered in this verse. Poor people—utterly bewildered by all they have heard from divines and masters in Israel about heaven, and the way in which they are to obtain heaven—have taken this sentence home to their hearts,—that the Son of Man, He who suffered for them and with them on earth, is He who has ascended into heaven, and who is always in heaven. They have entered into the kingdom of heaven with those spirits which were born of the divine Spirit, as they entered into the kingdom of earth when they were born of the flesh; they have seen the kingdom with the spiritual eye which God has opened, as clearly as they have seen the trees and flowers of earth with the fleshly eye which He has opened.

How He opens that eye, and what He reveals to it when it is opened, the next words will tell us. '*And as Moses lifted*

up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.'

How can I introduce such a passage as this at the close of a sermon? Because I would not allow my sense of the immense worth and importance of every clause, of every word, of which it consists, to hinder you from tracing the method of our Lord's discourse. The question about the kingdom of God lay at the threshold of the dialogue. Here He declares how He is to claim His kingdom, to what throne He is to be raised, that all men might confess Him as their King. Jesus might have spoken of the exaltation of David or of Solomon as the pattern of His own. He goes back to an older and sublimer event in Jewish history. The brazen serpent to which the eyes of those were turned who had been bitten by the serpents in the wilderness, the common life-giving, life-restoring object,—this was the sign which He chose of that dominion which should stretch from sea to sea, which should reach to the lowest depths, and work the mightiest deliverance. 'You would know if I am a King. You will see me lifted upon a cross: there you may learn what I am. Whoso sees the Son of Man, his Lord and King there,—whoso believes and trusts Him there,—will rise up indeed a new man, will be saved from the plague which is destroying him, will awaken to health and freedom. He will not perish in his wretched, selfish isolation; he will have that life which is the common life of all.'

And why? He will see there the love of God to him and to the world. The only-begotten Son upon that cross will declare Him as He has always declared Him; but the revelation will be immeasurably fuller and clearer than it has ever been. He from whom men have turned as their enemy, as plotting *their* destruction, as pledged to destroy the world, will be manifested as their Saviour and its Saviour. That which has been the curse and misery and death of man, his separation from God, his hatred of God, will cease for those who believe that in this Son of Man He is making known what He wills, what He is. They will have that eternal life of trust and love which is His own life.

And therefore He goes on: '*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. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.*' The belief that Jesus does by His cross manifest the tender love of God to mankind, that in Him God's whole will and mind and purpose are revealed to men,—this takes away the condemnation from their consciences; this restores them to trust and liberty and hope. And therefore, conversely, *not* to believe this, is to have a sense of alienation and distance from God, to feel that there is an abyss between us and Him which has never been closed—an abyss into which we are casting our sacrifices and works of devotion, in the dream that it may at

last be filled up; while all our efforts, being efforts of discontent and distrust, efforts to conciliate a foe, widen and deepen it. Our Lord pronounces this unbelief to be its own all-sufficing punishment. 'The light is there; you do not love it; you fly from it. What worse state can there be than that? You hug the evil deeds from which you might be delivered. You choose the evil which is contrary to the being and nature of the blessed God in whose image you are made. What torment can there be so great as that?'

I spoke of the new birth, or the birth from above, by which men are made capable of seeing the kingdom of God, as one of which those may become conscious who are conscious of a rebellious will, and who would fain submit to their rightful Ruler. This latter part of the dialogue confirms and enlarges that statement. He who is bitten with serpents may turn to the brazen serpent; he who has been alienated from God may become at peace with Him. But our Lord's words also discover to us another truth, different from this, nowise inconsistent with it. They show us that our consciousness is not in any sense the foundation of God's kingdom, that His love is the foundation of it. They make us understand that the revelation of that Love is in very deed the reconciliation and regeneration of the world; that we may claim all as included in that reconciliation and regeneration; that our baptism of water and the Spirit, while it gives all warrant for conscious repentance and faith, must comprehend the unconscious, must declare upon what their consciousness is to stand. They *are* sons of God. God's Spirit is given them, that they may grow into the knowledge of their sonship, that they may be able to live in conformity with it.

The conclusion of this memorable discourse also takes off all the edge which has been given to those words, in the earlier part of it, in which it is said, '*the Spirit breathes where He wills.*' I have treated that language as expressing the entire freedom of His operations, His independence on material agents as well as on the will of the creature. But if any one concludes that the Spirit does not will that all men should believe and come to the knowledge of the truth, he must deny that He is the Spirit of that God who sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDEGROOM'S FRIEND.

[Lincoln's Inn, Easter Sunday, March 23, 1856.]

ST. JOHN III. 30.

He must increase ; I must decrease.

WE have seen, in the first chapter of this Gospel, how much the work and office of John the Baptist are connected with all the deepest thoughts and announcements of the Apostle. The more we study him, the more probable. I think, the old tradition of the Church, that he was a disciple of the Baptist, must appear to us,—the more we shall understand the cause of his anxiety to point out the exact relation between his two teachers.

I have endeavoured to show you that it is not the *superiority* of the Christ to the forerunner which he chiefly dwells upon. That difference had been sufficiently brought out by the earlier evangelists. He insists that the superiority of the Christ rested on His *priority*; that the later in order of manifestation was the first in order of being; that of His fulness John and all previous prophets had received; that of Him, as the Word of God, as the Light of men, they had all borne witness. Whether Jesus was

or was not the Word made flesh,—whether He did or did not prove that in Him was the Life of all things, and that He was the Light of men,—are questions which the Evangelist undertakes to resolve for us in the course of his narrative. Upon that point the Baptist may at times have had a strong conviction; at times he might be doubtful. But that there was such a Word of God, such a Light of men, and that He would make Himself manifest, this was the groundwork of his prophecy; by this proclamation he proved himself to be of the same class with Isaiah and Ezekiel; by this he showed that a kingdom of heaven must be at hand, in which the least might be greater than he.

How our Lord spoke to a ruler of the Jews concerning that kingdom, and the qualifications for entering into it and seeing it—how he connected it with a birth by water and by the Spirit—we have heard in the first part of this chapter. The narrative which occupies the remainder of it carries us back to John. Not long after the passover at which the conversation with Nicodemus took place, Jesus, we are told, went with His disciples into the country part of Judæa—the land of Judæa being here set in contrast, not with Galilee, but with the city of Jerusalem, at which He had been during the feast. ‘*There He tarried with them and baptized.*’ This expression is used loosely; it is qualified in the next chapter. ‘*Jesus,*’ it is said, ‘*Himself baptized not, but His disciples.*’ Still it was regarded, to all intents and purposes, as His baptism. It was naturally compared with that of John; for he was still at large, and was ‘*baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, where there was much water.*’ Perhaps the numbers that went out to him had diminished; but it is obvious from the context that he was

still an object of attraction to many; *'they came to him, and were baptized.'*

'Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and a Jew' (the plural is evidently quite out of place) *'about purification.'* We need not inquire into the nature of this dispute, seeing that the Apostle tells us no more of it. Before that time, and ever since, the subject of purification has given rise to thousands of questions, all bearing more or less directly upon the relation between outward acts and the inner man,—what the former can or cannot do to make the other better. Such questions were certain to be awakened by a baptism with water, and a preaching of repentance such as John's; any of them may have suggested to his disciples the thought whether there was some greater virtue in that of Jesus, or whether He were merely a rival and imitator of the elder teacher. With surprise and perplexity, and something of the indignation which was natural in men jealous for the honour of a beloved teacher, *'they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, and to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come unto Him.'*

There was probably a pause before John gave his answer. The news which he heard may have stirred up strange thoughts and doubts within him, not in a moment to be quelled. Was his work over? Was he to have no more power over men? Was he no longer a witness for God? The magician says, when the fabric of his vision is dissolved—

*'Now my spells are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have 's my own;
Which is most faint.'*

A mournful conclusion, and yet one to which many a

man of high genius has been brought, and out of which, perhaps, in the end he has derived very precious lessons. Was this to be the result of the *prophet's* meditation also? No! it comes forth in quite other words, which were a reply both to the questionings in his own soul, and the shallower perplexities and speculations of his disciples. 'A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above.' As if he had said: 'You need not be careful of my fame. If I have ever spoken a word which has entered into you, and shown you your ownselves, and has made you truer, better men, that word was given me by the Lord of your spirit and mine; He enabled you to take it in. Out of the bosom of God, where that Word is whose life is the light of men, did these quickening, illuminating words proceed. Just so far as my words have led you to turn to *that* Word who is always with you, and who has promised that He will come and manifest Himself to you,—just so far have they been wholesome and effectual. "*You yourselves bear me witness, that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him.*" As I never pretended to be that unseen Light, which I told you was struggling with your darkness, so—you know it well—I never pretended to be the Christ, the Anointed One, the King of Israel. For my message was that this Christ must be that Light of the world, that Word made flesh. I told you that He alone would baptize with the Spirit, because He alone would be fully baptized with the Spirit. I am sent before Him,—sent, as I said, to baptize with water, that so He might be made known to Israel who has the higher baptism.' And then, as if he were caught away by a new and diviner inspiration, as if the very meaning of that word, Christ the anointed, were revealed to him,—as if, in

the light of that meaning, a thousand old songs and symbols were interpreting themselves to him,—he goes on, '*He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.*' The vision of a king was before him; of a king, the direct contrast to the tyrants of the earth. In place of a Deioces, hidden in the recesses of some Median palace—in place of a Tiberius, governing the world by spies—he sees One '*who is fairer than the sons of men, upon whose lips grace is poured, whose sword is on His thigh, and who rides on in truth and righteousness.*' He sees Him coming to woo and claim His bride, '*whose beauty He greatly desires, who is all-glorious within, whose clothing is of wrought gold.*' Such a Bridegroom all the prophets had, in one form of speech or another, been discoursing of. They had proved that they were dealing in no metaphors—pouring out no Oriental rhapsodies; for their revelation of Him had been connected with the homeliest exhortations to domestic union and purity; they had affirmed the relation of the particular husband and wife to have its foundation in this higher relation; they had treated all breaches of the marriage-vow as indications and results of the adultery of the race to its unseen Husband. And though the race meant in their minds Israel; though the people whom God had chosen, and with whom He had made a covenant, were those whom they taught to regard themselves as united in this eternal bond, of which covenants were but the outward expression, which existed long before Abraham or Noah; yet their language was always too large for even these limitations—was continually breaking through them. The King who was to reign over the Gentiles must be represented as their Husband; whensoever He should be revealed as the glory of His people Israel, He would certainly be revealed

as the Light to lighten all the nations; that is to say, whensoever he appeared as the Christ of God, He would certainly appear as the Bridegroom of Humanity.

To speak of Him, then, by this name, was not, as some would make out, to anticipate the discoveries of New Testament Apostles. It was expressly to endorse and unfold the discoveries that had been made to Old Testament Prophets. It is only when he speaks of his own office in relation to this Bridegroom, that John looks at all beyond the previous teachers of his land; and then, that he may make their office also more intelligible.

‘*The friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.*’ I know scarcely any words in all the Scriptures which have a deeper and diviner music in them than these, or which more express all that a Christian minister and a Christian man should wish to understand and feel; and should hope that some day he may understand and feel as he who first spoke them did. That may seem to us a high ambition; we ought to consider it a poor ambition. After eighteen hundred years we should be able to understand *better*, to feel *more* intensely than John did, that all the joy which is intended for a human being—nay, in the strict sense, which is possible for a human being—comes from hearing this Bridegroom’s voice. I do believe, brethren, that by sore experience, shameful experience, those of us who have had fewest saintly aspirations may learn that lesson. We have listened for the echoes of our own voices; we have longed to know what impression they made; we have tried to feast on the outward praise or the inward consciousness of their power or sweetness. Has it not been very miserable, unsatisfying food? has

not the day's gluttony brought nausea and disgust on the morrow? Has not the gratification of that vanity gradually formed in us a craving, which no indulgence could appease, which every disappointment made intolerable? How much better has it been, if we have striven to take delight in the words and deeds of other men, to feel the praises of them as our own! 'As our own! Then we still 'are intended to connect what is outside of us with ourselves; we must, in some sort, refer them to a standard 'within us?' Here is the puzzle; one always recurring; one infinitely more tormenting in the practice of life than it ever can be in speculation; one that affects all our judgments of our fellow-men; one that never deserts us when we are alone. It never can be set at rest till we confess a Lord, from whom all that is good and dear and worthy to be admired in any human being is derived—a root of all mutual understanding and genial sympathy—a centre of life and joy. If we think that there is a Bridegroom who is ever bestowing His own treasures and loveliness upon the creatures who were formed after His likeness, whose nature He has taken, who is ever drawing those creatures out of their own narrow and dark prison-houses, to come and claim their rights as spirits, and to share with Him the free air and light in which He dwells, then we may begin to claim the place of His friends, and in our own hearts, as well as in those who have been most estranged from us, to hear Him speaking. That speech will not be monotonous; we shall know why it is said in the Apocalypse to be as the sound of many waters. In the accents of humiliation and penitence, in the accents of thanksgiving and praise, in the confessions upon sick-beds, in the laugh of children, in the stillness of the churchyard, in the noise of cities,

in the cries upon the cross, in the message, He is risen,—we shall hear the Bridegroom's voice. It testifies that He has come and is coming to us and to all. Our joy is fulfilled only if we learn to welcome Him, and to bid our brethren welcome Him also.

And therefore John proceeds, most consistently and harmoniously: '*He must increase; I must decrease.*' If the words had been spoken only of a new teacher who was baptizing more disciples than he, there would be a sadness and a kind of murmur in them, however they might denote a necessary submission. But when it is the Bridegroom of his own spirit, the divine Lord, from whom alone he had received light, in whom alone he could see light, who was to increase, the '*I must decrease*' is not a qualification of the joy he had claimed as the Bridegroom's friend, but a principal part of it. How many a one has felt the misery of a self; has longed to become absorbed in the universe—to be nothing! It was a wish which a holy man such as John was did not dare to cherish, and yet which must have haunted him more than most. To have a glimpse of *this* annihilation; to see that it was possible to become less and less, while He in whom he was bound up, in whom was the spring of his life and joy, grew greater and greater; to feel that he might find his own personality in another;—was not this the consummation to which God had always been leading him? Was not this, too, the very meaning and explanation of the work in which he had been engaged? 'The Word, the Light of men, of whom he had told his countrymen, needed no longer his witness; for He was coming forth Himself to witness of that Father with whom He had dwelt eternally, to tell mankind of Him.

This higher testimony, this newer and grander revelation, is the subject of the verses which follow: '*He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.*'

John had said before, that a man receives nothing but what is given him from heaven. He does not recal that language, but affirms it anew, when he says that every man in himself, every child of Adam, though a living soul, is '*yet of the earth, and speaketh of the earth.*' He is tied to earthly measures and standards. If he applies even the faculties which he has derived from heaven to judge of heaven, he reduces it to the level of earth. But there is One who cometh from above, One who is above all, One who draws His light from the Fountain of light, One whose light in us is not a part of our darkness, but a divine power to scatter it. He testifies of that which He has seen and heard, of the heavenly things, of the will and nature and purpose of God. '*And no man receiveth His testimony.*' Strange that John should say that! What he had heard from his disciples was that Jesus was baptizing, and '*that all men came to Him.*' We are not told that he doubted their information; we are not told that he had any different information from more trustworthy sources. And yet he confidently affirms that His testimony is not received. Why? Because he was not speaking of what had happened in the few days or weeks since Jesus came to Jordan to fulfil all righteousness, but of the four thousand years during which He had come to His own, and His own had received Him not. That testimony which He had borne as the invisible Word of God He was bearing still, now that He

was made flesh and dwelling among men. It was mightier in degree; it was not different in kind. It was still a testimony to the heart, to the inner man, and must be entertained or rejected there. What, therefore, the Baptist could say of the past, on the warrant of so long an experience, he could say surely of the present. The darkness would fight against the light. No man of himself, without an operation from above, without a higher baptism than that of water, whether administered by John or by Christ, would believe that which the Son of God came to tell him.

That this limitation to the expression '*no man*' is involved in the very nature of the Baptist's discourse, is evident from the next verse: '*He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*' But what need of a limitation? Why should he have made a large assertion in one sentence, which is to be modified or contradicted in the next? The answer is contained in the words themselves: '*He who receives this testimony sets to his seal that God is true.*' The Christ comes to baptize men with the Spirit, that they may receive that which of themselves they are both reluctant and unable to receive. The man who accepts that testimony, confesses his own reluctance and inability. He believes God to be strong and true, though he is weak and lying. And his mind becomes stamped with the impression of God's truth. The Spirit of God raises him above himself to know Him. It was necessary, then, to make the one assertion in its breadth and fulness, that the other might not lose any of *its* breadth and fulness. It was necessary that no man should suppose himself capable of entering into the mind and kingdom of God—that all men might know that God was not deceiving them, when He promised to bestow that capacity upon them.

'For,' John continues, '*He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him.*' He speaks the words of God. If He proclaimed a doctrine, a theory, a scheme of the universe—that might be taken in,—if some thought ill of it, others would embrace it. But He comes speaking the words of God—revealing the mind of the Eternal Being—showing forth Him who is truth and who is love. How can we grasp such a manifestation as this? What have our poor beggarly conceits to do with the idea of a Goodness without bounds? Let us understand it well, brethren. The Jews rejected the testimony of Christ, because it was the testimony concerning such a God as this. The difficulty of all difficulties, whatever we may fancy, is to believe in *God*, in a *living* and *true* God, in a God who loves His creatures. It is a difficulty which no arguments can remove; a difficulty which the progress of ages does not diminish in the least, but makes stronger; a difficulty which is often most overpowering to the most religious men. The logician says, 'The understanding is finite; you cannot bring the Infinite within its range.' The philosopher of advanced civilization says, 'The belief in God was for little children; science is for us. Physical science does not reveal God; our worship of humanity dispenses with Him.' Religious men see evil all about them and within them. They can conceive of a punisher and avenger of evil; they can conceive that this punisher and avenger, if he has motive and compensation sufficient, may exempt some from the destruction which he has decreed for the majority. They cannot believe in Love.

The logician is right. St. John said, eighteen hundred years ago, that the Light had shined in the darkness, and the darkness had not comprehended it. If we

think only of our understanding, if we refuse to believe that there is a Word always illuminating it, we think only of the darkness, and we may say boldly, 'It can know nothing of God; we have nothing to do with Him.' The modern philosopher of advanced civilization is right. We cannot discover God in the world; we cannot discover in the world anything higher than ourselves. If there is no Bridegroom of humanity, who witnesses to it of a Father, and binds it to a Father, we can only worship the world, or worship humanity—that is to say, worship ourselves. The religious man who exalts evil into the throne of the universe is right. All the witnesses of the conscience that there is a God infinitely good,—all the witnesses of the heart that man is made to be in conformity with that infinite Good, and can be satisfied with nothing else—are simply mockeries and delusions, which it is the business of the disciple and minister of Christ to trample upon, to confute with words taken out of the Bible, till he has succeeded in making young men profligates and atheists, old men worldlings and hypocrites,—if there has not been in the world an only-begotten Son full of grace and truth, who has come forth from the Father to testify of the Father, and to whom the Father has given His Spirit without measure, that He might baptize with it all who receive His testimony, all who believe that God is true, not false—good, not evil.

To this subject the last and most memorable words of this whole chapter refer, those in which John the Baptist looks into the promised land which he was not to enter, in which he winds up the old dispensation, in which he introduces the new. *'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son of*

God hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son of God hath not life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.'

Henceforth we shall hear no longer of a prophet discoursing of a Word who has come to him, and from whom his light and the light of all men has been derived. We shall find *that* Word discoursing as a Son concerning a Father, conversing with a Father, showing forth a Father. We are to hear how this testimony is received, especially how it is received by the most religious portion of the Jewish people. We are to learn that, though their opposition to Jesus took many forms, there was one dark root of all their hostility and hatred. They could not bear to hear Christ speak of a Father—of a Father who loved the world. Whenever they thought of God, a dark image of wrath was present to them; that wrath abode upon them, settled in them. How was it possible for them, then, to see in Jesus the perfect image of the Father,—in His wrath against all baseness and vileness and hypocrisy, the true Divine wrath which is the expression of the deepest love,—in His sympathy with publicans and sinners, the self-same love? How was it possible for them to see in the Son lifted on the cross, the King whom prophets and holy men had desired, the Son of God in whom dwelt the fulness of the Father, because the fulness of love, bodily? And, therefore, the wrath which they had invoked upon all others, and cherished in their own hearts, came upon them to the uttermost. They rejected their King and Bridegroom, and all the national and spiritual life which had proceeded from Him perished inevitably.

I have come back to the subject of which I was speaking last Sunday. All Christian preaching should return continually to the Cross. It can never find any other object so

central or so glorious. But the death of Christ and His resurrection are inseparable. I have been preaching you an Easter sermon to-day. For, if you think of Easter as apostles and martyrs thought of it, you will think of it as the witness that the Bridegroom of humanity has presented and justified humanity before His Father. You will pray for the Spirit of the Father and the Son, that you, believing in that justification, may rise with Him to newness of life. And you will join to these prayers another, that each of us, when the hour comes in which strength and heart fail, may be able to say with joy, '*I must decrease, that He may increase.*' All that belongs to my own poor and selfish nature must decay and perish, that He, my Lord and Saviour, may be exalted,—that I and all His redeemed may see our own blessedness and glory only and for ever in Him.

DISCOURSE IX.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

[Lincoln's Inn, Sunday after Easter, March 30, 1856.]

ST. JOHN IV. 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 wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.

THE dispute between John's disciples and the Jew, of which I spoke last Sunday, was about purification. Apparently, John's answer to them, when they came to tell him that Jesus was baptizing, and that all men were coming to Him, had little reference to this subject. *Really* his words threw the greatest light upon it. He did not say whether the baptism of Jesus had a more purifying effect upon those who received it than his baptism. But he spoke of another gift which Jesus, if He was indeed the Son of God, would confer upon those who believed in Him. '*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life.*' It was a mighty thing for men to be purified, to have corruptions removed from them. But corruption is the consequence of death. Where corruption is, death must have entered. He who is the source and spring of life, He who can restore life, must have in Himself the very principle and

power of purification. All instruments of purification must derive their virtue from Him. He must be *the Purifier*.

Accordingly it is to this quality of the divine Word, or Son, that St. John has from the first directed our thoughts. '*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men:*' this is the starting-point of his Gospel. The sign in Cana of Galilee was the sign that Jesus was the communicator of life. His discourse with Nicodemus turned altogether upon the life from above which the Spirit of God would confer upon men, and which would enable them to see the kingdom of God. The primary announcement of the forerunner, therefore, respecting the Word made flesh, '*He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost,*' whatever more it might mean, could mean nothing less than this: 'He shall not merely cleanse away defilements; He shall impart the life which those defilements obstruct and seek to extinguish.' John did not say for a moment that water should not be the sign of entrance into the kingdom that was at hand—that it should not be Christ's sign, as it had been his sign;—but he said that it should be the sign, not merely of repentance and remission of sins, but of a higher and eternal *life*.

Was this an unusual and arbitrary application of the symbol? Surely not. Water, when it is applied outwardly, suggests only the thought of purification. Water, when it is taken inwardly, immediately suggests the thought of life. And this, therefore, is the point of connexion between the discourse of John with his disciples, which occupied us last Sunday, and the discourse of Jesus with the woman of Samaria, which is to occupy us to-day. The Evangelist points out the relation between the two subjects in his own mind and in the history, by the first

words of the fourth chapter: '*When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples,) He left Judæa, and came again into Galilee.*' What the disciples of the Baptist had angrily conjectured, the Pharisees would of course take for granted. They would assume that John and Jesus were rival teachers, and that one was supplanting the other. The thought of this might become the thought of Christ's own disciples: if it did, they would utterly misunderstand the work of their Master, and His relation to the preacher of repentance. Was not this a reason for leaving Judæa, and going into Galilee?

'*And He must needs go through Samaria.*' That was the most natural road. He might no doubt have avoided it; there was an inward and moral necessity why He should not. If He was setting up a kingdom in the whole land, portions of it which had been most separated from the rest must be claimed as belonging to it.

'*Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*' This country was connected with the oldest traditions relating to the commonwealth of Israel,—to the period before the giving of the Law, when the life of the fathers of the nation was entirely domestic and pastoral. In these traditions was the link between one part of the people and the other. The local associations with the events recorded in the Book of Genesis were witnesses that the rocks had once been united, however rudely they had in later times been rent asunder. There, especially, was the simplest and most faithful token of patriarchal times—a well. It was believed to have been dug by

Jacob. It brought the name of the head of all the tribes, and the likeness of his mode of existence to their own, before those who could read no letters, and had little in their own thoughts to tell them that they were members of a chosen race.

'Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat.)' Such a request from a weary and thirsty traveller would not commonly have been refused by a woman of Palestine; and certainly we have no reason to think, from the Gospels, that a Samaritan was likely to be less friendly or courteous than one of the Southern people. It is not probable that the woman meant to refuse. But she thought she had a right, on behalf of her country, to trifle a little with the pride of a Jew, who, in a difficulty, would ask a favour of those whom he despised, though he would not hold any intercourse with them, or meet them upon fair terms. *'How is it,'* said she, *'that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings'* (do not traffic) *'with the Samaritans.'*

That word, *'have no traffic or dealing,'* seems to explain the first part of our Lord's answer. *'If thou knewest the GIFT of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.'* She had come day after day to draw water at that well. Had she never known that that water was a *gift* of God? Had no thirst on a hot day, or no failure of the spring, taught her that? Was water a thing to traffic in? Did not she recollect that it was a

man, and not merely a Jew, who was saying, 'Give me to drink'? Did she never think of the gift of water as something very free and universal? This lesson was contained in the opening of the sentence; and the look and the voice of the Stranger had, perhaps, already carried it home in some degree to the woman's conscience. But the speech suddenly took another turn. There might be an exchange of gifts here also. '*If thou knewest who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.*'

The words conveyed no immediate sense to her mind as to the nature of the gift which was spoken of. But her answer shows that the presence of the Stranger had not been without its effect. She speaks with less levity than before, with something of doubt, if not of awe,—'*Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his children, and his cattle?*' I am far from supposing that this question indicates any suspicion in her mind that He *was* greater than their father, or that He could know the country and where to find its secret springs as Jacob did. But that very reference to Jacob showed that the feelings of the woman were becoming more serious than they had been. The petty disputes of Jews and Samaritans were giving place to those remembrances of the past which make all common spots sacred, and ennoble even the vulgarest minds. Her well, that well at which she had so often filled her pitcher, was the one out of which, eighteen hundred years before, the patriarch had drunk, and his children, and his cattle. It was a step in her education, a preparation for the words which follow.

‘*Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*’ I do not say that our version of this passage is in itself an incorrect one; nothing is harder than to find the most suitable equivalents for the words which are rendered here ‘*never*’ and ‘*everlasting*:’ but it would, I conceive, have been most desirable, by some means or other, to make the reader feel (which scarcely any reader of our translation does feel) that the two clauses answer to each other,—that εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, follows ‘*shall not thirst*,’ and that the adjective, αἰώνιος, is that which qualifies ‘*life*.’ I shall make no further use of this observation,—for there is enough in this passage to occupy us without any reference to it; but I could not pass it over because the word ‘*life*,’ which is the cardinal one of the passage, and I might say of the dialogue, must be considerably affected by that which accompanies it. I am far more anxious, however, that you should consider how our Lord describes the difference between the water of Jacob’s well and that which He would give. ‘*The water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.*’ The woman had wondered where He would go to discover a fountain deeper and more abundant than that which Jacob had bequeathed. The answer is, ‘*He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again.*’ ‘*He must come, as you do, to fetch water continually. The supply of to-day will be no supply for to-morrow. But what if each man should have the spring in himself? What if it should be a spring ever renewed, kept alive by Him who first opened it?*’ ‘*A strange*

‘thought,’ you will say, ‘to set before an ignorant woman! What could she understand about springs or fountains within?’ Very little at first, if we believe the Evangelist. Her reply is just what we might expect it to be. She relapses into the sort of banter with which she had begun the conversation. The gravity which she had exhibited for a moment has disappeared: ‘*Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*’ A sufficient proof, most would say, if they dared, that this kind of mystical discourse was very little adapted to the comprehension of such a person as she was. But, my brethren, if we say this, we must say more. We must say that the whole Gospel of St. John—the simplest, as I have said already, in language and construction, of all the Gospels, that which Luther was wont to designate the child’s Gospel—is unsuitable to simple people, and must be reconstructed according to our notions of simplicity. For that Gospel begins from the principle that Christ, the living Word of God, is the life and light of men, the life and light of all men. If that is true, it must have been the work of the Son of Man, of the Word made flesh, to let all manner of people know that He was the source and spring of their life,—that apart from Him they had none. Now, life must be inward; it cannot come to a man from the world which is about him. That may be full of signs and tokens of the life he wants. Each well, each drop of rain, may testify of it. But it must spring up within him. Whatever is enduring, whatever he wants to satisfy the infinite thirst within him, must be there.

You say, an ignorant woman could not enter into such a mystery as this. But there were mysteries that she could enter into. ‘*Jesus said unto her, Go, call thy husband, and*

come hither.' It was a curious and startling break in the conversation. What had it to do with Jacob's well, or with the living water which she could not find there? Very much indeed. '*The woman said, I have no husband. Jesus answered and said, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*' Here were facts concerning her past and her present history; here was a revelation of something that concerned her own very self. With *this* there was no trifling. It was not of Jacob's well, or of another well, that the Stranger was discoursing now. He was speaking of *her*,—He was telling her what she was. '*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*' She confessed it in her way,—'*Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet.*' All was not quite right with her;—He knew it, and He made her know it. She had offended the Power above,—perhaps He could tell her, also, how she might appease Him. Her fathers might have taught her wrongly. She would like to know. She would rather like, moreover, to make the discourse more general, less personal. A wish for truth, and a fear of it, light and darkness, in her, as in all of us, fought for the mastery. She said, '*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain,*'—this venerable Gerizim,—'*and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*' Whether or not she would have been ready at the bidding of a Jewish prophet to repair her errors, and earn the favour of God by giving up her Samaritan faith, and becoming a proselyte of the Temple, she had not perhaps asked herself; how much she would have gained by the exchange, our Lord's words in another Gospel, about those who became proselytes from heathenism, may partly tell us. But He

who had sat by the well did not ask this proof of her desire for reformation. ‘*Woman,*’ He said, ‘*believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*’ All she had asked—all that most Samaritans or Jews would have disputed about—was *where* they ought to worship. The thought upon which Jesus fixes her mind, is the Being to be worshipped. That new name, which John said the Son was come to reveal, is now proclaimed in the ears of a separatist and a sinner. He speaks not of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, but of the *Father*. Such a name the woman might or might not have heard, as one of the names of Him who dwelt on Gerizim. At all events, it would be but one of them—one that would be lost amidst the various titles by which He was invoked—carrying no special significance to the mind of the worshipper. Still, far down in that mind there was that which responded to the word *Father*, which would awake up at the sound when it came from lips that felt all the power and reality of it. She who had had five husbands, had had a father. To feel that the God of the distant hill had anything to do with that human relation, was the dawn of a new day to her. The sun was rising in her heart, if there were ever so many clouds concealing it.

I have said that our Lord was drawing the woman’s thoughts from the *place* of worship to the *object* of worship. He goes on, in the next verse, to tell her that ignorance of this object was the special ignorance of the Samaritan: ‘*Ye worship ye know not what.*’ And then He introduces words that have startled many, especially in this connexion: ‘*We know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.*’ ‘*Could He,*’ it has been asked, ‘*claim this dignity*

‘ for His own nation, at the very moment when He seemed
‘ to be breaking down all distinctions of nations? And *did*
‘ the Jew know what he worshipped? Did not Jesus Him-
‘ self say, “ *Ye know neither me nor the Father?*” ’ I
apprehend, brethren, that the assertion of this, as the great
calamity of the Samaritan—that he knew not what he wor-
shipped—is abundantly borne out by history. It was in all
times a country of superstitions, the early home of Baal-
worshippers, the later home of enchanters and fanatics, and
of sects putting forward pretensions to all kinds of spiritual
powers, appealing to great necessities in the human mind,
always leading it astray from its centre. The hard, cold
Jew was not half so much open to *these* impressions.
The sects in his land were dry and formal, bound together
by certain notions about the law. Becoming more and
more selfish, measuring everything by rules of profit and
loss, he grew at last to be a mere worshipper of Mammon.
How was it possible, then, for him to know Christ and the
Father? But in his debasement, he still preserved the
shadow of the blessing which had been conferred upon his
race, and which his neighbour, though freer and more
open-minded, had lost. He still clung to a distinct object
of adoration. He was a protestant against the worship of
spiritual phantasies. This poor shadow showed what the
substance was which the Jew had inherited, and which
was his distinction among all nations. Salvation was to
go forth from his land. And salvation, so our Lord teaches
us, consists in knowing what we worship; for that know-
ledge saves men from slavery to the world’s idols, and to
the idols of their own hearts, which is their great curse and
misery.

But if this is salvation, it could not be salvation to

worship in the temple of Jerusalem any more than in the temple of Gerizim. If this salvation was to go forth *from* the Jews, it could not be limited *to* them. Therefore He proceeds—‘*The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*’ Here was a proclamation which, in a wonderful manner, combined the truth that had been partially revealed to the Samaritan, and the truth which still subsisted, though commonly hidden, distorted, even inverted, among the Jews. The confused sense of a spiritual worship, of men being spirits, was that which gave the magicians among the Samaritans all their power. They did acknowledge some invisible presence and influence acting upon them, and capable of producing wonderful effects, though they did not know what they worshipped. The Jew bowed down before a Being mightier than himself, who could lay down laws for him, who would execute those laws upon him. But he turned that Being into a selfish tyrant. A double transformation! The tyrant is revealed as a Father. The enchantments are supplanted by a Spirit proceeding from that Father, a Spirit of truth. Men are not to climb up to that Father by their offerings on Mount Moriah or Mount Gerizim, by their sacrifices or by their enchantments. The Father is seeking *them*. He gives them His true Spirit to make them true worshippers. They must not wish to draw Him down to them; He would draw them up to Him.

‘*For God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*’ In those first words there was, as will be evident from what I have said, much that was in harmony with Samaritan feeling,—even with

the feeling of an ordinary Samaritan like this woman. She had heard of spirits; she thought more about spirits than a Jew would have done. She did not speculate about them, but supposed that they might appear to her, or have some influence over her. But then came that other part of the sentence, which went to the very root of the tricks and superstitions with which she and her countrymen were familiar; '*they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*' The Spirit of truth—*that* must enter into you, *that* must govern you, *that* must reform your life. A message this meant for the universe,—going to the very root of all religion and all philosophy, and yet bearing straight upon the conscience of that woman of Sychar who had come to draw water at Jacob's well.

Perhaps there is nothing that strikes us more in this conversation, which is so very direct and consistent in its purpose, and yet which follows all the windings of the human heart, beginning from '*Give me to drink,*' and ending with a revelation of the nature of God; perhaps, I say, there is nothing more remarkable in it all than the result of it. You expect to see the woman bowing before the mysterious Foreigner, expressing her astonishment at his high doctrine, lamenting that she had spoken to Him so uncourteously. Not at all. She says, '*I know that when Messias cometh, He shall tell us all things.*' 'Our people speak of One who is to be sent from God, of a Messias. I suppose, if these things are true about God being a Spirit, and about our having a Spirit of truth, He will tell us. We shall know as much of these things as we can know.' Evidently this part of the conversation has not yet taken hold of her. The part about herself has. 'The Messias will tell us all things; but this Jew has told me of myself;

He has seen what I am.' And therefore, when Jesus answers, '*I that speak unto thee am He,*'—so making a more direct profession of His name and dignity to this Samaritan than He had made in Jerusalem,—He surely meant to fix this impression on her mind: 'Yes, this is the test of Messiahship. Look for no other. Do not ask for some outward signs to tell you when He is coming, or what He can do. I that speak unto *thee*—I that lay bare *thy* heart—am He. That is the proof of my kingship over human beings; that is the proof of my being sent from God. I know what is in thee—the wrong of thy outward life, the evil of thy inward life. I know thy deepest necessities. I know thy want of a new spring of life within, of water of which thou mayest drink, and not thirst again. Thou needest that. All Samaritans, all Jews, all men and women who shall live, all nations and generations to come, will need it. I can give it them. For I can give them that Spirit of truth which the Father desires them to have, that they may know Him and worship Him.'

Lord, evermore give us this Spirit, that we thirst not, nor seek to draw the water of life, which is only in Thee, from the wells of earth!

DISCOURSE X.

THE REWARDS OF LABOUR, AND THE KINDS OF FAITH.

[Lincoln's Inn, 2d Sunday after Easter, April 6, 1856.]

ST. JOHN IV. 48.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

DISTANCE of time is not always unfavourable to accurate recollection. We often remember a friend's words better, years after they were spoken, than the next day; because we understand them better, because we see how one of them rose out of another. So, I imagine, it must have been with the woman of Sychar. If she had repeated the dialogue with Jesus to her neighbours, as soon as she returned to her city, she would probably have misrepresented it. Short as it was, she would have mistaken words, she would have changed the order of them. A time will have come when she would be sure of what He had said, and of what she had said,—when she could say confidently to those who were collecting His words, 'This is what He told me—this, and nothing else.'

At first she seems to have been too full of one part of the Stranger's speech to care about the rest. She did not say, 'I have received strange lessons from this Jewish prophet 'about God being a Spirit, and about the water of life;' she

expressed far more simply the effect of this speech upon her: '*He told me all that ever I did.*' Was this exaggerated language? At first we are inclined to say so; then, perhaps, to justify her by resorting to some awkward hypothesis of our Lord having said many things to her which the Evangelist has omitted. The experience and conscience of human beings justify her far better. One who repeats to us all the passages of our history ever so accurately, does not tell us all that ever we did. A single flash of light may make the whole past visible to us, and show us that it is *our* past. Thus was it with her. Her inmost self was revealed to the Stranger. And, what was wonderful, she did not wish to escape from His gaze. Awful as it was, she was attracted, not repelled by it. She had the comfort,—the greatest almost that we can experience,—of feeling that she had no longer anything to hide,—that there was One who knew thoroughly all that was wrong and all that was right in her. For Jesus had given her a sense of there being a right in her which she had never had before. She could not have explained how it came to pass; she was an ignorant peasant;—but it was so. The Stranger's speech had raised her to a new level. She had never seen the evil in herself as she had seen it now; but she had never so much risen out of the evil. When do we rise out of our evil but when the truth is told us, and we like to hear it?

And therefore she said, '*Is not this the Christ?*' 'Can it be any one else? And must He not be the Christ for you, my fellow-citizens, as He is for me? Must He not know all that you ever did, as He knows all that I ever did?' It was the right sermon. They acknowledged at once that it was such a Christ they wanted; not one who

could tell them about all things in the world, but who could tell them all things that ever *they* did. He who had that power might or might not be such a Christ as scribes and doctors talked of; He might or might not have the marks by which they discerned the coming King and Deliverer. But He was the Christ for poor people who hewed wood and drew water, who were human beings, and who had committed sins. These were the proofs of His mission to them. He must give these; they asked no others.

The Apostle could have been no ear-witness of the conversation with the woman. But he describes with such vividness, the impression made upon the disciples who returned when she was departing, that it is difficult to suppose he was not one of them. '*And upon this came His disciples, and marvelled that He talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?*' The sense of astonishment which they all felt,—the look which showed to each how the other was sharing it with him, and yet the awe which restrained them from questioning Him,—the confidence that He had some great purpose, though they knew not what it was; all this came back to the old man as clearly as if he were then by the well of Sychar, not amidst the merchandise of Ephesus. And so, by a single instance, he makes clearer to us than he could by a multitude of explanations, what must have been continually in the minds of the disciples, when they stood in that presence, and heard words spoken and saw acts done which they could not sound with their plummets, and which called forth faith in Him because they could not.

But though this was so, they had no dread of speaking to Him about common earthly necessities. They knew

that He had sat down weary on the well; they knew that He hungered and thirsted. He had sent them to buy food, and they could say, '*Master, eat,*' without any doubt that He would partake of it just as any of them did. Probably He took what they offered Him, even while He said, '*I have meat to eat which ye know not of.*' They had so little suspicion that He would ever work a miracle for His own support,—they were so inwardly certain that He would not,—that they said at once to each other, '*Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?*' No. He had waited for their coming. The ravens had carried no nourishment to Him; He had not commanded the stones to become bread. There must have been a special joy, an unwonted radiance in His face as He answered, '*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.*' He had that spring of life within Him, of which He had spoken to the woman, from which life might flow forth to her and to all. And yet He speaks of it as not an original fountain, even in Him. There was One from whom He was sent. The satisfaction of doing His will, of accomplishing his purpose,—this was His food; this was the sustaining principle within Him. St. John has taught us already, and will teach us more completely hereafter, that the relation of the Son to a Father, with all the trust, obedience, communion which it implies, is the subject of the new revelation. To be doing the will of Him that sent Him, to be in perfect sympathy with the will which is at the root of the universe, to be fulfilling the purposes of this will,—this Christ affirms to be meat to Him in a double sense; meat, as that which keeps up the strength of the man—meat, as that which gratifies and satisfies his desires.

One may feel there is great general force in such a

sentiment as this; but what is its *special* application to the story we are reading? Had His interview with the woman supplied Him with what could be called meat in either of these senses? What was there to sustain Him, what was there to delight Him, in her way of receiving His words?

The answer is given in the following passage: '*Say ye not, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already unto the harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*'

Many who have gathered crowds about them, who have produced a marked impression upon those crowds, have said, and said truly, that such success was meat and drink to them. If it did not feed their vanity, but sustained them because it showed them they were doing God's will and finishing His work, they may have understood something of Christ's meaning. But the secret food He partook of certainly came from no sudden success that followed His words. First, He met with a woman who had in general answered Him with levity; then a few people of her own rank came at her call. How little would such honours satisfy the ambition of some eloquent disciple of Christ, who has the power of influencing thousands! Could it satisfy Him who came to found a kingdom of which there was to be no end? Yes; for in these first sheaves He could see the certain pledges of a nation's, of

a world's, ingathering. The corn-fields which the disciples saw about them would not be reaped for four months; yet the harvest would appear, because the seed had been sown. These men whom He saw coming showed Him that the other harvest was nearer still. The fields were white already for that harvest; the disciples themselves would be reapers in it. He had sent them, and they would receive the wages of reapers. What wages? He had already told them that His own wages were to do the will of God, and to finish His work. Did they want better? They would gather in fruit,—the fruit of all His work and travail, of all God's revelations of Himself from age to age, of all the toil of patriarchs, kings, prophets. These had laboured,—they were entering into their labours. They were come in at the end of a period when all things were hastening to their consummation. They would have the reward which all these men had longed for,—the reward of seeing God's full revelation of Himself, of opening the spring of eternal life of which all might drink together. The divisions of time had nothing to do with an eternal blessing. The sower and the reaper would rejoice together. Why might not Jacob, who had given the well, and the newest Samaritan convert who drank of it, share in those pleasures which are at the right hand of Him, who is, and was, and is to come?

I have only given you a hint or two which may assist you in tracing out the sense of these great words. The Apostles did not enter into them for many years,—not till they had begun to reap the harvest of which He spoke, not till they had learnt that some of the wages of the reapers were persecution and disappointment. So they understood by degrees how unsatisfactory all promises

were but those which He had given them ; how miserable a thing it was to hope for any reward but that which had been and is His reward. I suppose we must be trained to understand Christ's doctrine in the same school. Till we have been under His discipline we shall have the temper of hirelings, counting His work a hardship, expecting to be paid hereafter for consenting to do it. Or else we shall look for instant harvests,—for mighty effects to follow at once from the things that we speak,—for those fruits which least manifest the calm, patient, loving will of God, and therefore bring no true and inward satisfaction to the spirit of a man. We must learn to see in the seed that same eternal life which is in the perfect flower and fruit—to believe that God will bring the one out of the other ; otherwise we shall have much excitement and much weariness, but no food which can support us, no joy which will connect us with the ages that are past and the ages to come. That will not be given to us till we see, in God's revelation of Himself to one sinner, the token of His love to the world.

The whole doctrine concerning the rewards for obedience, which has been the subject of so many wearisome folios by philosophers and divines, is contained, I think, in these eight verses, and may be drawn out of them for daily use by any who think that the Apostle has a higher wisdom than can be found in his commentators, or in their own speculations. The remainder of the chapter contains, in a form as simple and as available, the solution of another problem which has exercised the wits of schoolmen and the hearts of wayfarers. Who has not been tormented with questions and answers about the nature, conditions, kinds, of belief,—about the force of testimony which produces it,—about

the organ which exercises it,—about the security or the insecurity of the person who has it or who wants it? On all these points St. John gives us no dissertations. But he tells us a short story about certain Samaritans, and then another rather longer story about a certain Galilæan, which I think may supply the place of many dissertations.

The first is contained in these verses: ‘*And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto Him, they besought Him that He would tarry with them: and He abode there two days. And many more believed because of His own word, and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*’

Suppose this was translated into school phraseology about implicit and explicit faith,—suppose each of these terms was laboriously explained,—all the different opinions of Fathers, Mediæval Doctors, Reforming Doctors, Modern Doctors respecting each compared, weighed, adjusted,—how much learning we should possess! how much the Apostle’s doctrine would expand in our hands,—how much we should expand in our own estimation! But supposing we had actually to find out what belief is in our own case, to trace the history of its progress, how thankful we should be to any one who would translate back the learned language into the language of the Gospel, who would let us hear what these Samaritans—vulgar people of our own flesh and blood—said about their belief and its growth!

The first stage of it we have considered already. What the woman told them had a great effect upon their minds,

because she spake of what she knew, and not of what she did not know. If she had said, 'He explained the prophecies to me,'—who would have cared? What judge was she of the prophecies, and what judges would they be? If she had said, 'He wrought a miracle in my sight,'—there had been enchanters enough among them, who had imposed upon much wiser people than she was. Her fellow-citizens, if they were not very curious, would not have deserted their common business for such an announcement as that. But, '*He told me all that ever I did;*' then she spoke from her experience. Whether she were wise or silly, a good woman or a bad, that was worth listening to; there were signs of truth about that.

They came and heard Him themselves. And then He told each of them what *he* had done, showed him to himself, made him feel that he was in the presence of a Light. The Light entered into the separate hearts, and showed them their dark passages. And yet it was a common Light; it gave them a sense of fellowship they had never had before; it gave them a sense of being men, which they had never had before. And, moreover, it was a Light which scattered confusions, ignorances, falsehoods, that had been dwelling undisturbed within them, or that had only been disturbed by what they felt must have been a ray of this same Light. *And* therefore, without asking the opinion of any wise man whatsoever, these bold peasants said out frankly and broadly, '*We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*'

I cannot tell whether this faith of the Samaritans is what one class of modern divines would call *saving* faith. I should imagine not. For these poor men said they knew Jesus to be the Saviour of the *world*; and it seems to be

put forward as the characteristic of saving faith, that men should believe a Saviour for themselves who is not a Saviour for the world. And, certainly, their belief had not that groundwork which another class of divines tells us is the only one upon which the claims of a Christ can rest. He had done no sign or wonder before them; He had only discoursed with them. On this topic, that other story to which I alluded may possibly throw some light.

It is introduced by the words, '*Now after two days He departed thence, and went into Galilee.*' He was going into Galilee before. A strange reason is given for His spending so short a time among the people who had met Him so cordially. '*For Jesus Himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.*' He did not count it good to stay where He had honour. The Galilæans were His kinsfolk and neighbours, bound to Him by human, and therefore by divine, ties. *There* was the token that He was to labour among them. More respect He might find elsewhere,—that was not what He came into the world to look for. His followers often judge differently about this matter. It may be that here, as elsewhere, we should act more safely if we thought that He had left us an example that we should walk in His footsteps.

'*Then when He was come into Galilee, the Galilæans received Him, having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.*' They had, then, what we are wont to regard as the right foundation of faith; they had the outward evidence, while the Samaritans were only receiving Him on the testimony of their consciences. '*So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman,*'—(a person, probably, belonging to the

household of Herod Antipas,)—‘*whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*’ Apparently His judgment of these two kinds of belief was different from ours. That which we think weak and groundless, caused Him inward joy. It was meat upon which He could sustain Himself; it showed Him that the Samaritan fields were white already to the harvest. On the contrary, that stable belief, which rested upon signs and wonders, gave Him little pleasure; rather it called forth a rebuke. The nobleman did not answer the rebuke: ‘*He saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die.*’ This was not the response of a man’s conscience to one who had discovered his evil. It was not the kind of trust of the Samaritan woman or the Samaritan man; but it was good honest trust, nevertheless. If the nobleman had been hitherto a mere observer of signs, he was now something more. He was a parent seeking help for his boy. He was a man who, in the sight and under the pressure of death, turns to One who can give life. Jesus at once confesses the change which His own discipline has wrought in him. ‘*He 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.*’

Two steps we have traced in the history of his mind. A third remains. ‘*As he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the time when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 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.'

Here we have, no doubt, the account of a sign, and of its effect upon the persons toward whom it was exhibited. St. John himself connects it with the sign in Cana of Galilee. He appears to wish that we should regard both as specimens of Galilæan signs in distinction from Jerusalem signs. We may, therefore, apply here the principles which we discovered with reference to the marriage-feast. There it seemed that the lesson which was taught belonged to all marriage-feasts,—to all the outward signs of life and joy,—to those mysterious powers by which, in any country or in any age, physical transformations are effected. In this one instance Jesus was revealed as giving the blessing which seals the marriage-vow, wherever it is made,—as everywhere the Inspirer of gladness,—as ruling all the energies of nature. The circumstances in the Capernaum story are much changed; it touches more nearly on the funeral than on the bridal. But in one, as much as in the other, Christ is revealed as the Word of Life. In one, as much as in the other, human relationships are beautified and hallowed by Christ; the relation of the husband there, of the father here. One, as much as the other, applies to England as well as to Galilee. And what was said there of the faith that followed the sign, is even more strikingly developed here. '*He manifested forth His glory, and His disciples*'—those who had already confessed Him to be the Christ upon another ground—'*believed in Him.*' It was a discovery to them of His inward power. It deepened a conviction that had been imparted to them already. The Capernaum nobleman had already believed in Christ, with the belief of one who wants help, and thinks he has found

the person who is able and willing to bestow it. The sign unfolds that faith, and makes it more profound. The man becomes not more a seeker of marvels, but less. He desires no longer, casual, flitting exercises of power; he bows to power as inward, continual, moral. He is always in the presence of Him who spoke the word at the seventh hour. At every moment, he and his son and all his household are receiving fresh life from Him. To know Him, to be in fellowship with Him, to be doing His will—which is the will of Him who sent Him: this he finds to be eternal life.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

[Lincoln's Inn, 3d Sunday after Easter, April 13, 1856.]

ST. JOHN V. 16—18.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because He had done these things on the sabbath-day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making Himself equal with God.

THE scene changes again at the opening of this chapter. 'After these things there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.' What feast it was, the harmonists may settle; as St. John has not told us, I am content to dwell upon the fact, which he evidently thought of great importance, that Jesus did go up to the feasts, and that His acts had a special reference to the state of mind which He found among the inhabitants of the capital; above all, among its religious teachers.

'Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.' Jerusalem might or might not have been compassed with Roman armies when St. John wrote. I do not know that its independence or its capture would affect the position of the pool or the sheep-market; they might be

still just what they had been when the Apostle knew them. Perhaps the pool was no longer visited as in former days; perhaps the tradition of its virtues still drew to it people from the country round. At all events, the sight which had been before his eyes thirty or forty years before, was not one which he would forget. It is not one which we need much effort of imagination to bring before ourselves.

'*In these*' porches '*lay a multitude of sick folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the waters.*' If we look at the separate figures in the picture, they belong as much to the West as to the East—to the nineteenth century as to the first. Nor can any frequenters of an English or German spa consider the motive which brought together so many of different ages and with different ailments, a strange or an obsolete one. Even the notion that at certain times the water would possess a virtue which at other times it would want, may be justified by modern experience, perhaps may be explained by modern science.

But experience and science, it will be said, are both set at nought by the announcement in the next verse: '*For an angel went down at a certain season, and troubled the water: whosoever, therefore, first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.*' Here a reason is given for the virtues of the pool;—not, it will be said, a medical reason; not one which can connect the waters of this pool with those which intelligent people frequent for qualities which are, on fair evidence, known or believed to be in them;—but rather one which connects them with the holy wells which in the villages of England, Wales, and Ireland, are supposed to have received a blessing from some local saint. To find St. John adopting or endorsing such legends, causes no pain to those who assume him and

his brother Apostles to be the propagators of superstition ; ignorant Jews, who were steeped in all the prejudices of their countrymen, and who added to them some of their own invention. There are some who, with a general respect for him and them, can yet give him credit for following the traditions of his country when they were ever so vulgar and false ; excusing him on the plea that he knew nothing of physics, and that his business was not with them. There are men of a better and nobler stamp, who, though they do not claim for him any acquaintance with natural science, yet are sure that he lived to scatter delusions, not to foster them ; and that he would not have been permitted by the Spirit of truth to claim for lies the name of Him who came to bear witness of the truth. I do not wonder that some of these honest and earnest men should have been able to persuade themselves that the verse I have just quoted has nothing to do with the general narrative of the cure at Bethesda ; but has crept into the text from the gloss of some writer who understood Jewish opinions, not the mind of St. John.

I respect the motives of these interpreters, but I think their conclusion is a rash and a wrong one. I am convinced that the words which they would omit are a vital part of the narrative, and that our Lord's act loses very much of its meaning if we overlook them. I am equally convinced that these words contradict no truth of science ; that, if taken by themselves, they do not meddle with it, and are only supposed to meddle with it through a logical confusion, from which, for the sake of science and of our own intellectual clearness, it is well that we should be delivered ; that, if taken in conjunction with the whole story, they help to scatter a superstition which was very

injurious to the Jewish people, and is equally injurious to people in this day.

What St. John affirms is, that a certain invisible angel or minister—an intelligence, as we are wont to speak—was the instrument of making the water of the Pool of Bethesda beneficial to the persons who went down into it. He accounts, in this way, for its operation being more useful at one time than another. That assertion, you say, interferes with the doctrine that there were certain properties in the water itself which affected the condition of human beings. How does it interfere? You hold that the vaccine matter has in itself the property of counteracting the virus of the small-pox. But you hold also that the intelligence of Jenner had something to do with making this vaccine matter available for the actual cure of patients afflicted by the small-pox; you hold that the intelligence of different medical men has something to do with bringing the preventive power to bear on particular cases. You know this for a fact; but physical science tells you nothing of the way in which the intelligence cooperates with the natural agent. The notion that it does is an excusable fallacy; yet it is a fallacy. *In no instance whatever can the mere study of physics help you to determine anything respecting moral or intellectual forces; though at every turn the study of physics compels you to the acknowledgment of such forces.* It will save us from innumerable confusions, if we take this proposition in the length and breadth of it. Through neglect of it, the physician and the metaphysician are perpetually stumbling against each other, when they might be the greatest helpers to each other.

But, it will be said, that notion of an angel which connects it with the intelligence in a man, is a modern one.

not the one which we should naturally derive from the Old Testament. I think, if we study those passages in the Old Testament which refer to angels, we shall find that it is exactly *this* notion which is the result of them, and that any other is a modern one, either derived directly from heathen sources, or from a mixture of heathen feelings with the lore of the New Testament. In the patriarchal times, we hear of angels appearing to Abraham to tell him of blessings which were coming upon his descendants; of angels seen by Jacob in a vision, of one who wrestled with him till the break of day. The stories leave upon us the impression that there are beings who minister to the unseen Lord of the whole earth; who are interested in the well-doing of men; who are different from men, but not so different as to be incapable of converse with them—not so different that they may not present themselves even to the human senses. The effect of those visions and revelations was to take away from the old shepherds the feeling that they were merely surrounded by natural forms or by animal existences which were beneath them; that there was a world near them, though not visible to them, which might have fellowship with them, and which elevated them above their flocks and herds. In the next age,—the age of legal and national life,—there are intimations of an angel going with the people through the wilderness; angels admonish warriors that they should be courageous in fighting the battles of the Lord; angels remind the people of their departures from the law of God; angels arouse humble men to deliver their people from idolatry and from slavery. Here the lessons respecting the nature and work of angels are not changed, but expanded. These messengers communicate more with the spirit of men,

present themselves more rarely to the eye. They are witnesses of a permanent divine order, belonging not to the individuals to whom they come, but to their race; of an order from which they have departed, and into which it is the Divine will that they should be brought back. In the regal period, the war or the pestilence,—the direction of natural agencies to the punishment of human crime,—is referred to angels. The effect of *this* teaching upon the thoughtful Jew was, that he could never suppose himself the mere sport of outward influences of earth, or of air, or of fire. All these had a purpose; all were directed by the wisdom of Him who had entered into covenant with the nation. In the Book of Psalms, which illustrates this period, He is said to ‘*make His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.*’ All natural powers are felt to be angels of God, because they are under the direction of an intelligent and righteous Ruler. In the Books of the Prophets, before the captivity, the angel is not lost sight of; but the Word of God who comes to the Prophet, more and more gathers up all powers and ministries into Himself, while the human teacher to whom he speaks is himself treated as a messenger of the Most High,—as no less His angel than any creature who has not the weeds of mortality. In the Prophets, after the captivity, new functions are assigned to angels. They watch over different lands; provinces of the earth are committed to them by the Lord of all;—it is hinted that some of them may have failed in their trust, as human sovereigns fail in theirs. These lessons seem especially appropriate to the time when the Jew was to feel his connexion with other nations, and to find that each of them supposed itself to be governed by some divine king or demigod.

Is not the doctrine of this chapter entirely consistent with the lessons which St. John had learnt from his fathers? Those lessons, I have urged, can neither be confuted nor confirmed by physical science. But the analogy which we derive from our ordinary experience is all in favour of them. It is a shock to the conscience and reason of man to feel that he is indebted to moral agents,—to spiritual agents,—in a very great degree, for the health and comfort which he enjoys here; but that the whole world which lies beyond his ken is only peopled with physical forces which act upon him blindly and care nothing for him. Men never have been able to persuade themselves of this. The *people* have always held the opposite faith. Surely it is time to ask ourselves whether that faith must be merely set at nought,—whether its manifest falsehoods and mistakes do not conceal precious truths,—whether those truths can be at variance with any others,—whether we are not bound to bring them into light, as the only means of dislodging the errors to which they have given countenance, and also of overthrowing some of those idols of the cave which the student worships no less ignominiously than the multitude worships the idols of the market-place? I believe St. John tells us how his Master did this work at the Pool of Bethesda: ‘*A certain man was there which had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 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? 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. Jesus saith to him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.*’

This was a sign indeed,—a sign addressed to a man who had been waiting day after day, perhaps year after year, for some outward accident to make him well,—that health and disease are dependent upon no accidents; that the power of life is an inward power; that there is One in whom it dwells; that He in whom it dwells is near to the weakest, the most helpless, even the most sinful. It would seem, from the words which our Lord spoke to this man afterwards, '*Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee,*' as if He had selected a man in whom all these conditions met, who was the oldest and most powerless of all the sufferers there, and had brought the sufferings upon himself by his misdoings. The demonstration, therefore, was complete. Men—the very lowest men—are not the dependants upon outward things, no, nor upon the visitations of angels. Such visitations may be appointed; but there is One who has a right to call Himself a Son—One in whom the mind and purpose of the Lord of angels is expressed—One who fulfils, not occasionally but continually, His purposes of health and restoration to men—One who is the Son of Man—who has sympathy with men, and can take away their infirmities, because He knows them, enters into them, suffers them.

Thus this cure is bringing us to the point to which St. John has been bringing us in all the previous passages of his Gospel. This sign at the Pool of Bethesda, like all the other signs we have been considering, reveals to us the Word who is the Source of life and health to all creatures. We are led from the messenger, visible or invisible, to Him who was with God and was God. We are led from the mere friends or helpers of man to that Word made flesh, the Son of Man. We are led finally to a Son who has come to reveal a Father.

I have chosen my text from the latter part of the chapter, because it brings *this* subject so directly before us, and because I believe that in doing so it gives us the real moral and explanation of the narrative of which I have just been speaking. Two cures are recorded by St. John as done by our Lord in the city of Jerusalem: one is that at the Pool of Bethesda; the other, that of the blind man at the Pool of Siloam. They are very different in their incidents and their object: the latter we shall have to consider attentively hereafter. But they have this in common,—both were wrought on the Sabbath-day. In both cases, St. John fixes our thoughts upon this point; in both, this circumstance is the cause of the bitterest indignation against Jesus; here it is said to be the motive of a conspiracy against him. *‘Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath-day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but*

said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.'

Two points present themselves to us here, and demand some earnest consideration. The first is, Why should the Sabbath-day have been especially chosen by our Lord for these acts of healing? The second is, What connexion was there in the Jewish mind, or in our Lord's own words, between the charge of breaking the Sabbath and the charge of calling God His Father?

The belief in angels had a good effect upon the people of the Jews, in so far as it led them to believe that the Most High cared for them individually as well as nationally,—that He Himself, and not some outward thing, was the Author of their blessings, the Restorer of their health. It was perverted to a bad use by the people, in so far as it led them to depend upon accidental interferences, not upon a continual living Helper. How Christ's sign brought out the good, counteracted the evil, of this faith, I have endeavoured to show you. But the belief of angels and spirits, which distinguished the Pharisees from the opposing sect, had most of the mischief, little of the truth, which clung to it among the crowd whom they despised. The tenet, that angels had interfered and might interfere, did not make them think that God was concerned for His creatures,—that He loved them. It only suggested the thought that there were certain persons and certain places that might receive favours which were withheld from others. It did not bring them to believe that any union between God and man existed or was possible. Rather angels were the dispensers of those laws, and the executors of those punishments, which marked the separation between God and His creatures, and the wrath of God against them. God was the Author of

statutes which had been written in tables of stone, and could not be changed. God was the Judge and Condemner of those who broke these statutes. God might dispense with the punctual fulfilment of them, or accept sacrifices as a compensation for the breach of them, in the case of His favourites. But one claim to be such favourites would be the rigorous enforcement of them, as His commandments, against the nation generally, and the ignorant, miserable, sinful portion of it particularly.

Was not this zeal for the laws and ordinances of the Most High a good zeal? Did not Christ come to fulfil the law?—did He wish to set it aside? Consider, my brethren, what the law was. I do not speak of any spiritual interpretation of it; I refer merely to the letter of the Ten Commandments. They begin with these words, '*I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the house of bondage.*' The zeal of the Pharisees for the law of God forgot this foundation of the law altogether. They did not tell the Israelite that the Lord was *his* God; they did not proclaim the Lord as a Deliverer from bondage, but as the Author of bondage. Therefore, *every* commandment was denied in its very essence. The first said, '*Thou shalt worship the Lord,*'—that is, the Lord the Deliverer, the Lord *thy* God, —'*and Him only shalt thou serve.*' But the Pharisee worshipped any god rather than this only God; worshipped a god who was directly the reverse of this only God. Everything in heaven or earth or under the earth—money, the meanest thing of all—was more an object of worship to him than this only God. He could not help taking His name in vain. Every time he pronounced it he took it in vain; he substituted another name for that of the only God; he cherished another name in his heart.

But then came the command to keep the Sabbath-day. Here, at all events, he could be strict to the letter; that he could keep as God had wished it to be kept. What! when that commandment says, 'Man shall rest because God rests; man shall work because God works?' What! when the commandment announced the Sabbath-day as a blessing to the man-servant, and the maid-servant, and the cattle? A Pharisee construe this commandment literally? A Pharisee keep this commandment strictly? Impossible. There was none which he must distort more, in which he must suppress more vital words, which he must more habitually disobey. The denial of the sentence which introduces the commandments—the determination to regard the Lord as a forger of chains, when He declares Himself to be the breaker of them—necessarily led to a greater and grosser violation of this statute and ordinance of the Lord than of all the rest.

And yet there were obvious reasons why the Pharisee should take his stand on the fourth commandment rather than on any other. As our Lord tells him elsewhere, he made it part of his religion to set aside the honour of fathers and mothers. To bear false witness against a neighbour, if he was not a religious man, not one of their sect, was a merit rather than a crime. Covetousness is spoken of in the Gospels as the very principle of their acts towards men and towards God. And—without inquiring how far they were guilty of secret treasons against life, against marriage, against property—since the enforcing of punishments on open crimes, which disturbed the peace of society, was taken out of their hands, there was no way left them of signaling their care for what they called God's law and God's honour, but by a pitiless rigour in

enforcing the customs and traditions which had connected themselves with the Sabbath-day, the reason and the purpose of the day having been forgotten.

Here was the ground which the Jewish teachers had chosen for the exhibition of their morality and religion; it was on this ground that Jesus encountered them. To the first question, then, I answer, that He selected the Sabbath-day above other days for healing the sick, because He came to vindicate the law and make it honourable; because it had been made dishonourable, and the whole sense of it destroyed, by the notion of the Pharisees that it proceeded from an arbitrary Being, who had made it to coerce His creatures, and not from a loving Being who had formed them in His image, and desired that they should be sharers of His blessedness; because, unless the day of the rest could be reclaimed from their perversions, and restored to its right place and dignity in God's gracious economy, the law never could be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ the Son of Man, but must always be a hard taskmaster to keep them from Him. It was not a single point of truth which was involved in this controversy—least of all the question, whether a commandment might be relaxed in one particular. The whole truth of the old covenant was involved in it; the whole life and work of the Son of Man was involved in it; the purpose for which the Son of God had taken flesh was involved in it.

The other Evangelists make these assertions sufficiently clear. They tell us how Christ claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath, because '*the sabbath was made for man;*' and, because He was the '*Son of Man;*' how He was more angered at the hardness of heart which displayed itself in the apparent zeal of the Pharisees for the Sabbath,

than at all their other exhibitions of the same hardness; how the Jewish rulers met His divine anger with theirs, and decided that the only adequate answer to the demand, '*Is it right to do good on the sabbath-day, or to do evil?*' must be a conspiracy to put Him to death. St. John could not say more on these points. But there was a subject which it was his especial office to handle. He shows us how Jesus made the defence of the fourth commandment, in its letter and its spirit, a means of asserting His own relation to God. '*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*' Man was bidden to work because God worked. Had GOD ceased to work, then, on the day of rest? Was He not nourishing the earth, and causing it to bring forth and bud on that day? Was He suspending His labours for His creatures on that day? The argument, like those about the ox and the ass falling into the pit, was broad, simple, direct; one of those which men who have lost their life, their humanity, their godliness, in their books, are tormented by hearing; one which opens the deepest abysses of thought and consolation to those who are seeking for a living God, for a Father of their spirits. But such seekers cannot be content with a command to work because God works, to rest because God rests,—they must know how the command can be obeyed. They must know on what foundation the command stands. If there is a Son of Man who can say, '*I work because He works; I do as my Father does;*' He may give the sons of men power to work and power to rest. His union to them and to God is the foundation of both.

I have replied, then, to our second question as well as to the first. I have showed you how the act by which Christ, in the judgment of the Jews, broke the Sabbath-day,

naturally led to what was in their judgment an act of blasphemy. It was not that He dispensed with a law of God because He was the Son of God. It was not that He put a new sense into the law of God because He was the Son of God. It was that He could interpret the law of God fully. It was that He could accomplish the law fully. It was that He could unfold the Gospel which was hidden in the law. It was that He could show in what God's rest consists, by showing in what His own rest consisted; what God's work was, by the works which He did Himself in the might of God's Spirit. And thus, by one sign, He declared that men are not the servants of angels, and that they are the children of a Father.

O brethren, may those to whom God has given a better and a nobler Sabbath, which commemorates God's rest in the risen Son of Man and Son of God, never forget the truth which He taught the Jewish people respecting their Sabbath, or repeat the Jewish sin by making it a mere legal day instead of His day!

DISCOURSE XII.

THE SON DOING THE FATHER'S WORK.

[Lincoln's Inn, 4th Sunday after Easter, April 20, 1856.]

ST. JOHN V. 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.

I SPOKE to you last week upon these words,—‘ *Therefore the Jews sought to kill Jesus, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*’ I tried to ascertain what connexion there was in their minds between these two offences; I tried also to show you how their feelings respecting the Sabbath-day were involved in their general feelings respecting the Law and respecting the dominion of angels. If there was a Son who was higher than angels, who could express the very mind of God—if that Son was actually in the nature of man—all their thoughts of God and of man must be changed; they must regard Him whom they worshipped as something else than a mere lawgiver, removed to an immeasurable distance from His creatures, only holding occasional intercourse with them through beings of a different order from their own. They must look upon human beings,—that is to say, not only upon themselves, but upon publicans and heathens, upon

those whom they regarded as utterly cut off from God,—as standing in a very near and close relation with Him. This, therefore, was the most horrible of all conceptions to them, one which struck at the root of their pride, of that which they called their faith. They might suspect Jesus before, they might despise Him; but the moment He called God His Father, suspicion and contempt gave way to hatred. It was clear enough why He was setting institutions at nought; it was clear enough why He claimed to heal sick men, whom the ministrations of angels could not heal. By His words and His acts He was bringing God and man into the most dangerous proximity. He, *'being a man, was making Himself equal with God.'*

This last charge I did not dwell upon; I reserved it for our consideration to-day. The discourse of our Lord which follows in this chapter has reference to it. No words throw more light upon it than those which I have taken as my text from one of the latest verses. The answer to the charge begins in the nineteenth verse. *'Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.'* You will feel at once that this sentence is the expansion of that plea which Jesus put forth for the cure which He had wrought on the day of rest,—*'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'* But, I think, you will feel also how wonderfully it meets the other more awful accusation, that He was raising Himself to a level with God. If it had been true, it would not have been a new charge. *'Ye shall be as gods,'* was the first temptation presented to human beings,—the temptation to which they yielded. The ambition had never

ceased in any age or in any man. Jesus would have been but the Person who exhibited it in its highest power, who expressed it with the greatest boldness. But if the doctrine which St. John asserts at the beginning of his Gospel, which he has been working out in every passage of it since, is a sound one; if there is a Word who was with God and was God; if that Word was made flesh, and the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father shone forth in Him; then Jesus was the one Person in the world to whom this charge did *not* apply; the one Person in whom there was no ambition of making Himself equal with God. And this is what He declares here: ‘ You think I am exalting myself; on the contrary, this proclamation which I am making of a Father, this claim which I am putting forth to be His Son, is the abdication of all independent greatness, the denial that I am anything in myself. I can do *nothing of myself but what I see the Father do.*’

Here is the new revelation, the discovery of the real ground upon which all things stand,—the will of a Father commanding, the will of a Son submitting. Here is that idea of Godhead which men had been seeking for,—if haply they might feel after it and find it,—in which they had been living and moving and having their being, yet which they had always been rebelling against and contradicting, and which every thought and act of self-will and pride had been putting at a distance from them. The lowliest of all, He who was called the ‘*carpenter’s son,*’ was able to speak it out, to translate it into language, as His whole life translated it into act. And this union of wills, this inward substantial Unity, He declares to have its basis in love, the underground of Deity,—‘*For the Father LOVETH the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth.*’

We must not forget that all this bears reference to the primary subject of the discourse. He had been working on the Sabbath-day. That work He justifies as His Father's work, because it was a work of love, done to fulfil that mind of the Father which He knew, with which He was in sympathy. Now He goes on, '*And He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.*' The work of healing was His Father's work. In quickening the sick man beside the Pool of Bethesda, He had manifested a part of His will and power towards His creatures. There would be a more august display of that will and power; '*For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.*' Since the whole passage refers to one of the signs which Jesus did, it is surely most natural to take this also as referring to another of those signs. Jesus would not only cure a sick man. He would raise a dead man. As the cure of the sick man was an exhibition in a single instance of all the restoring, health-giving, life-giving influences which were at work through the universe; as its intent was to lead men to trace all these, not to chance, not to a dead law, not to their own merits, but to a Father who directs the operations which look most accidental, from whose mind law has issued, who alone enables men to work in harmony with His law; so, by raising a man from the dead, He would show what was continually going on in the unseen world; what the Father was doing there with those who were lost to the sight of their fellows, and who seemed to perish. '*The Son would quicken whom He would.*' He would take an instance here and there to illustrate the general course of His Father's government. He would break the bonds of the grave for the widow's son, or the brother of Martha

and Mary, that man might understand how little these chains could bind the whole universe of human beings, if the Father pleased to set them free.

But the thought of resurrection was associated in the Jewish mind, as it was in the heathen mind and as it is in ours, with the thought of Judgment. How could He speak of raising the dead, without speaking of a judgment through which the dead would have to pass? He anticipates the objection, and does much more than answer it. *'For the Father,'* He says, *'judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.'* These words have been much used in theological argumentation. I am far from saying that they have not been used fairly. But I have warned you already, that if we wish to understand St. John, we must follow his course of thought, not eagerly snatch at sentences which may serve a temporary purpose. On this ground I refused to take the first words of his Gospel as a dogmatical assertion of the divinity of Jesus. I said we must begin, as he began, at the beginning. We must wait till he spoke to us of Jesus of Nazareth, and declared His nature to us. Then we should learn much more of His divinity than if we were in haste to get proofs of it. For are we not learners, who want to be told what divinity is and what humanity is? Have we not need to sit at the Apostle's feet, that he may instruct us in those things which it is most needful for us to know? Is there not a danger of our fancying that we know all already—of our taking his divine words merely to confirm propositions of ours, into the sense and power of which we have never entered?

I would apply this rule in the present case. St. John has told us that in the Word who was with God was life, and that His life was the light of men. We have found him illustrating this language in various ways,—beginning from John the Baptist, as the witness of the light, afterwards telling us how Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of this being the condemnation, ‘*that light was come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*’ In both these passages, in the last especially, and in those which I have not recalled to your memory, the Word or Son of God is described as a Judge; as One who discovers the thoughts and intents of the heart; as One whom the man confesses to be His Lord and King, whether he shrinks back from His clear light, or asks that he may be penetrated by it. In strict consistency with this teaching, our Lord here declares the office of a Judge to be implied in the relation of the divine Son to men. In doing so, He clears away confusions that have darkened the conscience and disturbed the practice of all men. We think of the judgment of God. It is sometimes a terrible thought; it is more commonly a vague, misty thought. It never has been an effectual one in making men inwardly or even outwardly better, till they could connect it with some human judgment,—till they could attribute to some being of their own race, even though he were a frail being liable to error, the function of pronouncing upon their deeds and upon their characters. Why has it been so? Because ‘*the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*’ Because by an eternal, irreversible law, involved in the very nature of God and the nature of man, we cannot bring ourselves face to face with the absolute Being. Our

consciences tremble at His name; they do not, they cannot, bring their secrets directly into His light. Until they acknowledge One close to themselves, One who knows what is going on within them; until they acknowledge a Word, a Christ, who is nigh to them and not afar off; there is no distinction in their minds. Good thoughts and evil thoughts lie huddled together. Good deeds and bad deeds are only known, apart from each other, by some results which they may happen to produce. It is when the man has started like a guilty thing surprised, at the presence of One who brings back to him past passages of his existence; who tells him all that ever he did; who shows him that his acts, his petty words, are not lost in the sum of all the acts that have been done and the words that have been spoken since the creation-day, but have all been recorded; it is when the man understands that He who keeps the record is the dearest Friend he has, the One who has been guiding him, watching over him, restraining him from evil, urging him to good from his birth onward; it is when he understands that the Reprover can give him remission of his sins, can endue him with a new life;—it is then that he can believe, and rejoice in the belief, that there is a judgment of God—a judgment for the whole universe. For it is then that he honours the Son even as he honours the Father. It is then that he confesses these testimonies in his own heart to be the echoes of the Voice which gave commandment to the sea, and fixed its bounds that it should not pass, and ordained laws for all the generations of men. It is then that the Will which governs him is felt to be the Will of a Father. He honours it, and bows to it, and delights in it, because he honours and bows to and delights in the will of the Son whom He hath sent.

In the words which follow, our translators have exhibited an instance of the timidity which I have had occasion sometimes to notice before. '*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*' There can be no good reason why the word *κρίσις* should be rendered *judgment* in the 22d verse, and *condemnation* in the 24th. But from a fear, I suppose, lest the one should seem to contradict the other,—lest the Son should be thought not to execute the judgment that had been committed to Him,—they were unfaithful to the letter, perhaps even more unfaithful to the spirit, of the passage. To make the language fit their notion of the sense, they were forced to change the tense of '*come,*'—to make it '*shall not come,*' instead of '*doth not come.*' Those who cannot venture these outrages upon the text, must be content to accept the statement of it simply; that there is an eternal life in the Son of God,—that eternal life which was spoken of in the dialogue with the woman of Sychar; that those who hear His voice speaking to them in their hearts, and receive Him as the Witness and Manifestation of the eternal God, enter into that life; that they *do* not come into judgment. The light does not scare them, but invites them. They fly to it as a deliverance, not from it, lest it should consume them.

Then the next passage becomes far more intelligible. It is not a mere repetition of what has gone before; it enlarges and expands the doctrine we have heard, and applies it to the future as well as to the present. '*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and*

they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.' There can be no doubt that when the Jews spoke either of resurrection or of judgment, they meant merely a resurrection and a judgment after death. Jesus teaches us that we can know nothing of a resurrection or a judgment after death, unless we connect it with the Son of God, in whom men may believe and rise to newness of life here,—with the Son of God who speaks to us and judges us here. When we acknowledge Him as the Word in whom is life,—when we confess that His life is our light,—then we shall go on to acknowledge how both His life-giving power and His judging power extend over the whole universe, over the dead as well as the quick; then we shall understand that those who are in their graves are as little beyond the reach of His voice, as little without the sphere of His light, as those who are walking upon the earth. So much is involved in the very idea of a Son who is one with the Father. If we believe that the Father hath life in Himself, we must believe that there is a life in the Son which corresponds with that. If we believe that all thoughts, and acts, past and present, are open to the Father, we must believe that they are open to the Son. And, as I said before, the scrutiny of our own hearts and spirits must be in the Son of Man. We can know nothing of God's scrutiny, except through Him who is in contact

with us, and knows all the throbs and pulses of our spirits. How dark are all our thoughts of the tomb, till we believe this! How horrible its abysses seem, when we think of them as out of the circle of all the laws and relations which exist among us upon earth! What a sunlight there is upon it—what flowers spring from the sods about it—when we believe that the Son of God and the Son of Man rules there as here; that those who have tried to catch the sound of His voice here, recognise it more clearly and fully in the unseen world; that those who have done evil, because they have refused to listen to it, have still Him, and no other than Him, for their Judge!

It is perilling the sense of the whole chapter, to separate this passage concerning life and judgment from that concerning the Father and the Son, which introduced it. Our Lord points out, still more clearly than He has yet done, the relation between the two subjects, in the next verse. *'I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me.'* They had said, *'He called God His Father, making Himself equal unto God.'* He answers, 'When I speak of a Father, I signify that I can of mine own self *do nothing*. I do not raise myself to the rank of King or Judge over men; I give up all independent power of judgment. I claim to obey a Will, to be governed by it. And because that Will is the righteous and perfect Will, my judgment is right. The moment I boasted that I could judge according to the hearing of my ears, that moment my judgment would be wrong. I should be denying my Sonship; I should become false.' And as

He could not judge others except by hearing His Father's judgment, by following His Will, so neither could He judge Himself. '*If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.*' The Jews had asked Him already—asked Him more emphatically afterwards—to tell them if He was the Christ. Why could He not give the answer? Because it would not have been an answer. It would not have shown Him to be a Son; it would have led them to think of Him as another person altogether than that which He was. He therefore refers to the words which had been spoken by the preacher in the wilderness. '*There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he beareth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness of the truth.*' John had borne witness of a Word who was with God, of a Son of God, of a Lamb of God. John had borne witness of a light shining in the darkness, which the darkness did not comprehend. This was the true witness of Christ; to this He could appeal, because it was a witness not to the ear, but to the heart,—because it was the witness of one who did not claim honour for himself,—and therefore was the fit herald of a Christ who should come in the name of His Father, not in His own name.

John's testimony being of this character was not the testimony of man, though it came through a man. Jesus, therefore, does not contradict his former words when He adds, '*I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining lamp;*' (our translators have lost the distinction between the vessel containing the light, and the light itself,—a distinction which St. John has carefully preserved;) '*and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But*

I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.'

John's lamp was one which God had kindled and filled with his light, that they might be saved from their darkness; for a while it had played about them, and they had felt a kind of joy in the thought that God had not forgotten them. But Christ's works,—that latest work, especially, which He had done on the Sabbath-day, to show how and for what end His Father worked on that day,—these contained witnesses of a filial power, a filial obedience, a filial communion,—a witness to the hearts of suffering men,—which the words of the Baptist, quick and penetrating as they were, did not contain.

He goes on: '*And the Father Himself which hath sent me, He beareth witness of me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.*' 'In these acts of mine—these wonderful acts—as well as in my ordinary discourse, in my daily deeds and works, a Father is speaking to you, a Father is testifying of Himself to you. He is an invisible Being. It is not by visible appearances, by sounds and by shapes, that He communicates with you; it is by His Word.' Could it be necessary to say this to a people who were called out of all nations to know the unseen God, to protest against idols; to a people who had the law and the Prophets; to a people who were proud of their calling, proud of their law; who detested idols; who wrote out the Scriptures continually, revered them, declared them to be the very words of God?

Yes, brethren! it was necessary for this people. Jesus declares why it was necessary. '*And ye have not His Word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye*

believe not. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.'

I think that the late learned Bishop of Limerick and others, who have maintained that the verb *ἐρευνᾶτε*, in the 39th verse, would better be translated by the present tense of the indicative than by the imperative, have produced sound arguments for their opinion, and that the context is all in favour of it. But if the previous verse and those which follow be heeded, I am quite willing to adopt our version; the sense will be radically the same; and any who think that they cannot enforce the duty of studying the Bible, if they are deprived of this precept, may retain it as a motto for their sermons. What the Word of God is in St. John's Gospel, we have not now to learn; he has been teaching us from the first verse of it onwards. How that Word must abide in men, if they are to have any light; how the rejection of it is the choice of darkness, he has also been telling us, not once, but continually. Those who will not have the Word of God abiding in them, must shut out the invisible world, must become the slaves of the visible world. They may not have idols of wood and stone; but they must have idols. Besides the grosser idolatry of money,—to which, as a nation, they will be driven by the want of any spiritual object,—their religious men will fall into the worship of *letters*. The letters of the book which testify of a living God, will receive the homage which the only God claims in this book for Himself. This was the condition of the Jewish people,—especially of the Jewish teachers,—when our Lord came among them in the flesh. '*They searched the Scriptures; for in them they thought they had life.*' And

those Scriptures they made the excuses for rejecting Him in whom life dwelt,—the living Word of God. This charge our Lord brings against them here and elsewhere. That he wished them to search the Scriptures which testified of Him, no one, I suppose, doubts. That He commanded them to do so in this place, I am not at all anxious to dispute. And oh! how rejoiced should I be if we English Christians, heirs of Jewish privileges, felt that command as indeed addressed to ourselves! if we were ready to obey it! if, instead of talking about the Bible as the only religion of Protestants, writing its name upon banners, declaring that we are ready to die for it, we would indeed search into its treasures, because it testifies of Him in whom alone we can have life!

I do, indeed, desire that we should take the lesson contained in these awful sentences home to ourselves. For I do feel that the danger of the Jews in this case, as in that of which I spoke to you last Sunday, is precisely our danger; that we are likely not to search the Scriptures, because they bear witness of the Word of God, but to turn them into idols, because we have not the Word of God abiding in us. And I feel as if our Lord had laid bare the inmost root of our disease, as He does of the Jewish disease, in the verses which follow: *'I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 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. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?'*

He begins with asserting this as His distinction, that He seeks His glory from the only God (*παρὰ τοῦ μόνου*

Θεοῦ), not from man. He concludes with asking how they can believe Him, when they seek honour from each other, not from this only God. And who is this only God of whom He sought glory? He has told us before,—the God who loved the world, and gave His Son, that through Him it might be saved. That love He reflected; of that love, in His words and deeds, He testified. No such love was in them. They did not feel their want of it; they did not seek it where it was to be found. They flattered each other; they lived upon each other's praises. And the consequence was, that they did not believe in One who denied Himself, who abjured all praises, who said that He could do nothing but what He saw His Father do. Such a Being was incomprehensible to them. They *could* not believe in Him. They must take Him to be a blasphemer and a devil. Let us remember it and tremble. When religious men open 'a benefit club of mutual flattery,' and live upon the allowances that are doled out from it, they must deny the Father and the Son.

There are still some sentences left in this chapter which must not be passed over. '*Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*' However little of the *love* of God there might be in the men to whom Jesus spoke, there was a conscience which responded to what He said. Their conscience said there must be a Father,—we *ought* to be His children. If so, and if this man were not a blasphemer, but the Son of God, might He not charge them before His Father for their denial of Him? The thought was a natural one.

How eagerly a teacher who came in his own name would have profited by the terror it excited! How continually the ministers of Jesus Christ *have* said to unbelievers, 'What! dare you question His mission? If He should 'be what we say He is, how certainly He will accuse you 'to the Father for your rejection of Him.' Jesus Himself declares that this is not His office—that He is not, and never can be, the accuser. The law in which they gloried, in which they trusted, that was accusing them,—that was telling them how they had resisted the God of love,—that was telling them that they needed a Person to unite them to God; an elder Brother, in whom they might meet and behold their Father. Moses the lawgiver was writing of this Advocate and Brother. But if those letters of his were boasted of and worshipped, not believed, how could they believe the quickening, life-giving words, which are written not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart, by the Son of Man?

DISCOURSE XIII.

THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN.

[Lincoln's Inn, 5th Sunday after Easter, April 27, 1856.]

ST. JOHN VI. 35.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

IN general, the signs or miracles of Christ which St. John records are not the same with those which the other Evangelists have recorded. The exceptions are found in this chapter. Here, as in St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, we have a narrative of the feeding of the five thousand; here, as in St. Matthew and St. Mark, we have the narrative of Jesus walking on the sea. There is no doubt that the events described in all the Gospels are the same. In time, place, numbers, and in most of the circumstances, they exactly correspond. The variations in St. John, however, are very instructive as to his own design. We may learn from them why he repeats his predecessors, as well as why he so commonly introduces topics which they have not touched.

'After these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude

followed Him, because they saw His miracles which He did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.' The addition to the story is in the last verse. It has puzzled the harmonists. It does occasion serious difficulties in the chronology of this Gospel. Yet I hesitate to call it an interpolation. The Jerusalem feasts are continually present to the mind of St. John. Even when he leads us into Samaria and Galilee, we are never allowed to forget them. I own, however, that this notice of the Passover does not prepare us for a visit to the city; and that it is quite unnecessary as an introduction to the following discourse, which, as we all know, was suggested by an event which took place near Capernaum.

'When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great crowd come to Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?' The force of the sign is often, as I said before, to be discerned in these incidents, quite as much as in what we call the miraculous part of it. We see how our Lord uses events as an education of His disciples; how part of an event serves to bring out the character of one man, part of another. And what was true then, according to the doctrine that goes through the book, is true always. As the Teacher does not change—as, in essentials, the learner of

the West is not different from the learner of the East—the same method of discipline belongs to both. We may understand, from the specimens of it which St. John gives us, how our thoughts are awakened—how we are made conscious of doubts, that they may be satisfied.

St. John follows strictly the former Evangelists till the 14th verse. There the effect of the sign upon the multitude is given in words which we have not elsewhere. ‘*Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world. 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.*’ Two names are brought together which are quite distinct, but which have mingled with each other in all the world’s history. ‘He is a *Prophet*; God has sent Him.’ That is the natural feeling of a crowd which has been conscious of a wonderful power exerted on its own behalf. Then comes another:—‘How shall *we* exalt this Prophet? How shall we show our sense of His might, and our gratitude for His benefits? Let us make Him our *King*. None is so worthy to reign over us. He may not be willing to put Himself at our head; why should not we take the matter into our own hands?’ It was no new thing. Many a champion had arisen before in Galilee to rid the people of their oppressors. Each had come in the name of God. The desert was the ordinary scene of their exploits. Was it not the very place for an insurrection in favour of this Galilæan Prophet to begin? If some compulsion were used, the mysterious power which had fed them would, of course, be ready to support His own claims.

Unless we remember this wild excitement among men

who had been hungry and who had eaten, and the voice of command with which He sent them away to their houses—the kingly might coming forth in His resolution that *they* should not make Him a king—we can scarcely enter into the stillness and awfulness of that night-scene which is brought before us in the following verses:—‘*And when even was now come, the disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 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. But He saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*’

I believe the conscience of men has received the right impression from this story. It has come to them in dark oppressive hours as the witness of a Presence that had been with them, though they knew it not,—of a calm power in which they might trust. This might not be their notion of a miracle. If they had been asked to define its nature and its purpose, they would carefully limit it to the time in which Jesus dwelt on earth; they would say it was a departure from the laws of nature to attest His divine mission. They would explain away the faith they had expressed unawares; they would say they had only been making a moral or personal improvement of the incident. No, brethren, it is not so. They discovered the true meaning of the sign at first. The other is the cold intellectual *misinterpretation* of it. They feel in their hearts that it is *not* a violation of the laws of nature, for

the Son of Man to prove that the elements are not man's masters. They feel that when He raised up His disciples' hearts to trust in Him, He was teaching poor, weak, ignorant men the true law of *their* being, and thereby teaching them to reverence and not to despise the laws which He had imposed on the winds and on the waves. They feel that the whole beautiful narrative is not an argumentative assertion of a divine mission which can confute disputants, but the practical manifestation of a divine kinghood to meet the cravings and necessities of human beings. What does a debater care for '*It is I; be not afraid?*' What else does a man tossed about in a tempest care for? The words were not spoken to Scribes and Pharisees, and were not heard by them. They were spoken to fishermen out in a boat at night; and by such they have been heard ever since.

St. John tells us this in the next paragraph. If we attach the modern notion to miracles, we shall, of course, conclude that so singular a witness of the Messiahship of Jesus must at once have been declared to those who were hesitating about it, and half ready to believe it. The occasion for announcing it was given. '*The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto His disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks): when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him,*

Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? Here were the excitement and astonishment all ready. These people had said the day before,—‘*This is of a truth that prophet which should come into the world.*’ What strength would that conviction gain, if they heard that He did not cross the lake as other men crossed it! He says nothing of this. ‘*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me not because ye saw signs, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*’ They did seek Him because they had seen *miracles* or *wonders*; for it was a wonder that they had eaten and been filled; it was one which might be repeated. But they did not seek Him because they saw *signs*. The signs had not told them who He was; they had not come because they wanted Him, but because they wanted something which He could give them. He did not then announce any other sign of His power; it could have done them no good. But He proceeded to draw out the signification of the first sign; to show them what there was in it beyond the satisfaction of their immediate hunger.

Here, even more than in the case of the woman at the well, we may wonder at the deep mysteries which He revealed to what we should call ignorant sensual people. That they were a crowd of such people, St. John tells us plainly. And yet to what Jerusalem doctors had He spoken of a Bread of Life—of a bread of which a man might eat and not die? But let us begin where He begins. Each sentence, each clause, even each word, that He addressed to this rabble at Capernaum, is meant for the ears and hearts of the wisest among us. ‘*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.*’

To the woman of Sychar He spoke of water, for she had come to draw water. To these Galilæans He spoke of bread, for they had been eating of the loaves. Neither to one nor the other would He speak of the spiritual gift without speaking of the sensible gift,—without making them feel that that also was from God. He addresses the people of Capernaum as men working for their food ordinarily, though for once they had received it without working for it: and He bids them believe that there is another nobler work which is appointed for them,—a work, however, which does not prevent the fruit of it from being a gift. They were earning, by the sweat of their brow, a food which sustained their lives from day to day,—God endowing them with both the power to toil and the reward of toil. They might toil for a bread that would sustain another different kind of life in them,—a life not of hours and instants, but eternal. This bread, He says, the Son of Man will give. After what I said last Sunday of His use of this title,—of His assertion that the Son of Man must be the judge of men, must be the life-giver to men,—I have no need to dwell upon it here. I would only lead you to notice how exactly this application of it accords with that in the dialogue at Jerusalem, and yet how suitable it is to the Galilæans whom He is teaching. In both cases we find men brought directly into contact with One who knows them, who reads their hearts, who is the source and the standard of all that is human in them. In both, this Son of Man leads them to a Father from whom He has proceeded, from whose life His is derived, who has given Him His authority, whose will He has come to do. The words, we saw, were most provoking to the Pharisees of the noisy city. Their inhumanity made it impossible for them

to enter into the revelation of a Son of Man; their sense of distance from God, and their conception of Him as a mere Lawgiver, made the name of Father monstrous and incredible. With these ignorant labourers it was otherwise. A Son of Man,—a King who was yet a Brother,—they secretly longed for; half their wild acts were done in the struggle to find such a one. The thought of GOD was more terrible;—oftentimes they would have wished to hide themselves from Him under any hills and mountains; oftentimes they might have been glad to be told that there was no such Being. But there was that in them which owned Him as the Giver of all that they had; as worthy of the trust which their fathers put in Him; as associated with the graves of their parents and the faces of their children. To hear Him called a Father,—however little they might understand in what sense He could be a Father,—to hear that there was One whom He had sealed as a giver of Life to men,—this answered to some of the dreams which they had dreamed in their happiest hours: to some of the necessities which had been awakened within them in their saddest hours.

But these were vague, half-realized thoughts. The word 'labour,' or 'work,' was familiar to them. Jesus meant, they thought, that God would not give them anything which they did not earn. '*What shall we do,*' said one, who was the spokesman of the rest, '*that we may work the works of God?*' As often happens, the language was accurate beyond the conscious intention of the person who used it. He desired to know what work they should work *for* God, whereas it was really a work *of* God that was demanded. '*Jesus answered, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.*' God was working upon them;

He was calling them to trust their King and their Friend; to give up their hearts to the Lord of their hearts—to Him who could alone quicken them to any good and fruitful work.

Of course, they understood by the expression, '*Him whom He hath sent,*' that Jesus was claiming to be Messiah, —the sent from Heaven. '*They said therefore unto Him, What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*'

Jesus had fed them in the desert when they were fainting. That was a strange and great act, no doubt, worthy of a Prophet, perhaps of a King. But the manna had actually dropped from heaven out of the clouds. If He came from Heaven, would He have merely taken the bread in His hands and blessed it? Would there not have been a sign like that which showed Moses to be indeed the messenger of God? Would there be no appearance in the sky? It was the question of people whose minds were perplexed about Heaven, and who, happily, had not found out seemly phrases in which to veil their perplexity. A material heaven—a heaven of sky and clouds—was what they saw and confessed. They had a dim vision of something beyond this. Their hearts yearned for a Heaven as calm as that upon which their eyes gazed; as full of light, as productive of life, but yet altogether different from that. What it was, where it was, they could not tell. Do you think we should have helped them if we had talked to them about an intellectual Heaven or a subjective Heaven? Do you think such nonsense can be of much help to ourselves?

‘*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. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*’ They had a feeling that, in some way, the manna was a gift from above. They had an equally strong feeling that, in some way or other, it came to them from Moses. The impressions were confused; yet each was right in itself. The records in the Book of Exodus encouraged each. Those records taught them to regard the water which started from the rock, when it was struck by the rod, as bestowed by an unseen Giver. If the manna was found upon the trees, that book would teach them that it was just as much a gift as if it fell from the clouds. Our Lord brings this sense out of the old story. ‘*Moses,*’ II: said, ‘*gave you not that bread from heaven.*’ And then He pronounces the higher Name—the new Name, the Name which He had come to reveal—‘*My Father.*’ It was He who gave *that* bread in the wilderness, and it was He who was giving them, then and there, ‘*the true bread from heaven.*’ What that Bread is, He goes on to explain. It is a *Person* whom they want to connect Heaven with earth,—themselves with God. The glory they gave to Moses showed they needed a Man to bring God nearer to them. Their eagerness to assert that the manna came from Heaven, showed that this was not enough for them—there must be a direct connexion between them and the higher world into which Moses ascended; their food must denote it. The name of Father told them that it was even so. That Name turned the material heaven into a spiritual Heaven, more real than the material heaven—a Heaven from which the best good could come, not to lawgivers or

prophets, but to hungry Galilæans ; for they could not really enter into that name of Father without acknowledging a Son who came to them as their Brother. They could not receive Him in these characters without believing that He had come to bring life—common life and the highest life—not to a few select men, but to the world.

‘ *Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*’ The parallel words to this, in the dialogue with the woman of Samaria, were spoken, I thought, with the levity which characterised her till she discovered that Jesus knew all things that ever she did. I do not perceive a similar levity in these words. The people may have taken in very little of His meaning ; but I think they were serious and awed. And surely the words in which our Lord answers them are very different indeed from those which He spoke to the woman ; very different, also, from those in which He spoke afterwards to people who had none of her frankness, and who had a crust of intellectual and spiritual pride to break through. Before I quote His words, I will explain why I think that they wind up one division of this chapter, and that the remainder of it, though a continuation of the subject, introduces us to new topics and new persons.

It is evident that the conversation commences on the border of the Lake of Tiberias, with the people who had just crossed and found Jesus there. But it is said in the 59th verse—‘ *These things said Jesus in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum.*’ There must be a break, therefore, somewhere. I can have no doubt that it occurs at the 41st verse. In it we are told that the Jews murmured at Him. The word *Jews* we have not met with before ; the moment it occurs, the character of the narrative changes

Instead of the simple, confused observations of a crowd, 'which did eat of the loaves and were filled,' we have murmurs and reasonings of such men as were sure to be found in the synagogues—men who represented the sentiments of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem. They are evidently, I conceive, discussing a strange phrase which had been reported to them as having proceeded from the lips of the Nazarene teacher. All the controversies which have been raised about this chapter, arise directly out of the latter part of it. I shall not enter upon any of them to-day. We shall be far better qualified to consider them, if we dwell for a few moments upon that wonderful Gospel to the poor which is contained in the reply to their half-unconscious prayer—'*Lord, evermore give us this bread.*'

'You ask me to give it to you: it is given already. The Father has given *Me* to His creatures. I spoke of a Son of Man whom the Father had sealed. *I*, that Son of Man, *am that bread of life*. But how can such bread be eaten? *He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and He that believeth on Me shall never thirst.*' If coming to Him was going to Him on their feet, they had done that already; if believing on Him was acknowledging Him as the Prophet that should come into the world, they had already fed on Him in the sense that He intended. Yet it was clear that their hunger was not satisfied—that it was only beginning to be excited. He goes on—'*But I have said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not.*' If Jesus was merely a Prophet of Nazareth, who could be shown by visible miracles to be sent from God, the distinction of seeing and believing is incomprehensible. Let a sufficient amount of probative evidence be addressed to the eye, the act of believing must follow. But if He was the Word who

had in all times been the Light of men; if those who judged by the sight of their eyes had resisted this Light, and become idolaters; if those who received it, received it into their hearts, and so rose to the stature of Sons of God;—then it was certain that He would speak to another organ than the eye, or than any of the senses; as much when He stood before them in an actual body, and spoke with fleshly lips, as when He was only their invisible Teacher and Reprover. It must be their faith, not their sight, which must now, as ever, see Him and answer to Him. They might touch Him, and yet not come to Him.

But He proceeds:—‘*All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.*’ The apparent advantage of being on earth at the time of His appearing—of being in the streets in which He walked, of sitting with Him, of conversing with Him—would be nothing. All these privileges might belong to those who would reject Him, hate Him, betray Him. But all that the Father of spirits gives to Him—all that yields to the Father’s will—shall confess Him as its true Lord; and him that so cometh, in one place or another, in one age or another, He will not thrust away. ‘*For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.*’ ‘I have not come forth to save ‘some choice favourites of Mine, but to fulfil the will of ‘Him who created the universe—of that Father to whom ‘I said your spirits are yielding when they turn to Me.’

‘*And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing out of it (ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκέν μοι, μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ), but should raise it up at the last day.*’ I dare not paraphrase these words. They are too large and too deep for any conception

I can form of them. The adjective and the pronoun, you will perceive, are in the neuter, as if the promise was to include not only humanity, but all that is related to humanity—the body through which the spirit speaks and acts—the whole frame of nature, which has shared man's decay and death. The final day cannot come till all that the Father has redeemed is raised to its proper life. But yet the neuter could not satisfy the intention of Jesus. He was speaking to distinct persons; He must add—*'And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.'*

Thus we are brought back to the original proposition; only it has gained immeasurably in strength and fulness. To each man in that crowd who had eaten of the loaves and been filled, and had followed Christ for no better reason than that,—to each man upon whom His light shined in the days before His incarnation,—to each man who has been born into the world since,—to each ignorant peasant of this land,—to every miserable dweller in the streets and alleys of this city,—to each one of us who may have been tempted by wealth, luxury, false philosophy, false religion, to seek some food that cannot nourish us, does He say: *'It is the will of My Father that this man should triumph over all the enemies that are drawing him down into death, and that he should be raised up at the last day by the might of Him who died and rose again; that he should enter into that eternal life of righteousness and truth, which was with the Father, and which has been manifested to us in His only-begotten Son.'*

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE TRUE LIFE OF NATIONS AND OF MAN.

Lincoln's Inn, Sunday after Ascension (Thanksgiving-day), May 4, 1853.]

ST. JOHN VI. 62.

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before ?

ON this day the order of our Services would lead me to speak of our Lord's Ascension. On this day the Queen commands us to give thanks for the restoration of Peace. My text will tell you that I need not break the order of my discourses on St. John, if I desire to speak on the Church Festival. I believe there are lessons in the passage which would naturally come under our notice this afternoon, that belong equally to the National Festival. As long as we think of the Peace without any reference to God,—we mean by Peace, the Treaty of Peace; we question whether such and such articles in it are commensurate with the cost and success of the war,—whether boundary lines are fairly and wisely drawn,—whether new concessions might not have been obtained by a longer struggle? Or perhaps we mean by Peace merely the cessation of those hostilities by which all the nations that have taken part in them are more or less exhausted. Or perhaps we identify it with the material prosperity of the classes which

have money,—a prosperity that seems to some closely connected with social and intellectual progress, if not the source of it. All these subjects deserve our most serious consideration. I believe that a Thanksgiving-day is to increase the earnestness with which we reflect on them, to take away the looseness and levity of our thoughts respecting them. But it must do this by opening to us another view of Peace,—not as based upon treaties and conventions,—not as being sustained by these; but as deriving its ultimate strength from the mind and will of Him who rules the universe, its subordinate security from our conformity to His mind and will. Such a day teaches us to look upon Peace not merely as the end of a war, but as the normal state of a Christian and human society; a state which is interrupted by the lusts that war in our members,—the interruption being most terrible when it exhibits itself in internal strifes and hatreds. Such a day calls upon us to reflect that what, in the dialect of the money-market, is called prosperity, is not one of those symptoms of Peace which we are to rest in with confidence,—not one which we are ever to contemplate without trembling. For it does not mean the growth and vital energy of the whole body, but an unnatural swelling and bloating of certain portions of the body. It often leads to ignoble aims, frantic speculations, systematic fraud,—to everything that destroys the force of a people, and makes it a silly, gambling, slavish people. It compels wise men frequently to regard war, with all its horrors, as an inevitable punishment; nay, even as a positive blessing. Therefore such a day as this obliges us to seek diligently for the springs of the moral life of societies,—for the secret of their inward peace and coherency.

The Lawgiver of the Jewish people had told them that all the discipline they passed through in the wilderness had been to teach them that '*man does not live by bread alone, but that by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God, doth man live.*' He was speaking to them as the members of a *nation*. He was telling them that the endurance of their national polity from age to age would depend not upon material bread, but upon another kind of nourishment and strength which it would derive from an unseen Presence. The lesson was repeated by every prophet, ratified by the darkest and the brightest passages of Jewish history. They were a wise and understanding people, strong and united,—however poor in numbers and physical appliances,—just so far as they believed in a One God, who watched over them, in whom they might confide. They were a contemptible people, essentially weak, full of elements of strife and dissolution,—however numerous they were, however rich,—when numbers and riches became the objects of their worship, when the righteous and living King was forgotten. Do you think that this, which is *the* maxim of the Old Testament, is forgotten in the New? Do you think that Jesus introduced a new law which set this law aside,—a law that had reference to individuals merely, and not to societies? I believe that the great misery and sin of the Jews, in the time when our Lord appeared among them in the flesh, was that they had lost the feeling of national unity,—that they had become mere covetous individuals, herding together in sects, knit to each other by opinions and antipathies, not by the sense of a common origin, a common country, a common Lord. Jesus came to gather together the lost sheep of the house of Israel under their true Shepherd. Jesus claimed publicans and

sinners as part of the same nation, as heirs of the same covenant with the most devout. Jesus was in continual conflict with the sects, because they were substituting a self-seeking religion for the faith of Israelites. It is true that He was unfolding the faith of Israelites into a human and universal faith; but in doing so, He was establishing, not undermining, that which sustained the nation, and must sustain every nation.

When, therefore, He answered those who spoke to Him of the manna which their fathers ate in the wilderness, by telling them of the true Bread which came down from Heaven, He was, I conceive, expounding the words of Moses,—those which He had used in His own temptation. He was showing that neither the life of Israel nor the life of humanity can be sustained by earthly bread; that both demand another food; that He could tell them what that food was, whence it came, how it might be received. By keeping this thought in our minds through the latter part of this wonderful discourse, I believe we shall do something to rescue it from the fangs of systematisers and controversialists, as well as to deduce needful instruction from it for England on this day.

The 40th verse of this chapter appears, as I observed last Sunday, to close our Lord's dialogue with the people who had crossed the lake to see Him, because they had eaten of the loaves on the previous day. An interval has passed before the 41st verse. Then we hear of certain Jews who were *murmuring* at the words, '*I am the bread that came down from heaven.*' These Jews, I conjectured, were Scribes belonging to the synagogue of Capernaum,—men who had caught the notions and habits of the Scribes in the capital, and yet could avail themselves of the local

prejudices of Galilæans. Their temper is clearly indicated in the 42d verse:—‘*And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?*’ The difficulty about Heaven, of which I spoke last week, was really not less for the Scribe than for the peasant,—only the one could talk learnedly about a second, or third, or seventh heaven, while the other, more honestly and more wisely, did not pretend to know about anything but the actual firmament which was over his head. Yet the consciousness which man has of some better heaven than this, was indicated by the confused experiments of the former to conceive one, and dwelt in the heart of the latter, awaiting some divine touch to call it forth. The spring was touched when our Lord spoke of a Father; the new heaven which the spirit of man in each man craves for, is contained in that name; where the Father is, it is. If we demand a more accurate definition, we may try our skill in framing it,—God’s revelation will not help us. For that revelation does not cheat us with formulas when we are in want of realities; does not give us stones when we ask for bread.

Jesus, therefore, told the cavillers just what He had told the crowd. ‘*Murmur not among yourselves. 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.*’ All their reasonings and debates would not bring them nearer to Heaven or to Him, than the feet and the eyes of the people who had eaten of the loaves had brought them. The Father of spirits must draw their spirits to Him who was the source of their life and light, whom He had sent to raise their spirits out of their darkness and death; when

they were drawn, when they did embrace Him as their deliverer and friend, no death of the body, no darkness of the grave, should have power over them; He will raise them up to the fulness of life in the last day.

Was this new doctrine? ‘*Was it not written in their Prophets, Ye shall be all taught of God?*’ Was it not the very promise,—the highest promise,—to the people of God’s covenant, to those who were circumcised and withdrawn from fleshly idols, that they should hear His voice speaking to them? What did that promise imply but that God was a Father who was educating the creatures who are formed in His image to know that image? ‘*Every man therefore that hath heard and learnt of the Father, cometh unto Me.*’ ‘He comes to Me as that Word who was in the ‘beginning with the Father,—as that Word who has been, ‘and is, and will be always, the light of men.’

‘*Not—He goes on—that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father.*’ It is not that any man has had a vision of Him who, by a thousand mysterious influences, is every hour acting upon him, and whom he has either obeyed or resisted; only He who is of God—only the Son, who has come forth from the Father—has had this vision; only He has entered into that Love which has been guiding the universe, and penetrating into the hearts of human beings.

This doctrine respecting the Father and the Son, which we have been tracing through every passage of this Gospel—which we have found to lie beneath all its other announcements—is the necessary preparation for the answer which He makes to the murmurers:—‘*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the*

wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. And the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

This contrast between these two kinds of life has gone with us through this discourse, as well as through all our Lord's previous discourses: we ought by this time to be sufficiently familiar with it. The eternal life we have found is the life of the spirit; the life which is supported by material bread is the life of the flesh. Faith or belief is here, as elsewhere, described to be the proper act and exercise of the spirit, as feeding upon bread is the natural act or exercise of the flesh. That which is presented to the spirit must be as real as that which is presented to the flesh. The spirit cannot provide its own nourishment; faith cannot create its own object. Jesus says, '*He that believeth hath eternal life.*' He adds, '*I am that bread of life.*' 'I am the Word of Life to man at all times, 'whether he knows it or not—whether he desires a 'heavenly life, or is content with an earthly life. And as 'your fathers received manna from God to sustain the life 'of that body which was to die at its appointed season, 'I, the Word of Life, have come from God to sustain the 'life of the spirit—to keep that from perishing, to give it 'the immortality which He intended for it. I am the 'living Bread which came down from Heaven; I am that 'Word, in whom is life, made flesh. If any man acknow- 'ledge Me as that Word of Life—if his spirit participates 'of that life which is in Me—he shall live for ever; and 'this flesh which I have taken, which I have united to My 'living and eternal substance, I will give for the life of the 'world.'

I keep closely to the letter of the Evangelist. I dare not depart from it; and I dare not seek the interpretation of it anywhere but in himself. There are a hundred scholastical interpretations of the reason why the Son of God was made Man—why His death was necessary for the deliverance of men. Those who think these explanations better than St. John's may make what use they can of them. I find in St. John all that I want—ininitely more than I can embrace. I will try, with God's help, to learn what the Spirit is saying to us by him before I look elsewhere.

When He says, '*The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,*' does He speak of His death on the cross? Does He speak of some mysterious life which He will communicate to those who truly believe in Him? Does He speak of that Sacrament which we believe that He has commanded us to receive? You know how these questions have been debated in all times—how they are debated now. Perhaps we are on the point of a tremendous conflict on this very subject—a conflict which, however slight in its beginnings, may in its issues be more serious and practical than the one from which we have just escaped. Do not, therefore, let us evade the question, or any of the great moral difficulties which are involved in it. Do not let us strive to discover a poor unsatisfactory compromise upon it. Do not let us treat with contempt or indifference any of the earnest feelings which are enlisted on one side or another of it. One man or another may be condemned; there may be shouts of party triumph, or groans of defeat. What are all these when the question is about the life of the world, the life of eternity—about that which is to be when we are all stand-

ing together before an all-righteous Judge, to answer for the idle words we have spoken against each other, and for our mockeries of His Name? If we are giving thanks to God for peace, in the Name of God let us be labouring for peace—such peace as He only can give us!

Let us be sure, then, that when Christ speaks of giving His flesh, He does mean, as all have supposed Him to mean, that He would give up His body to die upon the cross. Let us be sure that, when He speaks of giving His flesh for the life of any, He must speak of a real, hidden, divine life, such as he has been speaking of throughout. Let us be sure, lastly, that when He speaks of giving up His flesh for the life of the world, He must mean that the blessing which He would confer by giving up His flesh would be one for mankind—for the whole earth—not for a little portion of mankind,—not for a few inhabitants of the earth. Whether I can grasp these truths or not, I must acknowledge them all to be true, if I acknowledge the Gospel to be true; I must believe that God understands them, if I do not. And this is what I mean when I come to the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. I do come to give thanks there that in Him is the life of the world, and that He gave His flesh for the life of the world. I do not want a separate life either here or hereafter. I come to renounce that separate life, to disclaim it, to say what a wretch I have been for pretending to have it, for trying to create it. I come to say that I find a separate life to be a detestable and damnable life—another name for death. I come to say, that if God leaves me to that separate life, I know that I am doomed to the second death,—the eternal death; but that I understand that the Son of God, by sacrificing Himself, has given me a share and a

property in another life—the common life, the universal life which is in Him; and that, understanding this, I have come to give God thanks for it—thanks for myself, thanks for my brethren, thanks for the universe; and I have come to pray that, through His Son, He will deliver me, and my brethren, and the universe from that separate and selfish life which is the cause of all our woes and miseries, spiritual and fleshly, inward and outward.

In this way, brethren, I reconcile the faith in that sacrifice which was made once for all—the full sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world—with that faith in each man to which Christ promises eternal life. In this way, I believe that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper explains and justifies both truths, not because there is some strange mingling in the elements of a body which must be received,—whether there is a spiritual organ to receive it or not,—but because it testifies to man of the eternal Lord of his spirit—of the Word who is his life, of the Word who was made flesh for the life of the world. I regard that Sacrament as looking backward to the beginning, onward to the end of all things—as speaking of Him from whom all things have proceeded, and in whom all shall be gathered up, whether things in heaven or things in earth. I do not think St. John had anything new to tell us respecting the Lord's Supper: it was already adopted in all the churches. Though he dwells so much on the last passover, he does not record again the breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine. He had a different task. He had to show why that act was not a formal religious ceremony, the badge of a profession; he had to show the eternal law upon which it rested—the ground there is for it in the relations of God and man. If you ask me,

then, whether he is speaking of the Eucharist here,—I should say, ‘No.’ If you ask me where I can learn the meaning of the Eucharist,—I should say, ‘Nowhere so well as here; for here I find the very signification of the sign. Here I may discover what the Eucharist has been to Christendom—what it has been to each man who has desired to be one of the great Christendom family—what it may be as a means of binding that family together—how it may become a bond to nations which are as yet lying beyond the circle of that family.’

But, first, we must learn how hard it is to acknowledge either the sign or its signification. ‘*The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*’ That strife which began in the synagogue of Capernaum has gone on, in every nation of the modern world in which the name of Christ has been proclaimed, even to this day. Some think they can quiet their own minds, and settle all debate, by saying, ‘Of course, the eating is metaphorical.’ But I do not find that the use of that phrase has brought much contentment to any living soul. I do not think that any man’s *spirit* can be satisfied with the bare imagination of a feast any more than his *body*. When vain men feed upon praises,—when angry men feed upon the acts which provoke them to rage,—when men who have received kindnesses feed on these kindnesses,—when earnest patriots feed upon the deeds that have been done by those who have saved their country,—you may, if you please, call this fantastic, imaginary, metaphorical feeding. I know that the results are real; that the vain man does vain acts, and acquires a vain character; that the angry man does acts of revenge, and becomes in spirit, if not openly, a murderer; that all gentle acts come from that

upon which the grateful man has nourished himself—all that is most blessed to mankind, from the courage and self-denial which the lover of his country has cultivated in himself. These skilful intellectual explanations of facts—the haughty and self-complacent formula, ‘This only means’—may serve very well the purposes of those who write books; for those who have to live and die, they are good for nothing. They take for granted that which the conscience of mankind denies,—that which every language on the face of the earth denies,—that the words which represent acts of the senses, needs of the senses, the satisfaction of the senses, do not also represent acts of the spirit, needs of the spirit, the satisfaction of the spirit. They introduce an unreal middle world between the senses and the spirit—a world of shadows, from which the most absolute materialism is a deliverance; because that, at least, is honest, and because against that there must be a re-action.

The mere animal people, who had eaten of the loaves and were filled, did not strive and fight as these intellectual people of the synagogue did. They wanted actual food; they had real hunger, if the deeper and nobler hunger had not yet been awakened in them. To them Christ could offer Himself as the Bread of Life. He does so also to these; but it is in sterner and more terrible language. *‘Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that*

eateth me, even he shall live by me. 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. These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum.'

Our Lord does not argue with these men. He makes an assertion, appealing to the after-history of the world for the confirmation or refutation of it. I believe the history of Christendom, from beginning to end, is nothing else than a commentary on these words; that we may read it by the light of them. Immediately after the age of the Apostles, if not in the age of the Apostles, there arose sects which affirmed Christ to be a spiritual being, an emanation from God, but which utterly denied that He was the Word made flesh,—which were utterly scandalized at the notion that He actually and literally died upon the cross. The leaders of these sects were, many of them, very able men; they had perceived some high principles of the Gospel,—they had perceived the relation of those principles to the doctrines that were current both in Jewish and Heathen schools. They were not put down by the persecutions of their brethren, for they existed before the Church could persecute,—when it was the object of persecution. They were not in themselves offensive to the Roman empire, for they were like the religious or philosophical sects which it always tolerated; they were not politically dangerous. And yet these sects came to nothing. They had no cohesion,—they had no relation to humanity; in our Lord's simpler and higher language, '*they had no life in them;*' for though they dwelt upon His spiritual nature, they did not feed upon His flesh and drink His blood.

Look on through all the centuries which follow. You find divisions, hatreds, secularity, hypocrisy in the Church; you find strifes about its doctrines,—about the relation of its ministers to each other,—about its relation to civil governments,—about its sacraments. What is it that has held this strange divided body together? What is it that enables us to say there has been such a thing as Christianity in the world,—that it has had an influence upon the civilization and order of the world? I can find but one answer. I do discover through all these ages the recognition of a Son of Man who actually took human flesh and blood,—who actually offered up that flesh, and poured out that blood upon the Cross. I do find that there has been here a common centre of life to all these ages,—something that has held them together in spite of their divisions and hatreds,—something that has been stronger than the division of castes, and classes, and sects, of the lord and the serf, of the prelate and the beggar. I do find the Cross the source of all that was noble, chivalrous, self-denying in the Middle Ages,—of all that was not base, tyrannical, superstitious. I do find the flesh and blood of Christ the strength of the Reformers, the bond of Protestants, the spring of all in them that has not been sectarian, disputatious, selfish, hateful. I cannot explain this in any other way than by believing that this flesh and blood of the Son of Man has been a divine food and drink, which has been ministered by God, in ways I know not, to Christian society, to Christian men, through all these times. I cannot but believe that there is a spiritual and eternal life in that flesh and blood which has given them this quickening power. I cannot account for that quickening power by any faith, or wisdom, or virtue which I see in

Roman Catholics or Protestants,—in the members of one nation or Church or another. Whatever faith, or wisdom, or virtue, I do discern in them,—and, thank God, there is no corner of the earth, no moment of history, in which they may not be seen by those whose eyes are open,—I must trace to a higher source. I can find the only interpretation of it in the words,—‘*As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*’ I must refer the Bread itself which has come down from heaven, and all the life of faith, and hope, and love that it has sustained, not to the creature, but to the Creator; not to the child, but to the living Father. I must suppose that He has been drawing men into the state for which He created them; that He has been proving that they were originally formed in His Son; that to be separated from the Son of Man is an unnatural, inhuman condition: that every good and blessed fruit which has grown on the soil of human nature, has been produced from union with Him.

It is the next passage which contains the words that I have chosen for my text. ‘*Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*’

Why does the allusion to the Ascension occur here? What has it to do with the previous discourse? I think brethren, that here again the history of Christendom is the interpreter of the words of Christ. It has been a '*hard saying*,' that we must eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, in order that we may have life in us. To make that '*hard saying*' easier to the understanding, easier to the flesh, various devices have been resorted to. One has been that to which I alluded just now, of representing the saying as only metaphorical. Another has been that of supposing that we may eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, provided He descends into the bread and wine of the Eucharist, and transmutes them into His body and blood. I call this hypothesis an experiment to make the words which were hard, easier to the carnal understanding. I fully admit that there has been a Nemesis of that understanding. That which was framed to aid its conceptions, has become the most intolerable bondage to it. Decrees must compel it, under awful penalties, to accept the explanation which its impatience craved for. And what has been the consequence? The blessed and elevating mystery which this week speaks of, has been practically lost sight of. The ascended Christ, at the right hand of the Father, has been thought at a hopeless and incredible distance from the suppliant upon earth. The glorified Humanity has been entirely overshadowed by the thought of the cradle at Bethlehem. One vast section of Christendom has acknowledged the words,—'*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.*' But it has denied that other sentence which proceeded from the same lips,—'*It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you,*

they are spirit, and they are life.' The spirit in man is as impatient of those fetters that bind it to the earth, as the carnal understanding is of all that is not of the earth, earthy. The message which Christ brings from the living Father to that spirit is,—' I can raise you above the earth ; ' I can enable you to share those treasures of wisdom, and ' righteousness, and love which are the treasures of the ' kingdom of heaven. I can make you partakers of that ' Divine Humanity which I have redeemed and exalted ' to the Father's right hand.' And our gospel to the spirit of man is ; Either you must feed metaphorically upon Christ's flesh and blood, or you must force yourselves to think that He is come down again into lower and baser conditions than those which He took when He ' did not abhor the Virgin's womb !'

But,—as the last words of the passage I have quoted remind us,—no power of man can awaken in us that faith, however greatly we may want it, which thus ascends to Christ, and dwells with Him where He is. It must be given us of the Father. That mighty drawing, which has been spoken of so often in this chapter, must lift individuals, must lift nations, out of the death of notions and opinions, into the life and freedom which the Son of Man came to bring them. Is that a reason for despondency, brethren ? Is it not a reason for all hope ? If we had nothing better to look for, than that the disciples of Christ, of one Church or another, should discover the meaning of His words, the power of His life, the last verses of this chapter would cause us the deepest despondency. '*From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away ? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to*

whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve.'

Those sentences which declared what is the very life of the Church, drove back the first disciples from Christ. They could believe in a prophet,—they could believe in any notions or doctrines; they could not believe in a Divine Word who would give His flesh for the life of the world. There is a sadness, a human sadness, in our Lord's question to His own apostles, which proves that even they might have been staggered by the thought that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, and that even they might desert Him. And though Peter's answer was a noble one, because it showed that he would cling to his Master, in spite of all ignorance and confusion,—because it showed that he trusted in Him as a Person, and that he was sure there was eternal life in Him, however little he might understand the way in which that life was to be received,—yet the allusion to Judas, at the close of all, has in it a depth of sorrow and of meaning which no one can fathom. It is quite evident, I think, that the sin of Judas is in some way connected by our Lord with unbelief in that lesson which He had been teaching in the synagogue of Capernaum. But how could that unbelief convert him into a devil? I answer with trembling. Judas is represented elsewhere as a covetous man. In following Christ, he was seeking not Christ but himself. He could believe in One who would give *him* a place in the Church below

or the Church above. He could not believe in a Son of Man who came to give life to the *world*. But a person who has lived with Christ, and been a minister and an apostle of Christ, and yet sinks into a separate selfish existence, answers to the Scripture definition and idea of a devil.

If the early disciples deserted Christ,—if His own apostle betrayed Him—because He said that He would in very deed prove Himself to be the Son of Man, by pouring out His blood for men, and by feeding the spirit of man, why may not His latest disciples forsake Him; why may not His priests now betray Him because they, too, desire a Christ for themselves, and not for the universe? But if our trust is not in them, but in the living Father, we shall see all things working together for the manifestation of the Son in this His true and proper character,—for the discovery of Him to all nations as the source of their highest life. The war which we have just passed through has brought us, the most exclusive of nations, into strange proximity with nations with which we have had no previous sympathy. We have fought side by side with one which was called for ages our natural enemy; we have fought for one who has been regarded as the enemy of Christendom. The alliance will have done us harm, if it has made us value our position as Englishmen less,—if it has made us understand less the position which our fathers in the seventeenth century occupied, when they struggled against Louis XIV. for Protestantism and for national life. It will have done us good, if it has made us feel that our fathers were fighting against a tyranny which was hostile to Protestantism and nationality because it was hostile to humanity,—that there is a Son of

Man who is Lord of Frenchmen as well as Englishmen, whom both in their creeds confess, whom both in their acts are continually denying, for whom each is disposed to set up some other Lord. Our struggle in behalf of Turkey will have done us harm, if it has led us to think less than our fathers did of that which divides the Crescent from the Cross,—the symbol of mere power, and the symbol of strength perfected in weakness. It will have done us good, if it has taught us that we are bound to resist injustice and wrong as much when it is done to Mahometans as Christians,—if it leads us to remember that the Son of Man gave His flesh for the life of the world,—for Mahometans, therefore, as well as for Christians.

A phrase has gone forth, and has become almost proverbial among us, which was spoken by one who was our enemy—spoken, we thought, with no honest intention, but one which has been recognised as containing a reasonable prophecy. It concerned the sickness and coming death of that empire for which we have been fighting. If sickness has overtaken, if death is to overtake, that once vigorous kingdom, this, I believe, is the explanation:—It bore at one time a strong and terrible witness for a living God, a Ruler of men, a Destroyer of idols;—God endued it with strength to bear that witness. It bore no witness for a Son of God and a Son of Man. It put humanity at a hopeless distance from God. Therefore seeds of weakness were latent in it when it was mightiest. They were certain to develop themselves in it more and more. They were certain at last to make its belief in God ineffectual, because it denied Him to be a Father. To adopt the modes of European civilization—to tolerate enemies of the prophet—may delay or may hasten the dissolution which has been foretold.

Certainly there is not in any of these things a power to restore life. Would the acceptance of Christianity restore it? If Christianity is taken up just as these changes have been taken up, as part of a new system—as the condition of admission into fellowship with more powerful states, I can conceive nothing so worthless, so detestable. The old Mahometan fanaticism is worthy of reverence; for it was real and honest. *This* profession of Christ would be a pretence and a mockery. The faith in Jesus which the Moslem does cherish is better than this;—he does confess Him as a great, though an inferior, Prophet. This would be to degrade Him into the head of a rival sect, which it is convenient for state purposes to make supreme.

But how can we teach them to regard Jesus in any other light than this? The first step to such a consummation is, to see that we do not degrade Him to this level ourselves. Let our Christianity be something more than a surface thing—more than an exclusive thing—more than a particular form of opinion; then those that are without our circle may feel its power, because then it will be a power. We need not, as some fancy, reduce the Gospel into a set of moral maxims, that we may meet the believers in the Koran on a common ground. By taking that course, we enter into a foolish competition with the Koran; we do set up our religion against the Mahometan religion, and so insult the prejudices of those who profess it. We need not bring proofs that Mahomet was an impostor, or that Jesus was the Messiah. But starting from that which is the strong and vital truth of Mahometanism—proclaiming mightily an unseen God and a living God—we may go on to declare that which is the specially Christian truth,—that this God is united to His creatures in a Son; that this

SON has taken man's flesh, and has given His flesh for the life of the world. The deepest mystery of our faith is the most universal; when we are most Christian, we are most human. Only we must not stop short at the Incarnation; we must go on to the Ascension;—so we do justice to the Mahometan demand that we should not exalt manhood above Godhead; so we escape the danger which Mahometans too justly imputed to Christians, that they turned the flesh of Christ into an object of idolatry;—when Christ Himself said, '*It is the spirit which quickeneth.*'

There is a design of establishing an English Church at Constantinople. If it is accomplished, God grant that the Gospel which is preached there may be the same which has been preached already by English lips and English hands in the hospital at Scutari! God grant that we may not seek there or here to set up an English religion,—for that cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ; that must be a denial of the Son of Man! If we fulfil the obligations which our Church lays upon us, we shall tell all men that there is a life for them in Him who died for all. We shall show the Turks that we hold the Second Commandment as sacred as Mahomet held it; that we are Islamites, confessing the will of God to be the only foundation of all the acts and energies of man. We shall show the Greeks that we regard the Son of Man as the one universal Bishop of His Church. We shall show the Latins that we are members of a one Holy Catholic Church, to which all nations belong, and which, by its unity, is to testify of the Unity of the Father and the Son in one blessed Spirit. And so we shall vindicate our own position as Englishmen; so the Church which we build on a foreign shore will prove that

the countrymen whose bones lie on that shore have not died in vain. They will have fallen in war that there might be the sacrament of a true and eternal peace between the nations. And whensoever the bread is eaten and the wine is drunk which testifies that the Son of Man has given His body and His blood for the life of man, their thanksgivings will be joined with those of the Church militant, for the sacrifice and oblation that was once made for all,—their prayers will rise with those of their brethren to the Father of spirits—through Him who has ascended on high, leading captivity captive—that all tyranny, and oppressions, and wars, may cease for ever upon that earth which He has redeemed.

DISCOURSE XV.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

[Lincoln's Inn, Whit-Sunday, May 11, 1856.]

ST. JOHN VII. 37—39.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (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.)

IF the words in the last chapter—‘*the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was at hand*’—are genuine, it would seem as if Jesus did not go up to that feast, or to the Pentecost which must have followed it. At all events, nothing is recorded of any visits to Jerusalem; and the inference from the opening of this chapter clearly is, that ‘*He did not walk in Jewry*’ from the time that the Jews had sought to kill Him at the feast spoken of in the fifth chapter.

I did not think it was necessary to make guesses respecting the name of that feast. What *this* was the Apostle has told us. I have no doubt that he wished us to remember why it was instituted; what it should have meant to them who were celebrating it; what it did mean to Him whom they had sought to kill, because He had said, ‘*God was His Father.*’ It said to the Jews who

were living then,—‘ Your fathers dwelt in tabernacles
 ‘ in the wilderness; they had no houses which they
 ‘ could transmit to their children, as you have. But the
 ‘ unseen God went in a tabernacle before them. That was
 ‘ the secret of their strength; that bound them together
 ‘ as a nation, before they had conquered a single walled
 ‘ town of Canaan. Your houses are as little stable as
 ‘ theirs were. If *your* national strength and union consist
 ‘ in your walled cities, the Romans in a year may lay them
 ‘ all waste. But the living God dwells with you as
 ‘ He did with your fathers. The Romans cannot take
 ‘ that Presence from you. *You* may forget it; *you* may
 ‘ disbelieve in it: then the tabernacle of God will not cease
 ‘ to be with men,—but it will cease to be with *you*; *you*
 ‘ will not be His stewards or witnesses any longer.’

Even we can feel that there was this significance in the festival; events which, we know, were soon to happen, reveal it to us, if the Law and the Prophets do not. How much more than we can divine or dream of must He have seen in it! But the persons who were about them, His own kinsfolk, had no such thoughts. To them the feast was an unusual gathering of men together,—the occasion which one who professed to be a prophet or leader of the people should take for showing Himself to them. ‘ *Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.*’

Looking at this advice from the point of view which we commonly take, we should speak of it as most sensible. We suppose that Christ wrought His signs to convince the unbelieving Jews of His mission; what more strange than that He should not take pains to display them? Looking

at the advice from *his* point of view, St. John says, ‘*For neither did His brethren believe in Him.*’ They expected Him to make a startling exhibition of His power to the eye. They did not *believe* in Him,—for faith rests upon that which is not seen; it confesses an inward, vital power.

The words, ‘*show thyself to the world,*’ were doubtless used by these brethren of Christ in a very broad, vulgar sense. Jerusalem was the great world to them; there all Jews met; there were the learned men who decided what others were to think and believe; there were the rulers of the people. But they had used the right word. A Mantuan, speaking of great Rome, and wondering what he should do there, would not have been more correct in calling *that* the world, than these Galilæans were in giving the name to the city of David. The Italian metropolis might, in one sense, be the centre of the world’s government and the world’s wickedness; the Cæsar might be the world’s god. But a society which was organized on the confession of a living and true God—which had retained its organization, and believed in *that* instead of in Him—is more exactly the world, in the sense in which the world is opposed to God, than the Roman society, or any other existing at that time, could possibly be. Jesus, therefore, adopts the expression of His kinsmen in answering them. ‘*Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When He had said these words unto them, He abode still in Galilee.*’

There is a greater sense of loneliness and oppression in this language, than in any which we have met with thus far,—the loneliness which comes from being altogether misunderstood ; the oppression which comes from a work to be fulfilled, which those whom it was meant to bless would abhor. The Son of Man feels all the difference between those ‘ *whose time was always ready,*’—who could go up to the feasts whenever it pleased them, merely with the expectation of meeting friends, and mixing in a crowd,—and Him who had the straitening consciousness of a message which He must bear, of a baptism which He must be baptized with. And the Son of God feels that He is to bear witness of a Father to a world which was created by Him, and did not know Him—which longed to rid itself of the sense of His Presence—which conceived of Him as a tyrant and an enemy. The world cannot hate those who fancy that the business of a divine Prophet is to persuade it to admire him and follow him. The world must hate those who tell it that the Creator of all good and truth is close to it,—that it has no good apart from that Creator,—that its works will always be evil while it is not owning Him. The world must hate Him in whom the glory of the central and eternal Good and Truth shone forth as in an ‘ *only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth.*’

‘ *But when His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him : for some said, He is a good man : others said, Nay ; but He deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews.*’

We are carried at once into the bustle of the feast. Two or three lines give a clearer and livelier impression of the feelings of the crowds who were assembled at it, than the longest description could have given. They wonder if the Teacher from Galilee is there, or is coming. There are various thoughts about Him. 'He has done many kind acts; surely He is a good man.' So says this man and that, as they talk in the streets. 'Yes; but the multitude,—the ignorant people, who are expecting a king,—what strange, dangerous notions He is filling them with! Can you doubt that He is plotting to be their chief?' So others whisper, correcting the charitable judgments of their neighbours. But it is a hum of voices. There is a fear of something, the people do not well know of what. It is a fear of the Jews, the Apostle says. Each fears the other. There is a concentrated Jewish feeling in the Sanhedrim, among the rulers, which all tremble at. Till that has been pronounced—above all, while there is a suspicion that it will come forth in condemnation—it is not wise for any to commit themselves. Brethren, do we not *know* that this is a true story? Must it not have happened in Jerusalem then; for would it not happen in London now?

'Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me.'

He went up to the feast in secret; but He goes into the Temple openly. He has as little wish to hide His doctrine as He has to display Himself. His testimony is to the world. It is borne at this time to a letter-worshipping world,—to a world which believed that certain letters had

come long ago from God, but which utterly disbelieved that God could hold converse with men in their day. Such people have lost all sense of the meaning of letters. They are no longer the blessed media of intercourse between soul and soul, witnesses of spiritual communication; they are dead things, to be committed to memory, to be learnt most readily by those to whom they express least. How natural their wonder was that He who spoke with authority,—He who uttered living words, and adopted all the living symbols of nature to illustrate them,—should know letters, when there was no evidence that He had gone to any school! And though a scribe may have first spoken of His ignorance, it is quite probable that the crowd will quickly have caught the phrase, and have manifested the same astonishment that one of themselves should dare to teach them. The answer is in accordance with all that He has said before. There is a fountain within, from which His words flow. They are not His own. He speaks what He has heard. He is a Messenger from the Unseen; He is a Messenger to human beings. He can make Himself understood by them; He can prove His commission to them. And this is the way He will prove it. *‘If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?’*

I have taken these three verses together. I believe we lose the force of the first, if we separate it from the other two. Oftentimes we hear the first clause of the

17th verse quoted without the second. By that violent proceeding this meaning is extracted from our Lord's words,—that if a man keeps God's commandments, he arrives at a correct apprehension of doctrinal propositions: an assertion which is surely not always borne out by evidence, and which is likely to produce quite as much self-righteousness as humility. Nay, it leads to far more doubt than satisfaction. The question is raised, whether A, or B, or C keeps God's commandments best, and therefore which may be trusted best as an expositor of doctrine. The unknown is to be ascertained by the more unknown: for who, except the Judge of all, can answer this question? Who would attempt to answer it that revered Christ's words,—*'Judge not, that ye be not judged?'*

Our Lord most carefully guarded His sentence against this construction. Our translators have honestly and righteously preserved the singular phrase,—*'If any man will (or wills to) do His will.'* Supposing a man really recognises a will as higher than his own, and wishes, above all things, to be conformed to that will, then Christ's words about *His* coming to do a Father's will,—His whole doctrine, which is grounded upon His relation to His Father, and His fulfilment of His will,—must become by degrees intelligible to that man. He may be confused about phrases, he may blunder in his statements, but he will enter into the meaning of the teaching; there will be a continual interpretation of it in his own thoughts and acts. For self-glorying, self-seeking, self-will is that which he will be continually dreading in himself, from which he will be continually flying in himself. He will know that that has been and is the cause of all falsehood in his words, his deeds, his thoughts; and therefore he will

acknowledge that One in whom there is no such self-seeking, self-glorying, self-willing, who was entirely seeking the glory of another, and doing the will of another, must be true altogether, must be right altogether,—that there can be no falsehood, no wrong in Him.

Here is our Lord's famous test, which has never been superseded,—which has never failed in the case of any generation or of any man. Jesus applies it at once to those who were about Him. They had a law,—they boasted of a law. But did they bow to the law, as expressing the will of One higher than themselves? No; it was a document which they could call *theirs*, which belonged to them—not a power which was to rule them; therefore this law which forbade killing was to be the very excuse for killing. They went about to kill Jesus, out of love to the law. A more tremendous illustration of a principle—tremendous, because its force has not been spent in eighteen centuries—cannot be conceived. It is possible to make God's commandments an occasion for boasting over others, for self-glorying; and so it is possible to make God's law a perpetual barrier between us and all knowledge of His will—even a reason for resisting it in our acts.

Perhaps the people at large were not aware that there had been any plot to kill Jesus at the former feast; for '*the multitude answered, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?*' Without apparently heeding the interruption—addressing Himself to those who *did* know what had happened at the Pool of Bethesda, and what charge had been brought against Him for healing on the Sabbath-day—'*Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;)*

and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.'

He was enforcing in these words what He had said at the other feast. The feeling of the Jews about the Fourth Commandment illustrated their feeling about the whole law. They were glorying in it as *their* day,—they were not receiving it as *God's* day; and, therefore, they were not perceiving the will of God in reference to that day. Nay, they were contradicting the very customs which they were themselves practising. They believed they were obeying Moses when they circumcised a man on the Sabbath-day; they believed they should be breaking the law if they failed to do so. Circumcision was the sign of a covenant which God had made with their fathers before He gave them the law—a covenant of grace and blessing. And yet so much were they misled by mere appearances, that they thought it an actual sin to make a man whole on the Sabbath-day. The act which inflicted pain must please God; that which gave health must offend Him!

There is more in the contradiction which He thus brought home to their minds than it is possible to express by any commentary upon His words. This misunderstanding of the very meaning of all God's dealings with them—this degradation of the law into a cruel letter—of the covenant into the mere sign or form of the covenant—was that proof of inward radical atheism (nay, as we shall find in the next chapter, of something worse than atheism) which

our Lord was convicting them of in His discourses, which they were hereafter to manifest by the wickedest deeds that had ever been done upon the earth. But, besides this witness against them, He was giving a lesson to all ages and to all teachers respecting the duty and the method of piercing through the outward shell of an institution into the principle which is embodied in it—respecting the danger and the sin of omitting to do this through any affected reverence for the institution itself. In the two pregnant instances of the Sabbath-day and of circumcision, He showed that if, in any case whatever, we judge according to appearances, instead of seeking for the meaning and purport of the divine signs, we shall be likely to repeat the sin of the Jews, and to deny God when we fancy we are honouring Him most.

‘Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He whom they seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.’

These inhabitants of Jerusalem were likely to know more of the anger which Jesus had provoked by His cure, than the mere multitude which was collected from all quarters. They knew that their rulers had sought to kill Him. Their wonder was, that He should be allowed to go at large, and should show so little fear of any mischiefs that might befall Him. They thought that some change must have taken place in the sentiments of the Sanhedrim. Could they have discovered that He was not an impostor and blasphemer—that He was the very King they were looking for? Surely that was impossible. They knew exactly from whence this Man had sprung, where He dwelt, who were

His kindred ; but who could declare the generation of the Christ? When He came, no one would be able to say from what region He came. There would be a mystery about Him, which would sever Him from all other beings.

There was a mixture of error and truth in this thought. Jesus distinguished them in the following words :—
‘ Then cried Jesus in the temple as He taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am : and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him : for I am from Him, and He hath sent me. ’ There was, in one sense, no mystery about Him ; all was simple, natural, open. He affected no reserve ; He disclaimed no human relationships. He walked with fishermen ; He did not avoid the company of rulers ; He ate and drank with publicans or with Pharisees. The absence of strangeness and singularity was what was most characteristic of Him. He was like all other men ; He did nothing to raise Himself above them. Where, then, was the mystery? He was not come of Himself. That God who had dwelt in the Tabernacle, who had guided them through the wilderness—that God who, they said, dwelt in that Temple, whom they were celebrating in that feast—was with Him, was speaking by Him. Of Him He was bearing witness. They did not know that Being, because He was true. Their falsehood kept them from Him ; there was no sympathy between them. But He knew Him ; He was from Him ; His truth He was come to show forth.

There was something in these words very like those which had called forth their first indignation against them—*‘ My Father worketh, and I work. ’* Perhaps they thought He was again speaking blasphemy ; perhaps they were only indignant at His discovery of their untruth. At all events,

we are told they sought to take Him. Some out of the crowd, it would appear—not officials, for they are spoken of afterwards—gave signs of an intention to seize Him; ‘*but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.*’ The Apostle keeps us in mind that an hour was to come when they would have their way; and that, when it did come, the will of the Lord of all would be more fully manifested than it was now in restraining them.

‘*And many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.*’

The desire to treat Jesus with violence seems to have been confined to a few. But what are we to think of those many who are said to have believed on Him? What kind of belief was it? I do not know that we can answer any question of this kind, except as St. John answers it. He calls the sentiment of these people *belief*. We have a right, therefore, to assume that a spiritual power was acting on their minds, and that they confessed it. The visible signs spoke to them of that which was invisible. On the other hand, we are told that they talked of the number of signs which the Christ might be expected to work. This was the gossip of men upon whom His words had taken no mighty or secure hold. Those who can deliberate how much evidence ought to convince them, have never yet surrendered themselves to the full force of a conviction. But the chief priests and Pharisees were not the least competent to judge what were deep and what were superficial impressions. All murmurs and questionings sounded dangerous; they ought to be suppressed, if it were possible

We have heard of their plotting against Jesus; but it is the first time that we have been told of any messengers being sent formally from the Sanhedrim to take Him. He appears to have received it as the foretaste of that apprehension which would take place at another feast; for—
'Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.'
I connect these words with the appearance of the messengers; I look upon them, therefore, as a prophecy of His death. But the further we read, the more we shall find that the language in which He speaks in this Gospel of His departure out of the world, is at least as applicable to His ascension as to His passion. His going is always a return. He is here for a little while; then He must be with Him from whom He came. I beseech you, do not pass over these expressions as if they were common-places, or as if you were sure you understood them. They are as difficult to us who keep the festival of the Ascension every year—who say every day, *'I believe that Jesus ascended on high'*—as they were to those who heard them first. Nay, unless we seize strongly the first words of this Gospel—unless we believe that the *'Word was with God, and was God,'* and that Jesus was the *'Word made flesh'*—I believe they may be often more difficult; that our familiarity with the mere name and notion of an ascent into heaven may make us less able to feel than they were, *'that no man hath ascended into heaven save He which came down from heaven, even the Son of Man that is in heaven.'*

The guesses of the Jews respecting our Lord's meaning, when He said they should seek Him but not find Him, were wide of the mark—were as outward and material as

we should expect them to be. Yet there is in them one of those curious anticipations of the truth—one of those unconscious prophecies which sometimes occur in the language of the most thoughtless or evil men.

'Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 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?'

He had broken down the barriers between different classes of Israelites—between Galilæans, Samaritans, and Jews. Why might not He carry His designs further? Why might He not go to the dispersed tribes in heathen lands? Why might He not preach to the heathens themselves? They were right: this would be the effect of His going away. This was a part, a great part, of what He meant by it. And it is not till we realize *this* sense of the words—till we regard the Ascension as the redemption and glorification of Humanity at the right hand of God, and therefore as the necessary step to a Gospel which should include the dispersed among the Gentiles, and the Gentiles themselves—that we perceive how it bears upon that great passage which I took as the text of this sermon:—*'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (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.)'*

The passage through the wilderness was commemorated by the whole of this festival. This great day of it would

seem to have been especially devoted to the striking of the rock, and perhaps to the celebration of those wells by which the thirst of the pilgrims was quenched. That same truth, therefore, which had been taught the woman of Samaria, as she brought her own single pitcher to Jacob's well, could here be drawn out of the history of the nation. A whole host had cried for water. God had told His servant, the shepherd of the people, where it was to be found. God had shown them that He causes the springs to flow from the hills; that He cared for the cattle who drank of them; that He cared more for the wants of the creatures whom He had made in His image, and redeemed from the oppressor.

Prophets and holy men had discovered—all men had in some measure discovered—that there are cravings which no fountains on earth can satisfy. The Jewish nation existed to declare that in God Himself is the fountain of life; that the spirit can only find its life in Him. John the Baptist had said that He who had been before Him, and was coming after Him, would baptize with the Holy Spirit. And now He who had declared that He was sent from the Father, and was a short time with them, and would return to Him, declares that whoever believed on Him should not only be satisfied out of the fulness of God Himself, but *'that from him should flow rivers of living water ;'* that he should receive only to give; that his blessing should be to communicate, because that is the blessing of the divine nature, of which he is admitted to participate.

Had these words stood by themselves, we might interpret them as they are so often interpreted of the individual believer. We might say,—‘These are the choice gifts, the peculiar treasures, which Christ bestows

‘ upon His most favoured servants,—upon them whose faith ‘ is the most simple and the most full.’ There is a true, a most important, meaning in such language ; and we should have no right to complain of any one who deduced it, and it alone, from our Lord’s discourse at the Tabernacle, if His own beloved disciple had not gone out of his way to point out another signification of that discourse, not inconsistent with this, but certainly far wider and deeper, and, I conceive, most necessary to save this from a perilous abuse. When he tells us that He spoke this of the Spirit, ‘ *which was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified,*’ he evidently connects the fulfilment of the promise with one of the acts which Christ was to do for mankind. The Spirit had before spoken by the Prophets ; when He was exalted on high, ‘ *the tabernacle of God was indeed to be with men, and He was to dwell among them, and to be their Father, and they were to be His children.*’ No doubt a man must have faith in Jesus before rivers of living water can flow from him which shall bless human beings and make the world fruitful. But it must be faith in Him as the Head of man, as the Redeemer of the race ; it must be faith which raises the man above self-seeking and self-glorying ; it must be faith that refers its own origin to this very Spirit, which He gives because He is glorified.

Such a faith, Jesus taught the Jews at the feast of Tabernacles, was implied in those services and thanksgivings in which they were engaged. If they understood the dealings of God with their fathers, this was the blessing to which they must look forward ; if they were content with less, all that had been given them would be taken from them. Such a faith, brethren, is for us who are

keeping another feast to-day. Call that the Christian Pentecost, if you will; but it substantiates *this* promise. Christ ascended on high; Christ poured out His Spirit upon fishermen and tent-makers. Out of them flowed rivers of living water that have made the earth glad. A family gathered out of all kindreds and nations was declared to be the Tabernacle of God, in which He would dwell. So Whitsuntide testifies. But, oh! if it should be kept by us as the Tabernacle feast was kept by the Jews; if there should be the same self-seeking, hardness, Atheism, in us, as there was in them; what can we expect but that these words will be spoken to our nation and to the whole Church?—‘*Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go away. And ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and whither I go, ye cannot come.*’

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE TRUE WITNESS OF CHRIST.

[Lincoln's Inn, Trinity Sunday, May 18, 1856.]

ST. JOHN VIII. 29.

And He that sent me is with me : the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please Him.

THE belief which was expressed in the question,—‘*When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than this man doeth?*’ appeared not to be a very stable belief. The effect of the words which Jesus spoke on the last day of the feast must have been greater, if not more lasting. ‘*Many of the people (the crowd) therefore, when they heard this saying (these words), said, This is the Prophet ; others said, This is the Christ.*’ There was no sign, no outward indication of His power. There was an appeal to a thirst in men’s spirits ; there was a promise that those spirits should drink, and that living waters should flow from them. Those who discovered *the* Prophet—the representative of all prophets—in the one who spoke thus to their hearts, were confessing a Divine and living Word. Those who discovered the Christ in the person who made this promise had learnt, by some means or other, that the Christ is He who is anointed with the Spirit that He may bestow the Spirit.

‘*But some said Shall Christ come out of Galilee?*’

Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of Him.' As I hinted before, the occurrence of this schism is no unimportant incident in St. John's Gospel. Much of the meaning of the narrative turns upon the question which produced it. Was the Christ to prove His right to the homage of His subjects by establishing His lineal descent from David, by showing that He was born in the place from which Micah had intimated that the Shepherd of Israel would come? Or was He at once to address Himself to the conscience of human beings? Was He to claim a sovereignty over them by an elder title? Were Scribes and Pharisees to bow down when they had satisfied their understandings, by spelling over texts, that Jesus possessed certain outward marks and tokens which were described in those texts? Or were publicans and sinners to hear that there was One who could give them the bread and water of life; that they might own Him, and eat, and drink, and live? Some will say that the first three Evangelists maintain the one doctrine, the fourth Gospel the other. To me it seems that St. Matthew and St. Luke, who give our Lord's genealogies from Abraham or from Adam, rest as little upon those genealogies as St. Mark or St. John, in whom they are not found; that all alike appeal to a different kind of evidence from this,—to that evidence which Pharisees and Scribes could not understand, '*because they had not repented at the preaching of John,*'—because they had not come to that living Lord, of whom the Scriptures testified, but '*thought they had life in them.*' But I do not doubt that in St. John's day, Christians had

begun to dwell on the evidence of genealogies and of outward marvels, as the Jews had dwelt upon them; that this was a time of infinite peril to those Christians, and to the society of which they were members; that it was an especial function of the beloved disciple to show, not only that the craving for this evidence was not healthy, but that it was a principal cause of the rejection of Jesus by the people of God's ancient covenant.

This truth is strongly brought out in the last verses of the 7th chapter.

' And some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought Him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto Him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house.'

All here is wonderfully living and characteristic. The faint effort of the officers to execute the command of their masters; the awe which held them back; their simple confession of the power which they found in the words of Jesus; the surprise of the Sanhedrim that the infection should have reached even their servants; their terror lest there might be traitors in the camp, — lest any Pharisee or lawyer (probably some eyes were turned on

Nicodemus) should have been carried away by the impulse to which the crowd, naturally enough, had yielded; their scorn of the people, as wretched, 'accursed,' men utterly ignorant of the law;—who does not feel as if he were present in that convocation of doctors?—as if he were looking at their perplexed and angry faces?—as if he were hearing their contemptuous words? But the debate turns ultimately on the impossibility of a Galilæan Christ. Nicodemus timidly suggests that those who boast of the law, and call the people cursed for not knowing it, should adhere to the law in their treatment of an accused person. He is at once put down by the demand,—*'Art thou of Galilee?'* All arguments of conscience, even the formalities of law,—so much more precious than such arguments,—are nothing, unless, after searching and looking, he can find that a prophet could come out of Galilee. Whether he did search and look we are not told; but we are told that he found a prophet in the tomb of Joseph, if he failed to satisfy himself about His coming from Nazareth.

Then follows the story of the woman taken in adultery. That story has approved itself to the conscience of Christendom. I feel it to be most dear and venerable. Some of the Fathers disliked the moral of it, and therefore were glad to believe it not genuine. I wish I were as sure that their conclusion was wrong, as that their reason for wishing the story away was unsound. But impartial critics seem to be agreed that there is not sufficient justification for retaining it, at least in this place. I dare not dispute their authority on a question respecting the weight and value of MSS. I dare not allow affection for the passage to interfere when truth is at stake. Thoughtful students maintain that the story belongs to this Gospel,

though they cannot tell to what part of the book it should be transferred. Were it a question of internal evidence simply, I should say that it does not seem to me an interpolated fragment *here*; that it supplies a link between thoughts which otherwise it is less easy to connect. If the story is withdrawn, the 8th chapter opens with the words,—‘*Then spake Jesus again, I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness.*’ Perhaps I may be deceived by habit and old association; but I feel as if these words explained how it was that, when Christ said, ‘*Let him that is without sin cast the first stone,*’ the ‘*accusers went out one by one.*’ I see in them also an answer to the charge that He was tolerating sin when He said, ‘*Go, and sin no more.*’ They show that the sharpest judgment upon sin is exercised by Him who delivers from it. And the story appears to unite that exposure of the law-worshippers—who punished breakers of the law, but did not keep the law—which we found in the last chapter, with the revelation of a Will, working in us that we may keep the law in the fullest sense of it, which we shall find in this. Nevertheless, I am afraid of using these pleas. If the story is genuine, it will defend itself; if not, the divine Oracles can do without it. The more sacred we consider them, the more we must be sure that God would have us receive them in purity, and that He will take better care of them than we can.

Whatever be the introduction to the words, ‘*I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,*’ we perceive at once that they are in harmony with all that we have been reading in St. John. But we ought also to perceive that they are not mere repetitions of the sentences in the opening of the Gospel, and in the third

chapter. The Light of the world comes forth here detecting, indeed, and manifesting the darkness in each man, but with a promise and assurance that it will prove itself mightier than the darkness. The Word made flesh says to the man who sees nothing but mists all around him, 'I can bring you into the clear sunshine.' He says to the man whose breath is stifled, whose limbs have suffered as much from the atmosphere he has dwelt in as his eyes, 'I am the Light of Life'—that which illuminates, quickens. There is certainly a progress and an order in all our Lord's teachings, whether we can trace it or not. The words on the last day of the feast, which could not be fulfilled till Christ was glorified, seem to make the conversation upon which we are now entering necessary. We want to know how the Water of Life is connected with the Light of Life; we want to know whence the Light and the Life are both derived. The answer of the Pharisees to our Lord's words—'*Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true*'—leads us on in this path of discovery.

This answer was no doubt suggested by a recollection of that which He had said Himself at the former feast (John v. 31). They thought they were confuting Him out of His own mouth; for surely to call Himself the Light of the world was as great a pretension as to call Himself the Christ. Could His own testimony be accepted for one assertion more than for the other? It was an all-important inquiry. The more earnestly the Pharisees pursued it—the more determined they were not to be content with any half solution of it—the better. If they had been in earnest, they would have been compelled to ask themselves—'And what evidence *can* we have that will satisfy us whether such a claim as this is well-founded or not?'

‘ What *can* convince us whether one who says he is our ‘ Light, and the Light of the world, is uttering the most ‘ profound truth, or the most portentous falsehood?’ They would then have been driven to plain facts. They must have considered how the sun proves itself to be a light to any man, or a light to all men; and what comfort there would be in learning from books that that is the function which it ought to perform, the blessing which men ought to receive from it. They were not in earnest; they would not grapple with facts. Facts were for that cursed people which did not know the law. What had doctors to do with such common things as the sun? What had the sun to do with the letters which they copied out? Something, perhaps, with the letter of that 19th Psalm, which begins with the light in the firmament, and ends with the law that enlightens the heart. But that was metaphorical language, poetical language—very beautiful, and sacred, and divine—but to be treated as if it meant nothing.

To this test, however, our Lord, who preached a Gospel to men, was bringing His own assertions, His own character, His own office. He did not, like those Prophets and Christs who bore witness of themselves, produce evidence to show how much He was above human beings. He did not, like the doctors of the law, judge and condemn. But He came speaking of a Father from whom He had proceeded, and to whom He was returning. He came speaking to men’s consciences, making them judges of themselves. Either he had come from a Father, or He had not. If He had, that Father would bear witness of Him; that Father would show whether He knew Him, and was testifying truly of Him. It was not Jesus of Nazareth saying, ‘ I am the Christ;’ it was a Father

speaking of a Son, a Son of a Father, to beings who could not live without either. I have translated, as nearly as my poor language can, His mighty words. Read them and meditate upon them till you find depths in them of which I have only caught the faintest glimpse.

'The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.'

Everything, you will perceive, turns upon this relation of a Son to a Father—upon their eternal distinctness, upon their eternal unity. The word '*Father*' was now, as before, that which at once confused the Jews, and filled them with horror. '*They said therefore to Him, Where is thy Father?*' '*What dost Thou mean? Dost Thou mean that the God there in those heavens is Thy Father?*' No! Surely the *Jupiter tonans*, whom they worshipped under the name of the Jehovah the God of Abraham, was *not* the Father of whom He spake. He said therefore, '*Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also.*' It was a fuller, bolder assertion than was contained in the words, '*My Father worketh, and I work.*' It affirmed that they could know the Father of all in a Man; that they could not know Him except in a man. This was the answer to their '*Where?*' This overthrew their notion of Godhead—the frightful intellectual idol to

which they were bowing down. But if He had spoken blasphemy before, He had spoken it more clearly and terribly now. St. John felt this; for he thinks it necessary to explain why Jesus was not stoned for using such language:—*‘These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on Him; for His hour was not yet come.’*

Then He repeats the words which He spoke before at the feast, but with an addition which deepens their force. *‘Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.’*

He would go away from them, and they could not follow Him. But how is that departure and that incapacity connected with their dying in sin? I believe the sense will become clearer as we read on in the chapter; but we shall not understand what follows, if we leave this question unconsidered. Throughout He has been teaching that the coming to Him with the feet, that the seeing Him with the eyes, was not that coming and that seeing which could do them any good, which could make them truer men. That belief which is not dependent upon sight—that belief which was in Him as the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—that belief which would be in Him when He had gone away from the world—that, and that only, would raise them above themselves, would unite them to the Father, would make them partakers of His true and eternal life. Sin, the separation from God, must be the state of their spirits,—those spirits must gravitate to earth, and claim their portion with the flesh,—unless they could look upwards, and assert their share in their Lord’s ascension, in His victory over the grave and hell.

The next verses will show, I think, that this is the force of the one upon which I have been commenting.

‘Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself? because He saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, That ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.’

The Jews did not now suppose that He was going to the dispersed among the Gentiles. They perceived that His words pointed to a departure out of the world. ‘But how could He know that He was going to leave it? Would He take the matter into His own hands? Did He mean that disappointment and anger at their rejection of Him would drive Him to self-murder?’ The suggestion was not a serious one; merely the mock of some priest, thrown out for the sake of degrading Him in the minds of the people. Our Lord’s words are not an answer to it, but an exposition of the sentence which had provoked it, and of the cause which had made that sentence unintelligible to them. They *could* only think of leaving the world as a *descent*, by one means or another, into the grave. The idea of an *ascent*, of a return of a spirit to its proper home, was utterly strange to them. This was a proof that they needed one to come from above, that they might be delivered from their downward, earthbound nature. This was a proof that they needed one who was not of this world to come, who might lift them above it; that they, too, might find their way to their Father’s house. If they would not believe in Him as such a Messenger from the Father, as such a deliverer from the world, they must become the victims of sin, the heirs of death.

‘ *They said therefore to Him, Who art thou ?* ’ ‘ What kind of being dost thou claim to be, who pronouncest judgment upon us,—who tellest us that we are to die in our sins ? ’ There is a mixture, it seems to me, of indignation and of curiosity in the question. They want Him to tell them what He is, and what His right is to censure them and prophesy death to them. The reply, according to our translators, was, ‘ *The same which I said unto you from the beginning.* ’ I do not suppose they were satisfied with this rendering themselves, or that any one ever has been. *Λαλεῖν* is more properly to speak than to say. *Λαλῶ* must be the present tense, not the past. Yet I do not think we can better their version by giving, as some have done, a mystical force to the words *τὴν ἀρχὴν* ; as if that was a name which Christ claimed for Himself. Some of the Gnostics, and some of the Fathers, no doubt, supposed that Christ is called The Beginning in the first chapter of this Gospel, as He is, undoubtedly, in the first chapter of the Apocalypse. But, were that so, I do not see what room there would be for this meaning here, or how the sentence could be construed if we introduced it. If we follow the order of the words, we may perhaps preserve the grammar of the sentence, and its connexion with the verses which follow, without deviating very widely from the signification which it conveyed to the minds of King James’s translators. ‘ *That in the beginning of which I am speaking to you. I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you. But He that sent me is true ; and the things which I have heard from Him, those I speak to the world.* ’ The answer may be either a direct one to the question, ‘ *Who art thou ?* ’ ‘ I have always been that Light of the world of which I am speaking now ; ’ or the emphasis may

be on the word '*speak*.' 'I am not speaking to you any different words from those which I have been always speaking to you. I am not pronouncing any judgment upon you which you have not heard pronounced in your consciences long ago. There are many dark spots in those consciences which I must bring to light; many harder speeches still which you must hear from me. I am come from a true Being; from Him who is true. I speak to the world that which I know to be His mind and will.' 'They did not understand,' says the Apostle, (this was their misery,) 'that it was the mind and will of a Father He was proclaiming to them; that it was from Him who loved them they were shrinking and turning away.'

'They understood not that He spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.'

As He speaks of *their* lifting up the Son of Man, it is clear that He means here what He meant in the conversation with Nicodemus. '*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so was the Son of Man to be lifted up.*' They would be the means of raising Him to that throne. They would place Him on that cross which should declare in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, 'This is the King!' But as He adds *then ye shall know*, it is clear also that He must allude to the events which would succeed the crucifixion, and not to it merely. The cross would say, 'This is the Son of Man; one with all men.' The resurrection and ascension would say, 'This is the Son of God; one with the Father.' The Cross would afterwards be felt to gather the whole message into itself, to be the witness of the love of

the Father to the world; of the eternal union of the Son with the Father; of the might of that Spirit which dwells in them, and proceeds from them, to bind all things into one. But what I said before applies also here. When Christ speaks of His departure from the world, the idea of ascension, of a return to the glory which He had with the Father before the worlds were, is always coming forth through the darkness of the passion.

And even that idea is not sufficient, unless this be added to it:—‘*And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.*’

His going to the Father is not enough without the assurance of His continual abiding in the Father. No change of place or circumstance, no progress in the world’s history, no development of the Divine purpose, must interfere with the calm belief of a unity of the Father and the Son in the Spirit, which was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

It is of this unity, brethren, that this day testifies; which is therefore a more wonderful and glorious day than that which testifies of the ascension of the Son to the right hand of the Father, or of the descent of the Spirit to fill the earth and the hearts of men with rivers of living water. But we can know little of the depth and sweetness of this day, if we forget how Christ revealed the mystery of it; how He both said and proved that to know Him is to know the Father! For that blessed doctrine, upon which Fathers and Reformers lived and died, we are fast substituting one which seems to put the Son at an infinite distance from the Father; which seems to make the will of the Son not the revelation of the Father’s will, but the contrast to it. Nay, our orthodoxy—so strangely

like what would have been called heresy in other days—is even daring to affirm that we may believe anything dark or malignant respecting the character of the Father, if only *we* gather from the Bible that that is its testimony concerning Him. Frightful contradiction! to set up a book against Him whom we believe to be its author! to say that a book, which is from first to last a denunciation of false and cruel gods, may possibly proclaim to us a false and cruel God, and that we should be bound to accept its message if it did! Gracious Father, deliver thy Church from doctrines which teach us that we are not to hallow thy name above all books and letters which thou in thy mercy hast bestowed upon us! Deliver us from those who teach us that we can see Thee anywhere except in thy Only-begotten Son; or that, if Thou art revealed in Him, Thou canst be anything but Light without darkness, Truth without falsehood, Love without cruelty. Teach us to hate all counterfeits of Thee; all notions of Thee which are derived from our darkness, our falsehood, our cruelty. Teach us to worship the Eternal Trinity, the One God of perfect charity blessed for ever. AMEN.

DISCOURSE XVII.

THE TWO FATHERS.

[Lincoln's Inn, First Sunday after Trinity, May 25, 1856.]

ST. JOHN VIII. 43.

Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word.

THOSE words of which I spoke to you last Sunday seem to have taken a sudden hold of some who listened to them. 'While He was speaking these things, many believed on Him.' When we recollect what those words were, we may at first wonder at this impression. He spoke of '*the Father being always with Him; of His doing always those things which pleased the Father.*' Was not His discourse concerning a Father that which provoked His hearers most; that which shocked some of them most? Undoubtedly. And yet, if He spoke truly, if He did come to bear witness of a Father, if the Father did bear witness of Him, this must have been the discourse which *attracted* His hearers most—which had most power over them. The revelation of a man who was always in the presence of God, who delighted in Him, in whom He delighted, was the revelation which the heart and conscience of every man was waiting for. The heart and conscience might be closed against it by sensual indulgence,

still more by spiritual pride ; but it could break through both ; it could prove itself true by overcoming both.

In this case, then, as in like cases which have occurred before, I should be very loth to explain away St. John's words,—to criticise the quality of the faith which he attributes to these hearers of our Lord. If we say, as some people would, that it was mere head faith, I do not think we shall make our own minds clearer ; I am sure we shall be in great danger of denying the facts which the Apostle reports to us. Our Lord's words did not appeal to the understanding ; they were not argumentative ; we cannot account for their influence by any processes of logic. So far as one can judge from a very simple statement, they went straight to the heart ; the faith which they called forth was a faith of the heart.

Does it appear, then, that the men who thus believed in Christ were satisfactory to Him ? Let us follow the narrative. It will tell us all upon that subject that we need to know.

'Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

This expression, *'If ye continue or abide in my word,'* denotes very clearly, I think, that they had not merely listened to a *saying* which went forth from His lips, and been affected by it ; that they had confessed the force of a *word*, which entered into them as light enters into the eye, as heat makes itself felt through the body. And if they traced this word to its source ; if they acknowledged the living Word from whom it flowed ; if they turned to Him as to one who was near them and with them,—not for a

moment, but always; if they trusted in Him, and not in themselves; then they should be—what? saints? divines? doctors? No; but what is much better than any of the three,—what all the three should wish to be raised into,—*disciples*. They will then be learners, learners sitting continually at the feet of the true Teacher.

And this shall be the result of that daily, hourly learning, of that change from the condition of men who know everything to the condition of men who know nothing. ‘*They shall know the TRUTH.*’ The Word shall guide them, counsel them, encourage them, scourge them. He shall prepare them to see that which is. He shall lead them away from fleeting shadows to the eternal Substance, to Him who changes not. Here is a promise, the highest that the highest Being can make to man; for it is the promise of sharing His own nature, of dwelling with Him and in Him. And there is another appended to it, which, though not greater in itself, comes nearer to human experience; commends itself more directly to our sense of oppression and misery. ‘*The truth shall make you free.*’ Truth and liberty are inseparable companions; neither can live long apart from the other. The bondage to appearances, the bondage to death, the bondage to the unseen horrors which haunt the conscience,—how shall this be broken? Our Lord says, ‘*The truth shall make you free.*’ ‘If you abide in my word,—if you adhere to me as the Lord of your spirit, you shall come to know Him who is truth, and He shall break every chain from your neck; He shall give you the freedom of the sons of God.’

However unintelligible His other words may have been to them, surely this magnificent promise will have looked most inviting to the Jews; to those, at least, of them who

were not vehemently prepossessed against the speaker, who did not count Him an impostor. The next sentence seems to say that it was not so. '*They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?*' Who were they who said this? We should certainly gather from the previous passage,—'*those Jews who had believed on Him.*' At any rate, St. John takes no pains to distinguish them from the rest. If they were not the only objectors to our Lord's words, they must have joined in the objection. There is deep instruction in the thought that they did. The voice of Jesus had reached them. It had not merely floated about them, but had penetrated within them. He stood before them who did always the things that pleased His Father. The first sense of having discovered the Divine Man must have been one of delight,—the greatest, keenest delight which they had ever experienced. Then this Divine Man points upwards to a truth in which He Himself is believing and resting. He says He can make them inheritors of that. But at the same moment He looks down into them. He detects a hollowness within them,—a quailing at the thought of this truth,—a secret dislike of it—a preference for that which is hostile to it. They are conscious of a chill. The keen pleasure has been succeeded by a pain as keen. The hope which He holds out to them they cannot grasp. The evil which He has laid bare is near and present. Their pride is awakened; they think of the glory of their descent; they cannot bear to be spoken of as slaves.

We often treat their words as a mere outrageous contradiction of fact. They had been in bondage, we say, to Babylonians and Persians; they *were* in bondage to the

Romans; they complained of the yoke; it was fretting them continually. How monstrous to say, 'We have never been in bondage!' I believe that in speaking so we are not doing them justice, and that we are likely to miss the force of our Lord's answer to them. A modern Roman, in the sight of French or Austrian bayonets, might deny indignantly that he was a slave. He might say, 'I belong to the city which has ruled the world. I am one of those citizens whom it was a shame and wickedness to beat with rods. How dare you speak to me as if I were like an American Negro, liable to be bought and sold, at the mercy of an owner or a driver?' We should not be astonished, I think, at such language. We should understand it, and not feel ourselves justified in replying to it by referring to a foreign tyranny, which may be all the more galling to him because he loathes the name of bondsman. And there was another sense in which a Jew might affirm that he, being a son of Abraham, had never been in bondage. As our Lord had spoken of truth, He might think of his privilege not to be the servant of any false god. *Tiv* may serve for this sense as well as for the other. He would exclaim indignantly, 'The truth shall make us free? To what abomination,—to what lying idol have we ever yielded ourselves?'

Our Lord does not complain of them for affixing too strong a meaning to the word bondage. He does not appeal to the places for the receipt of custom, as proofs that the seed of Abraham had lost their independence. But He convicts them of having fallen into a slavery, domestic, personal, abject. He says that this slavery, though it may have caused their subjection to the Romans, would not be removed or abated if that were to cease. And,

further, He affirms that slavery to a false god—that which lies beneath all idolatry—might be more justly attributed to the seed of Abraham than to any descendants of Han.

The first of these allegations is contained in the words which contain also the justification of His assurance that He can break their fetters, and give them a higher liberty than they had ever attained or dreamed of. ‘*Verily, verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*’ It is common to quote the first of these verses without the second. Preachers tell their hearers that they have committed sin, and are therefore the servants of sin. They say nothing of the Son who abideth in the house into which sin has intruded itself. I believe, brethren, that by making this separation, we put the sense of Scripture, as well as the honesty of our minds, in the utmost peril. I might use stronger language,—I might say we all but destroy both. We try to conceive of evil apart from good, of disobedience apart from obedience. We cannot do it. God’s eternal law will not let us do it. If you want me to understand the corruption and depravity of my nature, you must tell me from what it is drawing me aside. You do me an infinite injury, if you tell me that sin is close to me, unless you tell me also that the great Enemy of Sin is close to me, and that I am violently tearing myself from Him when I give myself over to it. It is possible, no doubt, to find, in the height or the depth, another sense for these words than this, as it is possible to find another sense for any words, if the one which is nearest and most obvious should for some reason be disagreeable to us. And I am

certain, brethren, that we shall all seek for some new, ingenious, and elaborate interpretation, or shall embrace it when it is presented to us—I am certain that we shall call the literal interpretation mystical, and shall persuade ourselves that the one we have put in the place of it is literal—unless we perceive that it corresponds both with the context of the New Testament and with our own necessities. I call upon you to see whether what I am saying is not true of each one of us. Let each man ask himself, ‘Is not the sin of which Christ speaks, with me? Is not the Son of whom He speaks, with me? Has not the usurper of the house separated me from the Lord of the house? Is not the Lord of the house ready to put down the usurper, and to make me free indeed?’

The next words have led some to suppose that our Lord cannot have been speaking to those Jews who believed on Him:—‘*I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*’ These, it will be said, were not the men who were seeking to kill Him; they had confessed His authority; His word, it is admitted, had made its power felt by them. I will not evade the objection by saying, that so far as these men took their stand upon their position as Abraham’s children, so far it might fairly be said to them: ‘You see what Abraham’s children do; their parentage does not save them from this crime.’ I believe that is *not* the meaning of the charge, or at any rate that it is only one very small part of the meaning. I think our Lord was speaking to the consciences of those whom He addressed of a sin of which *they* had been guilty. I think that if those consciences had been aroused to *confess* His power—in some measure to own His goodness—they will have been

more ready than any other to own the charge; and if they did not own it, to be stung by it. They had not participated, it is probable, in the plots of the Scribes and Pharisees to put Jesus to death. They might not then, they might not afterwards, take up a stone to cast at Him. But why were those plots conceived? why were those stones raised? To get rid of a Judge and a Reprover; to put out a light which was shining into the heart, and making its darkness visible; to destroy the Son of Man, the King of man; that each man might be his own king—might live undisturbed by any obligations to his fellow-men; to destroy the Son of God,—the witness of God's truth and God's love; that men might claim the inheritance as theirs,—that they might take credit to themselves for all goodness and truth, and give themselves no credit for their wickedness and lies. Now, did not each one of those to whom Jesus spoke, know inwardly that he had sought to put out the light that was shining into him,—to kill his Judge and Reprover? The living Word was there,—the Son was claiming to be the Lord of the house. But He was not allowed His place there. A certain sense there was of His presence. Certain acts of homage were rendered to Him. But He was not permitted to reign. They would find a divided allegiance more and more impossible. The good Lord or the evil must be absolute. The one who was rejected must be slain.

At each turn, this conversation becomes more profound and awful. The next verse leads us into a depth into which we may well tremble to look, and yet from which it is most unsafe to turn away:—*'I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.'* Jesus had spoken of His Father as the root of all His loving acts,—of the wisdom, and truth, and

love which were expressed in His words and in Himself. If there is a root to which all good that appears in a human life can be referred, must there not be a source to which all evil is referred? Can it be the same? If healing, restoration, life, are from the Father of Jesus, from what father come murderous thoughts,—the wish to destroy the Son of Man?

To fly from any thought which presses closely upon the conscience to some external truism,—even if it is one which has been proved to be inapplicable,—is the ordinary desire of us all. *‘They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.’* The question is about the paternity of certain purposes in their minds. These purposes were near to them, to their very selves. They determined their acts and their habits. Did they take *these* by descent from the father of the faithful? Were these his progeny? Of course, they would have answered, as many of us would have answered, ‘That is using words in a double sense. You mean one kind of fatherhood, we mean another.’ No! it was they who were guilty of this duplicity. They were calling Abraham their father, in the notion that they were deriving some *spiritual* privileges from him. If they only intended that they could trace up their pedigree, according to the flesh, to him, let them say that frankly to themselves. It was just what our Lord was urging them, in this part of His conversation, to do. But if he was their parent in any other sense, then let them remember what he was, what he did. The living and true God spake to him, and called him. He heard the voice;

he yielded to it. That same voice was speaking to them. He was '*telling them the truth*;' and therefore '*they sought to kill Him.*'

He repeats, then, the former words,—'*Ye do the deeds of your father.*' And now they ventured what sounds a bold defence:—'*Then said they to Him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.*' Had they not a right to say so? Were they not almost quoting the words of Malachi? What is more, were they not using the very words of Jesus? Had He not spoken to publicans and sinners,—to the very outcasts of the people,—of a Father who was seeking to bring home the prodigal son, as the shepherd went after the lost sheep? Would He deny to any Israelite the right to claim God as his Father? What had He taken flesh for, but that He might assert that claim, not for Israelites only, but for men? Alas! brethren, we can understand too well what the Jews understood when they used this language, '*We have one Father, even God,*' because we are continually using the like ourselves. How commonly do we say, 'Oh, yes; in a general sense, all of us are God's children.' That general sense is *no* sense. The word 'children' is used to signify *creatures*. We say men are His, as we say the cattle are His. In fact, we attach nearly as little significance to creation as to fatherhood. How can we, when we think of God as a mere ultimate explanation of our existence and the existence of the universe; when the idea of a Father of *spirits*—of one who has to do first of all with us, because we are spiritual, voluntary beings—is almost banished from our minds? To say that God is our Father, or any man's Father, when we conceive of Him as a distant power,—who ceases to be imaginary only when He puts forth His wrath,—is to prac-

tise a deception upon ourselves. It is a commoner deception with us than with the Jews, because Jesus has taught us to say, '*Our Father, which art in heaven;*' and every little Christendom child learns the words, and, thanks be to God, takes in something of their inward living sense. But when we become men, that sense which should have grown brighter and clearer with every day's joy and sorrow, has become utterly clouded by the world's mists, till the vision at last fades almost entirely. Then one here and there seizes the force of the word, discovers that he has really, and not in name, a Father, to whom he can pour out his whole heart. For a while he longs to persuade all that they have the same Father,—that they may cast their burdens upon Him too. He finds a few who understand him. They associate together; they speak of themselves as believers; they begin to think that they are God's children, because they believe that they are. Their ardour to convince men generally that they have a Father, becomes changed into an ardour to bring men into *their* society. As that passion increases, other lower and baser passions increase with it. 'The believer' contracts more and more of those habits which are of the earth, earthy. He contracts, oftentimes, a bitterness and a malice which are not of the earth, but come from beneath. These he gives himself credit for as springing from his zeal for religion, or he merely pities himself for them as the remains of indwelling sin. He has not courage to say, 'These spring from another father, not from the Father in heaven. So far as I identify myself with them, I become the child of a father in hell.' But he goes on assuming he is God's child. He tells other men that they are only children in the secondary signification; that is to say, he cherishes in them the most

dangerous of all falsehoods. He prevents them from turning to their true Father, and seeking of Him a true and divine life.

These Jews qualified the assertion, that they were all God's children, even in the lowest, most unreal, sense of that word. These were so who '*were not born of fornication.*' Children not born in lawful wedlock they seem to have thought of as having some dark, infernal parentage. It must have been most startling to them when the words at last came forth which appeared to fix that parentage upon themselves.

'Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.'

The Jews were proud of not worshipping false gods. The true God, then, what was He? The moment truth confronted them, they shrunk from it. They were proud of not worshipping evil gods. The good God, then, what was He? The moment goodness confronted them, they hated it, and wished to extinguish it. They shrunk from the Man who did not speak His own words, but God's. 'They hated the Man who did not show forth His own good-

ness, but God's. Whence came this mind in them, this will, this spirit? Jesus tells them plainly. 'There is a mind, a will, a spirit, which from the beginning has been a man-slayer—has compassed the destruction of the man in each man. There is a mind, a will, a spirit, who has been from the beginning a liar, who would not stand in the truth.'

I know well—we all know—what use has been made, and is made, and will be made, of this expression, '*from the beginning.*' 'So, then,' the objector exclaims, 'there is a second god, another creator, coming into existence with the good God. If this is not Manichæism, what is?' The answer is simply an appeal to the words as they appear on the face of the book,—'*He stood not in the truth.*' There was, then, a truth to stand in; there was a truth to revolt from. The name 'murderer' implies a life to be taken away; the name 'liar' implies a contradiction of that which is. Yes: it implies that the evil spirit is this, and *only* this; it implies that the murderer is the author of *no* life; it implies that the liar has called nothing that *is* into existence. You ask, 'What is Manichæism *but* this?' I answer, 'It is exactly the reverse of this. It affirms that the evil power *does* produce some life; that some part of creation may be ascribed to him.' And those who shrink from speaking of '*him*'—those who will not admit a devil at all—do, unawares, let this Manichæism continually into their thoughts, into their acts, into their words. They may talk of universal benevolence, but facts are too strong for them. They meet evil everywhere; they meet it in themselves. They do not like to say,—'It is an evil will to which I am yielding up my will. Because men are obeying this evil will, therefore there is misery

‘and ugliness in this blessed and beautiful world.’ They try to escape from that confession. They talk of evil in nature, of evil in themselves. Unawares, they have introduced it among the works of the good God. They have either made Him answerable for it, or they have said that there is some creator besides Him. The last alternative is very dreadful; but the former is, it seems to me, infinitely more dreadful. In accepting what our Lord said to the Jews in this discourse, I escape from both. I am able solemnly and habitually to deny that any insect or blade of grass is the devil’s work; I am able to regard the whole universe as very good, even as it was when it came forth at the call of the divine Word; I am able to declare that humanity, standing in that divine Word, is still made in the image of God, as He declared that it was; and that there is no one faculty of the human soul, no one sense of the human body, which is not good, and blessed, and holy in God’s sight. I am able, at the same time, to look facts in the face, and confess that sin has entered into the world, and death by sin; that there has been from the beginning of man’s existence on this earth, and that there still is, a murderer, who is seeking to sever him from his proper life: that there has been from the beginning of man’s existence upon earth, and that there still is, a liar, who is seeking to persuade men that God is not all good; that He is not all true; that He is not the Father of their spirits; that it is not His will that they should know Him, and be like Him. I can admit that this liar has been listened to, and is listened to; and that men may enter into such communion with him—may become so penetrated with his false and mendacious spirit, that they shall become in very deed his children, entirely fashioned into his likeness, understanding

no lessons but his. Our Lord speaks of the Jewish people—of the most religious part of them especially—as having passed, or as rapidly passing, into this condition. He declares, in the words which I have taken as my text—and which embody, I think, some of the deepest lessons of the chapter—that they could not ‘*understand His speech* ;’ that that sounded strange, monstrous, deranged to them, because they ‘*could not hear His word*’—because their hearts and consciences were closed against that which was every moment knocking and craving for admission there. They did ‘*not hear God’s words, because they were not of God*’—because their whole minds and wills were given up to another God, because they had become Devil-worshippers.

‘Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.’

It is certainly most unfortunate that our translators—who had just rendered Διάβολος by Devil, in our Lord’s discourse—should take the same word for δαιμόνιον, in the discourse of the Jews. I need not say that they did not mean what He meant, or anything like what He meant. They called Him a Samaritan,—evidently alluding to the Samaritan passion for enchanters. He was a possessed man, like one of those who appeared so often among the worshippers on Gerizim, and drew so many disciples after them. The reply of Jesus is, that He had not a dæmon; that He was speaking the words of no subordinate spirit or angel; that He was ‘*honouring His Father*’—Him whom they called their God, the Father of spirits. He did not seek His own glory, as those

did who came boasting that they were possessed by a spirit or dæmon, of which no others could partake. He came seeking His Father's glory, promising to make all partakers of His Spirit.

The next words are only a part of this promise. '*Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*' Why the translators, who have been careful in adhering to the common rendering of λόγος thus far, should suddenly have forsaken it here, and dilute it into 'saying,' I cannot conjecture. Certainly they have done much to make the whole passage unintelligible by that wilfulness. *He* has taken pains to distinguish the *speech* or *saying* which enters the ear from the *word* which is lodged in the heart, and is to be cherished there. That His word brings life, because in Him the Divine Word is Life, He has asserted again and again. When the man loses his hold on that word, death overtakes him; if he hold it fast, he is united to that which is stronger than death; and he shall not taste of death. When it comes to his soul and body, he shall defy it. He shall rise above it, and they shall be raised with him.

'*Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God: yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying.*'

The sense of eternity, of a relation to the eternal God,—to a Father of spirits, had almost forsaken these Jews. The sense of time,—of a series or succession of years,—had displaced every other in their minds; they could contemplate nothing, except under conditions of time. To the mere trader,—to him who lives in calculating when so much money will become due—any conditions, except those of time, seem impossible. He laughs at those who hint at any other. But the reverence for ancestry,—the affection that binds us to a family and a nation, does not belong to time. It brings past and present into closest proximity; it leaps over distinctions of costume and circumstance, to claim affinity with the inmost heart of those who lived generations ago. For all family feeling, and all national feeling, has its root in a living God; therefore it defies death; it treats death as only belonging to the individual.

The Jews *knew* that Jesus had a dæmon, because He spoke of men who believed His word not tasting of death. For Abraham to them was dead; the prophets were dead. They had no sense of a life which united them to Abraham and the prophets; they did not really confess a God who was a God of the living and not of the dead. Jesus probes this state of mind to the quick. He tells them first, that it is their want of knowledge of God which makes what He says incredible to them,—the lying, atheistical temper which they were cultivating under the name of religion. Because He knows God,—because He keeps His word,—because He lives in communion with the truth, therefore His speech seems to them that of a possessed man.

But he was to seem to them worse than a possessed man before the dialogue ended.

'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad: Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.'

The Jews, I said, were utterly entangled in thoughts of time. It was necessary to break these bonds at once and violently asunder. The Word who had been in the beginning with God, who was the Light of men, declares that He conversed with Abraham; that Abraham heard His voice; that Abraham saw His light; that this was the source of all his gladness. This was the reason why men in after days, who had heard the same voice, who had seen the same light, could rejoice with Abraham,—could feel that years did not sever those whom God had made one. The ears that were dull of hearing, the obtuse mammonized hearts, were proof against this paradox; it excited only a grin. Then came the other words,—*'Before Abraham was, I am.'* They were too familiar, too awful, not to arouse even those who were most petrified by worldliness and pride. The name which had been spoken in the bush had been spoken to them! The Man who stood before them was calling Himself the *'I Am.'* A flash of light broke in upon them. He *had* meant this. The blasphemy was now open.

'Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.'

And oh, brethren, may the meaning of those words flash upon us too! May they come to us not as dull sounds, but as if they proceeded fresh from Him who spoke them then! They do proceed from Him. Each day and hour

He repeats them to us. When all schemes of human policy crack and crumble ; when we discover the utter weakness of the leaders and teachers we have trusted most ; when we begin to suspect that the world is given over to the spirit of murder and lies ; He says to us, ‘ The foundations of the universe are not built on rottenness ; whatever fades away and perishes, I AM.’

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE LIGHT OF THE EYE, AND THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT.

[Lincoln's Inn, 2d Sunday after Trinity, June 1, 1856.]

ST. JOHN IX. 39.

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

THE reading of the last verse of the 8th chapter, which our version has adopted, connects it directly with the first verse of the 9th. *'Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by (παρήγγεν οὕτως). And as He passed by (καὶ παράγων), He saw a man blind from his birth.'* Possibly the former verse ought to end at the word *'temple.'* But if we lose that link between the incidents recorded in the two chapters, the internal relation between them will remain as strong as ever. The discourse of Jesus, which we have been considering on the two last Sundays, began with the sentence, *'I am the light of the world.'* Every subsequent passage unfolded itself out of this opening one. The story which forms the subject of this chapter is introduced by the same announcement. Can we doubt that the words and the act had the same origin and the same object? Can we safely sever what Christ has joined together?

I am aware of the motive which induces us to sever them. I have had occasion to speak of it more than once already, and to acknowledge that an honest feeling is lurking in it. We are afraid of confounding what is sensible with what is spiritual. We are afraid of using light in two senses, and of fancying that they are the same. I complain of no desire to be religiously accurate in the use of language. Scrupulosity in this matter is far less dangerous than indifference. We are in continual peril of falling into confusions and equivocations; let all our faculties be awake to the risk,—let them all watch against it. But they will not be awake, they will not watch, unless they do homage to the fact, that light has been used, is used, must be used, in every dialect in which men express their thoughts, to denote that which the eye receives, and that which the mind receives,—the great energy of the eye, the great energy of the mind. Instead of repining at this fact, as if it were a hindrance to our perceptions of truth,—instead of labouring to reconstruct speech according to some scheme of ours,—instead of fancying that we have done a good work when we have got a scholastical or technical phrase substituted for a popular one,—let us earnestly meditate upon the principle which is latent under these forms of discourse, from which we cannot emancipate ourselves. Let us thankfully accept them as proofs that the sensible world and the spiritual, though entirely distinct, are related; and that the last is not closed any more than the first against the wayfarer and the child. This, at all events, is the doctrine which goes through Scripture, and which has made its words so mighty to those who can understand no others—so full of relief and discovery to those who do not wish to be

separate from their kind, and who have convinced themselves that the deepest truths must be the commonest. Such is the doctrine implied in every parable of our Lord; such, above all, is the doctrine of St. John, who does not report many parables, but who takes us into the inmost heart of them, and shows us the divine law which is involved in the use of them.

I find an unspeakable blessing in following the order of St. John's narrative. It is the true order of human life. After we have listened to the divinest discourse, there is a sense of vacancy in the heart. We feel as if we were out of communion with the business and misery of the world,—as if the words had not proved themselves till they could be brought into collision and conflict with these. When we are in the midst of action, we want to know that it is not merely mechanical action,—that it is in conformity with some principle, and springs out of a principle. When Jesus has finished His discourse with the Jews, by assuming a name which lies beneath all discourse,—when they have finished their arguments by taking up stones to cast at Him,—He meets a man blind from his birth. He proceeds at once to do him good. But before He can enter upon that work, He must encounter a metaphysical doubt which has occurred to the fishermen who are walking with Him. A metaphysical doubt to fishermen! Yes; and if you go into the garrets and cellars of London, you will have metaphysical doubts presented to you by men immeasurably more ignorant than those fishermen were, even before Jesus called them; the very doubts which the schools are occupied with, only taking a living, practical form. Unless you can cause men not to be metaphysical beings—that is to say, unless you can take from them all which sepa-

rates them from the beasts that perish—they must have these doubts. Thanks be to God, He awakens them! And thanks be to God, He, and not priests and doctors, must satisfy them for every creature whom He has made in His image!

The doubt which troubled the disciples is one that has exercised all generations—none more than our own. ‘*Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*’ ‘He came into the world under this ‘curse. Was it for some sin he committed in another ‘world, in some older state of existence? or is this an ‘illustration of the doctrine asserted in the second com- ‘mandment? Are the sins of the father and mother visited ‘on the child?’ The former hypothesis has always connected itself closely with the sense of immortality in man. ‘Am I merely to be hereafter? Does not the future imply ‘a past? Do not shadows of that past pursue me? Can ‘I interpret the facts of memory if I deny its existence?’ The second doctrine is not more asserted in the law than it is justified by experience. The facts from which it is deduced belong to physiology as much at least as to theology. Every one who thinks of hereditary sickness and insanity confesses them and trembles.

‘*Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*’

A dogmatist who ventured, on the strength of this answer, to say that the bodily condition of this particular man, or of any man, had not been affected by the misdoings of his parents,—who should venture even to pronounce the other opinion respecting a pre-existent state a false and heretical one,—would speedily find himself at

fault. To be consistent, he must take the sentence according to the letter of it, and say that the parents of this man had not sinned at all before he was born. One who really reverences our Lord's words will not trifle with them after this fashion. He will seek from them actual guidance for his own life, not an excuse for suppressing evidence or condemning the conclusions of other men. And if this is his object, he will not be disappointed. In a single case He gives us the hint of a law which is applicable to all cases. That law remains true, whatever may be the truth respecting our own sins or the sins of our parents. That law is one which reveals the mind of God, and removes all dark surmises respecting His government of the world. That law is one which we may use for the regulation of our own conduct.

The disciples were speculating about final causes. They would not have understood what any one meant who had told them they were doing so; they were doing it nevertheless. Jesus met them with the *most* final cause. 'I can give you a better reason for this man's blindness than those you have imagined. His blindness will be a means of showing forth the power and purpose of God. He will learn himself, he will be a teacher to the world through this blindness, whence light comes, who is the Father of light.'

It was not the mere announcement of a principle. Every principle He delivered embodied itself in an act. He added immediately: '*I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*' He declares that what He was going to do He *must* do. He did not choose His own way. When He was

most exercising power, He was obeying a power,—‘*He was working the works of Him that sent Him.*’ And every such work was a revelation. It showed forth the Will and the Mind that had been creating and ruling all things. That Will was proving itself to be a Will of absolute goodness,—that Mind, a light in which is no darkness. But there is a sorrow for Him who is about to impart joy. His countrymen had taken up stones to cast at Him. He has a vision of a time when they would have their way. The light for a while would be quenched. But as long as He was in the world, He must illuminate it. Here, again, we have the feelings of the Man, the presentiments of the Sufferer—not drawn out, but just indicated—that we may have a glimpse into the heart from which they came. They cannot be divided from the divine truth He is enunciating; they are the media through which that truth is exhibited to us. The Word is indeed made flesh; it is in the Son of Man that we know the Son of God.

‘*When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*’

Every one has remarked that this cure is distinguished from most others that are recorded in the Gospels, by the careful use in it of intermediate agencies. He does not merely speak the word, and the man is healed. There is a process of healing. And I think you must confess that the use of these agencies is a part of the sign to which St. John wishes to draw our attention. If Christ’s other signs testified that there is an invisible power at work in all the springs

of our life,—that there is a Fountain of life from which those springs are continually refreshed and renewed,—did not this sign testify that there is a potency and virtue in the very commonest things; that God has stored all nature with instruments for the blessing and healing of His creatures? The mere miracle-worker who draws glory to himself wishes to dispense with these things, lest he should be confounded with the ordinary physician. The great Physician, who works because His Father works, who comes to show what He is doing in His world, puts an honour upon earth and water as well as upon all art which has true observation and knowledge for its basis. He only distinguishes Himself from other healers by showing that the source of their wisdom and renovating power is in Him. We have put our faith and our science at an immeasurable distance from each other. May not the separation lead to the ruin of both?

But we are not allowed to lose ourselves amidst these general characteristics of this cure. The words, '*He came seeing,*' remind us that one special malady is brought before us; that we have to do, not with a sick man, but with a blind man; and that it is as the Restorer of sight that the Lord of man is declaring Himself to us. That object is kept before us as we proceed in the story. '*The neighbours therefore, and they that before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go to the Pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is*

He? *He answered, I know not.* I do not introduce this passage for the sake of commenting upon it (a commentary would be very superfluous and out of place), but that we may be reminded continually how this theologian—he who has been supposed to be writing a learned, dogmatical treatise, he who has been supposed to live in an age in which plain facts had been forgotten in profound speculations—tells a story. We feel at once that to talk about its dramatical character is to spoil its effect. It is dramatical, as every childlike narrative is dramatical. The people who were alive at the time speak to us because they actually presented themselves to the writer as living beings, and because he did not want to thrust himself into their places. I do not say that these qualities belong only to a divine teacher. They belong, in their measure, to every simple narrator and poet. But they certainly do not belong to the builder up of a system; and they are precisely the gifts which we should expect would be imparted to one who had seen and handled the Word of life, and was bearing a message concerning Him to his brethren.

'They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.'

I observed before, that the only two acts of healing which are recorded in this Gospel, as done by our Lord in Jerusalem, were done on the Sabbath-day. In the story of the

man at the Pool of Bethesda, this was the most prominent circumstance; the subsequent discourse bore upon it; the strongest, and to the Jews the most offensive, proclamation by Jesus of God as His Father, arose out of it; the purpose to kill Him was first suggested by it. Apparently what He said then, and had said since at the feast of Tabernacles, was not quite lost even upon the Pharisees. There were some in this particular synagogue, if not in the Sanhedrim, who thought that to do a good act on a Saturday might not be a sin against God. The next verses show that they were a strong enough minority to force their fellows into a further inquiry respecting the fact of the cure. *'They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him; he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.'*

The answer of the man, that He who healed him was a prophet, was the simplest of all forms of expressing his belief that he had been brought into contact with a Person who was higher than himself, who was sent from God.

This passage would show, if it stood alone, how little even the commonest Israelite identified the prophet with the mere predictor of events. Foretelling had surely no direct connexion with opening the eyes; but one who could do that was naturally felt to be the bringer of a message and a blessing from another and a better region. These words, as we have seen before, lay very near to the others, '*He is the Christ*;' only in the last the king was blended with the prophet, the Son of David with the successor of Elijah. It is probable that the rulers of the synagogue would draw a much sharper distinction between the names than the people did. The belief in Him as a Prophet might be tolerated; those who owned Him as Christ were interfering with the authority of the priests or of Rome. Positive exclusion from worship and fellowship, therefore, might be restricted to that. The parents of the blind man feared, that he had approached the borders of offence. If they made a false step, it might be passed; therefore it was prudent to keep as nearly as possible to the mere fact of his blindness. Perhaps they had no opinion about the Person who had healed their son. If they had, is it worth while to run risks for an *opinion*? A *belief* is another thing altogether. If a man has *that*, he must run risks for it. His belief makes this demand upon him, and perishes if the demand is not complied with.

'*Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner.*' The two parties had probably come to a compromise. The cure was to be admitted as good; it was to be ascribed respectfully and devoutly to God; only the instrument of it must be declared to be evil. It was, of course, assumed that such an adjustment would be satisfactory to

the beggar; he would not rebel against the authority of his betters. Nor did he. *'He answered and said, Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.'* Was not his as fair an adjustment as theirs? He left them all their probable conclusions, all their traditional wisdom. He vindicated to himself only his pin-point of personal experience. No! it was not fair; the doctors demurred to it, as they had a right to do. Theirs was a fantastical airy possession, which every hour might diminish; he was standing on solid ground; every day he might add something to that ground. Nothing frets men like a discovery of this kind. The rulers of the synagogue showed their irritation by repeating their question. *'Then said they to him again, What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes?'* The beggar became bolder as the doctors became feebler. *'He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.'* Their self-complacency has returned. Of such people as this blind beggar did the disciples of Jesus consist! They had a law and a history. Moses had been sent to them from God fourteen hundred years before. About his mission there could be no doubt; they had it in the book. What help had they to determine the pretensions of the new Teacher, but His own words? The beggar thought they must have some means of finding out what He was, if they were learned men and guides of the people. *'The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and*

yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, he could do nothing.' It was very simple, childish logic,—the logic of a man who had convinced himself that God was living then, and was ruling the world then as in the days of old. He had done what the synagogue bade him. He had given God the glory. He had confessed a good God, who cared for him an outcast. Jesus had brought him to that confession, and therefore he could not, at the bidding of any synagogue, call Him a sinner. There was only one safe and conclusive reply to a man who spoke as he did. '*They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.'*

A strange process had been going on in this man, one worthy of all study. The world of flowers and trees, of earth and sky, and of human faces, had burst upon him; a vision too wonderful to take in, which might have crushed him with its strangeness and its excess of beauty. But with that had come another vision, for which his hours of darkness had not been unfitting but perhaps preparing him,—the sense of a loving Power near him, sympathising with him, caring to restore him; the assurance that this Power must be His who made the trees and flowers, the sky and earth, and had stamped on the human face an expression that was not of the earth. This sense, this confidence, came to him not suddenly, but gradually, by a discipline scarcely less hard than that to which he had been subjected hitherto. It came to him, in part, through that strange conflict with creatures of his own flesh and

blood,—with men of whom he had asked alms and whom he revered as his masters,—into which he was brought almost as soon as he could look into their countenances. It came through their denial of facts, of which he felt as sure as he was of the existence of those things which he had begun to see. It came to him with a feeling of his own duty, of his own power, to declare that God did not forget beggars, and that the man who had raised him out of misery must be from God. But this inner revelation was not overwhelming like the outward,—it was sustaining. The man who could look upon sun and stars found that he was more than they. God was nearer to the beggar than to them. A light was shining into him which did not come from them. Was it not a light which would go with him and cheer him, whatever synagogue cast him out; yes, if sun and stars were to disappear for ever?

He had been under a marvellous education. It was not completed. *‘Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? And he said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.’*

An incomprehensible, incredible record, if all that we have been hearing of a Life-giver and a Light of the world is untrue; if all communications come to human beings from without; if the Son of God is only revealed to us in letters; if there is not a conscience in man to which He manifests Himself. But how consistent and harmonious and consolatory a story is it, if this Gospel is indeed what it professes to be, if it does not mock us with idle sounds when it tells us of One who was with the

Father before all worlds, whose light always shined in the darkness, which did not comprehend it, who came into the world to show men of this Father, and to restore them to fellowship with Him! How the narrative concerning this beggar, and the way in which the Son of God led him to the knowledge of Himself, becomes then a narrative for each of us! We need not trace any outward sorrow that has been ordained for us to the sin of our parents or to sins of our own done in some former state. Accepting in either case the punishment, we may refer it to the will of a Father, that through it we may perceive how the blank in our sensible perceptions and in our hearts may be filled,—that through it we may be led to the Son, the Life-giver and Light of the world. The like calamities in our brethren are to be the instruments through which we convey to them a message concerning the same Son. If we claim them as opportunities for showing forth God's healing power; if we own the science and the art which are needful for the exercise of that power as His gifts; if we thus work His works,—others will find, we shall find more and more, that the riddle of the world has a solution,—that Christ has solved it.

And what is true of outward sorrows—of the want of sight, the greatest of all—is true also of moral evils, of the moral blindness from which they spring and in which they terminate. Our Lord's words, those I took for my text, lead us into the heart of this mystery also; they explain some of the greatest contradictions in our own lives, and in the world's life. *'And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.'*

How is He come into the world for judgment when He

came not to judge the world, but to save it? He has answered the question before. He answers it more fully here. What we want to be saved from is our darkness. We can only be saved from it by His light. That light brings us into judgment. It distinguishes—it condemns! It distinguishes between that in us which seeks light, and that in us which flies from light. It does not condemn us for being dark; it condemns us for not owning our darkness. It does not condemn us for not having a power and virtue in us to escape from the darkness; but for refusing to entertain the light which would raise us out of it. Our eyes are not formed to create light, but to receive it; if they will close themselves to that which is always seeking to open them and illuminate them, *that* is the sentence—that is the condemnation. The blind beggar washes in the Pool of Siloam, and comes seeing. He hears of the Son of God, and says, ‘*Lord, who is He that I might believe on Him?*’ The Pharisee grudges eyesight to the beggar,—denies that God may work good on His own Sabbath-day. He is satisfied with his power of seeing; and the light that would open God’s glorious kingdom to him puts out the eyes that he had.

Dear brethren, may Christ give us honesty and courage to confess our blindness, that we may turn to Him who can make us see! May He deliver us from all conceit of our own illumination, lest we should become hopelessly dark!

DISCOURSE XIX.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

[Lincoln's Inn, 3d Sunday after Trinity, June 8, 1856.]

ST. JOHN X. 27—29.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

A RECENT traveller in the Holy Land, who has looked on all its localities with honest and reverent eyes, and has enabled his readers to see them almost as clearly as himself, has suggested that the Mount of Olivet was the scene of the conversation, in which Jesus declared Himself as the Son of God to the man whose eyes He had opened. The man whom He had healed at the Pool of Bethesda He found in the Temple ; but an excommunicated Israelite would not have been allowed to enter those precincts. If we suppose our Lord to have met him on that other ground which He visited so often, the interview may have been secret. And the words, '*For judgment am I come into the world,*' which are so evident a commentary upon it, may have been addressed to persons, His disciples and others, whom He joined afterwards. Then it will appear how the concluding verses of the 9th chapter may have formed

part of the same dialogue with the opening verses of the 10th,—how much closer a relation there is between them outwardly and inwardly than we at first perceive.

‘And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.’

These Pharisees may have fallen in by chance with Jesus and His disciples as they walked down the mount, or may have come expressly to catch Him in His words. They must have heard that He had spoken of blind leaders of the blind. They knew, at all events, that His strongest language had been directed against them,—the guides of the people,—those to whom the humble Israelites turned for light and teaching. The question, *‘Are we blind also?’* may have been asked in recollection of these former passages between them, or in mere scorn that a Galilæan who had learnt no letters should presume to judge them. The answer struck at the principle of the Pharisaic character. *‘Alas! if you only felt that you were as blind as any of those whom you are professing to teach and show the right way, there would be no complaint to make of you. You would turn to the Source of light; you would allow the light that lighteth every man to illuminate you. “But now ye say, We see.” You are satisfied with the light that is in yourselves. You think that you have a light that does not belong to these poor wretches who know not the law. “Therefore your sin remaineth.” You stumble, and you cause those whom you guide to stumble.’*

If this conversation took place at eventide, on the slope of the hill, no spectacle (as the traveller to whom I have referred remarks) would be more likely to meet the eyes of our Lord and these Pharisees than that of a flock of sheep, gathered from the different pastures in which they had been wandering, and entering, one by one, through a little wicket-gate into their resting-place for the night,—the shepherd, as was and is the custom in that country, going through it before them, and leading them in. There may have been a pause after the words on which I have just commented,—then Jesus may have said, pointing to the sheepfold: ‘*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know no the voice of strangers.*’ As if He had said, ‘Look there; see how that shepherd is behaving. The sheep are not going through one door, and he through another. Of any one who took another nearer way you would say at once, not, “He is doing so because he is a man and is wiser than the sheep,” but simply, “He is not the shepherd; the sheep do not belong to him; he is come to steal them, and to kill them.” The sign of the shepherd—that which the porter at the gate owns at once—is, that he goes *with* the sheep. But it is not only the porter that makes this distinction. The sheep know their own shepherd as well as he does. They do not in the least confound his voice

‘with those of other men. Whether he is, as now, leading them in for the night, or leading them out in the morning, still it is the same. He knows each of them; each of them knows him. He leads them because he does not stand aloof from them.’

‘*This parable,*’ says St. John, ‘*Jesus spake to them : but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.*’ They did not feel the application of it; they did not see what shepherds and sheepfolds had to do with them. They could hardly have given a greater proof how little they understood the things which were written in the books they prized most,—how their worship of the divine letter had destroyed all commerce between their minds and the realities which it is setting forth. For is not the Old Testament, from first to last, a book about shepherds? Was not Abraham a shepherd,—Moses a shepherd,—David a shepherd? Is not the shepherd of sheep, throughout, connected with the Shepherd of men? That name belongs to Greek poetry as much as to Hebrew; it is found as often in Homer as in Isaiah; it is the most universal and human of all emblems. But the Hebrew seers are the great and consistent expounders of it; they carry it from the lowest ground to the highest. ‘*The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want,*’ is the song of the individual Israelite. ‘*He shall feed His flock like a shepherd : He shall gather His lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom ; and shall gently lead those that are with young,*’ contains the highest vision which the Prophet could see of the Divine care over his nation. And no applications of this language are so numerous as those which are directed against ‘*the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves, and will not feed the flock.*’

These passages might have occurred to those who knew

them so well as the Pharisees. But they were divine texts merely,—they never connected themselves with the sheep and the shepherds that wandered over the hills in their day. The sheep would sell for so much in the market the shepherds were hired for so much by the day or the week. There was no other measure of their worth. Clever teachers might, perhaps, resort to them occasionally for rhetorical illustrations. Secular and vulgar things might be converted, as the phrase is, to the service of religion. But it would always be felt that they *were* in themselves secular and vulgar things. God had nothing to do with them till they had been reclaimed. Thus the faith that all creation is divine,—that all occupations are divine,—that God has written His mind and purpose both upon the natural and the civil order of the world, had disappeared. Men no longer walked the earth as a holy place, filled with the presence of their Lord God; it had become utterly separated from Him,—sold and sacrificed to Mammon. Then came the Son of Man, interpreting the world which He had made, and which knew Him not; drawing forth out of it treasures new and old; deciphering the hieroglyphics which wise men had perceived in every rock and cave, in every tree, and in every grain of sand; showing that in Himself was to be found the solution of that sphynx-riddle by which all ages had been tormented.

But even His parables might be turned to an evil use. It might be supposed that we can only reach the kingdom of heaven through the forms of earth; that they are not the likenesses of the invisible substances, but that the invisible substances are the likenesses of them. This danger is of such continual recurrence, it belongs so essentially to the idolatrous nature which is in us all, that it

must have exhibited itself in the Christian Church before St. John wrote. Long allegories—which seem invented rather to hide the truth from common eyes than to bring it forth that it might be a possession for the wayfarer—began to be produced immediately after the apostolical age, if not within it. Nothing like them is to be found in this Gospel. Those parts of our Lord's teaching in which the parable was not used are brought into most prominence. Yet the parable is justified; all His acts are shown to be signs. And a proverb (*παροιμία*) is introduced here and there, which enables us to understand in what the worth of these natural likenesses consists, and how much the divine art which draws out the spiritual truth that is latent in them differs from the elaborate artifice of the allegorizer.

'Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'

The formal interpreter of parables would at once decide, that the most important object in the picture which is presented to the eye, must represent Christ the Son of Man. The supposition is a natural one; perhaps it may ultimately prove to be true. But our Lord's first words seem to confute it. His conversation with the Pharisees leads Him to speak of the gate through which both the sheep and the shepherd enter into the fold, before He speaks of the shepherd. And that gate, He says, is Himself. All kings, prophets, priests, teachers, had brought

light and life into the minds of men,—had served to bind men into one,—just so far as they had confessed a light and life from which theirs was derived, just so far as they had identified themselves with the people. And all that had come claiming to be the sources of life and light,—to have an independent authority,—to have a right to rule, because they were in themselves stronger, or wiser, or better than others, had been thieves and robbers, the tyrants and destroyers of the earth. There is no commentary on history, the history of the whole world, ancient and modern, so grand as this,—so perfectly able to abide the test of facts. Every prophet, and monarch, and priest of the Jews brought strength and freedom into his land, while he was the witness of an invisible Prophet, and Monarch, and Priest higher than himself, living then, one day to be made manifest. Every prophet, monarch, and priest was the cause of superstition, idolatry, and slavery to his land, when he exalted himself,—when he strove to prove that he had some rights of his own which were not conferred on him for the sake of his race,—which were not conferred that he might be a witness of the glory belonging to his race.

If we read Pagan history and literature by the light of Scripture, we should find abundance of proofs that the maxim is equally true and satisfactory with reference to them; that every Greek or Roman patriot and sage, whom we ought to love, and whom only a heartless, atheistical religion can hinder us from loving, did good and was good, so far as he did not seek his own glory,—so far as he did not attribute his wisdom and power to himself,—so far as he was in communion, amidst whatever confusions, with the Light that lighteneth every man;

and that every oppressor and invader of freedom, whose character it is our duty to hate, was so because he came in his own name, claiming to be a king, a Christ, a god. With tenfold momentum do the words bear upon the ages since the incarnation, and declare to every priest, pope, emperor, philosopher, and master of a sect or school,—‘ In ‘ so far as thou hast assumed to be the Son of Man,—in ‘ so far as thou hast set thyself to be something when thou ‘ art nothing,—in so far as thou hast claimed to have ‘ light, which has not come from the Fountain of light,— ‘ and power, which is not imparted by the righteous Power, ‘ —so far thou hast been a *thief and a robber, caring for ‘ nothing but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*’

But if in this sense it is true now, and has been true always, that Christ is the only Door through which any man enters, whose designs towards human beings are good and not murderous; can it be equally true that ‘ *the sheep did not hear* ’ the voices of false prophets, of usurping tyrants, who climbed up some other way? How then have they prevailed so mightily? Dare we say that no true men have given heed to them? Dare we judge all that have yielded to impostors,—all that have welcomed them as deliverers? Shall we not certainly be judged if we do?

Assuredly we shall. And, therefore, let us proceed to judge ourselves first, and at once. *We* have listened to impostors,—have we not? *We* have been beguiled by men who we thought were to give us life, and really took life from us. Well, but was there nothing in us which refused to hear these teachers,—to follow these guides? Was there no inward protest against them? Where some strong external evidence, some evil fruits in ourselves,

showed that a pernicious juice had issued from the tree, did we not feel that we might have known it before—that if we had been true to the light which was shining into us, we should have known it? And, even when the enchantment was strongest upon us, was there no crying for another guide,—no bleating after a better shepherd? Here, then, is the confirmation of our Lord's sentence; we need go no further to understand what He means. Something in us did follow the strange voice, but the *sheep*—the true man in us—did not. That could make no answer to the counterfeit voice; that detected the thief in the shepherd's dress; that was certain that there must be one who had a right to command, and whom it could obey.

I say again, this sheep is the '*true man in us.*' Each of us in himself knows that it is; we may know it also by the echo which the history of our race makes to the witness in our consciences. Why have the oppressors of mankind been so short-lived? How is it that, though there may be a succession of lies, each lie wears itself out in a generation,—in much less than a generation? How is it that what seems for a while the weakest possible testimony against it waxes stronger and louder, till at last the world gives into it, and the lie and the liar are indignantly trampled underfoot? How is it, but because the spirit of humanity does not and cannot hear the voices of those who break into the fold by the wrong way? How is it, but because all their temporary power is only derived from the tones of the true Shepherd, which they are able to mimic? How is it, but because they bear witness, by their reign and by their downfall, that they do not rule the earth, and that He does?

Yes, brethren, '*He who comes, that His sheep might have*

life, and that they might have it more abundantly,' does not teach us to talk of ourselves as His sheep, and of other men as having no part in Him. This is the teaching of robbers and destroyers,—of those who would sever us from our kind,—of those who would persuade us that it is a privilege to have a selfish, separate life,—to have selfish, separate rewards. This selfish, separate life is what Christ promises to save us from. The wide, free pastures into which He would lead us, are those upon which we can only graze, because we are portions of a flock; the fold into which He would bring us is for those whom He has redeemed from their separate errings and strayings to rest together in Him. We cannot, therefore, make a more deadly misapplication of this discourse, than when we turn it into an excuse for drawing lines of separation between those for whom Christ has died. While we draw *these* lines, we never shall discover the deep line in ourselves between that which can only follow the Deliverer, and that which can only follow the destroyer.

'I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.'

You will say, 'The image is changed. Christ was 'the wicket-gate; but now He has become the person 'who passes through that gate.' Yes, and if you have followed the course of the thought; if you have seen why He is described as the door through which shepherd and sheep must enter in,—why the shepherds of Israel are reproved when they will not pass through that door,—you

will see the necessity of the double image. You will feel that He whom all shepherds are bound to acknowledge, if they would have the sheep hear them, must be Himself, in the highest sense, *the* Shepherd. And the test that He is this Shepherd, explains the perpetual worth and significance of the other symbol. '*He gives His life for the sheep.*' The false shepherds wish to find out a way for themselves, which is not the way that the sheep take. They do not like the thought of stooping—beings of another and higher race as they are—to the conditions of these silly creatures. *He* identifies Himself with them. They have to die. *He* dies. That is the first and obvious view of the sentence; and it is the one to which we come back at last, as the deepest and most wonderful of all. But before we can take it in its full force, we must recal the old sentence, '*In Him was life;*' and the other which He has just uttered, '*I am come that they might have life more abundantly.*' The property of death is, that it is solitary and incommunicable; the property of life is, that it must be communicated,—that from him in whom it dwells most it must be poured forth most. He in whom the source of life is, from whom all the streams of it have issued, comes into the world to encounter death, which appears to have got the mastery,—to claim them whom He has created capable of life, for life. But how can He give life? How can He overcome death? He must *give up* life. He must die. The highest life is the life that sacrifices itself. All older shepherds had shown that it was. For their country and their brethren they had poured out their life; *that* men had received as the proof that they were from God,—that they were quickened by Him. The good Shepherd, the Shepherd of shepherds, justifies the

belief. He shows that they had done what they did by inspiration from Him. He shows that, in this instance also,—in this instance especially,—they were receiving of His fulness, and grace for grace. The Word takes flesh and blood, because the children are partakers of flesh and blood. The Shepherd dies, because the sheep die.

Thus, the doctrine which He has been preaching to the Pharisees is brought out in all its power. They claimed to be shepherds of the people, because they were above them,—because they did not share their weakness and blindness. His claim to be the Shepherd of the people was, that He would not be above them; that He would bear what they bore, and sink as low as they had sunk. And this not from some great effort,—in virtue of some arrangement,—but because He had the most intimate and original sympathy with them, because they had always been His, and because He had made Himself one with them in all things. This is the contrast which He draws between the good shepherd and the hireling. The one shepherd does his work because he looks to be paid for it. He feels altogether aloof from his sheep. He regards them as beings of a different nature from his own. He is to be very great and condescending to them. He is to fold them carefully at night,—to do all needful services for them by day; not because he cares for them, but because he has sold his work for so much, and he may lose his wages if he commits any serious oversight. And this motive serves him well enough till some great danger threatens the sheep, till the wolf breaks into the fold. Then the hireling feels rightly that life is more precious than money; it is wiser to lose his pay than to run the risk of being devoured.

From whom do these hireling shepherds expect their wages? I do not think it signifies much whether they expect them from man or from God,—in this world or in another. The temper is the same; the result which our Lord prophesies must be the same. For he who does his work in hope of getting a reward hereafter for what he has done, will, in general, regard God as an uncertain, capricious Being, whom it is very hard to please, who may punish as well as reward. Therefore he will pause before he will risk death for the sake of his work. Death may bring him into the presence of the Being whom he dreads. Death may surprise him before he has done all that he ought to have done. If there is nothing better in us than this expectation, we shall never throw away ourselves as soldiers do on the battle-field; we shall, perhaps, give ourselves credit for being better and holier than they are, because we do not.

But are we not to serve the sheep from a sense of duty to God? Are we only to serve them from certain feelings of affection for them? Let us hear what our Lord tells us of Himself, then we shall know better what we are to be.

‘I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.’

There are heights and depths in these verses which no man may look into; but the principle which is declared in them is needful for the daily practice of life, profound as it is. Christ declares that He knows His sheep. He opposes this knowledge to the motives and feelings of the hireling. Let us think of *these*. We can describe them to you; for, brethren, which of us may not say,—should

not say,—in dust and ashes: ‘They have been mine. I have felt cold and estranged from those I was seeking to guide; out of communion with their fears, their sorrows, their doubts, their temptations; ready to reprove the rich for being rich, and the poor for being poor, the tradesman for his basenesses, the lawyer for his; ready to condemn all the sins which I had no mind to commit; but not knowing them individually, not bearing their burdens, not feeling them as my own. And, therefore, when the wolf has come, which is always ready to divide the flock,—to rend them from each other,—to take away the life that should unite them,—I have not been ready to encounter him. How much less should I have been ready if he had come in the form of some terrible persecution, scattering them hither and thither!’ We know the hireling’s mind all too well; that we do not learn from report. And oh! that we might understand something of that other mind which is opposed to it,—of that which is expressed in the words, ‘*I know my sheep, and am known of mine!*’ If you would think rightly of the Son of Man, think of the Person who knows thoroughly everything that each one of you is feeling, and cannot utter to others or to himself,—every temptation from riches, from poverty, from solitude, from society, from gifts of intellect, from the want of them, from the gladness of the spirit, from the barrenness and dreariness of it, from the warmth of affection and from the drying up of affection, from the anguish of doubt and the dulness of indifference, from the whirlwind of passion and the calm which succeeds it, from the vile thoughts which spring out of fleshly appetites and indulgences, from the darker, more terrible, suggestions which are presented to

the inner will. Believe that He knows all these, that He knows *you*. And then believe this also, that all He knows is through intense, inmost sympathy, not with the evil that is assaulting you, but with you who are assaulted by it. Believe that knowledge, in this the Scriptural sense of it,—the human as well as the divine sense of it,—is absolutely inseparable from sympathy.

But it is added, and '*am known of mine.*' I am sure we should fix our minds upon those words which express His knowledge before we come to these, else they will either drive us to despair, or lead us to great presumption. When we have done this, we may say that the highest knowledge of Christ which any, the holiest, man, has attained,—that which we attribute to an à Kempis or to a Leighton,—is what is meant for the sheep of Christ,—their proper characteristic. But having said this, we should also say that every apprehension, which any man struggling with ever so much of evil, ever so much overcome by it, has of a higher and better life, of a Divine Teacher and Reprover, is part of this knowledge,—is in kind like theirs. We should say that to be absolutely without this knowledge is a dreadful possibility, which is threatening every one of us,—which those who are most occupied with divine mysteries must often feel to be near to themselves—but which is a reprobate condition, one into which we have no right to suppose that any person has sunk, so long as he has any perception of that which is good and true,—any, the faintest, desire to lay hold of it. Truly, the voice of him who was a liar and murderer from the beginning is speaking to us and in us all,—is tempting us all down into death. But the voice of the true Shepherd is also speaking to us, inviting us, claiming us as His sheep.

And there is not one who has not at times heard that voice,—who has not been sure that he had a right to follow it, and that no man or devil had a right to say, ‘Thou art not His; thou hast not a claim on Him; and He does not desire thee to follow Him.’

Brethren, if shepherds and sheep made more of an effort to understand each other,—if the shepherds were more sure that they could enter into all that is drawing the sheep astray, because the same evil is in themselves,—if the sheep thought that they might give the shepherds credit for knowing all that is worst in them, not as judges, but as fellow-sinners and fellow-sufferers,—we should each and all of us have more communion with the Chief Shepherd. Those who guide would be driven, by the sense of their own ignorance and coldness, to seek for light and warmth from Him; those who are guided would feel that the pastor on earth did not intercept their communication with the heavenly Pastor, but existed to show them what He is, and how near He is to them. All has gone wrong in ourselves from our losing this fellowship with each other,—from our forgetting that the Highest of all was the lowest of all,—that He proved His right to rule us by becoming one of us, and one with us.

And yet there is a deeper error still at the root of our selfishness and want of sympathy. We do not confess the ground of Christ’s own sympathy, of His own sacrifice. He declares to us here that His knowledge of the sheep, and the knowledge which the sheep have of Him, rests upon the Father’s knowledge of Him and His knowledge of the Father. He has been telling us the same thing in previous discourses. This union of the Father with the Son,—this dependence of the Son upon the Father,—has been the mystery which the whole Gospel has been dis-

covering to us. Those words, in which He tells us that this relation is at the basis of our relation to Him and to each other,—of all our social and spiritual sympathies,—do but carry us one step further in the revelation. Those words, in which He tells us that He lays down His life for the sheep, because He is one with His Father, do but bring out more fully that love of the Father, of which His life and death were testimonies; a love to which He yielded Himself in simple obedience, when He gave the greatest proof He could give of love to the sheep.

This is the answer to the question which was asked before, whether duty to God is not as good and powerful a motive as love to man? Yes, brethren, a more powerful motive, a deeper and safer ground to stand upon, if we accept what our Lord says here. He boasts of no love to man as dwelling in Himself,—it is all derived from His Father. He merely submits to His will, merely fulfils it. And because that will is a will of absolute love, the mere submission to it,—the mere consenting that it should be accomplished upon Him and in Him,—involved the most perfect love to men,—the most entire communion with them,—the dying for them. He says this expressly in the 17th and 18th verses, though there is one interposed between them and that which I last quoted, which it would be shameful indeed to pass over. *‘And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.’*

Our translators have carelessly substituted *fold* for *flock*

in the last clause of the first of these verses. But most readers, I think, have of themselves restored the true reading, and perceived that the Gentiles were not to be brought into the Jewish fold, but to form one flock with the Jews after the temporary enclosure of their fold had been broken down. Perhaps they have been more puzzled to understand why what we describe as the calling in of the Gentiles should be spoken of in connexion with Christ's laying down His life. The second, modern theology represents as an event necessary for the salvation of individual men; the first, as an event connected with the outward economy of the world. And so, modern theology is out of harmony with the language of the Scriptures to which it appeals. For that represents the death of Christ as the uniting power which breaks down the barrier between man and man,—as the deliverance of each man from the selfishness which sets him apart from his fellows, and apart from His Father in heaven. If it is this, it is surely nothing strange to speak of the union of the two different classes into which the world was divided as the mighty effect of the death of Christ. If it is this, the calling in of the Gentiles belongs not to outward history, but to the most inward and spiritual part of God's dispensation. The recognition of Christ's other sheep as His sheep,—the acknowledgment of the heathen as having been always His, no less than those who had been called out to be a blessing to all the families of the earth,—was the mightiest witness that the Brother and Lord of man had met the wolf who was destroying the fold, had redeemed all from death by sharing their death.

It was the witness, too, of that other profound truth which the 17th verse announces, that there was a Man

in whom the Father was perfectly satisfied, and that the ground of His satisfaction was that this Man entirely loved men—entirely gave Himself up for men. He could be satisfied with nothing less than this; for nothing less than this was the expression of His own mind and will. In no act of less love than this could His love declare itself. The thought is so wonderful, the mystery is so deep, that men have shrunk from it as incredible, and have invented any reason to account for Christ's death but that which He gives Himself. That an entirely voluntary act should be yet the fulfilment of a commandment,—that the highest power of giving away life and taking it should be realized in the most perfect obedience; this idea clashes so much with our natural pride and self-glorification, that we would rather think Christ died because He was *not* one with the Father,—that it was not the Father's love that was satisfied, but His wrath and fury,—than accept a statement which shows us that His thoughts are not as our thoughts or His ways as our ways; that He is not made after our image, though He would have us conformed to His. But seeing that all our morality, all our relations to one another, depend upon the question, what He is and what He has made us to be, we must ask for strength to cast away the schemes and theories of man's devising, and to receive simply, as little children, the teaching of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, our Brother and our Judge.

' There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?'

I do not know whether the Jews who held these different

opinions were the Pharisees to whom He originally spoke, or whether His sayings were reported to those who were gathered at the feast of Dedication. The opinions themselves are exactly what one would expect that such sayings would call forth. 'How can you listen to a madman, a 'demoniac, who says that He shall lay down His life and 'take it again,—who denounces our teachers, and calls 'Himself the good Shepherd?' This is the language of the respectable citizen of Jerusalem, the representative of the feeling of the Jewish religious world. 'But do we not 'want a Shepherd who shall guide us to something better? 'Are we satisfied with our present state? May not He 'who can give sight to the blind be the Light of men, as 'He says that He is?' These would be the cautious suggestions of those in whom some cravings had been awakened, which the teachers of the day could not stifle.

We may suppose that the former party would press this argument upon the others; 'But if He is the Christ, why 'has He not courage to call Himself by *that* name? Why 'does He adopt these phrases, "Shepherd," "Light of the 'world," "Son of Man," which we do not understand, 'instead of that with which we are familiar, the purport of 'which we know?' Of some such suggestion the question in the following verses may have been the fruit: '*And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*' The demand seemed most reasonable, '*Tell us plainly.*' What an honest sound there is in those words! What can be better than plain speaking? Why should He who denounced all lies have shrunk from it?

The question is not a new one. To have said, '*I am the Christ,*' would have been to deceive them, unless He showed them what the Christ was, unless He made them understand that He was in nearly all respects unlike the Christ they had imagined for themselves. 'May we not then, after His example, avoid direct answers? May we not use expressions which people call ambiguous?' Yes, if the answers we give are more perilous to ourselves than those we avoid, as His were; if the expressions that are *called* ambiguous bring the hearers more face to face with facts, than those which are called straight. This is our Lord's example. Let all who dare follow it.

'Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.'

He had told them that He had come from the Father; He had testified by acts what His Father was. He had shown them that the Father was working for them on common days and Sabbath-days to bless them. This act had begotten no faith in them; would the words, '*I am the Christ,*' beget faith in them? Neither words nor acts, so long as they were not seeking as sheep for the true Shepherd. He had said to them before, that instead of looking for a shepherd who should point the way to them and the humblest Israelite,—who should fold them together,—they were aspiring to be independent shepherds; they

were refusing to enter by the same door as the sheep. Those who were sheep,—those who needed a shepherd,—would own His voice. They did not want Him to tell them that He was the Christ. A sure and divine instinct would tell them, that He who gave up Himself, He who entered into their death, must be the guide they were created to follow,—that there could be no other. And He would justify their confidence. They were longing for life,—for the life of spirits,—for the life of God; nothing less would satisfy them. He would give them that life,—that eternal life of love, in which He had dwelt with the Father. They were surrounded by enemies who were seeking to rob them of life, to draw them into death. He was stronger than these enemies. They should not perish; neither man nor devil should take them out of His hands. 'The eternal will which He came to fulfil was on their side. *The Father who gave them to Him was greater than all.* Those who were seeking to separate them from their Lord and Shepherd were at war with this Father; for He had owned them, they were His.

To this mighty declaration all His discourse concerning the sheep and the shepherd has been tending; but at the ground of it lies a mightier still: '*I and my Father are one.*' All that He has been teaching is without foundation, if it has not this foundation. The unity of the Father and the Son is the only ground of the unity between the shepherd and the sheep; undermine one, and you undermine both. And when I say this, I mean you undermine all unity among men, all the order and principles of human society. For if these do not rest upon certain temporary conventions; if they have not been devised to facilitate the exchange of commodities, and the operations

of the money market; if there is not a lie at the root of all fellowship and all government, which will be detected one day, and which popular rage or the swords of armed men will cut in pieces;—we must recognise, at last, the spiritual constitution of men in one Head and Shepherd, who rules those wills which every other power has failed and shall fail to rule. We must recognise it. The existence of a Christendom either means *this*,—either affirms that such a constitution is, and that national unity and family unity imply it, and depend upon it;—or it means nothing, and will dissolve into a collection of sects and parties, which will become so intolerable to men, and so hateful to God, that He will sweep them from His earth. Do you think sects would last now for an hour, if there was not in the heart of each of them a witness for a fellowship, which combinations and shibboleths did not create, and which, thanks be to God, they cannot destroy? The true Shepherd makes His voice to be heard, through all the noise and clatter of earthly shepherds; the sheep hear that voice, and know that it is calling them to follow Him into a common fold where all may rest and dwell together. And when once they understand that still deeper message which He is uttering here, and which the old creeds of Christendom are repeating to us, '*I and my Father are one*;' whenever they understand that the unity of the Church and the unity of mankind depends on this eternal distinction and unity in God Himself, and not upon the authority or decrees of any mortal pastor, the sects will crumble to pieces, and there will be, in very deed, '*one flock and one Shepherd*.'

But, that we may enter thoroughly and deeply into the meaning of these words, we should meditate earnestly

upon those which followed them, those especially in which our Lord justified what the Jews declared to be blasphemy. *'Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him.'*

We are eager to quote these words of Jesus, as a proof that He is God. I fear that, very often, we only mean, *that He took to Himself the name of God.* We associate with that name a certain idea of power and absoluteness; we believe that He vindicated that power and absoluteness to Himself. No, brethren. He came—if we may believe His own words—to show us what God is; to deliver us from our crude, earthly, dark notions of Him; to prevent us from identifying His nature with mere power and sovereignty, as the heathens did, as the Jews in that day were doing. He came to show us the Father. Instead, therefore, of eagerly grasping at the divine name, and appropriating it to Himself, the method which He takes of proving His unity with the Father is, to humble Himself, to identify Himself with men, to refuse to be separate from them. *'You charge me with calling myself*

‘God. “*But did not he call them gods, to whom the word of God came?*”’ We are startled at the defence. We ask ourselves whether He was not abandoning the very claim which He had put forward; whether He was not allowing others to share the incommunicable glory with Him? No! but He was showing that a dignity and a glory had been put upon men by the word of God itself, which proved that there must be a Son of Man who was indeed the Son of God.

It was not only heathen sages who had spoken of man’s divine faculties, divine origin, divine destiny. The Scriptures had called those whom God had set over men, gods. Psalmists, who were most jealous for the honour of Jehovah, had not feared to use the language. Prophets could not maintain the truth of their own mission—could not declare that the word of God was speaking by them and in them—without falling into it. There *was* the greatest peril of men becoming Lucifers,—of their setting themselves up in the place of God. It is the very danger of which Christ has been speaking in this discourse,—the temptation into which kings, prophets, priests,—even teachers who pretended to no inspiration, who merely stood on the ground of their traditional greatness, or of men’s preference for them,—had fallen. Nor was there any deliverance from such pretensions, and from the robberies and murders which were the consequence of them, unless One came who did not exalt Himself, who did the works of His Father, who simply glorified Him. Such a One could justify all the high words that had ever been spoken of our race, and yet could lay low the pride of those who had aspired to be the lords of it. He could show what the true man is; and, in doing so, could show

what the true God is. By putting Himself into the position of the lowest of the sheep, by enduring the death to which each one of the sheep had been subjected, He could prove that the glory of man is to serve; He could show that the true sons of God had been the true servants of men; He could show that the perfect servant of all must be *the* Son of God. All titles, honours, dignities among men, had derived their virtue and efficacy from Him. Their virtue and efficacy lay in His Sonship. He was content to be a Son, to be nothing else than a Son. So He showed forth His eternal consubstantial union with the Father. If God is merely absolute Power, then all this Christian theology is a dream and a falsehood,—then there is no Son of God or Son of Man, in any real sense of the words. But if God is absolute Love, then He who died for the sheep must be His perfect image and likeness, the '*only-begotten, full of grace and truth*;' then to separate Him from the Father, to seek for the Father in any but Him, must lead to the denial of both, ultimately to the glorification of an evil spirit, a being of absolute selfishness, in place of both. From which frightful consummation, brethren, may the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the one God, whose name is Love, preserve us and His whole Church!

DISCOURSE XX.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

[Lincoln's Inn, 4th Sunday after Trinity, June 15th, 1858.]

ST. JOHN XI. 25.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

THE words, '*I and my Father are one;*' '*The Father is in me and I in Him,*' which were spoken in the porch of the Temple at the feast of Dedication, had the same effect as the words, '*Before Abraham was, I am,*' which were spoken after the feast of Tabernacles. In both cases the Jews sought to take Jesus that they might stone Him; in both Jesus escaped out of their hands. On the last occasion we are told whither He retired: '*He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized, and there He abode.*' The disciples who had been with Him in the crowd of the city found themselves in the lonely place where they had first heard Him proclaimed as the Lamb of God. Since that time there had been a whirl of new thoughts and strange hopes in their minds. The kingdom of God had appeared to be indeed at hand; they had seen their Master exercising the powers of it; they had exercised those powers themselves. Some day His throne would be established; they should sit beside Him. The

vision had passed away ; they were the companions of a fugitive ; they were in the desert where they had first learned, not that they were princes to sit and judge, but sinners wanting a Deliverer.

I cannot doubt that He who was educating them, not only by His speech but by all His acts, had devised this lesson for them, that it was just what they needed at that time. How often do we all need just such a discipline ; the return to some old haunt that some past experience has hallowed ; the return to that experience which we seem to have left far behind us, that we may compare it with what we have gone through since ! How good it would be for us if when circumstances take us back to the past, we believed that the Son of Man had ordered those circumstances, and was Himself with us to draw the blessing out of them !

Others beside the disciples were profiting, the Evangelist tells us, by this choice of a place. *'And many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle : but all things that John spake of this Man were true.'* They had perhaps contrasted John the preacher in the wilderness, with Jesus who ate with publicans and sinners ; John, who said, Repent, with Jesus, who opened the eyes of the blind. Now they were reminded of the likeness between them. Jesus drew them away from earthly things, as John had done. Jesus made them conscious of a light shining into them, as John had done. Only what John had said was true. They needed a baptism of the Spirit, that the baptism for the remission of sins might not be in vain. They needed a Lamb of God and a Son of God, who should do for them what no miracles could do. Was He not here ? *'And many believed on Him there.'*

I can conceive no diviner introduction than this to the story of the raising of Lazarus. It prepares us to understand that what we are about to hear of, is not one of those signs which Jesus rebuked His countrymen as sinful and adulterous for desiring; not one of those wonders which draw men away from the invisible to the visible,—from the object of faith to an object of sight; but just the reverse of this,—a witness that what *John spake of Jesus was true*,—a witness that in Him was Life, and that this Life always had been, was then, and always would be, the Life as well as the Light of men. With what care the story is related so that it shall leave this impression on our minds—how all those incidents contribute to it which would have been passed over by a reporter of miracles, nay, which would have been rejected by him as commonplace, and therefore as interfering with his object—I shall hope to point out as we proceed. And I would thankfully acknowledge at the outset, that, on the whole, the mind of Christendom has responded to the intention of the divine narrator; that whatever scholars and divines may have made of the story, the people have apprehended its human and domestic characteristics, and have refused to be cheated of its application to themselves under the pretext that it would serve better as an evidence for Christianity if its meaning were limited to one age. I am still more thankful that the Church, by adopting the words of my text into her Burial Service, has sanctified this rebellion. An attempt, therefore, to discover the exact meaning of the Evangelist will not introduce novelties, but will deepen old faith. And I cannot help feeling that unless we do seek to deepen that faith, unless we are willing to learn again from St. John some of the lessons which we may think we know very

perfectly, or have left behind us in our nurseries, we shall find that we have less of belief than many Jews and many heathens had before our Lord came in the flesh.

‘*Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)*’ The story of Mary and the alabaster box of ointment has not yet been told by our Evangelist. But he had too distinct and high an object to care for preserving the conventional proprieties of a narrator. He never pretended to be giving those who read him their first information about the events that happened while our Lord was upon earth. Their memories, he knew, were stored with these events. What they wanted was to see further into the meaning of them; to see how they exhibited the life of the Son of Man and the Son of God. He will tell us afterwards what is the context and significance of Mary’s act. Here he assumes that it was known at Ephesus,—as it was to be known wherever the Gospel was preached,—and he uses it to identify Lazarus. But how could Lazarus need to be identified? Must not his name and his fame have been spread as widely as his sister’s? Was any other more likely to be preserved in the first century, by tradition, if not by record? The answer is contained in the narrative. Lazarus, as a man who had been in a grave and had come forth out of it, might be spoken of then as he is spoken of now. A glorious halo might surround him. It would be shocking to connect him with ordinary feelings and interests. A like halo would encircle her head who had anointed the Lord’s body for the burial. Men would refuse to look upon her as one of the common children

of earth. It was just this which John dared to do, which it was essential to his purpose that he should do. He would have us know that Mary dwelt in the little town of Bethany; that she had a sister Martha; that Lazarus was her brother. The story is stripped of its fantastical ornaments. The hero and heroine have passed into the brother and sister. If they have to do with an unseen world, it is not with a world of dreams, but of realities; not with a heaven that scorns the earth, but with a heaven that has entered into fellowship with earth.

'Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.' The man who was healed at the Pool of Bethesda, the blind man who was sent to wash in the Pool of Siloam, were merely suffering Jews; the bread at Capernaum was given to five thousand men gathered indiscriminately; the nobleman of Capernaum seems to have heard for the first time of Jesus; the guests at the marriage-feast may have been His neighbours, or even His kinsmen, but we are not told that they were. This message is the first which directly appeals to the private affection of the Son of Man, which calls Him to help a friend because he is a friend. The words which follow of our Lord and of His Apostle are worthy of all study in reference to this point. *'When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was.'* He had a work to do. This was the first thought of all. The sickness was to glorify God, just as the blindness of the man to whom He restored sight was to glorify God. The Son of God

who had been revealed as the Light of the world, was to be revealed as the Restorer of life. Death was not to be conqueror here, any more than darkness there. All other thoughts must give way to this. Yet '*Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*' The individual sympathy was not crushed by the universal, but grew and expanded in the light and warmth of it. He did respond to the message in His inmost heart. The love which it assumed to be there—the love for that particular man—was there. And in spite of it, yea, because of it, He continued in the desert, and made no sign of moving towards Bethany. These sentences enable us to enter into the Divine humanity of Jesus, as a thousand prelections and discourses would not enable us to enter into it. They do not present to us first the Divine side of His life, and then the human, as if they were opposing aspects of the same Being. They make us feel that the one is the only medium through which we can behold the other.

'Then after that He saith to His disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.' I suppose many persons have asked themselves, 'What does this sentence mean just here? why was it introduced?' I do not know that we, who are living easy and comfortable lives, can quite solve the question. But many a patriot and confessor, who has been concealing himself from the anger of those whom he wished to bless, has, I doubt not, learnt the meaning of the sentence, and has felt the support of it.

If he tried to rush forth into danger, merely in obedience to some instinct or passion of his own, he was walking in the night, and was sure to stumble. If he heard a voice in his conscience bidding him go and do some work for God,—go and aid some suffering friend,—he would be walking in a track of light; it signified not what enemies might be awaiting him, what stones might be cast at him, he could move on fearlessly and safely. The sun was in the heavens,—the stones would miss until his hour was come. If it was come, the sooner they struck the better.

‘These things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.’ These words, *‘Our friend sleepeth,’* recal what was said, in the other Gospels, of the daughter of Jairus; and they point onwards to the language of the Epistles to the Thessalonians and to the Corinthians, concerning those that are fallen asleep in Jesus. Our Lord is evidently teaching His disciples a new language; a language drawn from nature and experience; one which had mixed itself with other forms of speech in the dialect of all nations; but yet which was not easy for them to learn, and which we understand very imperfectly yet. It might not help them much then, but it helped them afterwards, that He did not speak merely of a man having fallen asleep, but of *‘our friend’* sleeping. They

might not have seen Lazarus for weeks or months, or heard any tidings of him. All the outward tokens by which the existence of friendship is ascertained, might have ceased. They might never meet again. Would, therefore, the name lose its meaning or its power? What limit would you fix for that meaning or that power? Surely there is something immortal about the name; it prepares us for understanding how thin the thread is which separates death from taking of rest in sleep. The words, '*I go to awake him out of sleep,*' could, of course, convey little sense till the event interpreted them. But the expression, '*Nevertheless let us go to him,*' must have had a strange sound. 'Go to one who was already dead,—what could that mean? What did it all mean?' Thomas, the greatest doubter among them, assuredly could not tell. But he was willing to die with his Master; and that was the best preparation for understanding whatever He had to teach.

'*Then when Jesus came, He found that he had lain in the grave four days already.*' The commentator takes this opportunity of saying a word about Eastern customs, and the need of a burial immediately after death. Does he suppose that that necessity makes the story less near and dear to the sorrower of the West? The longer he is permitted to look at a face which appears often as if it had lost its restlessness,—not its beauty or its life,—the more dark and terrible must be the grave which is to hide it from him altogether, the more earnestly he must ask, Can light ever penetrate into that darkness? It is because the story of Lazarus has been believed to meet this question; because it comes into contact with the fact which speaks most directly to the senses and to the imagination of every one of us, that we cling to it when the topics of

ordinary consolation are wearisome, unintelligible, even hateful, to us.

By such topics the sisters of Lazarus were tormented; for St. John says,—*‘Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. They endure the visitation impatiently or patiently, according to their different dispositions. ‘Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house.’* The impulse of the first is to find a Friend to whom she can dare to make complaints, because she trusts Him; the other retreats into herself, and, perhaps, finds that same Friend there, teaching her another kind of lore than that which the well-meaning comforters are pouring into her ear.

‘Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.’ It is the language of reproach; but it is the kind of reproach which has faith and confidence for the ground of it,—which comes from a longing that the person who is the object of it should clear himself, and prove that he has not failed in the office of friendship, however he may have seemed to do so. And then, as if His face had already answered the uneasy suspicion which her words had expressed—had given her a hope of some unknown, inconceivable blessing—she adds, *‘But I know that even now, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.’* The words sound grand and glorious; they were really disappointing. What else she thought He might ask of God she could not say; but it was not *this*. She had heard often of a resurrection; the Jews, who had come to Bethany, had, no doubt, been

telling her many good discourses of the elders concerning it. Ages hence he would, she thought, awake out of the dust; in the meantime, the light in their house had been quenched; he was gone from them. She said, '*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*' If He intended to give back Lazarus to her at once, could He not have told her so? Might He not have said, 'In thy special case, for my love to Lazarus and Mary and thee, I am about to break through ordinary laws, and to raise a body out of the grave,—not at the last day, but now.' Why not? Because, if He had said so, He would have contradicted His own words, His own acts, the whole tenor of His life. He did not come into the world to show special favours, but to assert and manifest universal truth. He did not come into the world to break God's laws, but to establish them, and to show forth the will which was at the foundation of them. Therefore, instead of limiting Martha's words about a resurrection in the last day, He expanded her words,—He uttered what was a *more* general proposition than that one,—not bounded to a certain moment in the future, but extending over the present and the past. The resurrection in the last day,—vague and loose as Martha's thoughts were about it,—was still practically bounded by the feeling which occupied her soul in that hour. 'I know that *my brother* shall rise again,' did not mean very much to her; the rising of any besides her brother meant nothing. But '*I am the resurrection and the life,*' were words that applied to herself as much as to Lazarus,—to her sister as much as to either. She could not apprehend them, even in the slightest degree, without

feeling that they were spoken of *human* beings,—not merely of that being who had been lying in the grave four days. And yet how immeasurably more they met her own case, her own sorrow, than the others! ‘*I am the resurrection and the life.*’ ‘You have a Friend, an ‘almighty Friend, who restores life, who is the Giver of ‘life. Do not task your poor, feeble, sorrow-stricken fancy ‘to conceive of some distant world-gathering. There may ‘be such a one; but, if you are to know anything of it. ‘know Me first. Trust in an actual person; leave yourself ‘and the world to Him.’ And He went on: ‘*He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*’ I do not say that she could understand this, or that we can. But I am sure she did understand that she was meant to believe in Him—to rest in Him; and that this belief and this rest might be exercised, not only by those who could look into His countenance and hear sounds coming from His lips, but by those who were out of sight,—who had passed into the unseen world. The dead might hear His word speaking to them. The dead might believe in Him. The dead might be quickened by that word and that faith. Therefore, when He asked her the question, ‘*Believest thou this?*’—though she could not dare to say, ‘I believe it all; I take it in just as Thou hast spoken it,’—she could say, ‘*Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*’ She could trust absolutely, unreservedly in Himself, whatever His language might or might not import.

‘*And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly,*

and came to Him.' Martha went into a presence which she felt to be dear, with a confidence that she should be welcome, with a certain sense that she had a right to speak; Mary must wait in silence and awe till she had some intimation that He was seeking for her. This difference of characters is as marked in the nineteenth century as in the first; it affects all the common subordinate relations of life; it reaches to the highest and most divine. Each has its own worth, and its own temptations. We have no business to disparage either; for Christ has imparted both, and has made each a way to Himself.

'Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met Him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'

The good-natured comforters can give their victim no peace,—even the grave is not too sacred a place for their persecutions; her only safety is where her sister had sought it and found it. The words Mary uses are the same as Martha's; they are the simplest expressions of the thought which must have been in both of them,—the thought which each must have understood the other to be vexed with, if nothing was spoken,—the thought which Martha will have been able to utter, and which Mary will probably have kept closed within her till that moment. And is there anything in that thought to make a chasm between the household in Bethany, and any English household in the nineteenth century? Is not the feeling the very same,

in the heart of every one who has lost a friend or brother? 'He might have been saved; Christ might have ordered this differently. In this and in that case He did; why not in mine?'

'When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him! And some of them said, Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?'

The strength of these words, which has been so great for those who have taken them simply and naturally, has often been diluted. 'What need had He to weep, seeing that He was about to remove the cause for weeping?' But what if that grief of Mary was in kind the grief of every sister that had lost a brother, since death entered into the world,—of every sister who shall lose one, till death be finally swallowed up in victory? What if the grief of those about her, though less earnest, yet was at least a testimony that each of us has a share and a right in that which any other is afflicted with? Would the Son of Man, who had taken man's flesh, who had entered into man's sorrows, sympathise less with her who was beside Him then, because He knew the depth and cause of her grief better than she knew it herself; because He knew that it could not be cured by the smile of a brother, or the pressure of his hand, if that were granted her again; because He knew in Himself the mystery of the death of every man, and was to bear it Himself for every man? Surely it would have been a woful thing for us, and for the world, if He had not groaned in spirit at the sight of

that cave, merely because Lazarus was to come out of it; if He had not wept when He saw Mary and the Jews weep, merely because a sudden joy was to succeed their tears! And was it not a cause for groaning, that those who saw how minute, and tender, and personal His affection was for this one man, should take so poor a measure of His love as to suppose that He cared for him, and not for them,—for Mary and Martha, and not for every human sorrower,—that He might from partiality have caused that this man should not have died, but had no power of delivering all from death?

‘Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?’

He had said to her, *‘Thy brother shall rise again.’* He changes the language now, that He may convey a deeper sense. It was God’s glory that was to be revealed in that act. Hereafter she would know how much more it concerned her, and her sister, and her brother, that Jesus should manifest that, than that He should have caused her brother not to have gone into the grave, or to come forth from it again.

‘Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a

loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.'

The thanksgiving to His Father for the power which He felt He had been endued with to finish that work, unfolds the mystery of His life; the sense of filial dependence and trust that was at the root of it; the pressure of human misery and death which turned His confidence into cries and groans for deliverance and help; the quickening energy which answered the cry; because, as He tells us so often, He was not doing His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. This time it was needful that the cry should be heard by others. They must be taught that He was not exercising some rare and unwonted privilege to serve a partial end,—that He could bid Lazarus come forth, because He was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, the resurrection and the life.

St. John, who has told us the story with such care and minuteness, does not stop for an instant to comment upon it, or to utter any expressions of astonishment; he merely tells us: '*Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.'*

Could he have spoken otherwise, brethren? Did he not wish us to consider this act as the sign of a truth, as the exercise of a power, which circumstances cannot affect, which is proving its vitality from age to age? Why should he comment? Why should he wonder? The commentary was to be in the history of the world; the wonder

was to be renewed in the case of every brother, whom Christian hands were to lay in the grave, 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' in sure and certain hope that Christ is '*the resurrection and the life, and that whosoever believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet should he live.*' When we think of the return of Lazarus to his house at Bethany, it is not with an unmixed delight. We ask whether he could have welcomed the world's confusions which he had escaped? whether the thought must not have haunted him, that after a little while he should be in the same cave again? These are questions which it may be well for us to consider; though, perhaps, they are not different in kind from those which arise when any one who has been on the borders of the unseen world, who has taken leave of kinsfolk and friends, who has had glimpses of another country, suddenly recovers, and has to adapt himself once more—for a time probably with a strange sense of awkwardness and incoherency—to the business and intercourse of the earth. In one case as in the other, I conceive there is but this solution of the difficulty. The man must be glad to be placed where it pleases Christ that he should be placed. He will not certainly be nearer Him by complaining of his destiny, or by not desiring exactly the work which has been given him to do. If he has dreamed of a heaven above where he shall be under some other law than that, or where his will must not be in conformity with that law, the dream will never be realized. So, doubtless, Lazarus was taught by his discipline. And this may have been to him, if he could take it in, a greater comfort than even his appearance again beside the old hearth,—a compensation for all he might suffer then or afterwards,—that through him multi-

tudes unborn were to learn the meaning of their own death, the secret of their own life, and who is the Friend that interprets them both. To each man who has been near the grave, and has come back to ever such commonplace duties, something of the same blessing may be given. He may think of One who hallows the common feast as well as the grave, who binds both worlds together.

To the question—

“ Where wast thou, brother, those four days?
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling us what it is to die,
 Had surely added praise to praise.”

So we think very naturally. And yet, if we reflect, we shall perceive that those four days can only have been a part of the education of Lazarus,—that they cannot have been separate from all his previous and all his later experience.

The first cry of life, when he came out of the womb, as much testified of One in whom is life, who is the Source of life, as the look with which he greeted his sisters or his Lord, when he was commanded to come out of the grave. The opening of every sense to take in the sights and sounds of the world around him,—the opening of every affection which apprehended his human relations,—testified of the same living Word. The revival of past acts and scenes in the memory,—the awakening of the conscience, which bound those acts and scenes to his own individual self,—declared that there is One who not only gives life, but brings it back, who is the resurrection as well as the life. As the years of manhood brought him into converse with beings of his own race, whom he must meet on equal terms, whom he must recognise as having powers, affec-

tions, and responsibilities like his own,—as creatures looking before and after like himself,—he had a witness that there must be a common life, a common resurrection. As intercourse with Jesus gradually brought him to the knowledge of One who was a friend, and more than a friend,—a Master to whom he could submit,—an inspirer of strange thoughts,—a deliverer from infinite perplexities,—the discerner of mysteries which eye could not see, or ear hear; there was a more and more direct witness to his heart and reason: ‘Thou hast found the Christ. Thou hast found the resurrection and the life.’

When one looks at the subject in this way, I am not sure whether one cares so much to know what passed in those four days. Let death and the grave claim their rights and keep their secrets, as long as they can. They were to assert a higher right than they asserted over this man of Bethany. Within a few days they were to claim dominion over Him who said, ‘*I am the resurrection and the life;*’ they were to try whether they could not hold Him as their thrall for ever. If they succeeded, it does not much concern us what has happened elsewhere in the universe; there is one thick impenetrable cloud over it all. If they failed, life must have fuller and more perfect dominion in the unseen region than it has in ours. Nothing which seems to die here can be under the sway of death there. And Christ, by raising one poor man before He was raised Himself, testified that death shall have no power, that the grave shall have no power, to extinguish one faculty of the soul, one sense of the body, in any creature whose nature He has taken.

Brethren, here is the doctrine of the resurrection of the spirit and of the body taught in Christ’s own manner, not in

words, but in an act. And here, too, is that doctrine of a general resurrection at the last day, which Martha had learnt from the Pharisees,—which, separated from the words, ‘*I am the resurrection and the life,*’ is the hardest and most unpractical of all opinions,—which, united to them, as it is in the Burial Service of our Church, is the most consolatory. A particular resurrection for individual men, without a general resurrection of our race, without such a restitution of all things as has been spoken of by prophets since the world began, would be utterly unsatisfactory, because it would not set forth the glory of God and the love of God. The general resurrection in Scripture is described in various forms of speech, all answering to deep human necessities. It is spoken of as a revelation of the Son of God; it is spoken of as a revelation or unveiling of the sons of God in Him; it is spoken of as a gathering together in Him of all things in heaven and all in earth.

I cannot read this story without feeling that, among those things in heaven and earth that are so to be restored, the sympathies and affections of the family are some of the chief. I know not why St. John should have dwelt so much upon the sorrow of the sisters of Lazarus, and upon Christ’s feeling for them, if he had not meant us to understand this. Martha, I suppose, thought before she came to Jesus, that her brother would ascend some time or other on angels’ wings into a place somewhere above the stars; but that all the threads which, from their childhood upwards, had been winding round them and binding them to each other, should be broken; that the associations of home should cease for ever. I am sure she learnt a different lesson after she had seen her brother again, and had

understood the declaration, '*I am the resurrection and the life.*' Then she will have known that if, in the resurrection, 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage,'—if no fresh ties are formed like those which bind us together on earth,—yet that the old relationships, the old affections, are to have a new and higher life. What is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption; what is sown in weakness is raised in strength; what is sown a natural relationship is raised a spiritual. But in this case, as in every other, the change does not alter the substance of that which has been, only brings it forth in its might and purity.

Towards this resurrection all creation is groaning and travailing. And that groan which burst from Christ at the grave of Lazarus, was the expression of His sympathy in that groan of His creatures; even as His own travail hour, in the garden, on the cross, in the tomb of Joseph, showed that the path of the Shepherd is the same as that of the sheep, to victory and rest. Why cannot we enter into His sufferings? why cannot we look forward hopefully to His triumph? There are some fearful words in the text I have taken to-day—fearful in the midst of all their consolation—which explain the secret. It is said, '*He that BELIEVETH in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*' Do we not feel sometimes as if all power of believing in anything that is great and noble were departing from us? Do we not feel as if to believe in Him who is goodness and truth, were the hardest effort of all? Does it not appear as if a second death were coming upon us,—a death of all energy, of all trust, of all power to look beyond ourselves? Oh, if this numbness and coldness have overtaken us, or should overtake us,—if we should be tempted to sit down in it and

sink to sleep,—let the cry which awakened Lazarus awake us. Let us be sure that He who is the resurrection and the life is saying to each of us, however deep the cave in which he is buried, ‘*Come forth!*’ however stifling the grave-clothes with which he is bound, ‘*Loose him, and let him go!*’

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE DEATH FOR ALL NATIONS.

[Lincoln's Inn. 5th Sunday after Trinity, June 22, 1856.]

ST. JOHN XI. 49, 50.

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

WE naturally ask ourselves why Caiaphas should have taken this tone in speaking to his colleagues in the Sanhedrim? What did he wish them to do which they had not shown themselves ready to do? Had they not sent officers to take Jesus? Had they not encouraged the impulse of some amongst His hearers to stone him, if they had not issued a formal decree that He should be stoned? The explanation lies, I think, in the fact that Caiaphas was a Sadducee. It might be straining the words, '*Then gathered the chief priests AND the Pharisees a council,*' to conclude from them that the priests in general were not Pharisees. But there are other good reasons for thinking that the accession of Caiaphas to the office of High Priest marks the commencement of a Sadducean ascendancy. Now, the views of these schools respecting Jesus, however they might ultimately coincide, must have been determined by their other opinions. The Sadducees will have been much more

disposed to regard Him as a fanatic than as a blasphemer; they will have dreaded His doctrine much less than the belief of His kingship among the multitude; consequently, they may have thought the experiment of putting Him to death by stoning very unwise. It was making a trial of their native jurisdiction which was, at least, hazardous; it might lead both to a tumult among their countrymen, and to interference from their masters. In the council which was held after the raising of Lazarus, it is evident that the indignation against Jesus for '*making Himself equal with God,*'—even the indignation at a Galilæan for pretending to be a prophet—has been merged in the fear, lest if '*they let Him alone, the Romans should destroy both their place and nation.*' Caiaphas takes advantage of the feeling, by whomsoever it may have been expressed, to state and defend his own policy. '*Ye know nothing at all*'—'you who are trying to punish Him by your own laws. You do not consider that if we are in the danger you apprehend, "*it is expedient that one man should die for the people:*" that we should give Him up to the Romans, as a rebel against them; gulping down our scruples about our dignity and our reluctance to ask aid from the Cæsar for crushing an enemy, rather than that "*the whole nation*" should "*perish,*" through our obstinacy in maintaining an ancient and doubtful privilege.'

This was genuine Sadducean language,—precisely what one would expect to come from such a mouth. But it was also triumphant language. The Pharisee must yield to it, or else forego the gratification of his own chief desire. He might very much have preferred to assert Jewish law. He might have been willing to run some risk in enforcing it. To do otherwise was to stoop to the maxims of a sect

which he detested. But a compromise was the only possible course. By adopting it, he could ensure a general agreement among the rulers in bringing about the death of Jesus at the next Passover. And there would be some compensation. The death would be more ignominious than the national customs would have made it. We are told, therefore, that '*from that day forth they took counsel to put Him to death.*' There was now no division, either about the end or the means. Pilate was to be the judge; the death they were to aim at was the death of the Cross.

Such, I suppose, was what Caiaphas himself understood by the words, '*It is expedient for us that one man should die for the nation, and that the whole nation perish not.*' A narrow meaning enough,—one in which there was nothing of patriotism, in the vulgarest sense of that word. Caiaphas would save his nation by binding the chains of foreign domination more strictly upon it; he would put on a new badge of slavery, that it might be permitted to exist. But then, as now, men utter words—made, as they think, to fit an occasion—intended to express only some paltry device of their minds—which are pregnant with a signification that ages unborn will confess and wonder at. St. John does not say to his Ephesian readers or to us,—'*We can see another force in the words of the High Priest than that which he put on them; we can translate them in our way and to our use.*' But he says, '*There was that force in them always.*' Caiaphas had not the power to contract his speech to the dimensions of his wit. '*Being high priest that year, he prophesied.*' The grandeur of the office, which had witnessed the relation of God to His people for fourteen hundred years, manifested itself through the poor creature, who could look no further than the expediency

of the moment; to whom the past and the future were as nothing. He who believed in no angel or spirit was compelled to be the spokesman of the Divine Word, even when he was plotting His death. Strange and awful reflection! And yet so it must be,—so experience shows us continually that it is. Our words are not our own,—we are not lords over them, whatever we may think. Is it not well for us to ask who is Lord over them; how such terrible instruments—so immeasurably more terrible than swords or rifles—may be used lawfully, for the protection, and not the destruction, of our brethren; how we may be the willing, and not merely, like Caiaphas, the unconscious, proclaimers of a Divine purpose; how we may execute it by obeying it, not by the crimes which strive, vainly, to defeat it?

Caiaphas prophesied, says St. John, that '*Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.*' It is not chiefly the form of the High Priest's sentence which suggests this thought to him; he does not play upon the words of it. The proposition, that Jesus should not be tried for violating Jewish law, but should be given up as a treasonable subject of Rome, involved the breaking down of barriers between the nations. The cross was emphatically a message to mankind,—to all tribes and races within the circle of the empire that had appointed this punishment for rebels and slaves. It is a thought which possessed the minds of all the apostles,—of none more than St. John. The cross was to do what the eagle had tried to do. It was to bind men in one society. I shall not dwell upon the words that announce that doctrine here, because it forms the most prominent

subject in the following chapter of which I am going to speak. We shall find, I think, that every discourse and narrative in it is penetrated with the idea of crucifixion. So it becomes the suitable close to the records of our Lord's public ministry,—the right preface to those private interviews of which St. John is the only historian.

We are now arrived at the point in which the narratives of the different Evangelists coincide. All the others lead us from Galilee to Jerusalem at this Passover. St. John, who has taken us so often to Jerusalem at other feasts before, yet prepares us, by many significant intimations, to feel the special grandeur of the present.

'Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews ; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand : and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that He will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where He were, he should shew it, that they might take Him.'

He had walked the twelve hours of the day, and no stone had reached Him. But the night was closing in. The Jews were about to take the great step of confessing Cæsar to be the only king ; therefore *the* King must prepare to be the Sacrifice.

The story which follows connects the two characters together:—*'Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper ;*

and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him.'

I spoke, last Sunday, of the domestic tone which pervades the history of the resurrection of Lazarus; how St. John refused to regard death except as the breaking of a family bond—resurrection except as the renewal of it. The same tone is preserved here. The family feast is the resurrection feast; it is the union of the several limbs of a body which had been torn asunder. There is no change of relation or of sympathy; the old ways of expressing it are retained. Only service has been ennobled. He who sits at meat, and she who serves, are brother and sister. For there is a Guest at the table whose life has been a service, and yet whose acts are all kingly. The awe of Lazarus, who has known the secrets of the grave, does not interrupt fellowship; for He must know them better, and He is with them, sharing in their gladness. 'And what is He? Is He only the elder brother of one household? May He not be the elder brother of all households? Has He only done acts of mysterious grace and power for us? May He not be the Ruler everywhere—over the whole earth, and over those who are in the region from which Lazarus has come back?'

Such thoughts may have been in the minds of both sisters. Martha cannot express them save by fulfilling her simple household duties; they are done for Him. He can translate them into heavenly ministries. Mary must find some other way to utter what is working in her heart,—what no words can give expression to. '*Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Thea*

saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor ?' Mary was probably puzzled by this question. She could not the least have defended her act, or even have explained what she meant by it. She had heard of the anointing of kings, and of the anointing in tombs. The thought of royalty and of burial would become associated in her mind. But why she should have done this thing,—why she had not reserved the money for those who needed it,—she could not have told. Judas may have seemed to her a prudent and religious man for rebuking her. And the other Evangelists say that he was not alone in the complaint. The Apostles generally seem to have agreed in it, and felt its reasonableness.

Later knowledge led St. John to say, '*This he said, not that he cared for the poor ; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*' But at the time he may have shared the feeling of the others. The covetousness of the betrayer may have been quite concealed by his judicious charity ; Mary's act may have been measured by his rules. If it were so, John and his fellows showed that there was in them that mind which was rapidly becoming the only mind in Judas. It *might* become victorious in them ; it *might* be overcome in him. This perhaps was a very critical moment in their lives. Mary's act was essentially a woman's act. No man would be commended for it ; a man who imitated it would not be doing what he could, but attempting awkwardly to do what he could not. To rough men, therefore, it was a trial to understand her and sympathise with her. They had need to pass through many hard processes themselves—to be purged of the covetous spirit,—to be under the guidance of a Spirit who was,

not yet given,—before they could enter into the worth of services which they were not called to perform, before they could judge them by their origin, not by their immediate results, before they could see what a force love may put into symbols, and how that force may be felt from generation to generation by the humble and meek, whom words and notions affect very little.

But there was one who knew Mary's meaning not only better than they knew it, but better than she knew it. '*Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.*' What the day of His burying was, must have been unintelligible to the disciples generally; but the reference to it, and to a time when He should not be with them, may have had a solemnising effect upon them; they will have been less ready to judge, more inclined to honour those whom He honoured. Mary may have divined a little more of His meaning. The thought of His burial might perplex her. But it could not cause her despair. She knew that a body which had lain in the grave four days had been safe there. Surely some anointing, better than hers, would keep His body if it was laid in any tomb. In her the instinct of love made the thought of death and sacrifice, however wonderful, not incredible. On Judas it is evident that the sight of Mary's devotion had a withering effect. First, it led him to hypocritical professions about the poor, that he might persuade himself he had some benevolent feelings; then, when Christ drove him from this ground,—when he was reminded that he might always help the poor if he chose,—a conscious hatred against goodness began to unfold itself in him. He went away from that feast a traitor in heart, prepared to

accomplish the prophecy that Jesus had uttered concerning Himself. He was to be present at one more feast,—to take one more sop,—then all would be dark within him.

The Evangelist leaves a strong impression upon our minds of the hurry and confusion in Jerusalem at that feast; the curiosity of the people to see Jesus and to see Lazarus; the questionings of the council whether the excitement could be removed without the death of both; the half-formed thought, which might soon take shape and lead to some act, that perhaps the king was among them after all. And then follows the story of the entrance into Jerusalem, which is told at less length than in the other Evangelists; but to which there are two additions that are worthy of note. St. John quotes, as St. Matthew has done, the prophecy of Zechariah:—‘*Thy king cometh, meek, and sitting upon an ass:*’ and then adds, ‘*These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when He was risen from the dead, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.*’ The illumination of his own mind, and of the minds of his fellow Apostles, respecting the sense and connexion of the Scriptures,—how they learned to connect with Him the descriptions of a King reigning in righteousness, which the Old Testament contained,—how the resurrection from the dead identified Him as the fulfiller of them,—how it linked His relation to God with His relation to man,—this we learn more clearly from St. John than from all the other apostolical writings. *They* take the matter, in a certain degree, for granted; he enables us to see the process of it. I have spoken of this subject in considering the passage, —‘*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*’ The more we meditate upon it, the more, I believe, we shall be

able to trace lines of thought running through the Old Testament, by which the formal critic is puzzled,—the more we shall find how little the word written in letters could profit, if the Living Word did not expound it to the heart and reason,—the more we shall be sure that the laws which governed men in the old time are those which govern us; that we must have the same Teacher as they had; or that while we seem to know everything we shall know nothing.

The other addition is this:—‘*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after Him.*’ The words may indicate a doubt whether the new scheme which Caiaphas had devised was likely to succeed so well as their own; whether the feeling of the people for the Christ would not prove stronger than their submission to the Romans; whether it was not better, therefore, to accuse Him of breaking a law which the multitude did regard as sacred and Divine, however little they might understand it. At any rate, they show how much men, who have lost all sympathy with truth, are apt to overrate the power of mere numbers, and to underrate the effects of one simple, humble, brave act. The crowds that shouted ‘Hosanna!’ alarmed the Pharisees. Yet, in a few days, the temper of those crowds was changed; they could cry that Barabbas might be released, and Jesus crucified. The mere coming into Jerusalem royally, yet without the outward signs of royalty, was nothing in their eyes. Yet therein lay the real effective message to their city; that was the hour of its visitation; that has been received by generations of men, in the most cultivated nations of the earth, as the warning of its doom.

‘*And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip,*

which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.' The event seemed to the disciples a little one. They were used to see Greek proselytes at the great festivals; it was not strange that some of them should have heard of the Teacher from Galilee; or that, if they had heard of Him, they should wish to judge of Him for themselves. Coming with such feelings, to perform what must have seemed to them so easy a request, how they must have been astonished to see the emotion which it caused their Lord, and to hear Him answer them thus:—*'The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.'*

It is impossible, if we are not utterly loose in our mode of interpretation, not to connect these words with the Greeks who had come to the feast, whether we suppose that they were present and heard them, or that the answer was simply addressed to Philip and Andrew. And then the questions arise,—Why should this be such an hour of trouble and of glory? How should the appearance of a few strangers have led to a discussion respecting the falling of wheat into the ground, and its death,—respecting the saving of life and the losing it? You will remember that

when our Lord spoke of those other sheep He had, which were not of the Jewish fold, and whom also He must bring, He connected the formation of the one flock with the death of the one Shepherd. He signified clearly that the union could take place only upon this condition. The assertion is in strict harmony with the comment of the Apostle upon the words of Caiaphas to which I have alluded already. The death upon the cross was to take place that He might gather together in one those scattered children of God. If you turn from St. John to St. Paul,—from this Gospel to the Epistle to the Ephesians,—you will find the breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jews and Greeks is said to be effected '*in the body of Christ's flesh, through death;*' that He is said to have '*nailed the enmity to His cross.*' If you reflect on these passages, you will perceive (as I said in my discourse on the 10th of John) that what we sometimes speak of very lightly, as if it were only an accident of the New Testament,—the calling in of the Gentiles—the unfolding of a universal society out of the Jewish national society,—is treated by our Lord Himself, and by His Apostles, as that wonderful event to which all God's purposes, from the beginning of the world, had been tending. You will perceive that they looked upon this reunion, or reconciliation, as unveiling a deep mystery—the deepest mystery of all—in the relations of God to man, in the being of God Himself. Without sacrifice,—so the Jews had been taught from the beginning of their history,—so the other nations had believed just in proportion as they *were* nations,—without sacrifice, there could be no unity among the members of a race. Sacrifice must bind them to God. Sacrifice must bind them to each other. This great

political and Divine truth had been confirmed by the human conscience, even when it protested most against some of the inferences which priestcraft had deduced from it. Only he who can give up himself—so the heart of mankind testified—is a patriot; only he obeys the laws; only he can save his country when it is falling. There had been then a sure conviction expressed by prophets and holy men, planted deep in men's hearts, that any larger union—any union which should be between all nations, which should really be for mankind—must involve a mightier and more transcendent sacrifice; a sacrifice in which there should be no blemish. As the conscience was awakened by God's teaching more and more clearly to perceive that all resistance to God lies in the setting up of self—that this is the great barrier between Him and His revolted creatures—it began to be understood that the atonement of man with man must have its basis in an atonement of God with man, and that the same sacrifice was needed for both. One thing yet remained to be learnt, the most wonderful lesson of all; and yet of which God had been giving the elements, line upon line, precept upon precept, from the beginning. Could sacrifice originate in God? Could it be made, not first *to* Him, but first *by* Him? Could the sacrifices of men be the effect, not the cause, of His love and free grace to them? All our Lord's discourses concerning Himself and His Father,—concerning His own acts as being merely the fulfilment of His Father's will,—concerning the love which the Father had to Him because He laid down His life for the sheep,—had been bringing these mysteries to light; had been preparing the humble and meek to confess, with wonder

and contrition, that in every selfish act they had been fighting against the unselfish God,—that in every self-sacrificing act they had been merely yielding to Him,—merely submitting to die, according to the law of His Eternal Being, which He had created men to show forth. And so far as they had any glimpses of the accomplishment of God's promises,—that He would bring all into one,—that the Gentiles should wait for His law,—that He would be a Father of all the families of the earth, and that they should be His children,—so far they had the vision of a transcendent and Divine sacrifice.

There was One, at least, who lived in the assurance that God's will would be done in earth as in heaven, and whose soul was straitened till that will was accomplished. To His inward eye, the Greeks, who had come to claim their share in Jewish privileges and Jewish knowledge, and who wished to see Him, represented all those who should believe in Him, when His Apostles should go forth to baptize the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. They represented the human race of which He was the head, which should be at last gathered together in Him. How emphatically, then, did that moment speak to Him of the glory of the Son of Man,—of the end of His travail for the race of which He was the brother! It was the sign of that coming victory and glory. But how could He see that final issue, and not feel in Himself all the conflict which was to precede it? There was to be a mighty harvest: but the seed, from which it was to spring, must '*first fall into the ground and die, else it would abide alone*; it would give birth to nothing.' Yes! that was the law; He knew it, He

realized it in His own inmost being, that He might bring the world under it. He who would not give up his life, must lose his life; he who was content to cast it away, to surrender it wholly, should have the Life which is in God,—the eternal life—the life of truth and love, which cannot be destroyed. ‘If any man “*serve me,*” if he call ‘himself after my name, let him go along with me in this path of sacrifice; let him be content to die with me; then where I am, he shall be; he shall share the presence and the love which are my joy and my reward; “*him shall my Father honour.*”’ But then comes the agony. The death He called upon others to die with Him, He must taste in its bitterness. He must tread the winepress alone. He *was* treading it at that very moment. The sense of the glory of the Son of Man—of the work that He would achieve for humanity—brings on the unutterable sorrow. The whole man sinks within Him,—He can only say, ‘*Father, save me from this hour.*’ And yet He adds, ‘*For this cause came I to this hour.*’ It is not often that these actual signs of the struggle within Him are declared to us. How wise and necessary that we should have only rare and occasional discoveries of it! But of what unspeakable worth have these discoveries been to the hearts of sufferers in every age! The agony must be passed through; the death-struggle—which is most tremendous after the vision of coming good has been the brightest. But the sting of solitude, which is the sharpest of all, is taken out of it. Christ has cried, ‘*Save me from this hour.*’ Christ has Himself said, ‘That all He had passed through before, had been to prepare Him for that hour.’ And Christ changed this cry into another. ‘*Father, glorify thy name.*

Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people, therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, an Angel spake to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said, signifying by what death He should die.'

I have heard speculations about this voice from heaven. It seems to me that St. John's words, taking them just as they stand, convey a much clearer impression to our minds than all commentaries upon them. There is a sound. The people take it for thunder. Some, seeing perhaps a sudden radiance in His countenance, think that an angel has brought Him strength and consolation. He hears in it the voice of His Father,—the sure witness that that name has been glorified, and shall be glorified. To Him the mere voice, the outward sound, is nothing. '*That came for their sakes.*' It was the outward witness to them of the reality of that which He received into His heart. And surely the message has done its work. The struggle is over. He can see victory in His death. Sentence is passed on the tyrant of the world,—the Destroyer of the world. The trial-hour of the Son of Man is the hour of his defeat and overthrow. '*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*'

'*I will draw all men unto me.*' How can we explain these words? First, let us listen to those which followed them, and then let us consider how far we dare explain them. '*The people answered him, We have heard our*

of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things said Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them.'

Yes, brethren, we must either take those words, '*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me,*' as they stand, trying to learn a little of what they mean from the past history of the world, waiting for God to explain them to us more perfectly in the future; we must either confess that there are depths in God's purposes of love which no creature has sounded, heights which no creature has reached, but of which the Cross gives us the fullest glimpse we are capable of; we must either do this, or we must ask just as the Jews did,—'*Who is this Son of man?*' They could dream of a Christ who should exalt the chosen people, who should set them over their enemies. They could anticipate with a kind of faith the coming of such a Christ, and they could be sure that when He came He would abide for ever. But one who identified Himself with men, they would not, could not confess. I use both phrases, for the Bible uses them; St. John uses them at the close of this chapter. There is a hardness of heart, an inhumanity, which makes it *impossible* for men, for the most apparently religious men, to receive Jesus as the Son of Man. And therefore it is *impossible* for them really to receive Him as the Son of God, as revealing the mind

and character of His Father in heaven. And the Atonement of heaven and earth, of God and man; the Atonement through a sacrifice made once for all; the Atonement by the blood of One who has taken the manhood into God,—who has raised, purified, redeemed, glorified the earthly nature by joining it to the Divine,—is changed into a cold, formal arrangement for delivering certain men from the punishment of a sin which has itself not been purged away. For sin is no longer that root of bitterness, that selfishness, which has poisoned the universe, and poisons the hearts of each one of us—that deadly thing which betrays Christ, and which divides us from the Father; sin becomes the violation of an arbitrary rule, drawing after it the endurance of an arbitrary and infinite penalty. Those who boast of their religion think they can have a Christ who is not a Son of Man; a God who is their Father, and not the Father of men in Christ; a Spirit who sanctifies them, but who does not dwell in the Church,—who is not the witness of a fellowship for all creatures whatever who bear the nature which Christ bore, who die the death which Christ died. Nay, the cross of Christ—of Him who gave up Himself—is actually so presented to men, that they suppose it is the instrument by which self-seeking men may secure the greatest amount of selfish rewards! Then other men, who know that such a scheme must be subversive of all pure morality, abandon the Gospel of God for what they call the Gospel of humanity. They fancy there can be a society of men without a Shepherd who dies for them; without a Father who loves Him because He dies. And the world begins to be divided between those who deny a Son of Man, because they think only of

a salvation for themselves, and those who deny Him, because they worship the body of which we declare Him to be the Head instead of Him.

Brethren, this division will not last. The Pharisees and Sadducees, much as they hated one another, came to understand that they had a common enemy when Christ walked the earth. They will do so again. The creeds of the Catholic Church, all our prayers and thanksgivings, bear witness that there is a Son of Man,—that He died for mankind, and that He lives for mankind. Do you not think there will be a combination against these? Do you think their antiquity will save them? Or do you think there is a heart in our people to say,—‘These witnesses are dearer to us than our lives. Life would be nothing to us without them.’ I dare not trust to such a feeling. I know that the cry of ‘Hosanna’ may be followed very soon by the cry of ‘Crucify.’ And we have dealt so unfaithfully with these witnesses, they have been such dead letters to us, that I dare not hope the people know the worth of them. Oh that they may not be tolerated any longer because they are regarded as doing no harm! Oh that they may become real torments to those who deny a Son of Man,—real messengers of life to those who seek for one! And to you brethren, I say,—or rather Christ says,—‘*Walk in the light while you have the light, that ye may be the children of the light.*’ Cling to these prayers, and thanksgivings, and sacraments, while you have them. Bind the meaning of them to your hearts. Live it out in your families. Serve Christ in your daily tasks. Follow Him in simple, hearty, self-sacrifice. And then, when the dark hour comes, and the open witnesses of Him

disappear, and even two or three are scarcely gathered together in His name, you may await the time of His full revelation; the time which shall show that He died indeed to gather into one all the children of God who are scattered throughout this divided world; the men of every age, tongue, clime, colour, opinion; that by the might of His cross He has drawn all to Himself.

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE WORLD AND THE DISCIPLES.

[Lincoln's Inn, 6th Sunday after Trinity, June 29, 1856 (St. Peter's-day).]

ST. JOHN XII. 44—50, and XIII. 1.

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.

I SAID, in my last sermon, that we were approaching the end of our Lord's public ministry. The verses which I have just read to you are those which close it. I have connected them with the opening of the 13th chapter, because I wish you to mark the transition from this part of St. John's Gospel to that which records Christ's private interviews with the disciples. Hitherto the Apostles have had *less* prominence in St. John's Gospel than in the others. We have had narratives of discourses with Nicodemus, with the woman of Samaria, with the Jews at the feast, with the Galilæans at Capernaum, with the blind man, with Mary and Martha,—only now and then, (chiefly

to introduce these dialogues or to link them together,) with the Twelve. The contrast, therefore, in him is far more marked than in St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. Luke, between the Paschal supper and all that goes before it. And since inferences have been drawn from this contrast which I think are not true, I am anxious that you should feel how the words to the multitude, and the words to the chosen few, are connected, and in what the difference between them consists.

I must begin with some words which occur before those I have read to you:—*‘But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him.’* St. John speaks here of the signs which Jesus did, as he has spoken of them from the first. They were signs of a divine presence, a divine power, a divine goodness. They were mighty, in so far as they revealed His presence, and power, and goodness. They were utterly ineffectual to any who esteemed them for their own sakes,—who merely wondered at them. These signs, he tells us now, had not produced belief. Was it to be expected that they would? Had not an old Prophet, who spoke the word of God, testified that they would not? Had he not complained for his predecessors, for himself, for all that should come after him, that the report of the care of God

for men would be believed by very few; that only by very few would it be felt that the arm of a living God was stretched forth? And Isaiah, so the Apostle goes on, has not merely told us the effect which he witnessed, but has laid bare the cause. The inner eye which should see the divine arm is blinded, the heart which should take in the tidings of goodness and love is hardened: this was the reason why men with all outward advantages,—with a law, and a history, and a covenant,—chosen out of all nations to know God and be witnesses of Him, made all these privileges the very excuse for not turning to God, for not receiving His healing virtue.

But this is not the whole explanation. We must not forget that St. John says,—‘*HE hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.*’ We must not dare to cancel these words, because we may find them difficult. St. John himself interprets them in the next verse. He reminds us that Isaiah spake these words when he had the vision of the King who was sitting upon a throne and filling the temple with His glory. ‘That,’ he intimates, ‘was a vision of the true Lord of the nation, of that same Ruler who now that He was called Jesus of Nazareth was rejected, just as He had been in the days of old when He was revealing Himself to His subjects in personal and in national judgments.’ In both cases it was the goodness, the beauty, the glory, which blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts. We know it is so. Experience tells us that goodness has this effect upon minds in a certain condition. The bad that was in them it makes worse. The sight of love awakens and deepens hatred. If we believe and are sure that love has another power than this, that it is stronger than hatred, and can overcome

hatred, let us cherish that faith. St. John certainly will not discourage us in it. No one demands it of us so much. But we must arrive at it, not through the denial of any facts, only through the fullest and frankest acknowledgment of them. This blinding, destructive effect of goodness and love upon the evil will, is a fact which we are bound to confess, and to tremble. It will force itself upon us, it will explain itself to us in ourselves, if we pretend to dispute it. If we own the danger, God will reveal to us the arm which can avert it; He will enable us to take in the mighty report of that power and love which can subdue all enemies.

The next words are also of the Evangelist. They contain partly a limitation of the former, partly an illustration of them. *'Nevertheless among the chief rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.'* Only two verses before, the word which we render *praise* here had been rendered *glory*. I do not know why the connexion should not have been kept up for the English reader, seeing that it must certainly have been present to the mind of the Apostle. A vision of glory, he seems to say, did dawn upon the hearts of these rulers. It was not the notion of an outward Christ which presented itself to them. There came to their inmost consciences the sense of a King who was over them, of a Word who was enlightening them. But there rose up beside this vision another which seemed to be nearer,—the vision of human glory, human reputation, respectability in the class to which they belonged, the smile and good opinion of the Pharisee, the comfort of being called members of the syna-

gogue. Brethren, which of us does not understand how this image might displace and banish the other,—how the hearts of these poor rulers, because they were like ours, might reject the noble to fondle and embrace the vile? Let us submit to be judged ourselves by the Apostle's words, instead of judging others. And let us ask that what we believe with our hearts we may confess with our lips; knowing that there is no condition so miserable as that of those who are enemies both to God and to His enemies; knowing that such must be, above all, enemies to themselves.

Here is the remedy against this state of mind:—
'Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.'

This was the summary of all that He had been teaching hitherto. Yet with what new force must it have come upon those who were halting between Jesus and the Pharisees, who were convinced that He was the true leader, and yet clung to the leaders of their sect! 'Belief in me is not 'belief in a chief of your choice. It is belief in the God

‘ of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Father of
 ‘ your spirits. In me you see Him. I find you in dark-
 ‘ ness, ignorance of yourselves, of your relation to each
 ‘ other, of your relation to God. I am come a Light into
 ‘ the world,—a Light to show you what you are, where
 ‘ you are, what you have to do with your fellows, what
 ‘ you have to do with Him apart from whom you have no
 ‘ life. You *can* refuse that Light; you can treat what I say
 ‘ as vain babbling, as coming from the inspiration of an
 ‘ evil spirit. I judge you not. I have come not to judge
 ‘ the world, but to save it out of its darkness; to bring it
 ‘ back to God. But the word that I speak, which is
 ‘ echoed in your consciences, which is testifying of God
 ‘ in them, that word will judge you in the last day; that
 ‘ will tell you who has been with you, who has been bind-
 ‘ ing you to Himself when you have been tearing your-
 ‘ selves away. For I have not been uttering a word out of
 ‘ my own heart; I have not been setting up my own will.
 ‘ I have been obeying my Father’s will, fulfilling His
 ‘ commandments. And I know that His commandment is
 ‘ life eternal. I know that it is life in itself, and that
 ‘ its effect is life. These words which I speak, do them-
 ‘ selves issue from that Fountain of life; they are the
 ‘ words of the living Father; therefore, they are living and
 ‘ life-giving words.’

If we consider well the force of this parting testimony to
 the Jewish world, we shall be prepared to understand the
 words:—‘ *Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus
 knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of
 this world unto the Father, having loved His own which
 were in the world, He loved them unto the end.*’

The Jewish sects had refused to believe in a Father.

They had refused to believe in a Son of Man. They had refused to believe in a Lord of their own hearts. For a Father they had substituted a lawgiver, who hated all Gentiles, and to whom Jews could only look up with terror, not with confidence. For a Son of Man they had substituted their sect and its leaders. For a Lord over their hearts they had substituted the notion of an outward Christ, who was to be identified by certain particulars of place and time, which must be ascertained by studying the letters of a book. The hour was come when all these contradictions would reach their highest point, when the sects would combine to show what was the real point of their agreement; to Whom they were equally opposed. The feast of the Passover was to be the crisis which would reveal the dark thoughts that were in them; which would show what they were, and what Jesus was. He knew that the moment was come when the question was to be decided, whether men have a Father, or are orphans; whether they have a living Head, or are the loose, broken limbs of a body which has none; whether they are to be governed as horses and mules are governed, by bit and bridle, or as spirits are governed, by a higher Spirit. He had chosen His Apostles to testify to their own nation, and to all nations, of Him and of His Father. He had held them together by His own love, when there was that in the world, and that in themselves, which would have separated them. Had anything happened to break this bond between them and Him? If He left the world, if He returned to His Father, would it be broken?

These were the questions which that Passover-night was to answer. Perhaps you will think that as I have spoken so much of Christ's love to the world, of Christ as the Son

of Man, I may shrink from what seems the exclusive tone of this sentence: '*He loved His own; He loved them to the end.*' Shrink from it! No, brethren, I would do the utmost to bring forth the full force of these words; to impress their meaning upon you. I would have you observe how carefully we are told that these disciples were chosen by Him; that His love to them did not depend upon their faith, but their faith upon His love. I would have you observe how this love was manifested to them all as a body—to one and another of them individually; how they were taught that it was only this love which was sustaining them then, or could sustain them afterwards. Unless we do that, we shall never understand how they were witnesses against that religious world out of which they were called,—that world of sects and parties,—that world where all were choosing for themselves, and none were acknowledging a loving Will which was ruling them; where all were striving for their own views and opinions, and none were confessing their relations to each other; where each was fighting for ascendancy, and none was content to be a servant. We shall never understand how these Apostles were witnesses for the original calling of their nation, how they really represented the tribes in which God had put His name, and through which all the families of the earth were to be blessed. We shall never understand what that Church was which they were to bring out of these twelve tribes to be a witness to the world what its relation to God was, and how, by forgetting that relation, it had sunk into a poor, dark, divided, selfish world.

If we look upon His last supper as the special education of the Apostles for that work which they had to do in the

world, we shall prize the part of this Gospel upon which we are now entering; we shall perceive how all the discourses of our Lord that are recorded in the other Evangelists, from the time that they left their fathers ships, or the receipt of custom, till the time that He entered with them into Jerusalem, find their fullest illustration, their deepest root, in the dialogues and in the prayer which St. John has reported to us; we shall perceive how the institution of the Eucharist—which, as I said when I was speaking of the discourse at Capernaum, it was no part of St. John's function to announce—is more perfectly explained, both in its principle and its effects, by these specially sacramental interviews, than it is in any other part of the New Testament. And we shall begin to enter—it can be but the beginning of a lesson which must last to our life's end—into the purport of that sign which, whether it preceded or followed the giving the bread and the pouring out of the wine, teaches us how they are to be received.

'And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.'

Two hints are given to us which may assist us in entering into the meaning of this act, though, at first, they seem as if they had little connexion with it. First, St. John speaks of what had taken place and was taking place in the mind of Judas; secondly, of the knowledge which was in the

mind of Jesus, that He was come from His Father and was going to Him. What has the condition of the betrayer's heart to do with this washing? We are to learn, I apprehend, that the very corruption which was in *that* heart,—the very evil which had ripened into the darkest of all purposes there,—was that from which all the disciples had need to be cleansed. Whatever else the washing symbolized, it certainly imported the existence of *this* defilement, and that there was One who could remove it. Who could take the deep stain of covetousness, of selfishness, away from the heart of man, away from a human society? Only He who had come from the Father of love, that He might enter into the strictest and closest fellowship with human beings in their lowest estate, in all their peculiar and individual misery. Only He, who was going to the Father, that He might unite all in Himself. And He, knowing that He had come for this end, and was going away that He might accomplish it fully, He gives a pledge to the disciples that when He was seemingly absent from them, He would always be with them to do this work for them. He would be always near them to cleanse them from that pride and selfishness which would hinder them from being at one with each other, and from showing forth His mind to the world.

'Then cometh He to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.'

On St. Peter's-day you will not suppose that I could pass over these words; they illustrate so strikingly, as other parts

of this chapter do, the character of him whom we are commemorating. They illustrate the particular education to which he was subjected; the education which is needed for the impatient and self-confident man, who must be kept waiting, that his eagerness to know, which is in itself a blessing, may not become a curse; who must often have the very thoughts and convictions which are most honest and appear most indisputable, turned upside down, that he may not exult in them as *his* thoughts and *his* convictions, and so change the truth that is in them into falsehood. But the lesson, though peculiarly applicable to him, is a universal one, and shows the universal worth of Christ's sign. It is true of all symbols, that we can know little of them at first. The experience of life interprets them. And it is the hardest thing for all of us to believe that the Highest must wait upon the lowest; that it is not humility, but pride, to refuse the service. Wonderful thought to take in! God must stoop, or man cannot stoop. We must set ourselves up as gods, unless we believe that God's glory is shown in doing the lowest offices of a man.

But why was not Peter right in that other prayer of his, — '*Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head?*' Did he not want a thorough cleansing? Does not each of us want it? The question is one which requires the most careful answer. If the Bible did not give it in the most express terms, we should be utterly at a loss where to find it. But from first to last the Jewish nation is spoken of as a pure and holy nation by those lawgivers and prophets who complain of its members for being stiff-necked and rebellious. There is nothing which the prophets are so earnest in as in persuading their countrymen that they are the people of God's covenant, and are therefore a holy people;

that they are *forgetting* His covenant, and *so* are making themselves unholy. They call upon the people to repent and turn to God, and then He will restore them, He will purify them; the hearts which are red as scarlet, shall become as white as wool. The Jewish sects did not in the least understand this truth. They looked for an individual holiness, an individual cleanness, apart from the holiness of their nation. Each member of them wanted a holiness of his own; he regarded his race as unholy. He did not repent of the sins which kept him from sharing in the holiness which they all had in God.

Now our Lord was educating *His* disciples out of this falsehood into which their age had fallen, this falsehood which was so natural to every one of them. He came to show them on what ground the holiness of their nation stood. It had been called and chosen in Him. It was His righteousness, and not the righteousness of its individual members, which justified the titles that had been bestowed upon it. These members were righteous only so far as they rose out of themselves; as they submitted to the righteousness of God. It was, therefore, His first lesson to His disciples that, as a body, they were clean and holy because He had called them and they were complete in Him.

'Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean.'

They were clean as a body, as a family. Each had need to be purified from his own individual selfishness which kept him apart from the family, which kept him from claiming the common righteousness of his Lord. But they were not all clean. There was one who had

wrapt himself up in his individual nature,—one solitary, selfish being, who would have nothing to do with the family,—who would have nothing to do with the common Lord, the Son of Man; one who had sold his heart to the divider, to the spirit of selfishness and evil. I do not know anything which illustrates more clearly the sense in which the Apostles, as a body, were clean than this terrible exception; or anything which explains more clearly what need they would have for that daily cleansing of the feet of which He had given them a pledge.

‘So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither He that is sent greater than He that sent Him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.’

In the last century, preachers were wont to speak continually of our Lord as an example. In our time there has been a kind of revolt against that phrase as a hard and even as an unpractical one. ‘It is very well,’ we say, ‘to have an example; but can we follow it? Christ is divine, and we are human. No doubt He was human, too, in a sense; but then surely His divinity helped His humanity, so as to put all His acts at an immeasurable distance from ours.’ I believe there is a genuine feeling at the bottom of this complaint. I believe it is a very wearisome and a very useless thing to talk to men about examples, unless you can show how that he who exhibits the example has

some connexion with them, and some power over them. But, on the other hand, we are bound to inquire what has been the effect of example upon the world, how the men whom we meet with that are better than ourselves operate upon us, how it is that we can be impressed by the records of men who have departed. Christ's divinity is not a hindrance to our understanding the might of His example; it rather explains to us the whole doctrine and law of example. Are not that doctrine and law to be found in this passage? If He were not the Master and Lord, if the disciples did not say well in calling Him so, then His act would have been a solitary one, belonging to Himself, one which they could not imitate; but if He were their Lord in the highest sense of the word, in that sense which John has been setting forth to us throughout his Gospel,—if He were the Word in whom they had been created, the Word who was their life and their light, the Word from whom every energy of their spirits was derived,—then everything which dwelt in Him could descend upon them; whatever shone forth in Him could be reflected in them. And this would take place, not by their raising themselves to contemplate a lofty ideal, but by their submitting to a gracious and loving Will. The Highest of all showed Himself to them in washing their feet. All they had to do was not to think themselves greater than He, not to think that unworthy of the disciple which was not unworthy of the Lord.

The difficulty to the formal divine is no doubt this:—‘cleansing the feet symbolizes the removing of defilements from the inner man, is not that Christ's work alone? Can the disciple follow His example in doing that work?’ Our consciences tell us that he can. We do know that we may receive purification from one another, that the

tenderness, and love, and patience of one man act in a marvellous way upon another, when those qualities seem the furthest from him, when he most confesses that they do not belong to him. We do not set ourselves deliberately to follow examples. The examples get the mastery over us; there is a life in the men who exhibit them which awakens life in us. These are facts not to be gainsaid for the sake of any system. Upon them have been built theories about the righteousness of the saints, and the transference of one man's righteousness to another, which are, no doubt, very immoral and ungodly. But St. Paul's words, which are the plea for these theories, '*I fill up in my body the sufferings of Christ,*' are both moral and godly. For they are grounded upon the idea which St. John is setting forth here: that Christ, the Divine Sufferer, is the source of all purification and of all life; and that all men, in their proper spheres, may share His sufferings, and transmit and communicate the purification and life that flow from them to their fellows. All difficulties about example are capable of that solution. If we are members of one body, if He is the Head, why should not there be a continual circulation of life from each member of the body to every other? How can the departure of men out of this world hinder that circulation, or cause us who are here to feel it less? May not their power have become greater as the mortal fetters have been taken from them? May not we feel it more?

That is a strange announcement,—'*The disciple is not above His master,*'—to be introduced by a '*Verily,*' and yet the longer the Apostles lived, the more they understood what need they had to be told this truth, and told it with such solemnity. What follows reminds us that a commonplace in words may become a paradox in action,

and that we never experience either the difficulty of a divine sentence, or the power of it, till we put it in practice. All the crimes of Churchmen from that hour to this, all their cowardice, their arrogance, their baseness, their violence, have had this one root: the servants of Christ have believed themselves greater than Christ; they have counted it a shame and disgrace to do what He did, to endure what He endured. Here has been the cause of their powerlessness; the very secret of His power has been wanting in them. They have put forth the mock power which His real power has come into the world to crush and subdue. Does not the Christian power—the Church's power—*begin* when it has been brought to work *with* this power of Him who humbled Himself, and not against it? Do we want another ground for believing that those who have completely washed their robes and made them white from every stain of selfishness in the blood of the Lamb, must be mightier than they were here? Do we want another explanation of the fact, that those words of theirs which spoke out the true mind of Christ in them, live and are fruitful for generations after their names, and all the efforts they made to magnify their own names, have been forgotten?

'I spake not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me. When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.'

How are these verses connected with those that went

before them? how are they connected with each other? Sometimes the thought comes to us,—‘ Can we trace the processes of that Mind in that hour? Must not His words spring out of depths into which our eyes can never look? Must they not follow each other in an order which is altogether unlike that of other men?’ So far as such a doubt leads to reverence,—so far as it makes us distrust our own perceptions, eager to learn from others, certain that we can but see the smallest portion of that which is in Him, I would cherish it. So far as it puts Christ at a distance from us, as it tempts us to think that He was not the Son of Man feeling perfectly as a man,—that He did not mean that the things He said to us should be apprehended by us, and that He will not help us to apprehend them,—so far I would eschew it, and cast it off; because it is fatal to all sincere reverence and sincere humility.

I think He says plainly,—‘ I am not speaking to you all when I bid you wash each other’s feet. There is a sympathy with my mind implied in that act. There is a submission to me, as one who has chosen you, implied in it. That sympathy, that submission, one of you has shaken off. He sits at my feast; He has disclaimed me. But I tell you to do as I have done, that you may know hereafter what the secret of the power you exert over men is. If they receive you, they will be receiving me; if they receive me, they will be receiving my Father.’ Does it seem to you that such an assurance was likely to counteract the humbling lesson which He had just given? I do not wonder that any should entertain that opinion, because it is undoubtedly true that men may give themselves intolerable airs on the strength of their being messengers of the Most High; may curse and excommunicate

all who do not receive *their* decrees and confess *their* dignity, under pretence that they are setting Christ at nought. It is true also, and the records of the world establish the truth, that none have been so free from pretension, that none have borne such insults, and been so ready to die that men might not be cursed and excommunicated, as those who have given themselves up to speak a word which they were sure was not theirs, who have felt that they had no goodness or love of their own to show forth, but that the Son of God was showing forth His love to sinners through them, even as the Father showed His love to men through the Son. There needed a '*Verily*' to confirm this sentence as well as the other. They are, in fact, parts of the same sentence. The disciple will think himself above his Master as long as he thinks himself separate from his Master; when that thought ceases, he must accept our Lord's language in the length and breadth of it: '*He that receiveth you receiveth me.*' Dare he be an insolent, usurping, persecuting priest, unless he inwardly denies that the meek, suffering Jesus, who washed His disciples' feet, is in him?

And is it wonderful that the 'trouble of spirit' which St. John speaks of, should have mixed itself with this thought, and that the image of the betrayer, which had been appearing from time to time during this discourse in the background, should now rise fully and terribly before Him? 'There is one who chooses to be separate from 'me! one who will stand in his own name! one who will 'cast me his Lord, and friend, and reprover, away! He 'is one of you,—one of those whom I have sent forth as a 'messenger in my Father's name and mine.' Jesus has spoken of the Scripture being fulfilled in the act of Judas.

It was a Scripture which David felt had been fulfilled in his own case. A friend who had eaten of *his* bread had lifted up his heel. It had been fulfilled in a thousand cases before David, and since But this was *the* fulfilment; this contained the essence of all treacheries that had been and that were to be; this explained the principle and author of them. If there is a Son of Man, one in whom all human feelings, sympathies, affections, reach their highest point, one from whom they have been derived, one in whom they reflect perfectly that God of whom He is the image, then the betrayer of that Son of Man exhibits *the* revolt against these feelings, affections, and sympathies, *the* strife against this love, in which every false friend may read the ground and the possible consummation of his own baseness. Men, generally, have confessed this remark to be true, and have embodied it even in their careless forms of speech; therefore they ought to confess, also, that whatever pain and inward anguish any have experienced from the insincerity of those who have eaten their bread and lifted up the heel against them, must have been undergone by Jesus with an intensity proportioned to the intensity of His love. Surely this reflection, if we follow it out, may help us more to such an apprehension of His sufferings, as it is permitted and possible for us to have, than any phrases of pompous rhetoric which put Him at a distance from us, and make us suppose that He did not bear *our* griefs and carry *our* sins.

'Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give

a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.'

St. John has not spoken of himself hitherto. Why does he introduce himself now? When I was quoting, in my first sermon, the accounts which are given of him by the other Evangelists, I did not refer to the name by which he has described himself. Do we not sometimes think that it was a kind of indelicacy and presumption in an Apostle to claim it? Was it not setting himself above the others? Would it not have been better that he should have let them give him the title? Are not those which they do give him less honourable? I do not wish to evade any of these inquiries. Let it be remembered that St. John was writing in the full knowledge that he had been described as a Son of Thunder, that his ambition and his desire to call down fire had been recorded. These signs of what he was, of what he had shown himself to be, could not be separated from him; they were fixed upon him indelibly. None, therefore, could say that he was an object of Christ's affection because he had shown a gentler disposition than his fellows. Could they say, then, that the love of Christ was a partial love, that it was not directed to mankind, that it was not the expression of a universal love? St. John is the especial witness against these heresies. He declares that God loved the world; and Christ came to do His Father's will in saving it. What, then, might be—what has been—the effect of the name, '*the disciple whom Jesus loved,*' upon the Church? It has been felt that the story of Judas needed this foil. The dark, solitary, separate man must be brought into direct contrast to a man who lives only on trust. We understand by the disciple who leant on Jesus' bosom what

his condition was who went out into the night. At the same time, we must not be allowed to fancy that the love came forth from John. He could only be the receiver of it. If he ever fancied himself the disciple who loved Jesus, and not '*the disciple whom Jesus loved,*' he would be magnifying himself, he would be claiming to be better than his brethren. As it is, he can only regard it as part of Christ's manifestation of the divine character that this peculiar affection should be displayed to him. In the world of nature the distinctness of each thing is necessary to the harmony of the whole. Can it be otherwise in the world of human beings? Are they to be merged, now or hereafter, in one great chaos of being? Must not each form, each person, be brought out fully and brightly when the mists that prevent us from seeing the perfect unity have been scattered? Personal affections, gradations of sympathy, attachments and affinities between this human being and that, are the barriers which sever the true life of man from that Pantheistical absorption which is another name for death. Should not we expect there to be a witness for these, a restoration of them to their proper unselfish ground, in the acts and the life of the Word made flesh?

'And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.'

Though I have spoken of St. John as the contrast to Judas, the contrast must not be regarded in this sense,—

that love was withheld from Judas. We are occupied with that awful mystery of a human will and its relation to the divine will, where every step is perilous, respecting which the truest statements must wear the appearance of contradictions. But it has been the belief of all earnest men of all schools that the sop given to Judas was a last love-token, and that the entrance of Satan into him, after it had been received, expresses that last defiance of love, that utter abandonment to the spirit of selfishness, which precedes the commission of the greatest conceivable crime. After that perdition has come, the Lord speaks words to the man which he can understand, and he only. They may mean nothing to the bystanders; they may be capable of the most frivolous construction. To him they testify,—
 ‘There is one who knows thy heart; who knows thee. He
 ‘restrains thee no longer. Nay, He bids thee be quick.
 ‘It is to be; thou hast decreed it. Go and do thy new
 ‘master’s bidding faithfully. Then it will be seen whether
 ‘he or I shall prevail at last.’

And as Judas goes out into the night, a new hymn rises to heaven, and a new commandment is given on earth.
‘Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.’

Does it not sound tremendous that the Son of Man is exalted, in the voluntary exile of a human being from the

society of his fellow-men, from all communion with his Lord? It is tremendous; but must it not be so? Is not the spirit of selfishness that which has destroyed human society, that which wars against the Son of Man, that which declares that man shall not show forth the image of the perfect and unselfish God? Must it not, shall it not be cast forth utterly from the Church of God? And ought not all humanity, all nature, to join in the Song of praise of the Great High Priest, that Judas did go out into the night to achieve that purpose, to bring about that death, by which God was glorified in His Son, and which led to the glorification of the Son in Himself?

Perhaps the other portion of the passage seems to you plain enough. 'The command to the disciples to love one another—that sounds so beautiful! there is nothing in that to which every heart must not respond.' Brethren, I will tell you plainly: I find far greater difficulty in this commandment than in all the rest of the discourse. The Church has been trying to construe it for eighteen hundred years, and has succeeded miserably ill. I will go further. I will say that, if it is a mere precept written in letters in a book, it is the cruelest precept that was ever uttered. Men say so when they are honest: they say, 'Tell us to do anything but this. We will give, if it is necessary, ten thousand rivers of oil, the first-born of our body for the sin of our soul. But do not tell us to love. That we can do in obedience to no statute, from dread of no punishment.' Even so. If God demands that we should bring this offering to Him or perish, we must perish. But if He says, 'My name and nature is love; my Son has manifested my name and nature to you: you are created in Him; you are created to obey Him: you need not resist Him: His

Spirit shall be with you that you may do His will as He has done mine,'—then the precept is not cruel, but blessed and divine. For then in the commandment is life—life for those who first heard it, life for us. He was going away from them where they could not follow Him, that He might make it effectual for those who never saw Him, but over whom He reigns the same Son of Man, the same Son of God, to-day and for ever.

' Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered Him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now: but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.'

This is the commentary on the new commandment and on the whole discourse. Let St. Peter's-day fix it deeply in our hearts. Where lay his error? Why was it inevitable that he should fall? He thought he loved. He fancied his love would stand him in some stead. That delusion must be thoroughly purged away from him. The washing of the feet did not cleanse him as long as he gave himself credit for possessing that which was God's own possession, which none can enter into till he gives up himself. The prophecy to Peter, fearful as it was to him, fearful as it should be to every one of us, is yet the induction to the words, *' Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me,'* and to all the depths of consolation which Christ opened to His disciples in His Paschal discourses.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

[Lincoln's Inn, 8th Sunday after Trinity, July 13, 1856.]

ST. JOHN XIV. 25, 26.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

THE words to St. Peter, with which the 13th chapter closes, must have been a cause of dismay and confusion to all the disciples as well as to him. But it was not the only cause. The words, '*Whither I go, ye cannot follow me,*' had called forth his passionate question, and the expression of his readiness to lay down his life. They were terrible enough in themselves, even without reference to betrayal and denial. They must have mixed with the prophecies of both. He spoke of going away. He must mean that a death, a violent death, was awaiting Him. Why He did not say so plainly they could not tell. The darkness of the language added to the gloom of their spirits.

Then He spake again, '*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a*

place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.'

He addresses Himself here to all the causes of their trouble. The first was the deepest; for they had been told that a love which they supposed nothing could shake would be shaken to its foundations. They had believed in themselves; that belief would be found to rest upon the sand. The refuge was in another kind of belief altogether. Our translation assumes that they had a belief in God already; that it was to be fortified by a belief in Jesus. There is a justification for that rendering; perhaps it is the right one. But if we take both verbs to be in the imperative, the sense will be good. 'For your faith in 'your own willingness to follow me substitute a faith in 'me.' The result of the two constructions is not very different. The disciples had no doubt a faith in God, however feeble a one. It might be made firm and efficient if faith in His Son was joined with it. They wanted a faith as well in God as in Him. Neither could live without the other.

And here also is the deliverance from the other source of anxiety. By uniting the belief in God to the belief in Him, by no longer accepting the first as a tradition from their fathers, the second as belonging especially to themselves, by perceiving that the one is involved in the other, they would enter into the mystery of His speech respecting His own departure; they would see that it was not wilfully obscure; they would know what hindered them from following them, and how they might follow Him. He could not talk of going to the grave—that would convey altogether a false impression about Him and themselves. He had not

come out of the grave ; that had not been His original home ; and to His original home He was returning. There was no other mode of speaking : He was going to His Father's house. And that was their house too. He was not entering it to claim it for Himself, but for them. There were dwellings in it for them all ; if not so, He '*would have told them.*'

Why would He have told them ? Because He had been continually speaking to them of a Father who had sent Him, of a Father whom they were to know, of a Father who was drawing them towards Him. If there was no issue of His mission ; if He had done all His work by merely giving them a glimpse of a divine kingdom ; if they and He were not to rest in it together ; would He not have scattered the false hopes which they were beginning to form, which His own language had kindled ?

Yes, brethren ! that awful dream which shook the heart of the German poet,—the dream of Christ coming into the world with the message, 'There is no God. You have no Father,' must have been realized, if He did not come with the other message, 'I can declare to you the name of your God. You have a Father. I am come to lead you to Him.' He himself shows us that this is the alternative. 'I would have told you,—I would have sent you to tell the world,—that all the thoughts it has ever entertained of an intercourse between earth and heaven, of a ladder by which man may ascend to God, are lying thoughts, inspired by the spirit of lies ; unless I could have said, "There is a Father's house ; there are many mansions in it ; and I am going to prepare a place for you." ' Oh ! let us consider it well. Our Christianity must either sweep away all that has sustained the life and hopes of human creatures to this hour ; it must become

the most inhuman, the most narrow, the most God-denying system that the world has yet seen; it must prepare the way for a general atheism; or it must proclaim a Son of Man who unites mankind to God, who is a way by which the spirit of every man may ascend to the Father who is seeking it.

He had a right then to say, '*Whither I go ye know;*' for the knowledge of a Father was that which He had been all along imparting to them. It was that which the whole heart of humanity, expressing itself through songs, myths, forms of worship, had been aiming at. Doctors might have crushed it out of their hearts; peasants could not. And had not the disciples heard of a way to God? What had John the Baptist come for but to prepare such a way? What had the call to repentance, what had the message concerning a kingdom of heaven at hand, and a Word who is the light of men, been, but an opening of this way?

The difficulty was to connect this way with that by which Jesus said He was going. Thomas gave utterance to the difficulty with singular frankness. '*Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*'

Would that we were all as honest in asking questions as he was; then we should be prepared to receive the answer. '*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.*'

Are you so familiar with the first of these verses that it leaves no impression upon you? Connect it with the second, from which, in general, it is widely disjoined, and you will see how much of its meaning we have all

still to learn. We think of a way to *heaven*. Christ, we say, is that way. Even so. But the old question which we saw was so intensely puzzling to the people of Capernaum—which is not less so to us—recurs at each step, 'What is heaven?' Jesus answers by saying that He is the way to the Father. '*No man cometh to the Father but by me.*' So the words, '*I am the truth,*' acquire an infinite significance. Christ is the way to the eternal truth, which makes free. He is both the way and the truth, because He is one with the Father, who is that eternal truth. And the words, '*I am the life,*' are but the same, proceeding from His own lips, which we heard before from the lips of His Evangelist—'*In the Word was life.*' They are but the gathering up of all the signs which have manifested Him as the Life-giver to the bodies of men,—as Giver of a divine and eternal life to their spirits. But if we forget that Christ's work is to bring men to their Father; and that He is distinct from the Father, as well as one with the Father: if we exchange this evangelical statement for some miserable one of our own, about 'the happiness of a future state,' the announcement of Christ as the way and the truth becomes a mere self-contradiction.

Our Lord's teaching was not in vain. One of the disciples perceived that to know the Father was all in all,—that he wanted nothing but this. '*Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*'

We are now, surely, ready for the reply, wonderful as it is: '*Jesus saith unto Him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*'

The revelation of the Father in the Son was then the

revelation of the kingdom of heaven ; it was the revelation of God Himself. There could be no higher. It was a revelation to that which was highest in man, to that which really constitutes the man. And for the man really to enter into the knowledge and communion of God, to be able to pass out of the fetters and limitations of mortality into this blessedness, this eternal life, must be the consummation of all that Jesus came to do.

He therefore adds : *'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.'*

Perhaps, when the question took this form, Philip might be startled. He might say to himself, 'Do I believe this? Is this what I mean?' And he might, for a while, be at a loss for the answer. But he could not say, 'I do not believe it,' without saying, 'I do not believe this, and 'this, and this, which I have heard Jesus say, and seen 'Jesus do.' However he might wonder at the strangeness and awfulness of the truth, yet he had been led into it most carefully and gradually. It had seemed to come out of himself; to be implied in his acts, and thoughts, and intuitions. It was not like something new which had been given him, but something very old, which he had now for the first time been able to recognise. And his Teacher still deals with him in the same gentle, even method. 'Believe this,' He says, 'on its own ground, on 'its own evidence, because it explains to you what would 'be else inexplicable in yourself and in others. Or else 'believe it for the very works' sake. That, too, is a

legitimate process,—for some minds, the easiest and most natural. The works lead back to the Worker. The laws and principles in His mind lead back to the original of them in the mind of the Father.

The works lead back to the Worker. They would do so even when Jesus was no longer the visible instrument in effecting them. '*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.*' St. Luke says, in the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, that he had written before a treatise of all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach. He intimates that he is now going to continue that treatise, to show how much more Jesus did and taught, after He ascended into heaven, than when He was on earth. Here, in the most solemn manner, Jesus makes the same assertion to His disciples. The works that He did upon earth were only the beginning of what He would do—the signs, as St. John has expressed it so constantly, of a power to be more completely exerted, of a purpose to be fulfilled. His returning to the Father is to be the crisis and commencement of a new life to the world,—the pledge that all the influences for health and renovation which the Son of Man had put forth, instead of being exhausted, were to go on proving their vigour and winning their victories from generation to generation.

In the next verse He assigns the reason: '*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.*' He had taught them to pray, saying, '*Our Father.*' No doubt they had done as He had bidden them. And the thought, 'He taught us

so to speak,' must have been a mighty help when the effort was hardest, when it seemed most impossible to conceive that they had a Father. But to pray *in His name*, what a new world was opened to them, if they might do that! If there was One who did bind them all together, One in whom they were one, what an emphasis was there in that word, 'Our!' If this Son of Man were indeed the Son of God, what life, what reality there was in the word 'Father!' It was not that the prayer wanted its virtue till the name of Christ was openly, formally introduced into it. If that had been so, His own prayer must have been unfit for the Apostles and for us. All prayer that had ever ascended to God had ascended in His name. The Word was with God; the Word was the light of men. All things were created by Him, and in Him. When He had taught His spiritual creatures to feel they had need of a Father of their spirits, He had awakened in them the impulse to pray. The Father of those spirits was seeking such to worship Him, and owned their worship as that of children made in His image, unable to live apart from Him. In the Mediator, He could meet those to whom He had thus given power to become sons of God; He could own them as the spokesmen of humanity. But now it could be declared in what name men had prayed; how it was that the spirits in them answered to each other; in whom God had looked upon them, and been satisfied. No such revelation had yet been made, no such assurance had been given, that every beggar who desired that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven, was praying for that which Christ Himself must certainly accomplish. He goes on, '*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*' The Apostles thought, as we saw last Sunday,

that they could suffer for Christ because they loved Him. They were right in believing that love is the ground of all action and of all suffering, but they were utterly wrong in supposing that their own love could be the ground of either. If this love were in any degree an effort of their own, if it were not God's love working in them, it would prove, as He had warned Peter that it would, the weakest of all things; before the cock crowed, it might be found good for nothing. But if they loved Him, let them keep His commandments; let them submit themselves to the will of One in whom love dwells perfectly, from whom it flows forth freely. *'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. But ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.'*

This promise, I believe, is the characteristical one of those Paschal conversations; it is that which distinguishes them from our Lord's discourses to the multitude. It is most important, therefore, to observe how the subject is introduced, and how it is connected with the passages we have just been considering. The new commandment, which we find in the previous chapter, had been, *'Love one another, as I have loved you;'* which was further expounded by the words, *'As I have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet.'* It had been a social commandment. Each obeyed it in so far as he regarded himself as one of a family, under a Master who was his Elder Brother. The loss of fellowship was the loss of allegiance; the loss of allegiance was the loss of fellowship. Since He had given them this commandment, He had been speaking to them of His own union with the Father, of His own

obedience to the Father. One truth lay beneath the other ; they must be learnt together. *Their* union would be the way to the apprehension of this union. *Their* obedience would enable them to enter into this obedience. But, on the other hand, they would find union among themselves impossible till they had a glimpse of the fundamental unity ; they would find human obedience impossible till they believed that there was a divine obedience.

But how should they bind these two truths together in their hearts ? What would save them from revolving in a hopeless circle, never knowing whether the divine lesson or the human practice must come first ?

Before they well knew what they wanted, what deliverer they could have in their infinite perplexity, He, their Head, would pray the Father, and He would give them a Paraclete, one who would be always ready to help when they called for Him, one who should not be with them to-day and gone to-morrow, but with them for ever ; not an external Teacher, but a Guide of their spirits ; not a Spirit who would obey their fancies or notions, but a Spirit of truth, to whom they must yield, that they might be freed from their confusions and falsehoods. This Spirit, it is added, '*the world could not receive.*' That world or order which does not own a Head, which is made up of sections and parties, to which the Word of God comes, and which rejects Him,—such a world is not capable of a uniting, fusing Spirit, not capable even of conceiving how there can be such a Spirit, how He can enter into human beings with all their different tastes and propensities, all their contradictions, to mould them into one, how He can give them one heart and one soul. But the Apostles did know it. They had

the germs of unity within them; amidst all their rivalries and discords, they aspired to be one. The Spirit was dwelling *with* them even then; He should be *in* them.

I wish you to observe how every word and every symbolical act of Christ has pointed to the disciples as a body, as a family; how all commandments and all promises have reference to them in this character; how the difference between them and the world was not that they were individually better than the persons of whom it consisted, not that they had blessings which the world was not intended to be a partaker of, but simply that the Son of Man had chosen them, and had constituted them His witnesses to the world. And to those who owned Him as the Head of their body, whether they saw Him or not, He would come. '*I will not leave you orphans,*' He says; '*I will come to you.*' If they were left without Him who alone had told them of a Father, who was their only bond to a Father, they would be in the strictest sense orphans. These last words took off the rough edge of that sentence which, with all its apparent fulness and richness, must have sounded sorrowful in the ears of the disciples, as if there could be a substitute for Him, another Paraclete. In some wonderful manner He would Himself be among them; in some wonderful manner His Father would be among them. Else why did He speak of orphans? And the next words made His meaning more definite, if not at once more clear, to them: '*Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also.*' 'The world, which judges only by sense, which *believes* 'nothing, will have no organ by which to apprehend me. 'I shall seem to it to be far away. It will proclaim that 'it has got rid of me. But you will apprehend me through

‘ the spirit’s organ. Your inner life will rest upon my life. In your own selves you will be in contact with me.’

‘ *At that day,*’ He goes on, ‘ *ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*’ ‘ In that day, when you shall begin truly to see me, when you shall know me more fully than you have ever known me yet, in that day the great mystery of my union with the Father will come out fully before you. It will come forth to explain another mystery, which without it would be incredible, that as I am in Him, so you are in me; that as He is in me, so am I in you.’

We shall find how this mystery, in connexion with the other, becomes the subject of the subsequent discourse, till it finds its fullest expansion and expression in the prayer of the 17th chapter. But it was necessary that He should set before them once again the nature of the mystery, and the way to the knowledge of it, lest they should lose themselves in abortive efforts to embrace it. ‘ *He that hath my commandments,*’ He says, ‘ *and keepeth them, He it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*’ The love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father, was the ground of their union. He who would remember Christ’s commandments that they should love one another, and would watch over them and cherish them in his heart, he would show his love to Christ; and to him the love of the Father would be manifested, to him the Son would manifest Himself.

This idea of a secret manifestation which the world could not share in, may have seemed merely astonishing to some of the disciples,—may have awakened certain feelings of vanity, as if they would be His exclusive favourites,

in others of them. Either feeling might have been in Jude, or both might have been mixed, when he said, '*Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*' The answer is one which, if it were taken in, would destroy all exclusiveness, but would not diminish wonder: '*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*' If a man loved Christ, he would hold fast those words of His in which He said that God '*loved the world, and gave His only-begotten Son for it;*' that God '*sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*' And then, because these words were dear to him, and he wished to live in the spirit of them, the Father who loved the world would come and make His abode with him, would impart to him His own likeness, and enable him in a measure to enter into His love. But one who cared nothing for Christ, would not care for these words of His, would not keep them in his heart, would not really believe them, would not desire to have his own mind fashioned in accordance with them. And seeing that Christ's word is not His, but the Father's who sent Him, that Father would remain to such a person always hidden and unknown.

'*These things,*' He adds, '*have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance.*' It may be hypercritical to complain of our translators for rendering μένων by '*being yet present;*' but I

cannot help thinking that 'remaining,' or 'while I remain with you,' would have diminished the likelihood of a misapprehension which must make much of what He says here and afterwards unintelligible. That He was going away He had told them; only one day longer He would remain among them as their visible Teacher. But, assuredly, He declares solemnly that He shall not cease to be present with them; it is the express object of His conversation to give them that assurance. Nowhere does it come forth more strongly than in this sentence. What He said to them while they could look into His face, while they could see His lips moving, was but poorly apprehended by them; only a small portion of its meaning passed into them. Their real learning would come hereafter,—the vital recollection and understanding of the very words they were listening to then. Did they not feel that they wanted some one to fix the sense in their hearts, before the sounds mingled with the common air? Did they not want an interpreter, who should not translate one set of phrases by another, but should translate phrases into realities, and should open the spirit to entertain them? Were they not conscious of a hebetude and dulness, which the divinest wisdom could not penetrate as long as it remained on the outside of them? Did not the dulness hinder their intercourse with each other? Did any know exactly what the other meant? Did they not talk of trifles, because they despaired of breaking through the ice which enclosed their neighbour's heart, and had not even learnt the secret of thawing their own?

Yes; in this way they were taught that they must have a Spirit such as He spoke of, to be with them, not occasionally, but continually; to be with them, not as separate

creatures, but as fellow-men; to be the Inspirer of their memories, their understandings, their affections; to be their Deliverer from shallowness; to be their Guide to that well of living water at the bottom of which truth lies. It was thus that they learnt, however imperfectly, that this Spirit must be a Divine Person,—could not be a mere vague and floating influence. It was thus that they sprung to the conviction, however hard it might be, which our Lord had expressed, and which He repeated in another form of words here, that the Spirit must bring Him near to them, must come in His name, must bind them together in His name. It was thus they learnt that a Spirit, which did not proceed from a Father and testify of a Father, could not be the Spirit of truth or the Spirit of peace.

He had been described already by one of these names. Our Lord now fixed the thoughts of His disciples upon the other. *'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'* It was the legacy which they needed above all others. But how could it be received? How can a treasure which all experience proclaims to be open to thefts, lessened by a thousand accidents, dependent upon mental and bodily temperament,—how can this be actually left, not to one, two, or three, upon certain conditions, but to a whole body permanently and not capriciously, *'as the world giveth?'* Christ's words imported this; the Apostles must have felt that He was deceiving them if less than this was meant or was performed. Only a Spirit to abide for ever with them; a Paraclete to whom they could have recourse when fightings were most terrible without; One whom they might find beneath all the wars and fightings within themselves; one who could unite them to each other, because He united them to

the Father;—only such a Spirit could be the gift of peace which Christ bestowed; only concerning such a Spirit could He have said, ‘This is my peace.’

He repeats the words He had used a short time before. He said, ‘*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*’ He could utter them now with a new and mightier force; for now, far better than before, He could remove that cause of trouble, the dread that He was going away from them. ‘*Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*’

The explanation of His going is the same as before. It is the return to a Father’s house,—a house with many mansions,—a house for them as for Him. But, since the promise of the Spirit has been given, He can say, ‘*I come again unto you.*’ ‘It is not merely that you will know ‘I am in a home which you cannot see, in a home which ‘is out of the reach of the tumults and distractions that ‘surround you—a home of peace, and truth, and love; it ‘is that here, in the midst of this earth, peace and truth ‘and love shall abide with you. It is that I have a kingdom in this world; it is that my Spirit will be with you, ‘to enable you to make continual inroads upon the world ‘which “*sees me not, neither knows me,*” to bring fresh portions of it under my government.’ This coming again into the regions of earth—coming as a king and conqueror, yet still as a fellow-sufferer to bear the cross with His disciples, is a new element of consolation. But it does not displace the former. The celestial house is still to be the object and final resting-place of their thoughts and hopes. They were to rejoice that their Lord was there, in His proper

and eternal dwelling, united as a Son to a Father, doing homage as a Son to a Father, confessing there, as He did on earth, His own glory to be derived from the Father. They were to rejoice for His sake, because they loved Him ; and that rejoicing for His sake would be the greatest elevation, and the highest satisfaction to themselves. They would look through Christ to the Father ; they would see all things issuing from Him, and tending to their fruition and perfection in Him.

' And now,' He concludes, *' I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you : for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.'*

That which was coming to pass, we can have no doubt, was the death of the Son of Man, His ascension, the gift of the Spirit ; for of all these He has discoursed, as if they were inseparably connected. Each event would be imperfectly understood till the next came to expound it. When the Spirit was given, there would be a flood of light upon all the acts of Christ ; all the lines of the world's history would be seen to be converging towards Him. But an hour of darkness must precede this illumination, an hour in which the living Word, the upholder of all things, would be almost silent ; the hour, He calls it, of the prince of this world, the hour when righteousness would seem to be put down for ever, when the priestly tyrants of Judæa, and the imperial tyrants of Rome, would seem to have established their supremacy. But their master had *nothing in Jesus*. The cross upon which they raised Him would stand forth as the perfect opposite of his selfishness

the perfect manifestation of the Divine love. For the world's sake, that cross would be set up; for the world's sake, He spoke these things to His disciples. He would have the world know that He loved the Father, and that He was fulfilling His Father's commandment in dying for it. What a wonderful conclusion to a discourse which He had addressed to His own, whom He had chosen out of the world! What a wonderful preparation for that discourse concerning the vine and the branches, which He seems to have spoken as He walked with His disciples towards the Garden of Gethsemane!

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

[Lincoln's Inn, 9th Sunday after Trinity, July 20, 1856]

ST. JOHN XV. 1.

I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman.

THE words, '*Arise, let us go hence,*' with which the 14th chapter concludes, have been taken by some to indicate that our Lord was about to lead His disciples into a higher region of thought and of hope than they had yet visited. The feeling is a very natural one that everything in these conversations must have a sublime sense, that no words can be used in them in their common earthly sense. But it is not an altogether healthy feeling. It may lead us to forget that the disciples were sitting in an actual room, at an actual supper; it may give us the notion that we have been transported into some fantastical world. That is a heavy price to pay for a refined or spiritual interpretation. It may make the whole life of the Son of Man unintelligible to us.

From the beginning of the 13th chapter, our Lord has been preparing them to '*arise and go hence.*' He has been leading them towards that Father's house, whither He is going and to which He is the way. We might say that He

reaches the mountain summit, in His prayer in the 17th chapter; yet even that must be said with caution, because His death and ascension were yet to come, and the Spirit had not yet been poured upon them. But though nothing which He ever spoke is deeper, or has had a mightier effect on mankind, than the passage of which I am about to speak, we do not conceive of it rightly if we describe it as a departure from earthly facts or earthly images. We are about to be told of the discipline which is necessary for those who are upon earth fighting, not transfigured, and how the discipline will be administered. The old form of speaking by parables, which the disciples might easily have thought was intended only for the multitude, and might be discarded in the more advanced stages of their education, is resorted to again. The forms of earth are still claimed as interpreters of the kingdom of heaven.

I think it is better, therefore, to take the words in their simplest sense,—to suppose that our Lord and His disciples did arise from the supper as He spoke, and that the first object which they saw as they walked towards the Mount of Olives was a *vine*. That tree had been the old lesson-book of Prophets. They had watched its growth; had wondered at the life which circulated through its branches; had thought of the care which was needful in the choice of a place to plant it in; of the incessant vigilance which must be bestowed upon it after it had grown. ‘*Thou hast brought,*’ they said in their songs, ‘*a vine out of Egypt, and planted it.*’ ‘*The house of Israel,*’ they said in their discourses, ‘*is the Lord’s vineyard, and Judah His pleasant plant.*’ Then the question arose, ‘Why does it bring forth wild grapes? Will it never fill the land?’ Which led to the other deeper questions, ‘How is it that these comparisons

‘*must* be true in spite of all experience which seems to prove them deceitful? What makes our nation one,— what gives it life, though we seem a mere set of loose, wretched, dead sticks, trying to be separate?’

Here was the answer, ‘*I am the true Vine.*’ As the words, ‘*I am the good Shepherd,*’ explained all the previous uses of *that* symbol, and showed why they were not fictitious, so this sentence interprets all the passages of the Old Testament which connect the life of trees with the life of man. ‘You have been told that you were the branches of a vine; that God was pruning you, and lopping off dead boughs from you. Now, look into the heart of this mystery. In me you have been made one; from me you have drawn life. *My Father* Himself has been, and *is*, the *Husbandman*. It was over His own Son that He was watching. It was the branches in ME which were not bearing fruit that He was taking away. It was every branch in ME that beareth fruit which He was purging, that it might bring forth more fruit.’ Here was the interpretation of the unity of the nation; for here is the interpretation of the unity of man. We shall find no wider, or deeper, or more practical one. The more we apply it to all the circumstances of our lives, and to all the problems of history, the more satisfactory it will appear to us. But first, as always, Christ Himself applies it to the persons immediately before Him.

‘*Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*’ The words

in the 13th chapter, '*Ye are clean, but not all,*' led me to anticipate what I should say about these, '*Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*' I said that He treated them as a pure and holy body, and that the unclean person was he who would not belong to the body, but chose to dwell in his own isolation. What is added to that statement here is, that Christ's word was that which purified them. They had no unity of their own, or purity of their own. He spoke to them in their inmost hearts, claimed them as His. That quickening, uniting, purifying word, going forth from Him, was the source of their life, their purity, their unity. What they had to do was not to put forth self-willed efforts for the sake of making themselves better, or wiser, or more united, but simply to abide in Him, to believe that they were His, to act as if they were. I resort to other forms of expression, as if I hoped to make that which He chose clearer; but, in fact, that is immeasurably plainer, and fuller, and deeper, than any I can imagine. '*Abide in me*' at once recalls the natural analogy, while it is in strictness appropriate only to the condition of a voluntary being. It implies a possible separation, an act of adhesion; and yet it implies that this separation is altogether monstrous and anomalous; that this adhesion is merely the refusal to break a cord of love with which God is actually binding us. '*Abide in me*' is doubtless a command; but it is supported by the other clause, '*and I in you.*' 'Rest in me as if you were united to me; and a living power shall go forth from me to sustain and quicken you. And all this that you may *bear fruit.*' That part of the symbol is never for a moment lost sight of. The relation of the branch to the stem implies the passage of a productive life

from one into the other. The secret processes within are tending to a result which shall be visible. Christ tells them that they can bear nothing, that they will be utterly barren and dry, unless they retain their attachment to Him, unless He communicates a sap to them continually. He is not satisfied with the comparison; He again puts the doctrine into a more direct form, as if to assure them that He was not using metaphors, that He was taking the most direct method of bringing before them that which was not real but *the* reality, not *a* fact, but *the* fact of their existence. ‘*I am the Vine, ye are the branches.*’ ‘The energies and powers within you, when I quicken them, shall bring forth thoughts, deeds, words, that shall be living, and shall spread life. Without me all is dead.’

The last clause has brought the law home to the disciples themselves; but the former was more general: ‘*He that abideth in me, and I in him.*’ And so is the 6th verse: ‘*Except a man*’ (any one) ‘*abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*’ That ‘any one’ gives the sentence a fearful significance. Let us think well of it. Have we never felt as if, though no voice had cut us off from the fellowship of our brethren, we had cut ourselves off? Have we never felt an internal withering, as if the springs of life in us were all dried up? What was the secret of this condition, which we could trace to no outward violence? Or do we ask, ‘What is the cure? How may that separation be put an end to before it becomes fixed and everlasting? How may that secret withering be arrested before it ends in absolute death?’ The evil is traced to its source when we are told that we have not abided in Him; the remedy lies in that

command, and in no other. The dead sticks are gathered into a bundle and burnt. But the sap has not gone out of the Vine; that may still make the bough to sprout and bud.

The next verses take us a step further. *'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.'* He had said, *'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it.'* He can now give the words, *'in my name,'* their full force. It is not the name of one who may have power with Him to whom they are pleading, but who is far from *them*. It is the name of Him in whom they are actually dwelling, in whom they are one. And His words are the expression of His Father's will. So far, then, as those words dwell in them, and ascend up from them in prayer to God, so far they are asking according to His will, and He is doing that will in granting them their petitions. Not merely, as we render the passage, *'It shall be done for you,'* but *'It shall become to you.'* God's will shall work with your will, which it is moulding to itself. And so God is glorified in the fruit which you bring forth. The more rich you are in love and good works, the more is He Himself manifested in you, the more are you Christ's disciples.

Thus we are brought back to the ultimate ground of this relation between Christ and human beings. *'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: abide in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'* This is the continually recurring burden of this divine song. The love of the Father is at the root of all. The Son can do nothing but in obedience to that. He

believes it, obeys it, and so lives in it. The law of the disciples' being is the same. They are to believe in the love which is the manifestation and reflection of this love, to obey it, to live in it.

And now another gift is bestowed which we expect less, on this night of sorrow, than even that gift of peace of which I spoke last Sunday. *'These things have I said unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full'* (or fulfilled). Remember that this was spoken after He had been 'troubled in spirit' at the thought of His betrayal, not long before He was to pass through the agony. If any one says to himself,—who has not said it to himself?—'What is joy to me? how can I ever be partaker of that?' let him think thus. 'Christ knew, as none of us ever have known or shall know, what the death and extinction of all joy means; what it is to be alone; what it is to feel deserted of men and deserted of God. And yet He spoke of His joy, and of communicating that joy to the disciples. Whence came it? What was it? How could it be communicated? It was obedience to His Father's commands. It came from His submitting to those commands, though they brought Him to suffering, and desertion, and death. It is communicated to men along with that same power of obedience and endurance. His joy was to do a will which He knew to be a loving will, into whatsoever heights or depths it might bring Him. That obedience with all its consequences, He says, He will impart to us if we will receive it.'

Therefore He goes on: *'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command*

you. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth. But I have called you friends ; for all things which I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you.'

You see how earnestly He repeats those words which to many of us have such a paradoxical sound. 'I *command* you to love.' 'Just the thing,' we say in our hearts, 'which cannot be commanded, which must come from choice.' 'Just that,' He answers, 'which cannot come from choice, which must come from submission.' If a loving Being were not the Lord of our wills, were not the Lord of the universe, we might make mighty efforts to love, supposing we had been taught by some visitant from another region what love was ; and every such effort would be a rebellious struggle against our Master and our destiny. If there is a perfect Love creating and sustaining all things, if men have a Father, then such efforts cannot be rebellious, must be in conformity to this law : 'Love as I have loved you.' I have said this before, while dwelling on another part of this discourse ; but I must say it again and again, for it is the principle which underlies the whole of it, and upon which the distinction that is made here between servants and friends entirely depends. Christ manifests the greatest love which, He says, can be manifested. The love which He manifests is His Father's. He lays down His life in submission to that. They become His friends by yielding to that love, by confessing it, by allowing it to have dominion over them. He calls them no longer servants, but friends, because servants only know what they are to do, without knowing why they are to do it ; whereas He has told them the very secret of His Father's mind, the ground on which His acts and His precepts rest. It is

not that the friend is less under authority than the servant. It is not that the one does what He is bidden, and the other may do what he likes. It is that the friend enters into the very nature of the command,—that it is a command which is addressed to his will, and which moulds his will to its own likeness.

In strict consistency with this language, He goes on : ‘ *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain ; that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He may give it you.*’ All sectarianism, all self-seeking and self-willed religion, is based upon the idea, ‘ We have chosen Him. By an act of faith, or an act of love, we have entered into a relation ‘ with Him, which but for that act would not be.’ And the whole Gospel turns upon the opposite maxim to this : ‘ *I have chosen you.*’ ‘ You are merely obeying a call. You ‘ are merely confessing a relation, with the making of ‘ which you had nothing to do.’ Even when this doctrine of election has taken a narrow form,—even when it has been recognised chiefly as exclusive,—it has had a mighty power over the hearts of men. They have given themselves up, as they never could do when they thought they had selected their own Master, or were going upon errands of their own. But when it takes the form which it has here ; when Christ, who has loved them to the death, commands them to love others as He has loved ; when He tells them that He has placed them in their different circumstances that they may go and bring forth fruit,—that fruit being the men whom they shall persuade that they too belong to a race for which Christ has died, and which the Father loves ;—there cannot be any principle which is at

once so humbling and so elevating, which so takes away all notion from the disciple that there is any worth in his own deeds or words, which gives him so confident an assurance that God's word, spoken through him or through any man, will not return to Him void. And that, if I am not mistaken, is the reason why the promise, that whatever is asked of the Father in Christ's name shall be granted, is again introduced here with the variation, '*He may give it,*' instead of '*I will do it.*' A man who feels that he is called to a work, does not therefore feel power to accomplish it. He may feel—as Moses did, and as Jeremiah did—an increased feebleness, an utter childishness; but he understands that he may ask the Father, whose will he is called to do, that that will may be done; so he wins a strength which is and is not his own.

We wonder to find the command which we have heard so often, delivered once more in the 17th verse. But we presently discover that it is as an introduction to a new subject, and that in relation to that subject the old words have a new force. '*These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word which I spake to you, The servant is not greater than his Master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also.*' Here the love which He commands them to have for one another—the love which is His own, and which He inspires—is contrasted with the hatred of the world. The one difference which we have already discovered between the world and those whom He

chooses out of it, is that they confess a Centre, and that the world confesses none; that they desire to move, each in his own orbit, about this Centre, and that the world acknowledges only a revolution of each man about himself. The world, indeed, cannot realize its own principles. It must have companies, parties, sects,—bodies acknowledging some principle of cohesion, aspiring after a kind of unity. Still, as a world, this is the description of it; and therefore, as a world, it must hate all who say, ‘We are a society bound together, not by any law of our own, not by an election of our own, but by God’s law and election. And His law is a law of sacrifice. He gives up His Son; His Son gives up Himself. We are to give up ourselves in obedience to His Spirit, that we may do His work.’

As He had so lately called them friends, not servants, we may be surprised that here He gave them the old name again. But the title, servant, is not now a dishonourable title for those whom He has called friends. Since the Master became a servant, His friends must be content to be servants, otherwise they do not know what their Lord doeth; they cannot enter into His mind. With this service, too, they must take the hatred and persecution of the world as part of their endowment, as one of the treasures which their Lord shares with them. If it does not hate them, they must always fear that they are not loving each other, or loving it as God loves it.

‘But all these things will they do to you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now

have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. These are, perhaps, the most terrible words in the Old or New Testament. No descriptions of divine punishment which are written anywhere, can come the least into comparison with them for awfulness and horror. This gratuitous hatred—this hatred of Christ by men because they hate God, this hatred of God because He has manifested and proved Himself to be love—is something which passes all our conceptions, and yet which would not mean anything to us if our consciences did not bear witness that the possibility of it lies in ourselves. And do not let us put away that thought, brethren, or the other which is closely akin to it, that such hatred is only possible in a nation which, like the Jewish, is full of religious knowledge and of religious profession. There, our Lord tells us Himself, was a hatred of Him and of His Father which could be found nowhere else,—there, among scribes, and Pharisees, and chief priests. Let us ask God, that none of us may say of his brother, ‘This crime may be committed by thee;’ but each of himself: ‘God be merciful to me a sinner. Keep me by Thy love, abiding in Thy love. Help me to keep Christ’s commandment of loving my brother as well as Thee; else, if I am left to myself, I may sink into such a hell of hatred, as would be worse than all other hells that men have ever feared to think of.’

Let us pray this prayer, and then our Lord’s last words in this chapter will come to us as the most wonderful relief, as the very answer which we long for. ‘*But when the Comforter shall come, whom I will send to you from*

the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.' To have the Comforter, the Paraclete, with us, this is the security that the spirit of hatred shall not overcome us. To have the Spirit of truth with us, this is the security that we shall not be brought to believe a lie, or to disbelieve in the God of truth. To have Him testifying of Christ, the Son of Man and the Son of God, is the security that we shall abide in Him who has given the greatest proof of love that can be given, by laying down His life for His friends. To be able to testify of Him because we have been with Him, even when He was hidden from us, and we did not know how near He was; to testify of Him by our words and our deeds; this is the security that He is using us for His own gracious purpose, and that He will be glorified in the fruits which He will cause us to bring forth.

DISCOURSE XXV.

THE COMFORTER AND HIS TESTIMONY.

[Lincoln's Inn, 10th Sunday after Trinity (Morning), July 27, 1856.]

ST. JOHN XVI. 1.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

THE things which Jesus had just spoken to the disciples were, that His countrymen '*hated Him without a cause;*' that they '*hated both Him and His Father.*' These things were to take away the scandal which it would be to them to find that they made themselves hated by proclaiming a Gospel of peace and good will. '*They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*' It would be a strange result; fellowship with their brethren destroyed because they proclaimed the ground of fellowship; death inflicted upon them because they preached that death was overcome. Might not poor Galilæans, conscious of folly and sin, often say to themselves: 'We must be wrong; the rulers of the land must be wiser than we are. Ought we to turn the world upside down for an opinion of ours?' But '*these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.*' 'They have not known what the Lord and Light of their spirit meant: do you think

‘ they can know what you mean? They have hated my character; they have hated God in His own essential nature: would you expect them to love you who are sent forth to testify what that nature is, and how it has been manifested?’

All His education had been gradual; no word had been spoken till it was needed. So it is now. *‘And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to Him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?’* His meaning would only be entered into fully when the events explained it; but what a difference would it make to them that they could assure themselves then, ‘It is His meaning! All this He told us of.’ And this would be no mere act of memory, at least if memory is only concerned with the past. It would do more than anything else to remove the confusion which beset them, which His own words seemed almost to increase, as to His absence from them, and His presence with them. He had said that He was going to the Father; He had said that His going would be an elevation and a blessing to them. He had said that He should come to them. They could not see their way through these apparent inconsistencies. They had begun to ask whither He was going, but they had stopped short in the inquiry. The news of His departure possessed them; that was an unspeakable weight upon their minds. They scarcely thought that any knowledge of the ‘where’ would materially lighten it.

‘Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you

that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. It was the hardest of all truths ; the hearts which grief had occupied could afford little room for it. ‘ *It is expedient that I should go away.*’ Again the doubt will have come back in its full force : ‘ What compensation can there be for His absence ? What new friend can take His place ?’ Before, the promise, however difficult to comprehend, ‘ *I will come to you,*’ had taken away some of the bitterness of their anticipations. Now it was necessary that they should face the whole subject ; that they should apprehend the Comforter as a distinct Person from Him who was speaking to them ; that they should rise by degrees to feel how compatible this distinctness was with perfect unity. We, with our rough blundering dogmatism, may think that we can each these lessons at once ; and when we find how difficult it is for men to take them in, because they are men like ourselves—incapable of seeing more than half a truth at a time—may conclude just as rashly that no processes can ever bring any but a few learned and subtle men to such a discovery. But He who knew what was in man, was content to give His disciples line upon line ; to go over the steps of His teaching often again ; to make them conscious first of one need of their spirits, then of another ; to present each by turns with the satisfaction which it demands ; to be indifferent about apparent contradictions, so long as real contradictions were escaped. He who knew what was in man was sure that it is not the doctor or the systematizer, but the human being, who wants to be instructed in the distinction of Persons and the unity of Substance ; that our minds rest upon the principles to which these opposing words are the indices ; that the fisherman or the publican feels

after them with his heart, and assumes them in his discourse; that he and the doctor may enter into them together, when both are willing to perform the highest demand of science as well as of faith, by becoming little children.

Here, then, He tells them that His departure out of their sight was actually necessary in order that the Paraclete—whom He had spoken of as the bond of their union, as their efficient Teacher and Friend—should come to them. You would have supposed, perhaps, that He would have gone on to tell them what blessings the coming of this Paraclete would confer upon *them*, which He would not confer upon the world, since He had said that the world would not receive Him or know Him. It may cause us some surprise, then, to read: ‘*And when He is come, He will reprove the WORLD of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*’ It is impossible to get rid of this difficulty by any loose interpretation of the word *world*. It is one of the characteristic and vital words in all this discourse. It is used, as I think, with great precision and uniformity throughout St. John: to evade its force here, is to destroy his meaning altogether. On the other hand, if we will adhere steadfastly to the language as it stands, we gain a fresh and brilliant illustration of the work to which our Lord had destined His disciples, and apart from their performance of which they could look for no blessings to themselves. They were to be witnesses to a world which had forgotten its Centre, concerning that Centre; witnesses to a world which was created by a righteous God, and was meant to show forth His righteousness, in whom this righteousness dwelt, and how

it was to be sought after ; witnesses to a world which had set up a prince of its own, that his power must come to an end, that it had been proved to be weakness.

How could they fulfil such a mission as this? What could their arguments or their rhetoric avail to bring home such convictions to a single Jew or a single idolater, to say nothing of a world of Jews, or a world of idolaters? By their very nature, such convictions must be inward and radical. They could not play about the surface of men's hearts, but must penetrate into them. Whence could come this demonstration? Our Lord tells the disciples at once that they are to despair of its ever coming from them, that they are to be sure it will come from the Spirit with which He will endue them. Not they, but He, will convince the world ; because, though the world may not receive Him neither know Him, it has been formed to receive all quickening life from Him ; it must confess His presence, even if it would hide itself from His presence. And the disciples were to go forth in this faith ; in the certainty that wherever they met a man, Jew or Gentile, there was one whose Head was Christ, who owed his life to Christ, who was receiving light from Christ, and who only sinned because he did not own this Head, confess this Life, open his conscience and heart to this Light. The Spirit in them would show them this truth concerning themselves, and would only show it to them concerning themselves, because they were partakers of the nature which every worshipper of Jupiter or Brahm had as much as they. The disciples were to go forth in the certainty that the righteous Man whom they had once seen upon earth, in whom they had beheld the grace and truth of the Father, was the same when they saw Him no more. They were

to believe in Him as the Lord their righteousness; they were to believe that the righteousness of God was in Him; so they were to rise up righteous men, children bearing the image of their Father. The Spirit within them would give them this faith; the Spirit within them would make them partakers of this righteousness. And that same Spirit would convince the world of this righteousness, would bring this standard continually before it, would make this standard the real measure of its laws, its polity, its customs; the measure of its deflections from right and truth. There would be an inward conviction, a continually growing conviction among men, that nothing short of this could be the human standard, even when they were setting up another, even when they were pronouncing this to be unattainable, even when they said that they would rather not attain it if they could. The disciples were to go forth in the belief that when the spirit of selfishness seemed strongest in themselves, strongest among their fellows,—when they were most disposed to bow to him and acknowledge him as their king,—he was not their king, but a lying usurper, whose pretensions Christ had confounded in the wilderness and on the cross, whom they could trample underfoot if they remembered that Christ's Father was their Father. The Spirit would teach them that this prince of the world was not their prince. He would teach them, therefore, that he was not indeed, and by right, any man's prince, that all might disclaim him, that for the sake of all he had been judged. And the Spirit would convince the world also of this, that the untruths to which it bows down can have only a brief dominion; that that which is, must prevail over that which is not; that all evil lingers on under a curse which

has been pronounced, and shall be fully and eternally executed.

All this they would learn hereafter ; it could only be prophecy to them now. And there were many things which it would be of no avail to utter even in prophecy. '*I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now. But,*' our Lord goes on, '*when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all truth,*'—into the whole truth, not merely into scattered fragments of it. For He shall have dominion over your whole being. He shall guide it into that fulness which it longs for, the fulness of God Himself. But it shall be still a *guidance* ; He will take you by regular steps along the road which leads to this satisfaction. '*For He shall not speak of Himself, but what He shall hear that shall He speak, and He shall tell you things to come.*' We should not, perhaps, be able to make out the force of the words, '*He shall not speak of Himself,*' if the history of the Church and the world had not expounded them. Again and again there have been teachers in the Church who have spoken loudly of an illuminating Spirit. They have said that a dispensation of the Spirit had come, which made the old Gospel of Jesus Christ poor and obsolete ; they have said that now the Spirit was all that men had to think of or believe in. So spoke a portion of the Franciscans, in the thirteenth century ; some of the brethren and sisters of the Free Spirit, in the fourteenth ; some of the Anabaptists, in the sixteenth ; some of the Quakers, in the seventeenth ; so speak not a few who are revolting against Materialism, without having found any safe standing-ground from which to oppose it, in our own. The spirit in such men speaks '*of itself.*' Such a spirit, our Lord says, is not the Holy

Spirit; for He will speak whatsoever things He hears; He will bring to us the message of a Father, from whom He comes. He will not make us impatient of a Lord and Ruler, but desirous of one, eager to give up ourselves to His guidance, eager to get rid of our own fancies and conceits, and to enter more into fellowship with all men. He will not allow us to be satisfied with our advanced knowledge or great discoveries, but will always be showing us things that *are coming*; giving us an apprehension of truths that we have not yet reached, though they be truths which are '*the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*' That may not be the whole meaning of the words, '*things to come*;' the phrase may intimate that foresight which is given to those who study principles, meditating on the past, and believing in God. The Spirit which our Lord promises is assuredly the Spirit who spoke by the prophets of old, and has spoken by all His servants who have humbled themselves, and sought light and wisdom from above. But these two senses do not contradict each other; and the first is, I think, more directly suggested by the context. It may also imply that the Spirit, who does not speak of Himself, leads men away from that incessant poring over the operations and experiences of their inner life, which is unhealthy and morbid, to dwell upon the events which are continually unfolding themselves in God's world under His providence, and teaches them to expect the final issue of those events in the complete manifestation and triumph of the Son of God.

The last meaning would connect the 13th verse with the 14th, '*He shall glorify me.*' 'Whenever the Spirit of truth is working most energetically in you, the effect will be that the glory of the Deliverer and Head of man becomes

‘ more dear to you ; that you proclaim me more and more earnestly in that character.’ ‘ *For He, the Comforter, shall take of mine, and shall shew it to you.*’ ‘ He shall, in your hours of deepest gloom and despondency, reveal to you One who is above yourselves, One in whom you may forget yourselves, One in whom you may see all that perfection of your nature which it will drive you to despair to seek in yourselves. Not, indeed, that you could be satisfied with even this vision, if it were only the vision of a Son of Man, of what is most glorious in humanity.’ ‘ *But all things which the Father hath are mine.*’ ‘ All the glory of the Godhead shines forth in the Manhood ; all that original goodness and truth and love which man is created to long for and to show forth.’ ‘ *Therefore, said I, He shall take of mine and shall shew it to you.*’

He has returned to the point from which He started. His going to the Father has been the subject of His discourse ever since He met them in the upper room at the feast. That has led Him to speak of the Comforter who should tell them of His Father ; afterwards of His own eternal union to them, as the root of their fellowship, as the spring of their life ; then again of the Comforter who should teach them of both Him and the Father, who should make them witnesses of their eternal unity to men. It is no break in the discourse when He adds, ‘ *A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.*’ The words which we translate ‘ see ’ in the two clauses, are different. I do not know that I can discern the shades of their meaning ; but I am sure that there is a reason for the variation, and that it should not be overlooked. The word *θεωρεῖτε* γ, perhaps, intimate that for a time they would lose all

perception of Him, even an intellectual perception; the word *ὄψεσθε*, that they should see Him again with the eyes of the body as well as of the mind, may have cheered the disciples afterwards; at present it added to their confusion. *'Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith.'* They are like men awakening out of a dream, full of troubles and of joys mixed strangely together. He was departing from the earth; He was going to the Father; He was to prepare a place for them. What did it all mean? They thought He was about to tell them; these words *'a little while'* seem to throw them back into more than their old perplexity.

'Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?' He knew that they were desirous to ask Him, because He had taught them to ask. The processes of their minds were under His guidance, as well as the issues of the processes. He determined nothing for them till He had led them to feel after it. So their conversations have become lesson-books for all ages; not resolutions of doubts by peremptory decisions, but histories of transactions in the hearts of men like ourselves, whom the Divine Word chose as instances of the method by which He educates us. And the sentences which follow show us something more of this method, and make us understand how little even the most celestial food can nourish us if it is taken in without being digested.

‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice : and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.’

Their thoughts of the ‘*little while*’ had been half sad, half frivolous. They supposed that He could at once tell them what He meant by telling them how long He would be absent, and in what place and under what circumstances He would meet them again. He presents the subject in an altogether different light ; for He tells them that the little while in which He shall be hidden from them will be an hour of travail and of death, and that the little while of His reappearance will be the hour of the birth of a man into the world. We feel at once that these cannot be metaphors ; that if the death of Christ is anything, and the resurrection of Christ is anything, this must be *the* language, the most exact and living which Christ Himself could speak, or we could hear, to determine the signification of them. Here, as throughout the conversation, our Lord connects the world with His disciples, and at the same time contrasts the one with the other. They will mourn that they have lost a friend ; the world will rejoice that it has got rid of an enemy. But their ultimate joy must be that a MAN, *the* Man for whom the world has been waiting so long, has been born into it. They can have no joy for themselves which is not a joy for mankind, which is not a thanksgiving for its victory. ‘*And ye now therefore have*

scrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' They should see Him returning the Conqueror of death, the Conqueror of man's enemy; that should be a joy not dependent upon the sight of their eyes, not dependent upon His visible continuance with them; it should be a joy of the heart, and it should be a joy which no man could take from them. Their own weakness, or sin, or death, could not, for this joy would raise them above themselves; this would give them an inheritance in One in whom was no sin or ignorance, and over whom death had no power. The unbelief of others could not, for the fact of His triumph would remain the same whether men confessed it or no.

He goes on: '*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*' This was the secret, half-understood cause of their grief, as it is one cause of the grief of all who are about to lose a friend. We can go to him no more; we can tell him of no more difficulties; we can ask him no more questions. 'But in that day,' He says, 'when you shall see me again,—in that day 'of full, satisfying joy,—you will not feel this want; you 'will not be longing to ask that which only concerns your- 'selves; you will feel yourselves bound together in my 'name, a family of brothers in an Elder Brother. The vision 'of a Father will open clearly upon you; and verily what- 'ever you ask Him in my name,—in the name of Him 'who binds you to one another, and binds you all to the 'Father of heaven and earth,—He will give it you. For

‘ you will desire that which He desires, that which I have
 ‘ died and risen again to work out, the glory of His
 ‘ name, the coming of His kingdom, the doing of His will.
 ‘ Hitherto you have not entered into this joy. Your
 ‘ thoughts have been narrow, weak, limited to yourselves.
 ‘ When you pray to the Father in my name, when you
 ‘ enter into communion with Him, your joy will be full ;
 ‘ you will attain the highest blessedness of which man is
 ‘ capable.’

‘ *These things,*’ He continues, ‘ *have I spoken unto you in
 proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak
 unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the
 Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not
 unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father
 Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have
 believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the
 Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the
 world, and go to the Father.*’

This is the climax of His discourse, one may say of all human discourse; though prayer, as I think we shall find in the next chapter, may take us into a higher region still. He has been speaking to them in symbols, proverbs, parables. He has been showing them how all nature, how human transactions, how their own lives, all implied a kingdom of heaven, were ladders upon which angels were ascending and descending. The ladder would not be thrown down; parables and proverbs would remain everlastingly true. But now His voice could be heard who was at the top of the ladder. The Father, who had been declared through all subordinate relations, would Himself be revealed. And though all prayers are ascending up to

Him, yet His love would be discovered as itself the fountain of them all. Even the Son, the great Intercessor, will not say to them that He will pray for them, if they take prayer to mean anything which is to alter the Father's purpose, or augment His love. For of His will His own words are the utterance and expression. He came forth from the Father, and is come into the world. He is going back to the Father to unite the world to Him.

'His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee : by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.'

It seemed to the disciples as if all clouds were now scattered. They thought the Man was already born into the world. Alas! it was in their own faith they were still in part believing, not in Him. The travail-hour must be passed through by them as by us; that which would scatter all trust in themselves, that which would leave them only God to trust in. *'Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, in which ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.'*

Their hour of weakness was at hand. It would be also His. They would be deserted, and He would be deserted. And yet He adds, *'I am not alone, because the Father is with me.'* *'Your faith will perish. Even I shall cry, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"'* And yet that eternal union which I have been declaring to you, which I have come into the world to manifest, will be unshaken. This desertion will make it manifest. And because that is unshaken, your union with me will be unshaken also. Nothing which I have said to you will prove untrue. *"These things have*

‘ *I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation,*’—that world which surrounds you, and in the evils and faithlessness of which you share. “*But be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.*” Its wars and divisions and hatreds have not vanquished me ; I have vanquished them. Not the king whom the world has chosen for itself, but the Son whom the Father has set over it, shall reign in it for ever and ever.’

DISCOURSE XXVI.

THE PRAYER OF THE HIGH PRIEST.

[Lincoln's Inn, 10th Sunday after Trinity (Afternoon), July 27, 1858.]

ST. JOHN XVII. 1.

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

THE more we enter into our Lord's teaching, the more profound is our apprehension of the dignity, the awfulness, the divinity of words; the more we confess their insufficiency. If He who was in the beginning with God is the Word, if words have been the expression of His mind, they awaken those thoughts in our minds which they are intended to clothe. But if the Word has spoken of Himself as a Son; if He has said that He has come from a Father; if He has promised a Comforter, He has taken us out of the region of words into the heart of the realities which they represent. It is the Son Himself who reveals the Father: what could words effect without His Person? The Father Himself, He has said, draws us to the Son: words would be spoken in vain if there were not that wonderful and loving attraction upon the hearts of the creatures whom He has formed in the image of the Son. The Spirit's work is to produce that inward conviction which

words cannot produce, to act upon the man himself, to bind those into fellowship whom the diversities of speech and custom have made unintelligible to each other, to testify to men of the Father and the Son, as the ground of all speech, thought, and being. But here, as throughout this Gospel, the deepest revelation is the commonest and simplest. As we enter into the region of the divine relations, of divine communion, all must tremble; none are forbidden to approach. Intellectual differences disappear; here every spirit may find its home.

We sometimes ask ourselves, as we read the prayer in this chapter—and it is good that we should ask ourselves—‘Is this the model of our prayer? Is Christ giving us an example here that we should follow in His steps? Or does it stand awfully alone, separated from every other that ever has been or can be offered; one which we are to wonder at the more, because so vast a chasm separates it from all our acts and efforts of devotion?’ I believe that if we have *not* understood the acts and discourses on the Paschal night, there can be but one answer to this question. ‘The Son of God praying to His Father the night before His Passion,—how entirely isolated,’ we should say, ‘must such intercourse be from all that ever has been, from all that can be conceived of! What blasphemy to connect it, even in thought, with the petitions of those who have little to do but to confess their sins, and supplicate forgiveness!’ But if we have studied these chapters; if we have learnt that when the disciples saw Christ they saw the Father; if we have understood that He is the Vine, and they the branches; if we have known what He meant when He told them that they were to ask in His name, that their joy might be full; if we have observed how He

distinguishes the disciples from the world, and yet how He teaches them that everything they do is to be done for the world, and as a witness of God's love to the world; then, I think, we shall feel that it is the greatest of all contradictions to suppose that this prayer does not contain in itself the essence and meaning of all prayer, that it is not the one which best expresses the wants and longings of every man, that it is not the prayer of all the children of God, in all places and in all ages, because it is the prayer of the only-begotten Son of God.

'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come.' He had spoken to His disciples of an hour of travail, which was to terminate in a new birth for them and for the world. The world knew nothing of this hour; no one of its works or pleasures was interrupted; that night was like every other night. The disciples had a dull sense of present oppression, a vague presentiment of approaching calamity. But they, as little as the world, felt what the sorrow was, still less what joy they had to expect when it was over. He knew it all. He knew inwardly that that was the hour to fulfil the purpose for which He was come into the world. The life and death of the world were gathered up into it. The feeling would have been intolerable if it had been a solitary, separate one; but the foresight of it had been given Him by His Father; the sense that the hour was come was imparted by Him; His prayer was the acknowledgment of that which had been revealed to Him, His filial acceptance of that which had been prepared for Him. And surely, brethren, all prayer must be this. It is the acknowledging of that, be it sad or joyful, which has been given to us; it is the casting our experience upon Him

who has brought us into it, and who understands it, because without Him we cannot go through it, or in the least understand it ourselves.

And this is the petition which is grounded upon that confession, '*Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*' Every prayer that had been presented since the creation-day had been a prophecy of this. When the Psalmist cried out of the depths, '*Lord, hear my voice ;*' when he said, '*Let not any be offended or confounded because of me ;*' when he confessed his sin, that God might be justified, and *might be clear when He was judged*, he *seemed* to say, '*Glorify me, that I may glorify thee ;*' he *seemed* to pray, '*Let me, David, be brought out of my ignorance and darkness and sin, that thy name may be honoured and not blasphemed.*' He did *really* pray, '*Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee !*' He prayed that not he, but that the Son of Man, might be raised and delivered and exalted, in order that God's own image might be exalted, and might shine forth upon men. When the Son of Man actually in His own person prayed this prayer, He was expressing that which was latent and could not be expressed in those earlier petitions ; He was bringing them forth into their full clearness and power ; He was actually presenting them in His own name to Him who had known and inspired the suppliant.

'As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him.'

I do not think that when we are occupied with the words of our Lord Himself, spoken in prayer the night before His crucifixion, we have a right to alter them in the slightest degree, for the sake of extracting from them what may seem to us a more natural and obvious signification. I am

quite aware that our translators would have appeared to themselves and to many of their readers to be using an uncouth and strange form of speech if they had rendered the words literally, '*That all that which thou hast given to Him, He may give to them life eternal.*' But I think they were bound to encounter any apparent difficulty of construction, rather than to incur the risk of contracting or perverting this sense. It was not a time to ask themselves whether their understandings could fully measure or take in the words. If they had faith in Him who spoke them, they should have given them exactly, and left Him to interpret them in His own time to those who had need of them. Christ says that His Father has given Him power over all flesh. He speaks, again, of all (*everything*) which His Father had given to Him. And then, leaving the neuter, *πάν*, He uses the masculine plural, *them, αὐτοῖς*, surely that He may denote the universality of the gift, as well as the personality of those on whom it is bestowed. It seems to me that we cannot afford to lose either of the truths which He thus declares, because it requires a violation of the technicalities of grammar, not of its essential laws, to utter them both. I suppose it was only in prayer that even He could have united them; and possibly it is only in prayer that we can apprehend them, so that they should not clash with each other.

'*And this is the eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*' If these words came upon us for the first time, without any preparation, we should perhaps think them very wonderful, but should either pass them over, or try to reduce them under some notions or formulas of ours. But in this Gospel we have been most carefully educated into

an apprehension of their force; they do not burst upon us suddenly, though they may be both more full and more distinct than any with which we can compare them. In the night dialogue with Nicodemus, by the well with the woman of Samaria, in the synagogue at Capernaum after the feast of the five loaves, in Jerusalem on the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, we have been hearing of a life which the Son of Man gives, a life of the Spirit, a life which is not of yesterday or to-day, a life of communion, a life of God. If what was said there was true, this must be true; or rather, this is the truth which throws back a light upon the words concerning the new life, and the '*water of life*,' and the '*bread of life*.' This explains the assurance in man that he is born to know that which is above himself, and his equally strong assurance that he must be known before he can know. The only true God knows the creature in all his wanderings and ignorance and falsehood, knows him in that Son in whom He has created him. When he turns to that God of truth, when he confesses Him and the Son, who is His image and the Light of man, then comes the true life, the eternal life, which Christ, who has power over all flesh, alone confers upon it.

'I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the worlds were.' It is impossible to say anything which will not weaken the force of these words. All I desire is to show you how they fulfil the idea, which St. John has been presenting to us from the beginning of his Gospel, of a Word who was with God and was God, of a Son who had come forth from the Father to reveal His

grace and truth to men, of a Son who was returning to that Father as to His proper home. All is consistent from first to last; all has been divine, and all human. No clashing of the one with the other; but the human showing forth the divine as the perfect light from which it has been derived; the human leading on to the divine as that in which it is satisfied.

Hitherto this prayer has had no special reference to the disciples. He has spoken of His power over all flesh, of eternal life, of the work which He had accomplished. Now it turns to them: '*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*' We have traced the use of this language through the later discourses of this Gospel, and have seen how entirely they are in harmony with the commencement of it. The disciples are taken out of the narrow exclusive sect-world by which they are surrounded, to be a family of witnesses for the Father and the Son; witnesses of that love which the world—and no part of it so much as the religious world in Jerusalem—was by its acts, its words, its principles, repudiating. To those Jesus had manifested the name of His Father. He had shown them what He was, and that they belonged to Him. Amidst all their confusions and errors, they had kept firm hold of this word. They had yielded to Christ's guidance; believing, when they understood Him least, that there was none else to whom they could go; that He had the words of eternal life. And they had now learnt a deeper lore. They had referred His calling and guidance to the Father. '*Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;*

and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.' This had been the design of all His discipline. It had been working gradually upon them and in them. But there had been still a clinging to Him as *their* Master; the vision of a Father had only just dawned upon them. Now in these last discourses they had learnt the mystery of His relation and their relation to the invisible world. Their belief might not be strong enough to be proof against all storms, but it had taken root. Their position was that of friends, not servants; they were waiting for the Comforter to tell them fully of the Father; already they had the sense of not being born of flesh, or of blood, or of the will of men, but of God.

'I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.' It is not because I wish in the least to evade the force of these words as they stand in our version, that I plead for a more exact rendering: *'I am asking concerning them; not concerning the world do I ask, but concerning those whom thou hast given me.'* I believe the impression left on many minds by our use of the preposition *for*, is that Christ is indifferent to the world, and only solicitous on behalf of a certain select circle. I do not say that any one will quite put that thought into words. When he sees it stated, he will shrink from it. Still it lurks in men's minds, and it is very desirable to remove any prop, however feeble and unimportant in itself, which may sustain it there. If any one says, 'But the force of the words lies not in this *for*, but in the expression, "*whom thou hast given me,*"' I say at once that, so far from wishing to make *that* expression less strong, I would insist upon it vehemently, as marking the

distinction between a family which stands in its calling by God, and a world which attempts to associate on another ground than that calling, which chooses for itself. Christ is here praying concerning those who are to be the lights of this dark world, the salt of this corrupting earth; those who are to teach the world, in Whom it is constituted, the earth, by Whom it has been created and is kept alive.

'They are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.' All that has been said in the Paschal discourses, concerning the unity of the disciples with Him and His unity with the Father, concerning the essential and eternal dependence of the human unity upon the divine, is here translated into prayer. And yet, *translated* is an unsatisfactory word. It rather finds its only root and ground in prayer. For what is prayer but that intercourse of the Father with the Son, of the family with its Head, which this unity makes possible? And what is the object and result of all prayer but this, that what is true in the mind of God may be true in the actual condition of men; all the hindrances which self-will has opposed to the divine Will being finally and for ever taken away?

'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' Here, no doubt, is an unfathomable abyss; we cannot see down into it; to attempt it, is to hazard the loss of our footing. One of those whom the Father has given to Christ (so the passage seems to say, and we

cannot alter the terms of it to fit our fancies or wishes; perishes in his own selfishness and sin. Jesus says so. He says that that which had been written of old had come to pass; curses had come upon the man who loved cursing; he who had chosen death had been left to die. It is terrible to think of. But how infinitely more terrible would this fact, and all the facts that are daily occurring in the world's history, be, if they were not associated with the gift of eternal life, with the cry of the Son to the Holy Father on behalf of all whom He has given Him! What the heights and depths of that prayer are, none of us can know. It is enough to know who spoke and who heard, what love is above all and beneath all, how that love has been manifested and accomplished on this earth of ours. To dwell in it must be eternal life; to be separated from it must be eternal death.

'And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' The idea of men living as children of God, members of Christ's body, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, with a world and a flesh and an evil spirit striving against them which they can renounce and can overcome, is not one which is strange to any of us. It is only too familiar. We know the sounds so well, and we have repeated them so often and so idly, that the words have lost their significance; we think they are words of art, or words of course. Here we have the beginning and ground of them.

Throughout, St. John has been speaking of a race born, not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of men, but of God. Christ here declares that He has founded such a race upon the earth. He prays His Father to keep it in the world, not to take it out of the world; to keep it by His word, His quickening, uniting word, which a world that is divided and is seeking death must hate; to keep it in the confession of Him who is not of the world, but is the Son of God; to keep it from that evil spirit who would make it selfish, divided, hating, and therefore the worst portion of the world against which it is to bear witness.

‘Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.’ Surely, brethren, there are no words that we need to meditate on more than these: for it cannot be denied that sanctity and truth have become strangely separated among those who call themselves by Christ’s name. Oftentimes it would seem as if holiness were pursued to the utter denial and dereliction of truth; nay, as if it courted an alliance with falsehood. Oftentimes, again, it would seem as if men who desired truth and pursued it, regarded it as a dead and abstract thing, which has no affinity with the life of man which has no effect in making him purer or better. Nevertheless, the voice has ascended on high, ‘Make them holy by truth,’ for truth only can make holy. Whatever is contrary to it or mixed with falsehood, must defile and make base. And the prayer has been heard, and will be answered completely at last; for the Son of God, who is the way, and the truth, and the life, took our flesh upon Him, and met falsehood in all the forms in which it

presents itself in this world, and sanctified Himself, and kept Himself from all contact with it, only by the might and energy of truth, only by submitting in all things to His Father, who is the God of truth. And these temptations He underwent, and this battle He fought, for the sake of His disciples, that they also might be sanctified by truth and truth only, that it might be an armour to them on the right hand and on the left, that they might live for it, and die for it.

In this second part of the prayer, all has had direct reference to the disciples who surrounded Him, whatever ultimate reference it might have to the remotest corner of the universe. But in the third part of it, He says expressly: *‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.’* Here is a prayer for the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here on earth from age to age; a prayer offered by the Head of that Church to His Father, offered on the night before His sacrifice was to be perfected; a prayer grounded not upon some wish or high aspiration hard to be realized, but, as He has just said, upon truth, upon the eternal truth that the Father is in Him and He in the Father, and that He is the Head of all men and that all live by Him. This glory, He says, He has given not to those eleven who were sitting about Him then, but to all everywhere who

should believe in Him through their words. He has put this glory upon them; He has given them the name of Himself, and of His Father, and of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, to be *their* name, that they might dwell in it and abide in it. And He prays for them, that they may not choose to be divided when He has made them one, that they may not make themselves the curses of the world by sharing in all its envies and hatreds, and by pleading God's name as the excuse for them, when He has sent them into the world to be the witnesses that His own Son has declared His love to it, and has gone forth from Him to bring it into the circle of His love.

He began by saying, that eternal life was to know the only true God and His Son Jesus Christ; He ends with saying, that this is the glory which all are created to seek after, and which He has taken flesh that they may attain and possess with Him. '*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee*' (has not known thy righteousness, but has supposed thee to be altogether unrighteous like itself; has not known thee by that name of Father, but has taken thee to be hard-hearted and grudging like itself): '*but I have known thee,*' (known thee as the image of thy righteousness, known thee as thy Son,) '*and these have known that thou hast sent me.*' These have seen thy light shining forth through me. These have beheld my glory as the glory of an only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. '*And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it*' (to the end of all things): '*that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*'

DISCOURSE XXVII.

THE PASSION.

[Lincoln's Inn, 11th Sunday after Trinity (Morning), August 3, 1856.]

ST. JOHN XIX. 37.

And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they have pierced.

IN our services for the earlier days of Passion Week we read carefully and at length the narratives of the first three Evangelists. The narrative of St. John is reserved for Good Friday.

There is great wisdom, I think, as well as courage in this course. The diversities in these narratives, instead of being concealed from us, are forced upon our notice; we are taught that we shall gain insight into the whole purpose of the writers of the Gospels, of God Himself, by considering them. We are taught, at the same time, that it is here we are to look for the unity of the Gospels; that all the lines in them have been tending to this point; that we must learn what they signify at the Cross itself. The special honour which is given to St. John may have been suggested by the name of 'beloved disciple.' But it has, I think, a higher justification. St. John's Gospel takes us into the very heart of the Good Friday mystery. The passages in his narrative of the Passion, which do not occur

in the other Gospels, throw back a light upon them, while they explain the special end for which he wrote. But they do much more. They show us why the death of Christ has been, and must be, the centre of the Gospel concerning Him; why all His discourses, nay, even that prayer I was trying to speak of last Sunday, would be worthless and unmeaning without it. How we should tremble to overlay the record of it with our words! How careful the Evangelists are that we should not be hindered from seeing the facts, and the Person, even by listening to their words! I shall attempt little more this morning than to seize those points of the narrative contained in the 18th and 19th chapters of St. John, which are different from the narratives in St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. But, that we may feel the force of these differences, it is necessary to say a word respecting their essential agreement.

This agreement is negative as well as positive. In contemplating the passion of our Lord, one class of devout persons have encouraged a sentimental habit of mind. They have dwelt upon the seven wounds, upon the crown of thorns, upon the circumstances either of mental or bodily anguish which seem to separate this Divine death from every other. A second class has meditated less upon the suffering and upon the Person of the Sufferer; much more upon the effects which the suffering would produce either upon men or upon God. I do not condemn these courses; none can tell what good for life or for death may have been extracted from either. I only say, that the method in the four Gospels is equally different from both; and seeing that those who have chosen the one or the other acknowledge the authority of Scripture as paramount and divine, I cannot offend them if I add that the Gospel method is

simpler, deeper, and more reverent than theirs, and that probably any blessing which they have divided between them will be ultimately possessed in fulness by those who follow it.

In trying to discover what this method is, the reader is likely to be struck with the importance which all the Evangelists attach to the arraignment of Christ before Caiaphas and before Pontius Pilate. Perhaps, if they were honest with themselves, they would confess that they have been surprised at finding so much said upon this part of the subject, so little comparatively of the crucifixion itself. But the more we reflect, the more clearly we shall perceive that in this, which seems to them the legal portion of the history, the ground is laid for that part of it which is most transcendent and divine, and also which is nearest to the sympathies of all human beings. The charge before the Sanhedrim was, that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God; the charge before the Roman governor was, that Jesus claimed to be a king. To set Him forth in that double character, as the Witness of the Father whom Jewish rulers were denying, as the true human King whose power the absolute emperor was counterfeiting and usurping,—this was the business of the Evangelists in their records of all Christ's discourses and acts. And it was this which gave the significance to His death. It was *the* divine death and *the* human death, the death which manifested the mind and will of the Father; it was the death in which all men were to see their own. In this respect St. John does not in the least differ from his predecessors. It was certainly not *less* his purpose than theirs to exhibit the Son of God and the Son of Man. What was spoken against Jesus, and what He spoke before Caiaphas and

before Pilate, could not therefore be passed over or dwelt upon with less emphasis in the fourth Gospel than in the other three. It must be dwelt on with more emphasis. He can tell us nothing of Calvary till he has made us understand Who was brought there, and why He was brought.

And as in this main characteristic of the other Evangelists St. John resembles them, so also he follows them in all the chief incidents which they record. The night scene when He is apprehended by Judas and the band of officers from the chief priests; St. Peter's attempt to defend Him by cutting off the ear of Malchus; St. Peter's denial; the cry of the multitude for Barabbas; the purple robe and the crown of thorns; Pilate's efforts to release Him; the inscription on the cross; and the burial in the tomb of Joseph; are told as carefully in St. John as if no previous narratives of them had been known in the Church.

Yet under each of these heads points are brought out by St. John to which there is nothing corresponding in the earlier Evangelists, and which one feels instinctively would have been out of place in them. The first is this in the story of the apprehension: '*Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*'

The last quotation is taken from the prayer which St. John alone has given us. But I think the words, '*I am,*' which made the officers stagger as they drew near with their torches in the dark night to the Nazarene prophet, have also their interpretation in previous words which belong exclusively to this Gospel. We are told in the 8th chapter that the Jews in the Temple took up stones to cast at Jesus, because He appeared to them to be claiming the words spoken in the bush as if they were spoken of Him. Was there not a recollection of those words as He stood before them now? Did not the clear light of righteousness and truth in His face carry them home to the conscience of the officers, and make them feel for a moment that One was using them who had a right to use them, One to whom they owed homage?

The struggle was soon over; they had been sent to do a work, and they went through it. Then came that other sentence, '*Let these go their way,*' which fulfilled, St. John says, the words, '*Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.*' What! we say to ourselves, Were not those words spoken for all time? Did not they refer to a deliverance from ultimate perdition? Could they be accomplished in the deliverance of the eleven Apostles from the immediate peril of being apprehended with their Lord? I answer, the more we become acquainted with the letter and with the spirit of St. John's narrative, the more we understand that he regards every act done by our Lord, to effect ever so temporary a redemption, for ever so small a body, or so insignificant an individual, as a sign of what He is, of the work in which He is always engaged, of the blessing which He has wrought out and designs for the universe. If we do not like to take this as a sign that the words of that prayer

were uttered on earth and accomplished in heaven, we may form what sublime notions we will about Christ's redemption, but they will be notions only; they will not belong to reality; at best they will point to some good which we expect for ourselves; they will not glorify Him from whom all good comes.

The incident of Peter smiting the high-priest's servant follows immediately upon this sentence. The sequence is, I think, significant. The Apostle begins to defend his Master; he does not know that his Master is defending him. Of His disciples He loses none; but '*the cup which His Father has given Him, He must drink.*' Then the vigorous champion is chilled. He must warm himself at the fire, for it is cold, while his Master is in the hall before the high-priest; the faces of maid-servants terrify him; he forgets that he was in the garden with Christ; he forgets his own violence; and the cock crows. The story is told with peculiar vividness by St. John, but it is the same in substance with that which the Hebrew Matthew told of the Apostle of the Hebrews; which Mark told of his own kinsman and master, writing perhaps from his dictation.

But the answer of Jesus to the high-priest is found only in St. John. '*I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.*' I do not quote these words only or chiefly because they show that He who when He was reviled reviled not again, could answer in a way which the bystanders thought offensive to the dignity of the high-priest; so justifying words that have been pronounced unseemly in many of his followers,

when they have been brought before priests and rulers ; nor because they show how easily affected reverence for an administrator of the law may be joined with an outrage upon the law itself. I quote them much more because they occur in that Evangelist, who has been suspected of revealing a secret lore which Christ had kept back from those who heard Him in the synagogue and in the Temple. That inference has been grounded upon those Paschal discourses which I have been considering lately ; discourses especially designed to prepare the disciples for delivering a message to the world ; discourses of which the main characteristic is, that they contain the promise of a Comforter who should deliver them from their narrowness, and who should convince the world. But here is a testimony, coming after those discourses, from the lips of Christ himself, that He had no esoteric lore, that His doctrine may be learnt from that which He spoke openly, and that His disciples are teaching another doctrine than His, if theirs is not one which can be proclaimed as good news to the universe.

It is St. John who tells us that the Jews did not '*go into the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled, that they might eat the passover.*' This most characteristic trait of a religious and godless nation ever put upon record, should be thought of by each of us in silence and awe, since every age has brought some terrible repetitions of it. What cautions have not inquisitors taken lest they should be defiled ! what care have they not used to prepare themselves for feasts, at which their hands were to be dipped deep in blood for the honour of their god ! They never fancied that they were copying the Pharisees of Jerusalem. We wrap ourselves in our Protestantism, and think we are quite secure that we shall not follow them. Alas ! there is our peril ! to dream

that there is one evil tendency in Jews or in Romanists which is not in us, that there is one crime of theirs which we may not commit!

It is from St. John that we learn that Pilate would have wished the people to take Jesus, and judge Him according to their own law; and that they, acting in the spirit of the advice of Caiaphas, waived the privilege which perhaps they might have asserted, that He might die the Roman death of the cross, and perish as a traitor against the Cæsar. And it is St. John who gives us that dialogue in Pilate's hall, of which we are only beginning, after eighteen hundred years, to spell out the sense, though during all those eighteen hundred years the sense has been declaring itself in wonderful ways. *'Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.'*

The other Evangelists have spoken to us of a kingdom

of heaven, a kingdom the nature of which might be explained by parables of nature, the powers of which were manifested in acts of healing and blessing to men. It was a kingdom in the strictest sense, a kingdom set up on earth to rule over the earth. But it was not of this world. Its capacity of blessing men arose from its not being created by them, or dependent upon them. It was God's kingdom, therefore it was as unlike as possible to the tyrannies by which the world had tormented itself. St. John had gone in his Gospel to the root of this doctrine. He had spoken of a Word by whom the world is created, who is the Source of its life, though it knows Him not. He had spoken of this Word as the Light of men. He had shown how the Word, being made flesh, proved Himself by all His acts and discourses to be the same who had taught the hearts and consciences of men in all ages. He had spoken of this Word as setting forth the Father from whom He came. He had said that in manifesting Him, he manifested the truth which would make men free.

In this dialogue all these lessons are gathered up. Jesus will not tell Pilate that He is *not* a king, for that would be to contradict all His preaching and all His acts; He will not tell him that He *is* a king, for how could a poor official and slave of Roman absolutism understand Him? But He says: '*For this cause was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness* (to Jews, to Romans, to thee) of the truth. And I know that those who seek truth and love truth will hear my voice.' This was that 'good confession' which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, the ground and pattern of all confessions that were to be borne afterwards in the world; all these deriving their virtue from this, all being witnesses of a kingdom which

is not of the world, but overcomes the world; all being true because He is the truth.

I have said already that Jesus is represented in all the Gospels as wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns. But the words of Pilate, when he brought Him forth with these signs of royalty, '*Behold the Man!*' occur only in St. John. The answer of the chief priests and of the officers was, '*Crucify Him, crucify Him.*' Pilate said, '*Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*' These words, like so many of which he speaks in his Gospel, may have fallen lightly upon St. John's ears at first; but after that '*Jesus was risen from the dead, then would he have remembered what things were spoken of Him, and what things were done unto Him.*' Then will the sentence, '*Behold the Man,*' have seemed to him the most wonderful inspiration which an evil ruler, who spoke not of himself, was ever visited with. Then the cry, '*Crucify Him,*' will indeed have meant, '*Crucify the Man, the Son of Man, the Representative of Humanity.*' Then the attempt of the chief priests to sustain their charge of treason against Rome when that was failing, with the charge which Pilate could not understand, and which therefore made him the more afraid, of treason against God, will have appeared to him a startling testimony that they could not crucify the Son of Man without crucifying the Son of God.

What follows belongs only to St. John. '*Pilate went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.*' Pilate may have had a misgiving that he and the prisoner were not in their right relations to each other. There was something in the

criminal which judged Him. He shook off the feeling, as most would have done, by boasting of his superiority. *'Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?'* No doubt he watched the countenance of Jesus, to see if such words did not make Him quail. The calm answer came: *'Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.'* He did not dispute the authority of the governor or of the empire. It was God-given authority. They believed it was their own. He told them whence it was derived. The heavier sin lay with those who boasted that they were chosen by the righteous God, and who sought the aid of the rulers of the world to put down Right. Pilate was convinced that Jesus was not a rebel, whatever his words about a kingdom might mean. *'From thenceforth he sought to release Him: but the Jews cried out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend. He that maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.'* The governor had too much Roman sense not to see through this petty sacerdotal artifice, this affected reverence for a ruler whom, as Jews, they hated. *'When he heard that saying,'* probably to indulge his scorn of men who were driving him into an act that he disliked; perhaps—though I think there is over-refinement in attributing that motive to him—because he fancied he should have the people on his side against the priests—*'He brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out. Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him! Pilate*

said unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.'

If Pilate had had a deliberate scheme of policy to extract from a turbulent province a solemn recantation of the faith which had kept alive its national existence from age to age, he could not have effected his purpose more perfectly than he did by this proceeding. For an unusual crowd must have been assembled; it was the feast which celebrated the deliverance of the land from a foreign tyrant, and its allegiance to an invisible king. There and then the rulers of the land severed all ties except those which bound them as servants to the emperors. If Pilate had been (as indeed he was) a prophet of God, he could not have proclaimed more solemnly and awfully that the Jewish people were thenceforth ineffectual for any moral purpose, as witnesses against human tyranny or human idolatry, and that there is no real alternative for any people between the acknowledgment of *the Man* as King and the worship of a military tyrant or Man-God. This, therefore, is the crisis in the history of that day and of the world. '*Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away.'*

All the Evangelists speak of the title on the cross. St. John dwells upon it with great emphasis: '*And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.'*

If we have understood the meaning of this Gospel, we shall feel the emphasis of the words, '*What I have written, I have written.*' The Jews had declared, '*We have no king but Cæsar.*' But they cannot prevent the servant of Cæsar from declaring, in bitter mockery, to all men who could read Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin, '*This Man, whom they have forced me to put to death as an evil-doer, is their King. Look up, and see what kind of a king they have.*' The insult was felt by them; they must bear it. And that Hebrew nation has said by the prophets and apostles whom it has sent forth, has said by all who have believed through their word, has said in their own tongue, has said in Greek and in Latin to the nations which Alexander vanquished and civilized, to the new world of the West which Julius Cæsar reclaimed from chaos, '*Our King is your King; to this malefactor you must bow down; by this sign you must conquer, or be conquered.*'

'Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.' Do you ask how St. John could speak of that act of the soldiers whilst Jesus was hanging there? Do you ask how he could dwell upon fulfilments of the Scripture at such a time? Think a moment! Would anything give you the same impression of horror, if you were standing by an ordinary deathbed, as the sight of men contending for the raiment and goods of him who was leaving them? Is

there anything so horrible as the thought how much death is regarded as only an event which gives the survivors a right to appropriate the things which the man has no more use for? If we had not been told that it was so when the Prince of the whole earth was dying, how much less we should know of the indifference which it is possible for human beings to feel! How much less we shall know of what He had to bear! '*These things therefore the soldiers did,*' in the sight of the Cross, under the eye of the Son of God. We might in their place have done the same; there was nothing in the mere sight of the suffering to prevent it. '*They parted my raiment among them; for my vesture did they cast lots.*' Thus a man of the old world, dying in desertion and darkness, expressed a part of his suffering, not a less intense part of it than the dryness of the '*throat with thirst, than the melting of the heart like wax.*' And that suffering was all *fulfilled*, all raised to its most intense point in Him who gave Himself for all, that all might be brought within the power of a love which they seemed utterly incapable of perceiving. I am sure there is immeasurably more in these words than I can enter into or dream of; but I dare not leave realities for metaphors at such a time. It may be lawful to speak of the divisions in Christ's Church as the rending of His seamless robe; they are that, and much more than that; they are the rending of His body and of His heart. But they are too awful, and the Cross is too awful, to permit plays of the fancy. Let us ask God to keep us from them, that we may have some faint perception of the truth of His grief, as He entered into the inmost experience of ours.

'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary

Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.'

This is all which St. John tells us of the Cross, and of the words that were spoken upon it. We may think it little; but it has been found enough for tens of thousands of men and women dying on their beds, by the sword, at the stake. When they have doubted, and have even been led by religious teachers to doubt, whether human affections did not belong to frail and sinful mortality, the words, '*Woman, behold thy son: son, behold thy mother,*' coming from the Divine lips, have testified to them that selfishness only is accursed, that all which belongs to love is imperishable. When they have felt the intensity of bodily pain, and have felt how little they could obey the dreary command to think of their souls; the cry, '*I thirst,*' has bound them to Him who knew the fulness of their sorrow, who entered into the wants, not of souls, but of men. And when all sight of the future has been shut out, and there has been in their minds only the sense of evil triumphant and exulting, a voice which no clamour could drown has said to them, '*It is finished.*' 'The battle is fought; the victory is won. A little while, and the hosts which look so 'mighty now, shall be seen no more for ever.'

'The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day, (for that Sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and He knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.'

That some in St. John's day had begun to deny that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, nay, that he regarded this denial as *the* anti-Christian doctrine, we know from his Epistle. His Gospel is the answer to this denial, because it begins from the divine ground, and shows how impossible it is to maintain that ground, unless we believe in the Word made flesh. He that saw the water and the blood then bare record of the fact, the import of which concerned the life of the Church and of every man. If we look at the subject from this point of view, we are not obliged to decide whether St. John spoke of the water and the blood in a common sense, as a point of evidence, or in a sacramental sense; as involving a high mystery. The common sense *is* the sacramental sense; the evidence of Christ's actual relation to our nature is the assurance that He cleanses it of its defilement, that He endues it with a new and higher life. What more is conveyed by this sign, or, rather, what a force it gives to the whole history of the crucifixion, St. John himself must tell us.

‘ For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.’

To understand the fulfilments of Scripture of which the Apostle speaks, by merely fitting the words which he quotes to some fact, I believe to be impossible. There is a fact always answering to the words; but its import, its connexion with the life of our Lord and the life of man, must be ascertained by meditating on the context: that context being found, not always in the letters of a book, but quite as often in a portion of history, or in an institution and the purposes for which it existed. Here is a type instance. The words, *‘ A bone shall not be broken,’* are brought to the Apostle’s mind by seeing that the usual custom of breaking the legs of crucified malefactors was not followed in the case of our Lord. But those words recalled to him and to his countrymen the feast of the Passover, and all that is declared respecting it in the 12th chapter of Exodus. The fulfilment, then, of these words was the fulfilment of the whole Passover service; the translation of the national deliverance which it spoke of into a complete and universal deliverance; the substitution of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, for the lamb whose blood was sprinkled upon the door-posts of the houses that the angel of death might not touch them.

The other quotation is even more remarkable; it is taken from the 12th chapter of Zechariah. *‘ And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they*

shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.'

One fulfilment of Scripture at the Cross was in the rending of the vesture by the soldiers, and in the mockery of the priests. The last, representing the inward hatred of the Jewish nation, is more fearful than the mere recklessness of the heathen officials. How utterly overwhelming it would have been to the Apostle, if he could have supposed that either the recklessness or the hatred was mightier than the divine love which was manifested there! But the pierced side recalled the words of the old prophet. There was a witness in them that even hatred would prove weak at last; that even upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of David a power would come from that Cross that nothing should resist. It said, 'The will of eternal Love may be contended with long. It must prevail at last and for ever.'

With the assurance that Scripture shall yet receive this grand and complete fulfilment the history of the crucifixion closes. St. John, like the other Evangelists, records the burial in Joseph's tomb. He introduces one particular into their narratives which, for the students of his Gospel, is full of interest. '*And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night; and brought a mixture of myrrh, and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.'*

On the night of which St. John speaks, Nicodemus had heard the words, '*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that He sent His*

only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' As the eyes of the ruler turned to the Cross, may there not have come to him a sense of divine, unutterable love, stronger than death, which will have made these dark words intelligible? May there not have come to himself, in that hour, the pangs of the second birth of which all his Jewish lore had taught him nothing? May he not have hoped that for the body he was anointing, there would also be a second birth, a resurrection morn?

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

THE RESURRECTION.

Linc. In's Ln, 11th Sunday after Trinity (Afternoon), August 3, 1856

ST. JOHN XX. 30, 31.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book : but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

THIS morning I went through the narrative of our Lord's Passion, which is contained in the 18th and 19th chapters of this Gospel. I propose to examine, this afternoon, the narrative of the resurrection, and of the events that followed it, which is contained in the 20th and 21st chapters.

Those who have formed a vague notion of the fourth Gospel, as the Gospel *according to the Spirit*, the other three being represented as Gospels *according to the flesh*, will expect that St. John should attach far less importance than his predecessors did to the resurrection of our Lord's body out of the grave. They will suppose that he must have sympathised much more in those passages of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in which he speaks of our being risen with Christ, than with the 15th chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he makes that resurrection, which many among them denied, the very centre of his message to mankind.

I hope we have not gone thus far in the study of St. John without discovering that this conception of his character and purpose is an entirely false one. In whatever sense St. John's Gospel is a spiritual one, he has spoken of Christ's presence at feasts, family and national, of His hunger and fatigue, of His friendship for special persons, of actual bodily suffering in the hour of death, at least as much as any of the four. He takes more, not less, pains than the others, in recording incidents. No plain person ever felt that his story, if it is ever so divine, is not human. I may have made this observation very often, but I will repeat it even to weariness, rather than that it should be forgotten, since upon the recollection of it depends all hope of our understanding the beloved disciple, or of our gaining anything from him. It is true that he has carried us back to the beginning of all things, instead of introducing us to the manger in Bethlehem, or telling us first of the preaching of John in the wilderness. It is true that he has told us of the Word who was with God, before he has used the name of Jesus Christ. It is true that throughout his Gospel he has been presenting to us Jesus Christ as the Word of God, the Giver of light and life to men. It is true that this has been his explanation of the signs which Jesus did when He fed the multitude, or healed the sick, or raised the dead. It is true that this has been his explanation of those parables in the natural world, by which the Creator of that world revealed to men the mysteries of the kingdom of God. It is true that, by following this method, St. John interprets to us those names, Son of God and Son of Man, kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven, which occur so continually in the previous Gospels. It is true that he brings out in its fulness their declaration, that the office of the

Christ was to baptize with the Holy Spirit, and to deliver men from the spirit of evil. It is true that the Name in which St. Matthew declares that the disciples were to baptize all nations, is unfolded to us by St. John with a distinctness and fulness with which it had never been unfolded before.

And *therefore* I think St. John must be even more careful than the other Evangelists to speak of the resurrection as a distinct, definite event: to set it before us in language which shall give us no excuse for supposing that he is merely talking of our spiritual nature, or of Christ's spiritual nature; in language which shall fix it upon our minds as a fact that was accomplished upon this earth. Of evidence, as I have remarked to you before, the other Evangelists give us very little. They assume that it was not possible that the Son of God should be holden by death, that the marvel which angels desired to look into was that He should have submitted to death. Only so far as that conviction took hold of men's minds could they believe in a resurrection, though a body of the most incredulous and learned witnesses should conspire to affirm it. St. John cannot have attached more weight to this kind of evidence than they did. His whole Gospel has been showing that it is an evidence which the living Word presents to the hearts and consciences of men, that alone produces any practical conviction. He must have felt, even more than his brother-disciples did, that the Word of life could not be overcome by death; that the great contradiction of all, which could only be explained by the truth that the highest life is the life of love, was in His undergoing death. He, therefore, more than any one else, must have felt the resurrection to be necessary, to be implied in the relation of Christ to his Father. He has again and

again told us that the return of Christ to the Father was that to which He looked forward as the return to His natural state and proper home; at the same time as the consummation of the work He had done upon earth. He is so impressed with this conviction, it was so much his work to impress us with this conviction, that he will not relate, as St. Luke does, the fact of the ascension in the sight of the disciples. *That* is taken for granted. All that he has written would be unmeaning, if his Master were not gone to the Father to prepare mansions for His disciples. But the victory of the Spirit over the flesh, the proof that He who was united to the Father and united to a mortal body, overcame, in virtue of His divine fellowship, his fellowship with dust, and made that body free from its bondage—this must be spoken of as the proper termination of His earthly conflict. For by this He justified fully the feeling of mankind, which all the teaching of Scripture had confirmed, but which no prophet or saint had been able to justify to himself, that death is an intruder into this world of ours; that it is not less an intruder because all have yielded to it, and must yield to it; that there is a law of life which is higher than the law of death; that we cannot be satisfied till that law is promulgated and vindicated, not for one here and there, but for the whole race in the person of its Head.

With these thoughts in our minds, let us consider the following verses: ‘*The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not*

where they have laid Him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.'

The points wherein this narrative differs from those in the earlier Gospels, are those which refer to the Apostle himself and to St. Peter. There is more, you will perceive, not less, of detail than elsewhere. 'The Apostles look into the sepulchre; they see the linen clothes and the napkin. We are told where the napkin is lying. These are not points of evidence, in the sense in which we commonly use that word. If we repeated them ever so often, or multiplied them ever so much, they would not establish the fact. They have served a much higher and more practical purpose. They have brought the fact home to the minds of multitudes as a fact. They have taken it out of the region of mist and shadow. They have connected it with a Person. Their very minuteness leads us to think of Him, not of them. They say to us, as they said to the Apostles, not 'There is a resurrection,' but '*He* is risen.'

By speaking of himself, St. John is able to make us acquainted with the process of conviction in one mind. He does not, indeed, dwell upon any mental struggles. He

just hints at the dull unbelief with which he began ; at the eagerness, more of curiosity than of hope, with which he ran to the sepulchre ; at the timidity or awe which hindered him from going in ; at the dawn of faith when he saw the clothes. It is all very simple and childlike. What surprises some of us most is, that he should blame himself for not having known the Scriptures, ‘ *that He must rise again from the dead.*’ What Scriptures could have told him this so clearly ? Are there any which positively and formally announce it to us who read them in this day,—any, at all events, which we could blame a plain wayfarer for not connecting with it ? Have not learned men of our own, able and vehement opposers of infidelity, affirmed that there are no traces of a belief in a future state among the writers of the Old Testament, nay, urged the absence of such traces as a proof of their divine legation ? And has not St. John himself produced evidence enough that those who pored over the Scriptures most could not identify Jesus as the Person in whom their prophecies were to meet ? We must go back, I believe, to the language of which I have spoken so often, if we would see our way through this difficulty. If the old Scriptures said nothing of a Word of God, of a divine Lord of men’s spirits and bodies, it was impossible to conclude from them that He, or any one, would rise again from the dead. As long as St. John was blind to the fact that they *did* speak of such a One, that they were speaking of Him from beginning to end, that He only gave any unity to their histories or their prophecies ; so long the most incessant diligence could not enable him to discover in these Scriptures more than dark hints of a triumph over death,—hints which never could support a practical belief, could never overcome the objec-

tions of sense and experience. The moment they found *this* Word speaking in all the words of the Bible, the moment they believed that Jesus was the Word made flesh, the Scriptures became full even to overflowing with these tidings. Not to see them there was to see there only dead letters.

‘But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her.’

There had been differences in the reports of the Evangelists respecting the appearance of the angels to the women. St. Matthew had said:—*‘And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his*

raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.’ St. Mark had said:—‘ And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.’ St. Luke had said:—‘ And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.'

I thank God that we belong to a Church which is not afraid to bring these diversities before us, as it does those in the reports of the Passion; a Church which believes so strongly in God, that it can leave Him to interpret these differences to us without making any awkward attempts at reconciliation. Our faith in the Resurrection is not affected by them so long as we live upon God's word, and not upon the letters of a book. When we change the one for the other, it must perish; no arguments or explanations will keep it alive. St. John, in some respects, differs from them all. I think many would have been glad if he had differed more widely. There is a dislike in our day, in Protestant countries, to any notice of angelical visitations. Romanists, and some who are not Romanists, would denounce the feeling as a sign that we are losing all faith in the spiritual world. I am not willing to interpret it so harshly. I think there is a feeling amongst us that we ought to be connected with the spiritual world now as much as in the days of old, and that these reports seem to keep us at a distance from it by drawing a line between us and former ages, by affirming communications to have been made to them which are not made to us. I partly considered this subject when I was speaking of the angel who is said to have troubled the Pool of Bethesda; but I must refer to it again, because we

all feel, I think, that the angels who sang to the shepherds of the Child who was born in Bethlehem, and the angels who spake to the women at the tomb of Joseph, must have had a different message to deliver from all others. What was the difference? Surely this, that they came to tell of a union of earth and heaven, of the spiritual and the visible world in the person of a Man. If there were no such news to bring, we should indeed be left under the dominion of angels; for we should not be able to get rid of the thought—no nation ever has been able—that we are surrounded by invisible creatures, and that they do in some way communicate with us. But if there was such a truth to be told, should we not be rather startled to find that there was none to tell it? Would not the absence of these stories leave a blank, not in our imaginations, but in our hearts and in our reason? Was not the appearance of these angels a witness to men that we do not need, as former ages may have done, special messengers to come from behind a veil which the Son of God has rent asunder, but that hosts of such creatures may be working with us, and ministering to us, and joining with us, the sinful spirits, who present the sacrifice that was made once for all before the Father of spirits?

St. John tells us, at once, of another apparition to Mary, which was immeasurably more to her than the apparition of any angels. An actual human form stood before her, the one which she had known best and loved best in the world, and yet she took it to be the gardener's. It was not, therefore, that it was too radiant for her to look upon, that it had lost the signs and marks that belong to her race. But it was not the figure or the countenance which revealed Him to her. It was the voice calling her by her name, it

was the voice which had bidden the seven devils depart out of her, that brought her to own Him as her Lord.

Then came those wonderful words which contain the deepest and most blessed of all truths in the form of the most startling contradiction. She was not to touch Him, *for* He was not ascended. That which appeared to invite intercourse was the bar to it; that which would appear to put them at a hopeless distance would be the beginning of a fellowship that could not be interrupted. The weak, penitent woman was to learn the lesson which the Apostles had been taught at the Paschal supper. He must go to His Father that they might know Him. The private and exclusive communion into which they had entered so imperfectly, must be merged in one in which all should share who would take up their lot as brethren of each other and of Him; for He was to dwell with His Father and their Father, with His God and their God. This was a risen life indeed; and we see at each turn how a risen life implies an ascension.

'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.' You think of these as sudden apparitions, glimpses granted and withdrawn, of the Teacher who had once walked with them by day and sat with them by night; and you think rightly. St. John's words give us that impression of them. But do they give us no other at the same time? Is it not the apparition of an actual Person, of an actual human body? He may be seen, and may disappear; but

He *is*. We are not among shadows more than we were before. The air is freer, the light is clearer. He only does not tarry in that room where the disciples are assembled for fear of the Jews, because they are to learn that wherever two or three are assembled in His name, there is He in the midst of them.

And consider His words to them. The last time they had met at the Paschal supper He had said—*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. And these things I have spoken to you that in me ye might have peace.* Since they heard that language, they had known more of fightings without and within than in all their lives before. And now He repeats it again, and shows them His hands and His side. Now it comes with power. If there was a moment of intense agonizing excitement, you might have fancied it would have been that. There is no excitement. There is perfect quietness in them all; in him who had forsaken the Master, in him who had denied Him. He has spoken peace to them, and they are at peace. The beloved disciple can only describe what he felt, what all felt, in the simplest, calmest words—*Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

What had happened to them? He with whom they had been at war had declared Himself at one with them. Christ had brought that message from the grave. His hands and side assured them of it. Their consciences were absolved. They were freed men.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.'

The connexion between the two passages is too obvious to be overlooked. He had come in His Father's name to bring them peace. He sent them forth in His name with the same gift. The Spirit of peace should go with them, that they might execute their commission. The pierced hands and side, which had been the witness and pledge of it to them, should be the witness and pledge of it to the world. Their conscience had been absolved. A chain had been taken from them. They should, in the name of Christ and of His Father, break the chains which bind the consciences of others. They should remit, or send away, the sins which keep men the prisoners and slaves of an evil and accusing spirit, which prevent them from serving their Father in heaven. But since it was *conscienc*es they were to unbind—since they were carrying a message of peace to voluntary creatures—the liberty might be refused, the rebellion might be persevered in. The very word which looses becomes then a word to bind. It is a tremendous fact, asserted again and again in Scripture, certified by experience. The message of reconciliation and deliverance holds in an iron gripe those spirits which it does not emancipate. They cry out that it has come to torment them; they have a sense of evil which they had not before; they are bound by it as they were not before.

I cannot see *less* in the words which were spoken that night—or in the commission which was then given to the ministers of Christ—than I have expressed. If you say that I ought to see *more*, I submit willingly to the rebuke. But I deny that it *is* more to talk of some power of the keys being entrusted to the Apostles or their successors, if by that power is meant only some outward authority to

withdraw the punishment for sins, or to enforce it. I cannot, in any case, read 'punishment,' where I find 'sin' written. I must regard remission of punishment as a very poor and miserable substitute for remission of sins. If it is said that we cannot imagine ministers who have received such a power, for that remission of sins must belong to God only, I answer, 'Most assuredly ministers can neither remit sins nor punishments in their own name.' If they assume to do either, they violate the charter upon which all their authority rests; they claim to be what Christ did not claim to be, to do what He did not claim to do. For He said that He was nothing, and could do nothing without His Father. His glory was that He did not come in His own name. But if the ministers of Christ *do* confess that they are sent in His name, as He was sent in His Father's name, then I say they can, in His name, speak to the conscience and absolve the conscience, not from its punishment but from its sin. And I say that the consciences of thousands and tens of thousands have waited in all ages, do wait in our age, to receive this blessing, and have actually received it, and are receiving it. And I say that when it is spoken to them, and they do not receive it, they bear testimony to the other half of the sentence; they are bound more closely, because they will not be loosed. Therefore I fear it is because Christ's ministers do not care to exercise His powers, but wish to exercise some powers of their own, that they fight so stoutly for these rights to punish or forego punishment, to curse or to take off curses, which, when they were most fully acknowledged and produced most terror in the minds of men, were generally very feeble for any good moral purpose, and were very dreadful temptations to tyranny and lying in those who exercised them.

I am far, indeed, from saying that absolution consists only in preaching the Gospel. The words, '*Peace be to you,*'—the hands and the side,—spake to the consciences of the disciples. At what time more than when we are kneeling and confessing, is the conscience likely to receive the message, 'He pardoneth and absolveth?' What has been more effectual than the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in carrying home the words to each heart, '*Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, rise up and walk*'? And in both these cases it is not merely to single hearts that the blessing is imparted. The gathering together in Christ's name is a witness that we meet as a family just as the Apostles did; and that, as a family, we want the peace and reconciliation which a Father only can send us through His Son. Did we understand the worth of that *communion* more, and how all individual blessings are associated with it and rise out of it, the power of *excommunicating* would not be something to boast of, or to fight for, or to play with. To cut a man off from the Church would then, indeed, be to deliver one who had sold himself to the service of evil to the master he has chosen, that he may feel the bitterness of his yoke, and so may return to his true Lord, and his spirit be saved when that Lord appears. But till we know more of that Spirit which Jesus breathed on His disciples, on that first day of the week, we shall be as little competent to administer censures as we are to testify of reconciliation and absolution.

'But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my

hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord, and my God! Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

By one class of readers, Thomas is described as a doubter, impatient of all evidence but such as amounts to demonstration. By another class, he is described as a man with the idolatrous tendency which insists upon sensible tokens, because it has no apprehension of that which is spiritual. By a third, the moral is drawn from his story, that those who forsake the fellowship of their brethren, miss the presence of their Lord and the grace of faith. There may be much of truth in each of these observations, and they do not contradict each other. We are all, at different times of our lives, greedy for proofs that shall satisfy the logical understanding, and for signs that address themselves to the senses. We have all thought that we should gain more by lonely study than by intercourse with our fellows and by common worship, and have been punished for our pride. But I do not think that Thomas should be accused of asking for too complete a demonstration. He asked for too weak a one. He wished to put his hands into the print of the nails. That would not have convinced him. It was another evidence addressing itself not to his eyes, but to his heart, which forced him to cry, '*My Lord, and my God!*' And I cannot believe that we have any

right to cast stones at those who require outward tokens to assist their faith; for Christ vouchsafed to this Apostle the very tokens which he desired. And we ought to remember that we do not bring Christ amongst us, or procure graces from Him, by frequenting the assemblies of His disciples, but that we should go to them because He is there speaking peace, and revealing Himself to those who are willing to be members of a body, and who wish for no privileges which all cannot share with them. Whatever reproof Thomas needed, whatever encouragement we can desire, is gathered in our Lord's last words to him. If he required the aid of seeing to sustain his belief, it might be afforded him. But faith itself is a higher evidence. Things not seen present themselves to it with a force and demonstration as great as that with which the things seen present themselves to the eye. The invisible Person who is the Light of men, makes Himself known to that organ which is created to receive His light. His life, His peace, are as near to us as they were to those to whom He showed Himself alive after His Passion. Our knowledge that He is risen may be as certain as theirs, and essentially of the same kind.

With this sign to the unbelieving Apostle, I suppose St. John's narrative originally closed; for he adds immediately: '*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.*'

I have taken these words for my text, because they express with peculiar terseness the characteristics of the Gospel as they have come out gradually before us. It is

a book of *Signs*. Every event that has been recorded has been significant. It has been the index to a truth. These signs have been selected out of *many* others, all bearing the same import. Each of these signs declares—all of them together declare—that *Jesus is the Son of God*. Their design is to awaken *belief* in Him as the Son of God. Those who have this belief have *life* through His name. He does not, then, merely compile a story of certain acts; he honours all previous Gospels which do not bring forth a collection of stories, but make known a living Person; he desires to remove the confusions which had beset those who believed in a Son of God, but not in an actual man; in a man who was not a Son of God. He desires that that Son of God should speak to the spirit of man, to that in man which exercises faith. He wishes us to feel that the Son of God is the one Source of life, that only through Him as the Son of Man can men receive life.

When St. John had been enabled to give this perfect explanation of what he had written, he might well think that his task was done. If he had been an artist instead of an evangelist, he would have been afraid to disturb the symmetry of his work by making any additions to it. But he was under other guidance than his own judgment; what it was good for the world to hear, the Spirit within him would not suffer him to keep back. Another vision rose before him, a vision so clear and bright, that he knew it could not have been given to him for his own sake; men in distant lands and ages were to be blessed by it. He was again by the Lake of Tiberias, amidst old friends. *'There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of*

His disciples.' We ask ourselves for what great purpose they were assembled there. The very names are for us full of wonder and mystery. Those who bore them had been witnesses of the death and resurrection of the Son of God. He had breathed on them; as His Father had sent Him, He had sent them; they were to loose and to bind. The next verse answers our question: '*Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*' We thought that when Jesus called them from mending their nets, that occupation was for ever abandoned. Who would have dreamed of their resuming it now? They had been admitted behind the veil; One from the grave had come back to them. Were they to become common fishermen again? They evidently go into their boats with no misgiving of conscience. They set about their toil as freshly and earnestly as ever. *As* freshly and earnestly? Was there nothing in that lake, and in all that had happened to them upon it, which made every labourer more free and joyous? Did not the water speak to them of Him who had walked upon it? Did not the shore beyond tell them of the bread which He had blessed? Was not the still night full of voices that echoed the voice which had said to them, '*Peace be with you; my peace I give to you*'? Had not the curse been taken from the earth and from the labour of man, since He had been called 'the carpenter's son,' since He had been proved to be the Son of God with power?

There must have been the sense of His presence everywhere; and it was not merely *the sense of a presence*: He was there. '*But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was*

Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No. And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.'

The old sign is given again. They had been taught that He cared for their craft and blessed it, when they had only a dim notion of Him as a great Prophet and King. They find that He cares for it and blesses it still. The risen Christ is the same as the Christ who told them words, hard to believe, about rejection and crucifixion. Only He does not sit with *them* in the boat, as if He were caring for one particular band of fishermen. He has chosen them to tell all workers everywhere, that He is watching over them, that their work is not a barrier between them and Him, but a means of grace, a road to intercourse with Him. *'Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.*

We must not suffer ourselves to be cheated of the bless-

ing which lies in this simple and minute narrative, by vulgar efforts of the fancy to give it what is called a spiritual signification. Our spirits want to know that they have a Lord who has shared earthly food, and does not disdain us for partaking it, but who Himself bestows it and blesses it. Our spirits do not want to know why the number of fishes caught was one hundred and fifty-three; they cannot live upon meagre, childish analogies about those who were to be caught in the Gospel net. Our Lord had promised His disciples that they should be fishers of men, and they were speedily to become so. But He was teaching them and us that the higher duty glorifies, instead of degrading, the lower; that every business in which men can be engaged is a calling and a ministry; that the bread which sustains the eternal life in man hallows the bread which sustains the life that is to pass away.

Our Lord did not allow His disciples to forget that grander office to which He had destined them, while He was putting this honour upon the one to which for a time they had returned. But instead of taking His comparison from the work of the fisherman, He takes another, with which His own lessons and the lessons of the old Scriptures had made them quite as familiar.

‘ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time,

Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.'

We are wont to dwell, perhaps, too much upon the thrice-repeated questions to him who had thrice denied. There is a meaning in all such correspondences; every hint to the conscience is worth something. But the meaning is always subordinate to a higher one; the hint brings a train of thought, or it fails of its purpose. Peter had boasted of his love; his sore discipline had been to show him how little it was good for, how utterly it must fail. Now he was asked, '*Lovest thou me more than these?*' He had loved Christ just as he had loved other people; more intensely, it might be, but with a love going out from himself. Had he learnt yet that he needed One who could bestow love upon him, One in whom he must trust and to whom he must cling, because he was so poor in that wherein he had fancied he was rich? Did he love his Master now with this dependent, trusting love, instead of that self-confident love? with a love that sought to be always replenished from the Fountain whence it proceeded, instead of with a love which he could call *his*, and which therefore must continually run dry? Simon Peter appears to answer boldly; he does answer humbly. He would have said in former days, 'I know that I love thee.' He now says, '*Thou knowest that I love thee.*' It is an appeal from himself to his Master. It is saying, 'My love is but the fruit of that knowledge which thou hast taken of me. I love thee so long as thou knowest me, and no longer.'

And then comes the command which shows that the loving Him more than these implied anything rather than loving these less. He had been told at the former supper,

that if he loved Christ, he was to keep His commandments. To obey a loving Being is to love Him. His love works in the man who is content to do His will. That love must go forth to His sheep. Here, then, was the minister's commission and his power. The Chief Shepherd had taken care of the sheep, and had died for them; the under shepherd was to do His work for them. So far as he did it, he would feel how scanty and wretched his own love for them was. He could not feed them at all unless he was possessed by his Master's love.

You see how remarkably these commands are in accordance with the doctrine which our Lord set forth in the conversation which is recorded in the 10th chapter of this Gospel, and also with that language which He addressed to the disciples generally, to Peter especially, at the Passover, because he had in the highest degree that trust in his own love which was infecting them all: '*Ye have not chosen me; but I have chosen you.*' And you will see how the idea which is contained in that sentence, is expressed and expounded in the words that follow the command to feed the lambs and the sheep.

' Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.'

This doctrine of a divine compulsion acting upon the heart and will of a man, of a wisdom ordaining every step for him, of a love imposing upon him duties which of himself he would be least willing to undertake, bearing him on to sufferings from which he would most shrink, is the one which St. Peter needed to learn, which every

minister of Christ and every Christian man must, by one discipline or another, be taught. St. John intimates that his brother-disciple was to be led along in the exact path which his Master had trodden before him.

‘ This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow me.’

But the Evangelist goes on to show, by another example, that Christ prepares the most different lots for different men; that two may be standing close to each other, may be intended during a part of their lives to work together, who may in the close of their earthly pilgrimage be the most remarkable contrasts to each other, though they may be following the same crucified Lord, and one may be bearing as heavy a cross as the other.

‘ Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing Him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?’

St. Peter was not to know what was intended for his brother-Apostle; that Apostle was to know as little himself. Some meaning there was in that intimate communion which he had had with his Lord on earth. So great a gift could not have been bestowed upon him for his own sake; it must have been meant to fit him for a work that he had to do in the world. What it was he may have waited long to know. He was not to stay in Jerusalem with

St. James; he was not to travel to the dispersed among the Gentiles with St. Peter; he was not to raise up Churches among the Gentiles, like St. Paul. He was to stay upon the earth till Jerusalem had been trodden down by the Gentiles; till St. James and St. Peter, and all who had been most dear to him, had glorified God by their deaths; till a Gentile society had seemed about to displace the old Hebrew society; till the new Christian Church had been threatened by the same discords, the same sins, the same unbelief, which were undermining his country and the empire of the world. In some sense he was to tarry till his Lord came. Was he then not to die? That had not been said. Yet the words had been spoken by Him who did not deceive, and they must be fulfilled. *Did* he not tarry till his Lord came? Was He not revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance of the unrighteous nation, of the evil world? Was He not revealed as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, as the faithful Witness, as the Prince of all the kings of the earth, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as the Son of Man standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, as the Lamb that was slain in the midst of the throne, as the Word of God? Was it not for this revelation that St. John had tarried on earth? Was it not that he might declare Who is the foundation of the new heaven and the new earth which should arise out of the wreck of the world that was perishing?

It appears as if the elders of the Church of Ephesus had added their attestation to the Gospel in the words of the 24th verse: ‘*This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.*’ I do not profess to decide whether to them

or to the Apostle we should ascribe the last verse. *'And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.'* Some have wished that the verse were omitted altogether, because it seems to them a conclusion scarcely worthy of so divine a record. I accept it as a simple and childlike testimony to the truth of which the whole Gospel has been bearing witness, that the acts of the Son of God do not belong to the few years in which He dwelt visibly upon earth, but to all ages from the beginning, when He was *'with God, and was God,'* even to the end *'when He shall put down all rule and all authority and power, and when the Son also Himself shall be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.'* I accept it as a testimony that all the books in the world cannot contain the things which Jesus has been doing and is doing, in the hearts of human beings, in the world which He made, in the kingdom which He rules. I accept it as a warning to us, that we can know nothing of the Book which explains other books, unless we ask that it may be explained to us by Him who is, and was, and ever shall be, the Word of God.

NOTES.

DISCOURSE I.

THE scheme of Baur, to which allusion is made in this sermon, is set forth in his '*Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien.*' The part especially relating to St. John is contained between pages 79 and 389. In the First Part he maintains that there is a leading thought, a *Hauptidee*, in the Gospel. He traces this out, beginning from the prologue ; notices the testimony of the Baptist, the comparison of Jesus with John, the first coming of Jesus into Jerusalem, the conflict between belief and unbelief in its different forms, the signs and works of Christ, the argumentative conflict with the unbelief of the Jews, the raising of Lazarus, the transition to the history of the passion and death, the final crisis of the nation's unbelief, the discourses of Jesus with His disciples and the sacerdotal prayer, the history of the death and resurrection,—as different points and instances in the development of this idea. He then goes on, in the Second Part, to consider the relation of this Gospel to the synoptical Gospels ; maintaining the absence of any leading idea in them, and the consequent evidence that, in spite of the historical confusions which he supposes to be in them, there is more mixture in them of simple facts related without a purpose. Next he enters upon the internal probability of the history in St. John. Then he considers the relation of the Gospel to the consciousness of the time. Finally, he maintains the identity of the Apostle with the author of the Apocalypse ; dwelling especially upon his sympathies with the feelings of the Christians in Asia Minor respecting the keeping

of Easter ; and regarding the Apocalypse as the work of a Jew passionately attached to the traditions of his fathers, and vehemently opposed to the spiritual doctrines of St. Paul.

Perhaps I may be allowed to explain in what relation the view I have taken of the Gospels in these Sermons stands to that of this learned Tübingen Professor.

1st. I have maintained, as he has done, that there is a leading idea which may be traced through the whole of the Gospel ; that what is called the prologue is not an idle introduction to a narrative with which it has no connexion, but is the key to the meaning of every part of it. 'This leading idea' I have further maintained to be the leading idea of the whole Bible, to be unfolding itself through all the Law and the Prophets, to be that which makes the history of the Jews a coherent history, to be that which makes that history the exposition of all histories. Supposing it entirely absent from the mind of any people on the face of the earth, I hold that people not to be a nation, but a mere herd of animals, and its records a mere collection of fragments, with nothing to bind them together. In proportion as any people has been possessed with this idea, in that proportion has it been a nation great in itself, one which could interpret the conditions and destinies of other nations. That the Jewish people were brought to know that they were under the guidance of a Divine Word—their ever-present Teacher, and King, and Judge—is what I mean when I speak of God calling out that nation, of God ruling it and educating it, of God making it a blessing to all the families of the earth.

2d. Next, with reference to the synoptical Gospels. It follows, from what I have said, that if I did not trace any of this 'Hauptidee' in them, I should regard them not as histories, not as Gospels, but as that collection of fragments, partly mythical, partly historical, which Baur and his school suppose them to be. I have contended, in a book on 'The Unity of the New Testament,' that there is a 'Hauptidee' in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke ; that they are not biographies of a certain Man called Jesus of Nazareth, whom His disciples supposed to be endued with supernatural powers, or to be actually divine ; but that they are the history of the way in which that

King, whom the Jewish prophets had been declaring as the invisible Ruler over them, manifested Himself visibly to His subjects, and claimed their obedience. By a careful examination of all the passages which these Evangelists have in common, by an equally careful examination of their differences, I have endeavoured to show that they were all setting forth this King of men, that each was setting Him forth under a distinct aspect. There may be very little of what is called the higher criticism in such an examination as this. To that I do not aspire. We English may be content to work on in the stupid old Baconian method, trying to find out the meaning of facts, and not quite indifferent to *this* fact, that these Gospels have exercised an influence over eighteen centuries of human beings in different lands, which it is not very easy to understand how they could have exercised, if they had contained a few doubtful records of journeys between Nazareth and Capernaum, of miracles imagined by superstitious wonder-hunters, of discourses some tenth part of which may possibly have proceeded from a Nazarene Prophet. If they set forth a Person who has been, and is now, and will be for ever, the King over men, there is at least *an* explanation of the secret of their power; whether it is the right one may be at least worth some consideration.

3d. In the book to which I referred, I carefully abstained from any comparison of the three Gospels with the fourth. I have, throughout that book and this, admitted that they are widely different, and that it confuses our impressions of all four to blend them together as the Harmonists attempt to do. I have maintained, indeed, that the first three Gospels assert, as distinctly as the fourth, that the King of men whom they are proclaiming was the Son of God. I have maintained that they would not have proved themselves to be the Jews that they were, if they had begun with the records of the life of a Man, seeing that every book of the Old Testament begins with God, and treats of men only as they testify of God or are related to Him. But I have said that in the commencement of the three Gospels, in their incidents, in their whole framework, there is a marked and characteristic difference from the fourth, which no faithful expositor can overlook or try to explain away.

There can be no doubt about the nature of the difference. The prologue, as Baur truly says, at once denotes it. St. Mark speaks of Jesus as the Son of God in his opening sentence. The use of the name Word of God, as identical with Son of God, is found in St. John, and perhaps in St. John only. That name belongs, the Tübingen Professor tells us, to the *consciousness* of the next age. Of course, we are liable to make mistakes about the meaning of that phrase. It is not a native or natural phrase to us; and some of us are not eager to import it, seeing that our home manufacture of cant is quite prolific enough. But if the consciousness of an age is what I take it to be, I have maintained that the first century, even from its very commencement, was the age which showed itself peculiarly conscious of the truth which is denoted by the expressions 'Word,' 'Life,' 'Light,' and all the others which characterise this Gospel. The evidence of this fact is so notorious, that nothing but an elaborate theory could force a man of Baur's extraordinary learning to cast it aside. Supposing all he says of the absence of Gnosticism in the Christian Church in the first century were as true as I apprehend it to be unfounded, would that prove that no such man as Philo ever existed; that chronologers have been mistaken by a hundred years about the date of his birth and his teaching; or that he was a solitary phenomenon, a person who exercised no influence, and indicated no *consciousness* in the country and period to which he belonged?

4th. The question, I am aware, when once Philo is mentioned, is how far so learned and accomplished a man could have affected, by his thoughts, humble fishermen like the Apostle John? The question is raised and answered by two different classes of people. One set is eager to maintain that what they call the *Logos-idea* must have been derived from a great mystical speculator, and cannot have presented itself naturally to an ignorant man. The other is utterly scandalized that an inspired Apostle should be supposed to have anything to do with that which was passing in the minds of his uninspired contemporaries. On the question of simplicity I have spoken at considerable length. Whether the writer of the fourth Gospel was simple or not, whether his doctrine respecting the Word

affected his simplicity, must be ascertained from the book itself, and cannot be learnt from any theories of mine or of any one else. But if I am right in thinking that this (so-called) *Logos-idea* is that which gave simplicity and clearness to the lives of prophets and patriarchs, because they did not think of it as an idea at all, but believed that they were ploughing, and keeping sheep, and eating and drinking, under the eye of a living Person, then it was surely not an unnatural thing that an Apostle should be taught to bring out that truth in its simplicity which had been mixed with conceits and phantasies. If it is inconsistent with our notion of the teaching of the Spirit of God that He should enable a Jewish Apostle—living in a heathen city, amidst Jews and Heathens who were both confused with thoughts upon this very subject, among Christians who did not know how to connect their thoughts of Jesus with the Divine Word—to bring forth a Gospel which should have this special object; I cannot find that it is inconsistent with the promise of the Comforter which our Lord Himself gives us, or that that promise could have been more perfectly fulfilled to His own generation than by such an illumination of an Apostle's mind and memory. And for those who do not believe that that promise is withdrawn, who think that the Spirit which was given to dwell in the Church dwells in it still, I do not know that there can be a more cheering thought than this, that His revelations of Himself were gradual to His own Apostles; that He taught those who were nearest to the time of His ascension to present Him as the risen Son of God; that He taught His disciples who lived at the end of the age to see in that Son also the living and eternal Word who was before all worlds, who would be manifested as the Centre of all society, as the final Conqueror of all enemies. For there surely may be a gradual unveiling, in the later times also, of Him who has been with us from the beginning; and it may be given to these later ages, when kingdoms are falling down, and ecclesiastical systems are wearing out, and scholars are finding nothing solid remaining in heaven and earth except their own criticisms and their own conceptions, to see the Word of God coming forth in His living power and majesty as the King of kings and Lord of lords, the foundation of that heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

5th. I have touched, in these last words, on Baur's doctrine respecting the identity of the Apostle with the author of the Apocalypse, and the essential differences between the Apocalypse and the Gospel.

It is notorious that many in the Alexandrian Church agreed with Baur in separating the author of the Apocalypse from the author of the Gospel ; but that they gave the Gospel to St. John, and the Apocalypse to some other author. I am quite willing, with the German Professor, to consider the Apostle as first of all the 'Apocryptiker;' to believe that he was regarded specially in that character by the Churches of Asia Minor ; and to take the vision of the Son of Man, in the first chapter, as the explanation of that confused tradition respecting John which represents him as in some manner keeping alive the office of the high-priest after its representative in Jerusalem had disappeared. I am most willing, also, to admit that the author of the Apocalypse does regard himself as a true Jew, in contradistinction from those who called themselves Jews, but did lie and were of the synagogue of Satan. What I contend is, that the writer of the fourth Gospel is an 'Apocryptiker,' in the strictest sense of the word ; that the unveiling of the Son of God and the Son of Man is the subject of one book as well as of the other ; that the meaning which is given to revelation or unveiling, in both, is not at variance with the meaning which it bears in St. Paul's Epistles, but is the expansion and illustration of that meaning ; that the Jews who do lie in the Apocalypse, as well as in the Gospel, were those who were content with a visible high-priest, and were not asking as their high-priest for Him whose eyes were as a flame of fire, who died and was alive ; that as the Epistle of the Hebrews, whether written by St. Paul or not, explains the very ground of all St. Paul's Epistles and their unity, so the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse show what is the underground of the doctrine of that Epistle, viz. that the High-Priest of the universe is that Word of God who was with the Father before all worlds, in whom men may ascend to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. I have expressed, in this Sermon, a hope that the Apocalypse may some day be proved to be a revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and not of certain dates and

mystical numbers, because I believe that its radical and essential harmony with the Gospel will be more and more discovered to those who read it, and because the two books and the Epistle will then, I think, explain to us all the former books of the Bible—how they are related to each other, how they are related to Him in whom alone God is unveiled to man. I have spoken of the Gospel as a book of theology, the Apocalypse as a book of politics, not because I believe that these artificial distinctions of ours can represent satisfactorily their different objects, but because I am convinced that theology will be a mere *hortus siccus* for schoolmen to entertain themselves with, till it becomes associated once more with the Life of nations and humanity; that politics will be a mere ground on which despots and democrats, and the tools of both, play with the morality and happiness of their fellow-beings, till we seek again for the ground of them in the nature and purposes of the eternal God.

DISCOURSE II.

I HAVE not seen my way to adopt the punctuation of the 3d and 4th verses of the 1st chapter, (*Χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. Ὁ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν,*) which many of the Fathers approve, which Lachmann has introduced into his text, and which Mr. Buusen appears to regard as of very high importance. On the question of a various reading, I might have deferred to these authorities; on a question of pointing, their judgment is merely that of ordinary students. The simplicity of the Apostle's style, it seems to me, is violated by the change. Nor am I yet aware what we gain by it. Is it the pleonasm in the 1st verse which is objected to? Surely we must strike out half the verses in the Psalms, if we complain of such pleonasms. I believe we shall find, when we have done so, that the force of that which we have retained has not been increased, but weakened. Or is it that the words, 'in Him was life,' are regarded as a mere commonplace? God give us such commonplaces in exchange for all the rarities and refinements that wise men can present us with! I do not

mean that the difference between 'being' and 'becoming' is not involved in all the doctrine of these verses. No one can read them thoughtfully without perceiving it. But need it be thrust upon us in the very terms of school philosophy? Does it not come out much more naturally and truly in the old simple Hebraic forms? Those who suppose these forms to be obsolete for us, cannot suppose them to have been obsolete for the writer of the fourth Gospel, unless they accept Baur's theory concerning him.

I have also not been induced to depart from our version of the words, Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, in spite of the many objections which have, in modern times and in old times, been raised against it. I do not think that I have what is called a theological interest in defending it. If the light is said to lighten every man, I can ask no more. Give what force you will to the coming into the world, connect it with what clause of the sentence you will, that assertion remains good, perhaps even less qualified than it is in our translation. Moreover, a single text would be a very poor ground on which to rest such a doctrine. A person who finds it in every line of St. John—nay, implied in the whole Bible—can afford to make a present of one passage to those who find it inconvenient. I contend for the fidelity of our version upon a different ground. If we construe the words, 'The light which lighteneth every man was coming into the world,' we destroy the order of the Apostle's discourse, and we go near to make him contradict himself. He declares that the Word was in the world, and that the world knew Him not. The coming into it, in the sense of being made flesh, is reserved for the 14th verse. My great object in this Sermon has been to assert this order, and to show how much we mistake the purpose of the Evangelist when we substitute another of our own. Until some rendering of the passage is suggested which does not involve that great mischief. I must adhere to the one with which we are all familiar.

DISCOURSE III.

THE notion of St. John as the teacher who possesses a higher lore than the other writers of the New Testament, which I have considered in this Sermon, may be traced especially to Origen. If the reader is at the pains to consider the opening of his Commentary upon St. John, he will discover in what sense this Gospel seemed to him a kind of quintessence of all the previous revelations of God. His own emblem is drawn from the first-fruits of a sacrifice ; a better comparison in itself, but one which does not make its meaning at once evident to the modern reader. I cannot have any wish to speak disrespectfully or disparagingly of Origen, with whose mysticism some will accuse me of having only too much sympathy. Yet I cannot help thinking that his attempt to distinguish between the spiritual and the sensible Gospel, has been the source of infinite confusions in the study of the Evangelist. Its other evil consequences—as cultivating a morbid ingenuity in seeking for distant analogies, and in destroying the force of plain narratives—have been often dwelt upon. I allude to it in connexion with what I have said, in this Sermon and in the eighth, of our Lord's forerunner.

Even the most earnest seekers after truth are continually perplexed by the question how John the Baptist could have been a guide into what Origen and his school have taught them to consider the most esoteric part of the Christian faith. 'If the least in the kingdom of heaven,' they say, 'was greater than he, how can he have been possessed of a doctrine which even some of the great in the kingdom of heaven seem very imperfectly to have apprehended?' The answer to this question, I believe, will come to such persons gradually,—at last decisively. What is called the doctrine of the Logos—the idea of the Logos—may have been seized and possessed by one here and one there, at different periods of the Church. The best of these, like Clemens of Alexandria, may have been driven to it by the necessities of their position, by their conflict with the false Gnosticism, by the impossibility of preaching the Gospel to Heathens without the belief in a universal Teacher. They may have been often

dazzled with their own light—often tempted, if not to glorify themselves upon the possession of it, yet to denounce others as carnal or earthly who were without it. I cannot, indeed, say that I trace as much scorn of others and exaltation of their own wisdom in the Alexandrian school, as in that which was most opposed to it, in the hard dogmatist of Carthage. But they were tempted to make distinctions which interfere, it seems to me, most grievously with all that is truest in their teaching. If the Word is the Teacher and Light of men, as they represented Him to be, the vulgarest men must have been under His teaching; the commonest facts, the most simple forms of nature, must be instruments through which His learning is communicated. If the Word has been, as they say, made flesh, fleshly things cannot be despicable, but must contain those spiritual truths which the wise and prudent who despise them, and exult in their own intellectual superiority, cannot find. Therefore the simplest men, the preachers of repentance, those who have brought a message to the poor,—whether they have talked of the living Word or not,—have borne the best and fullest witness of Him. It is so now; it has been so always. The prophets of old spoke of a Word because they were preachers of repentance. I contend that John the Baptist spoke of Him just as they did, only with more clearness, with a stronger apprehension of His personality. But if John was the messenger of a Word made flesh, if the Incarnation is the beginning of a new world, the opening of a new heaven, it must needs be that the least of those who are born into that world, who are permitted to ascend into that heaven, is greater than John. If, indeed, he forgets the answer which was given to the disciples when they asked, ‘*Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*’ if he begins to exult in his knowledge or in his privileges; if he scorns the world which Christ has redeemed; if he denies that Christ is the Light of the world; he not only puts himself below John the Baptist, but below every Jew, Mahometan, worshipper of Juggernaut; he more openly sets Christ at nought than they do. The Christian world may come to this utter denial of its Master; then will come a preacher of repentance,—a preacher of the living Word to publicans and sinners,—

an Elias to witness of judgments upon Scribes and Pharisees, who will make it evident that the deepest lore is also the simplest ; that that which is most divine has most power over those who have been most given up to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

To return for a moment to the Alexandrian divines. I cannot acquit Clemens of having given encouragement to that esoterical doctrine which led Origen, it appears to me, into such dangerous refinements. But the spirit of his 'Pædagogus' is so personal and so practical, that many of the tendencies to which his pupil yielded were counteracted, if not wholly overcome, in him. Above all, there is one passage of Origen's Commentary which shows him to have utterly departed from the principle which goes through all the books of Clemens. He considers (tom. i. c. 23) why the name Logos should have been especially chosen as a title of the Saviour. He has been extensively followed by persons who would not like to acknowledge that they have learnt anything from him, in this mode of speaking. But it is surely fatal to the humble study of St. John. We do not suffer him to tell us of the Word, and then to tell us how the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and manifested forth His glory. We start from an assumption and speculation of our own ; we chain the Apostle, as if he were a Proteus, that we may compel him to give forth, not his own oracles, but those which we have put into his mouth. If I could induce but one student of divinity to abandon this perilous and irreverent course, I should believe that God had permitted me to be an instrument of some good to His Church.

DISCOURSE IV.

MR. ALFORD has given it as his opinion that the sentence, '*Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,*' does not refer at all to the Paschal feast, but to the words in the 53d chapter of Isaiah. He raises the natural objection, of which I have spoken in this Discourse, that the scape-goat bears away sins, but that no

such association is connected with the Lamb except in the words, 'Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' I do not venture to affirm that the words of Isaiah were not in the Baptist's mind when he uttered this sentence, or that they did not suggest themselves to the minds of the disciples who heard him speak, and who followed Jesus. But supposing that to be the case, why did the Prophet connect the lamb that was led to the slaughter, and the sheep that was dumb before his shearers, with the exclamation in the fourth verse? Why did Isaiah, as well as John, think of a lamb instead of a goat? We are all agreed that the scape-goat was the most obvious image, one specially suggested, to a preacher in the wilderness. Why was it not the one to which that preacher in the wilderness resorted? Why did he industriously choose another image, which no tradition except that of one passage in a prophet seemed to justify? Why has all Christendom accepted and ratified that selection, the other being thrown quite into the background, only furnishing an occasional simile to divines, being scarcely brought within the range of our sympathies even by the earnestness and genius of an adventurous and devout painter of our own day, while the lamb has been the favourite subject of Christian art in all ages? Surely these questions require to be considered. The Passover, I admit, does not suggest the thought of a sin-bearer. That thought is suggested to the conscience by the sense of sin, or rather is that sense. But did not the Passover suggest to those who had that thought deeply fixed in their own minds and consciences, the sense of a deliverer? May not John have felt—may not all Christendom have felt—that the sin-bearer must, as I have expressed it in this Discourse, go into the presence of God to deliver us from our burden and bondage, not into a land uninhabited?

The intolerable burden which Luther had felt on his conscience leads him to speak of this verse with intense delight and satisfaction. (See Werke, b. vii. p. 1637, u. s. w. Walch.) Starting from his inward experience, he takes it for granted that Isaiah's words were the exposition to the Jew of the inadequacy of the legal lamb offered day by day, or at the annual feast, to take away sin. St. John's words, *in that sense*, become, for him, the interpre-

tation of Isaiah's words, 'Surely the Lamb that was dumb before his shearers hath carried our sins.' '*Behold that Lamb of God!*' But it never occurs to him that the Jew could have separated the lamb at the feast from the consciousness of evil, or that it could have suggested any thoughts which did not point to a deliverer from the evil. On many subjects older writers or modern writers may see further than he does; on *this* no one, I think, is so entitled to bear witness.

DISCOURSE V.

Note 1.

THOSE who maintain that it is dangerous to attempt any revision of our present translation of the Scriptures are fond of two arguments especially. One is, that the language which would be substituted, in almost every case, for that of the divines in King James's reign would be less simple and popular than theirs; the other is, that no vital or fundamental doctrine of our faith is affected by any errors or inadvertencies into which they may have fallen.

These arguments have been illustrated by a large amount of eulogistic and vituperative rhetoric; but plain readers would rather that they were brought to some practical test. Here is one. I have urged that we should put *Signs* in nearly all those verses of St. John in which we now find '*Miracles.*' Is this change likely to affect the simplicity of our version, to make its 'language not understood by the people?' Is 'miracle' one of their ordinary, homely, Saxon expressions? Would it be exceedingly difficult for a preacher to make his humble parishioners understand the use and purpose of '*Signs!*'

But there is the *cui bono* objection:—'You unsettle a mode of speech to which we are accustomed. To what end? Is there anything "vital" in the difference?' Vital means, 1

suppose, if it is rendered into our vernacular speech, that which affects life—the life of individuals or of societies. I venture to think that this change is important to the life of both. The habit of looking for wonderments, as the decisive and overpowering witnesses of Christ, has, it seems to me, been most mischievous to the life of the Church, is affecting the life of each one of us. Those who wish to think and speak of Him as not only born at a certain time into the world, but as living before the world, and as the founder of it, find themselves perpetually embarrassed by the notion which has worked itself into the minds of our people and of ourselves, that He established His claim to be an extraordinary person by doing extraordinary acts in the towns of Galilee and the city of Jerusalem, instead of showing by signs what He is and always has been. The Catholic doctrine is more undermined than we are at all aware by the feeling which this deviation from the original has sanctioned and promoted. We assume Christ's simple humanity as the ground of our thoughts, and then add on to it an indefinite notion of divinity. The truth which was so dear to the earnest Evangelical teachers of the last century, that Christ is to be proclaimed as the Emmanuel, 'God with us,' that the whole Gospel is concerning a living Christ, suffers scarcely less from the same cause. And how much the whole argument of Protestants with Romanists about *their* miracles is weakened, and its practical effect destroyed, by the use of an expression which (such is the curious Nemesis upon those who, for any cause whatever, trifle with language) we have derived, not from the Vulgate, but from Theodore Beza, I fancy some of our professional anti-Romanist orators might discover, if they spent some of the time in studying the controversy and the history of the Church which they spend in constructing denunciations against the superstitious and apostasy of their opponents.

I offer these as proofs that in one instance, at all events, 'vital' benefits may be gained by an earnest and sober consideration of our existing translation, and that even deadly mischiefs may be averted by it. And I am inclined to think that it is a fair instance. Among those divines who are most earnest for a revision, and would be most competent to take

part in it, there is not one, so far as I am aware, who would not watch with the greatest jealousy over the Saxon character of our version, who would wish to substitute for a single venerable phrase a nineteenth century equivalent, who would not sacrifice anything excepting truth to the preservation of that which is popular and human, who would not expect, as the reward of a steadfast adherence to truth, that the book would become more a book for the English people, and less a book for the schools. And I am satisfied that these honest and learned men may look for another—even, if possible, a higher—reward for their serious devotion to the book which they love and reverence most. Many delusions like that of which I have spoken are perpetuated, I am persuaded, through phrases which crept into our version from carelessness,—which have been repeated and turned into arguments by pulpit rhetoricians,—which often lead honest Englishmen to doubt the truth of the Bible. They will be, in the best sense, defenders of the faith if they rescue the words which the Psalmist speaks of as purified seven times in the fire from any earthly dross, and if they spoil the trade of those who wish it to be mingled with the genuine ore.

I will add one word in conclusion. Much is said in our day about verbal inspiration. Some accuse their brethren of superstition for maintaining it; some accuse their brethren of infidelity for not maintaining it. I suspect that a common name may cover the most opposite feelings and convictions. A believer in verbal inspiration, like Mr. Tregelles—who lives laborious days that he may discover the purest text, so that none of the inspired words may fall to the ground or be perverted—is one of the noblest witnesses for truth I can conceive of. May God give us more and more of such men, and hearts to honour them for their works' sake! On the other hand, those who say they believe in verbal inspiration, whenever they wish to direct the wrath of their disciples or of a religious mob against men that are more righteous than themselves, and who then show that they are afraid of trying God's words, and freeing them from insincere mixtures, lest the minds of the people should be disturbed, are not exactly those whom one can think of as '*Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.*'

Note 2.

My attention has been called by a friend to a very interesting interpretation of the dialogue between Jesus and the Virgin, which is given by Gregory of Nyssa, Tom. ii. p. 9, B. c. He makes, it will be seen, the words of our Lord interrogative: 'Is not my hour yet come?'—

Τὴν γὰρ μητρῶσαν συμβουλήν, ὡς οὐκέτι κατὰ καιρὸν αὐτῷ προσαγομένην ἀπεποιήσατο, εἰπὼν· τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ γύναι; μὴ καὶ ταύτης μου τῆς ἡλικίας ἐπιωτατεῖν ἐθέλεις; οὐπω ἤκει μου ἡ ὥρα ἢ τὸ αὐτοκρατὲς περιεχομένη τῇ ἡλικίᾳ καὶ αὐτεξούσιον;

 DISCOURSE XII.

I HAVE spoken in this *Sermon* on two subjects, of which I have spoken at some length in my *Theological Essays*; the 'Resurrection' and the 'Judgment.' I am not the least anxious to correct any impressions which my remarks in that book may have made on the minds of religious critics. If they have misunderstood me, nothing which I could say would make me intelligible to them. If they have misinterpreted me without misunderstanding me, I am not the sufferer. But I shall be very glad if what I have said here should remove any difficulty from the minds of earnest and thoughtful men, some of whom have written their complaints to me in a most kind and friendly spirit, evidently regarding me as a fellow-inquirer after truth, and wishing that we should help each other in the pursuit of it.

I think they will perceive, from what I have said on the words—'*Those that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live,*'—that I am not less zealous than they are to assert the absolute identity of the body of humiliation with the body of glory. That truth cannot be asserted in stronger language than it is asserted by St. Paul in the 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, and by our own Burial Service.

God forbid that any one should make it weaker! What I affirm is, that we do not gain the least strength for this conviction by setting aside St. Paul's assertion, that corruption shall not inherit incorruption; and that the Burial Service nowhere gives the slightest hint that what is committed as earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, shall be reunited to constitute that body which we have a sure and certain hope will be raised, and will be made like unto Christ's glorious body. This attempt to identify the corruption of the body with the body, the effects of death with the substance which death is unable to destroy, I know has the sanction of great and venerable names. Transubstantiation and Consubstantiation have also the sanction of names which are most dear to the Church. But if Bonaventura and Thomas à Kempis cannot bind us to the one, or Luther to the other; if we have a right to feel that we partake with them of the sacrament of Christ's risen and glorified body most completely when we forget the theories by which here on earth they limited it; we are surely not bound by the rhetoric of Donne or of Jeremy Taylor, however much we may reverence them both, to adopt what seems to us merely an earthly and sensual explanation of a glorious reality, directly interfering with the scriptural account of it, and with many of the most practical and consolatory truths which flow from it. I do not wish to get rid of any passage in the New Testament upon the subject, or to give it a forced construction. I do wish that we may look straight at all the passages in it, and not allow a conception which we have formed,—a very natural, but it seems to me a very low and grovelling conception,—to interfere with the full understanding and reception of them. I would not wish a better argument against the popular theory than the eloquent sermon of Donne in the support and elucidation of it. Let any one see how utterly unrestrained the fancy of a devout and excellent man becomes when it enters into this speculation, how entirely it loses sight of all scriptural guidance, how it revels amongst the images of the charnel-house. And then let any one ask himself whether this is the doctrine of that divine passage in St. Paul, which reaches indeed from earth to heaven, which is not afraid of the lowest objects when it is in contact with the highest; yet

in which all is clear and awful, as if he knew that he was speaking of death and life, of God and man, and as if the Spirit who was guiding him abhorred all conceits and trifling. Only imagine Donne's Sermon substituted for the 15th of Corinthians, when we meet in the church around the coffin of a friend! It is a very simple test; but I think any one who applies it fairly will know what is the worth of the additions which the fancy, even if it is not ordinarily a vulgar fancy, makes to the divine testimony.

Precisely on the same ground do I protest against the exercises of this same fancy respecting what is called, by a phrase which I have not met with anywhere in Scripture, the intermediate state of disembodied spirits. I am told by a gentleman, who seems to know, that they are placed in the moon, or in one of the fixed stars. Any one who can find consolation in such an opinion, I should be very sorry to deprive of it. But I must say plainly, that we are in a world of life and death; and that if we have nothing better than these dreams to sustain each other with, we had better hold our peace. In the words of our Lord in the 5th chapter of St. John, in the comment upon these words at the tomb of Lazarus, I find what I want, and what I believe every one wants, and more than we shall ever get to the bottom of, if we meditate upon them from this day till the consummation of all things. While I have them I will not, for my part, build up a world of fantasies which, seeing that it has no foundation in the nature of things or in the word of God, any physical discovery, any application of ordinary logic, may throw down in a moment. *Da nuce pueri.* The boyhood of the Church, as of individuals, may have innocently occupied itself in cracking nuts, and eating the poor kernel in the inside. *Our* faith perishes in such experiments. Let us put away childish things, and try that we may know those blessed things which are freely given us of God.

That the declarations respecting a general resurrection at the last day are to me of infinite worth, and that they do not at all clash in my mind with the belief which our Lord's words in this chapter appear very distinctly to justify,—that men, at all times and in all ages, who have been in their graves, have heard the

voice of the Son of Man and have lived; that in their bodies, and not in their spirits only, they have awakened at His call; I think will be evident from what I have said on the resurrection of Lazarus. And this general resurrection I connect, as I think all men connect it, with a judgment-day. The only question is, whether we are to follow strictly the assertions of the Evangelists, and call that day an unveiling of the Son of Man—a discovery to all, wherever they are, in one part of the universe or another, quick or dead, of Him who is, and always has been, their King and their Judge, so that every eye shall see Him, and the secrets of all hearts shall be discovered; or whether we shall substitute for *this* notion of His advent to judgment, one which supposes a gathering together, in some certain space, of multitudes that never could be gathered together in any space,—one that reproduces all the pomp and solemnities of earthly courts of justice,—one that supposes Christ not to be the Searcher of hearts, not to be the Light of men, but the mere image and pattern of an earthly magistrate. What I call for, is the *strict* interpretation of the words of Scripture. What I denounce, is an attempt to substitute the forms and conceptions of our own carnal understandings for that which speaks to a faculty within us which is higher than our understandings, and which belongs to us all alike. Far from agreeing with those writers, immeasurably superior to me I own in learning and insight, who think that the words of Scripture do not fit the conditions of modern times, and that we need to adapt them to our stage of civilization, or else to cast them aside, I expect no deliverance from the superstitions by which we are tied and bound, from the confusions which a corrupt and money-getting civilization has introduced into our thoughts on the meanest and on the highest subjects, but in a return to the more accurate study of those Scriptural phrases which we use most familiarly, but in the attempt to bring our theology to the higher and simpler standard which they set before us. Earnestly would I implore those friends who have so kindly told me that they would gladly agree with me, in my views respecting the Resurrection and the Judgment, but that they find it impossible—not to trouble themselves about my views at all; to be sure that they can only

be of use to them, that I can only be of use to them, just so far as I can help them to clear their minds of mists which hinder them from seeing that light which must throw all my opinions and those of far wiser men into the shade.

DISCOURSES XVI. AND XVII.

A FRIEND, who has kindly looked over the sheets of these Discourses, has intimated to me that though I may have said enough on the simple and childlike character of St. John's *narrative*, I have not directly encountered an impression which he believes to be very general,—that the *discourses* of our Lord which are contained in this Gospel, are essentially and radically unlike those in the other three. He thinks that this impression may not be felt by the *most* humble and devout readers of the Gospel; but that it is far from being confined to those who have any knowledge of Baur's opinions, or have even the slightest acquaintance with German theology. It forces itself upon every one who is only beginning to exercise his faculties of comparison and criticism upon the Scriptures; it is especially likely to affect those who have derived their impressions of them from our ordinary English commentators and pulpit teachers.

My own experience corroborates this opinion. Earnest men feel this difficulty more than indifferent men. It is, therefore, one which no teacher ought to leave unconsidered. But every reader must feel how hard it is for one man to put himself exactly in another's point of view, and to discern what the inconsistencies are which seem to him most glaring. To speak about tones and habits of writing, so as to make oneself intelligible, so as not to assume canons of criticism which the objector does not recognise, is possible, but certainly far from easy. I believe that I can only fulfil my friend's wishes on this subject, with any satisfaction, if I take some special discourse from one of the first

three Gospels,—some one which shall be admitted to exhibit their characteristic manner,—and another from St. John, which shall be admitted to exhibit his manner. For many reasons, I think that the former specimen ought to be taken from St. Matthew. Nor can I have much doubt on which passage of St. Matthew the reader would wish me to fix. All would say, ‘The Sermon on the Mount exhibits that purely ethical tone which we trace in the earlier Gospels. There Christ speaks with authority, no doubt, as a king and a lawgiver; but it is to proclaim blessings upon the poor in spirit, the merciful, the pure in heart. There is little of what in modern times we call doctrine. There is no formal theology. It is a code which saint, savage, and sage, may all recognise as divine, whether they conform to it or no.’

What shall we choose as the parallel discourse to this in St. John? It would be difficult to find any contrast so marked and striking as that which the 8th chapter offers. The discourse there is argumentative, not hortatory. It is addressed to disputers in Jerusalem, not to crowds about a mountain. Those who hear it do not confess its authority, but canvass every word of it. No passage in St. John is more strictly theological. Here, then, if anywhere, we may expect to find the radical essential dissimilitude which is spoken of. Let us see whether it is there,—whether the opposition which is so manifest upon the surface does, or does not, penetrate to the heart’s core of the two records.

We may amuse ourselves for ever with the words ethical, theological, doctrinal. They are evidently mere artificial helps to our conceptions. We can never arrive through them at any safe apprehension of human thoughts or divine. But it is not difficult, I think, for any earnest reader to ascertain what is the cardinal idea,—at all events the cardinal word in the Sermon on the Mount. Let us take a few passages of it, that we may be clear on this point. ‘*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*’ ‘*I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of*

your Father which is in heaven : for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. ‘ *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*’ ‘ *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*’ ‘ *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : that thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.*’ ‘ *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*’ ‘ *Be not ye therefore like unto them : for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*’ ‘ *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*’ ‘ *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*’ ‘ *Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?*’ ‘ *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*’ ‘ *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him ?*’ ‘ *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*’

I am sure I need not remark that we have not here the mere repetition of a name. All the precepts that answer most to the description that is given of the Sermon on the Mount, when it is praised for its ethical qualities, for its beautiful morality, are here made to depend upon the fact that those whom He was addressing had a Father in heaven, who knew them and desired

them to be what He was. This is the thread which binds all these precepts together. Take it away, and they lose not only their cohesion, but all their practical force; they become a set of cold, dead, formal letters in a book, which we may admire if we like them, but which have no power over us, which do not concern human beings at all. This is not only a truth, but it is *the* truth which exercises all the charm over those who feel that there is any charm in the Sermon on the Mount, however they may account for it, or represent it to themselves. A person who has been reading the old Hebrew Scriptures asks himself,— ‘What is the change that I experience in passing from them to this document? St. Matthew was a Hebrew; perhaps he wrote in Hebrew. He says the law is not to pass away; but that every jot and tittle of it is to be fulfilled. Why, then, do I call his book a Gospel? Why does it transport me into a world altogether different from that in which I have been dwelling,—from that in which I have had such wonderful revelations of God? Christ speaks to me of a Father; Christ reveals a Father. All other differences are contained in that. This is the new revelation.’

Having made this discovery, let us turn to the 8th chapter of St. John. What is that about? I am afraid of repeating myself; but I will repeat St. John without fear.

‘And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.’ ‘I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto Him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.’ ‘They understood not that He spake to them of the Father.’ ‘And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.’ ‘I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.’ ‘Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.’ ‘Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that He is your God.’

These passages I think I have shown are the cardinal pas-

sages here, as the others are the cardinal passages there. May I entreat the reader, who thinks there is a radical difference between St. Matthew and St. John, seriously to meditate upon them? They will show him that there is a difference, a very great difference, between these Evangelists. I think they will show him that the difference is of the kind which I have endeavoured to indicate in these Sermons, between one whose function it was to declare to men that they had a Father, and one whose function it was to show them how it was possible they should have a Father, by unfolding the unity of the Father and the Son.

DISCOURSE XIX.

A BOOK has recently been published by Mr. John McLeod Campbell 'On the Nature of the Atonement.' I cannot feel too thankful to the pious and excellent writer for the light which he has thrown upon this subject; for his exemplary charity to those with whom he is at variance; for his successful effort to reclaim the doctrine from the region of hard scholasticism to the region of practical life and holiness; above all, for his vindication of the character of God as a Father, and for his determination to assert, that likeness to His character, and communion with Him, are the ends which God is seeking for us, and which we are to seek from Him. In every one of these respects, I wish to be a learner from Mr. Campbell. Others may criticise him who feel that they know more than he does. I cannot read his book without perceiving how little I do know of the truths which seem to me the most vital and cardinal, and how impossible it is to know more, except by having more of the spirit of love, which is the Spirit of God.

In a book written expressly for Scotland—though admirably fitted to enlarge and deepen the thoughts of Englishmen—I cannot wish that he should have followed any other method than that which he has followed. He knows what books are popular

among the religious people of his own land ; and of these he has spoken with singular candour and wisdom. I might, indeed, wish that Calvinists knew something of Calvin as well as of Edwards, and that Scotchmen cared more for the broad, bold statements of Knox, than for the modifications of much feebler men in this country. I can say for myself that I have read, with infinite delight, Knox's book on Predestination ; finding there the fullest and most vehement assertions of God as an absolutely righteous Being, and the greatest indignation against his opponents for daring to say that a believer in predestination must think of Him chiefly as a Sovereign. Knox would evidently have died rather than have adopted phraseology which his descendants think that it is heretical to complain of. He would have rejoiced not to limit God's grace in any way ; only he could not see how the acknowledgment of it as universal was compatible with the attributing of every good thing to God and nothing to man. As an assertor, as a resister of Arminian denials, we may embrace him and go all lengths with him. And I apprehend that even when he was upon earth, at all events that now, he would prefer this sympathy to that of men who fritter away his positions, and only accept his negations.

Neither Edwards, however, nor Dr. Williams, nor Knox, nor Calvin, have much influence upon the mind of England in the present day—at all events on the minds of English Episcopalians. Luther, to whose Commentary on the Galatians Mr. Campbell has done justice, commands our sympathy more. It is the man who speaks to us more than his books. I believe if we knew them better, we should find such a man speaking in them that we should be scarcely able to make the distinction. He whom we suppose to be the assertor of Justification by Faith, is really the poor stricken monk, overwhelmed by the sense and burden of sin ; grasping the assurance of forgiveness which comes to him from the old Creed ; believing that assurance as given by the God who is the subject of the Creed ; certain that it cannot mean indulgence for sin, that it must mean deliverance from sin ; discovering that it involves the actual possession of righteousness ; discovering that he cannot have that righteousness in himself, and must have it in Christ ; learning gradually from St.

Paul how Christ is made unto us righteousness and is the righteousness of God ; knocking down every obstacle which stood in the way of the apprehension of this righteousness ; preaching the Gospel to men that it is theirs as well as his ; anathematizing Popes, Councils, Kings, Doctors, Reformers, whoever seem to him to intercept the intercourse between the sinner and his Lord. With such a man—in his strength and in his weakness, in his gentleness and in his rage—Englishmen, so far as they are enabled to make his acquaintance, feel a cordial interest ; they are sure that he was fighting a good fight, even when the smoke of the cannon, or his own single-handed rashness, conceal him from their sight, and make his intentions perplexing to them. And those who have had any fights in themselves, and who therefore know that his descriptions are real and not imaginary, will heartily approve of Mr. Campbell's judgment in putting him foremost among those who have started from the sense of evil in themselves, and have been led to believe in an atonement as the only emancipation from it.

It must not, however, be concealed, that the following of Luther has had an effect in cramping men's study of St. Paul. In another book I have endeavoured to explain how it seems to me that this effect has been produced. The doctrine of Justification by Faith has been assumed to be *the* Pauline doctrine. Luther said that it was so ; and Luther surely entered into St. Paul as no one else has done. Persons who followed the course of Luther's experience thought that the Epistle to the Romans must begin from the sense of sin, as Luther and as they began. If it did not appear to do so, then the two first chapters must be treated as prologue, and it must begin with the third. All questions about the relation of Jews and Gentiles must be treated as accidental or subordinate to the primary thesis ; whatever does not concern that, in the final chapters, must be resolved into practical exhortations, introduced, after the manner of a modern sermon, when the doctrinal statement has been concluded. Those who, without this experience, merely desired to elucidate the formal doctrine, of course subjected the Epistle to still more formal treatment. Its human character disappeared ; and the divinity which was to compensate for that

disappearance was of a very dry, hungry, uninspired character indeed. Both parties agreed to regard the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians as the specially Pauline Epistles, because there were most allusions in them to justification by faith; other Epistles were to be interpreted mainly by reference to these. Ultimately, Baur, who wrote a triumphant vindication of the Lutheran doctrine against Möhler's 'Symbolik,' has discovered that only four of the thirteen Epistles can be genuine, because the Pauline diagnostic is wanting in the rest; and that there was a deadly antipathy between St. Paul and the other apostles, because he was asserting that spiritual doctrine which they were setting at naught.

The time, therefore, it seemed to me, had come for re-examining this question about the subject-matter of St. Paul's Epistles, and seeing whether we have a right to limit them as some German Evangelicals have been inclined to limit them. I contended, in 'The Unity of the New Testament,' that the words '*It pleased God to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles,*'—words that occur in the Epistle which was dearest to Luther, in the Epistle on which Baur grounds his great argument for an opposition between St. Paul and the other apostles; words that contain St. Paul's own account of his conversion, and therefore begin from what Lutherans must admit to be the right starting-point of his history,—are the key to the meaning of his life and the object of his mission. I attempted to show that, if we used this key, the Epistle to the Romans might be read as a whole letter, not be cut into fragments to meet a certain hypothesis; and that all the Epistles which Baur would reject become the varied and harmonious expositions of a great and divine purpose. Using that key, also, it seemed to me that a most close and intimate relation would appear between the Epistle to the Hebrews and those which bear St. Paul's name on the face of them; and that—whether the old tradition or the suspicion of critics respecting that Epistle has the strongest foundation, whether or not it actually proceeded from the hand of St. Paul—it does illustrate and fulfil his intention, and is a transition point between him and the other Apostles, especially between him and the Apostle St. John.

Why do I refer to these points here? Because it seems to me that the doctrine of Justification by Faith, either in the practical form in which it presented itself to Luther, or in the merely dogmatical form which it assumes in some of his successors, has determined the thoughts of a number of Germans, Englishmen, and Scotchmen on the subject of the Atonement; so that their thoughts of the one unconsciously and inevitably govern their thoughts of the other. They start from evil, from the conscience of evil in themselves, and then either each man asks himself,—‘How can I be free from this oppression which is sitting so heavily upon me?’ or the schoolman asks, ‘What divine arrangement would meet the necessities of this case?’ Of course, the results of these two inquiries are very different; and Mr. Campbell has done an immense service to Christian faith and life by bringing forth the former into prominence, and throwing the other into the shade. His book may be read as a great protest of the individual conscience against the utter inadequacy of the scholastic arrangements to satisfy it; as a solemn assertion,—‘This arrangement of yours will not take away my sin; and I must have my sin taken away; this arrangement of yours does not bring me into fellowship with a righteous and loving God; and I must have that fellowship, or perish.’ This is admirable; but if what I have said is true, there is another way of contemplating the subject. We need not begin with the sinner; we may begin with God. And so beginning, that which speaks most comfort to the individual man may not be first of all contrived for his justification. God may have reconciled the world unto Himself; God may have atoned Himself with mankind; and the declaration of this atonement, the setting forth the nature and grounds of it, and all the different aspects of it, may be the real subjects of those Epistles, in which the individual man has found the secret of his own blessing, of his own restoration; but which he mangles and well-nigh destroys when he reconstructs them upon the basis of his individual necessities, and makes them utter a message which has been first suggested by them.

The subject belongs to this place, because the words, ‘*Other wher I have, which are not of this fold,*’ have led me to speak in

this Discourse of the calling in of the Gentiles as part of that mystery of atonement, the great act of which was the Son of Man's laying down His life that He might take it again, the ground of which was the unity of the Father and the Son. Here St. Paul and St. John wonderfully coincide. That which must be thrown into the background by those who merely connect the atonement with individual salvation, becomes most prominent for both Apostles; for the one who believed that He was an ambassador from God to men, telling them that He had reconciled the world unto Himself, and beseeching them to be reconciled to Him; for the other who taught that '*God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*' If it be asked, then, whether there is no difference between the tent-maker of Tarsus and the old man of Ephesus, I should answer—this; that while St. Paul's main work was to set forth the fact of atonement, laying its groundwork always in the righteousness of God manifested in Christ, and ascending, in the Epistle to the Ephesians especially, to the purpose which He purposed in Christ before the worlds were; St. John's calling was to trace this last idea to its source in God Himself; to exhibit the original constitution of man in the Divine Word; to set forth atonement as the vindication of that constitution, and the vindication of the right of all men to enter into it; to set forth the union of the Father with the Son in one Spirit, as the ground of the reconciliation of man, and of his restoration to the image of his Creator.

To those, then, who ask me whether I hold the doctrine of the Atonement in some unusual and unnatural sense, or do not wish to thrust it into a corner, as if the Bible had other more important subjects to treat of, I answer,—My great complaint of the oracles of the English religious world is, that they do give a most unusual and unnatural sense to the word Atonement; that they give it a most contracted signification; that they lead their disciples to form a poor opinion of its effects; that they do not follow Apostles and Evangelists, in connecting it with the whole revelation of God and the whole mystery of man. I answer again,—that they connect it with their own faith and their own salvation, not with that cross on which Christ was lifted up

that He might draw all men to Him. On many points I believe I could adopt forms of language usual among Calvinistical divines, to which Mr. Campbell, looking at them from his point of view, rightly objects as involving fictions ; but I would rather be suspected of rejecting all popular modes of speech on the subject, even when I see in them a good and wholesome meaning, than yield for one instant to those representations of the character and will of God which must end with us, as they did with the Jews, in the identification of the Father of lights with the Spirit of lies.

DISCOURSES XXII. XXIII. AND XXIV.

I HAVE dwelt much in these Sermons upon the fact that our Lord treated His disciples as a body, and as a holy body. Many persons, as soon as they hear remarks of this kind, exclaim—‘ Oh, yes ; we have often heard that doctrine of corporate holiness set forth before. But it seems to us the very destruction of personal holiness. It involves every ecclesiastical fiction ; Romanism is at the bottom of it.’

When statements of this kind are made honestly and earnestly, I am glad to hear them. Abhorrence of fictions we should take all pains to cultivate in others and in ourselves. Whatever tends to the weakening of personal holiness, let it have what logical consistency it may, must be false. And that there is a doctrine about corporate Christianity, corporate faith, corporate righteousness, which is open to these charges, I, at least, can have no doubt. I should not say that Romanism was at the bottom of it ; but rather that it is at the bottom of Romanism, in so far as Romanism is an immoral system, and one that deposes Christ from His rightful dignity.

1. Let me explain myself upon each of these points. To suppose a society—call it a Church or what you will—consti-

tuted holy by an arbitrary decree of God, its members remaining unholy, I hold to be a most dangerous fiction ; one which we cannot too vehemently repudiate, as alike condemned by experience, by reason, and by Scripture. Experience testifies that when a nation or a Church claims a holiness or a righteousness of its own, it becomes practically most unholy and unrighteous in all its acts and purposes. Reason declares that it must be so, because righteousness is predicable only of voluntary beings, and that to be made righteous by an arrangement is impossible in the nature of things. Scripture declares that it must be so, because God is holy ; and the holiness of man is only possible by the participation of His nature. But is it the same thing to assert that God has constituted man holy in His Son ; that all unholiness is the result of the selfish desire of men to have something of their own, and not to abide in God's order ; that a Church is the witness of the true constitution of man in Christ ; that every Churchman, therefore, by his position and calling, is bound to say that he is only holy as a member of a body, and holy in its Head ; that every Churchman who does not say this, who thinks that it is his individual holiness which helps to make up the Church, is setting up himself, and imitating the sin for which our Lord denounced the Pharisee ? Does experience, does reason, does Scripture, protest against this doctrine ? Is not experience in favour of it, inasmuch as it testifies that every true patriot has lived and died for his nation, and has renounced himself ; that every true Churchman has lived to claim his own blessings for all men, to declare that he himself, as an individual, was worthy of none of them ? Is not reason in favour of this doctrine, seeing that it affirms a voluntary creature to be a mere curse to himself till he confesses a law which is above himself, and gives up his self-will that he may have a free-will ? Is not Scripture affirming, in every line, that God has chosen families, nations, Churches ; and that these are holy because He is holy ; and that those who go about to establish a holiness or righteousness of their own have not submitted to His righteousness ?

2. I have anticipated the answer to the second question. Personal holiness is weakened, nay, is destroyed, by everything

that could lead a man to think that it was fictitious in him, or that God was sanctioning a fiction. And therefore it is greatly imperilled by any notions which speak of the individual man having a righteousness imputed to him, in consequence of his faith, which is not truly and actually his. But this fiction is not the consequence of maintaining the doctrine I am asserting ; it becomes inevitable when we deny that doctrine. If by the very law and constitution of His universe God contemplates us as members of a body in His Son, we are bound to contemplate ourselves in the same way. We have a righteousness and holiness in Christ. We have no right to deny it ; our unrighteousness is the very effect of denying it. Imputation of righteousness *then* becomes no fiction. It means only that God beholds us as we are, as we have not learnt or do not choose to behold ourselves. The fiction has arisen because the truth has been denied.

3. When I speak of a Church, St. Paul tells me to speak of a body. He pursues the analogy, we all know, into its details ; he speaks of head, and feet, and hands, of functions assigned to each, of sufferings passing from one to another, of a life circulating through the whole. Everything here is living and real. You turn the body into a corporation, a certain thing created by enactment, without parts, functions, life ; you attribute to the dead thing what is true of the living thing—to the decapitated trunk what was true of that which derives all its strength and virtue from its head ; then, indeed, you are involved in a series of falsehoods, each more monstrous than the last ; or, to speak more modern and courteous language, in a series of developments, each preserving a family likeness to its ancestor, the very last and most prodigious being able to prove its descent from the notion out of which they all started. Once suppose it possible for the Church to exist out of Christ, and for humanity to exist out of Christ, and a Church which thinks this may impose anything it pleases upon those who belong to it. Nothing would be restrained from it which it had imagined to do, if its first maxim were *not* a falsehood, if Christ did *not* reign in spite of the determination of His subjects to set up another ruler.

4. I have given an outline of what I believe to be the Romish system ; and surely it is a system which may obtain a hold over England, as well as over any country in the world. Nay, must it not obtain a hold if we have nothing to set up against it but the notion of a Church, compounded of a number of men believing themselves to be holy, and despising others? Romanism is the fearful parody of Christian Unity. This is the absolute denial that any such Unity exists or is possible. When the Son of God and the Son of Man is manifested, the parody and the denial will perish together.

DISCOURSE XXVI.

A FRIEND has suggested to me a punctuation of the 2d verse of the 17th chapter, which would enable us to translate it : *'That He should give to them all which Thou hast given Him, (even) eternal life.'* This version seems to me at least worthy of serious consideration.

THE END.

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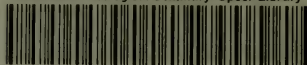
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