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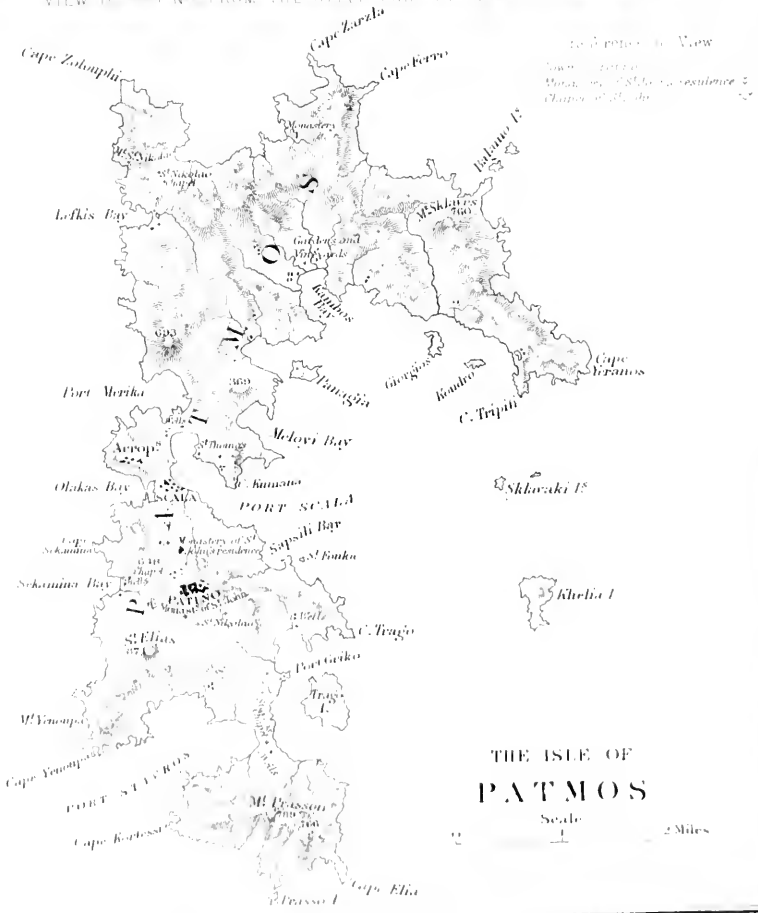
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF  
ST. JOHN.







VIEW OF TOWN FROM THE UPPER PART OF PORT SCLATA



THE  
LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF  
ST. JOHN.

BY  
JAMES M. MACDONALD, D.D.,  
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY.

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY  
THE VERY REVEREND  
J. S. HOWSON, D.D.,  
DEAN OF CHESTER.

Ὁ ὑπὲρ πάντας ἀγίους ἠγαπημένος, ὁ στηρίξας τὴν ἀπὸ περάτων τῆς οἰκουμένης Ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἐμφράξας τὰ τῶν αἰρετικῶν στόματα.

CHRYSOSTOM, *De Pseudo-Proph.*, etc.

SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG & CO.,  
743 & 745, BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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No one whose attention has been turned to the fact that it was not so much the object of our Lord's ministry to produce effects directly on the minds of the people at large, (although these effects were, as a matter of course, incidental and constantly visible,) as it was the object of that ministry to prepare His disciples for the functions of the apostolic office, will for a moment think that too great prominence has been given to that portion of St. John's life spent under the immediate training and discipline of the Great Master and Teacher Himself.

Messrs. Scribner, Armstrong & Co. have, with the entire concurrence of the author, made an arrangement with Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, of London, for the publication of this work in Great Britain.

PRINCETON, N. J.



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# INTRODUCTION.

BY THE EDITOR.

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AN affecting interest is given to this treatise on the life, character, and writings of St. John, in consequence of the death of its author while these sheets were passing through the press. I am not able to reckon Dr. Macdonald among my own personal American friends. I never had the pleasure of meeting him on either side of the Atlantic: but a slight biographical notice, which has been placed in my hands, enables me to furnish the following particulars.<sup>1</sup>

Descended from a family in the north of Ireland, and, more remotely, drawing his origin from the west of Scotland (these two parts of our coast have been associated together by many romantic and historical incidents, and the name "Macdonald" has a well known place in such recollections), and himself born and bred in the midst of the Puritanism of New England, the writer of this book united in his character two elements of strength, which showed themselves, throughout his career, in a vigorous and resolute habit of mind. His father, a man of mark both as an enterprising merchant and as a general in command of troops during the war of 1812, on his deathbed dedicated this son, then a boy of only fourteen, to the Ministry of the Gospel. The youth "appears never to have lost sight of this dying charge, and very soon set himself in earnest to fulfil it"; and his character was from the first and throughout in harmony with the calling thus accepted. By a companion of his early manhood he is

<sup>1</sup> *Memorial of James Madison Macdonald, D.D.*: a Discourse delivered in the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton, New Jersey, by Lyman A. Atwater. 1876.

described as robust in frame, with an honest face, a fresh complexion, and a bright eye, as devout and conscientious, genial in society, firm in his friendships and diligent in study. After exercising his ministry first in Connecticut, then in Long Island, then in Brooklyn, he made his home in Princeton, New Jersey; and there his mature work was done with zeal and perseverance for many years.<sup>1</sup> There too he became Vice President, and (for the most part Acting President) of the Board of Trustees of the Theological Seminary, though himself a graduate of the Theological Seminary of Yale. Thus, in different parts of his life, he was closely connected with two of the most famous Divinity Schools of the New World, each of which has exercised a wide and beneficial influence on Religion in the United States. Dr. Macdonald's position at Princeton was peculiarly responsible and difficult, his congregation containing men of the highest culture in Science, Philosophy, and Theology. It is justly remarked in the pamphlet which I am now consulting, that "no pastor retains his unabated hold of any congregation for a score of years without some very sterling qualities, much less such a charge as this." But Dr. Macdonald had this success, and he was never more honoured and trusted than at the last. The most conspicuous feature of his character appears to have been an unswerving love of truth, with an earnest and zealous desire to propagate the truth. As a preacher he had great advantages in a voice of singular compass and distinctness, and in his power of lively description. Notwithstanding his tenacity of purpose, he was remarkably candid in his dealing with new expressions of opinion; he was always a most diligent student; his habit was to make careful and assiduous preparation for his work; and he had that strong common sense, and that power of subordinating the unimportant to the important, which almost always give to the possessor of these faculties a command over the minds of others. With all this there was a tenderness and a gentle sympathy in his nature which

<sup>1</sup> This period began in 1853 and ended in 1876.

bound him closely to those who were in suffering and sorrow. "We never truly knew what Dr. Macdonald was," it was said, "till he came to us when death invaded and darkened our households." The end of his own life came very suddenly; but in this circumstance, notwithstanding the distress which it caused, there was this advantage, that the impression of his full usefulness and the fresh power of his example were unimpaired. These particulars are put together from a short memoir, which is evidently not written in the language of blind eulogy; and it is pleasant thus to be able to combine a slight sketch of the author with the publication of the book which is here edited.<sup>1</sup>

Both the plan and the execution of this book will, if I am not mistaken, recommend themselves to the English-speaking world as a really valuable addition to our theological and religious literature. The plan is to present in one view all parts of St. John's life in their connection with one another and with his writings, and also in their connection with the Life of Christ and the founding of His Church. Of the execution the readers must judge, when they have examined the whole volume. I may be allowed here to make a few remarks on the general subject.

We are invited in this volume to contemplate St. John as the personal link connecting together three very different parts of Holy Scripture. This method of presenting the personality of a Biblical writer in close combination with his writings,—so that the man is set forth, so to speak, as part of the Divinely-communicated Revelation with which we have to deal,—is remarkably characteristic of our times, and has met with much favourable acceptance.<sup>2</sup> The texture of the Bible lends itself with peculiar facility to this method. It may be worth while to note two or

<sup>1</sup> Among the books which he published was one entitled *Credulity in its Different Forms*, and another, for devotional use, entitled *My Father's House*. See below on the Apocalypse.

<sup>2</sup> I am of course not in any way responsible for the friendly way in which my own attempts in this direction are mentioned in one of the notes of this book; but it may be allowed to me to express my sense of obligation to the writer of the note.

three instances before we turn to the special features which mark the case of St. John, when regarded in this point of view.

There are some cases of this kind in the Old Testament. One is pre-eminent. We have there the life of David in the Historical Books, and the poems of David in the Psalter; and in proportion as we can connect the two together (and to a considerable extent we certainly can) we gain very much in our appreciation of the value of both. If the man stands out, as it were, from the Psalms, we read those Psalms with a stronger sense of their reality; and when we study the story of David's life we study it with a new interest, if we remember that it is he, under God, who instructs us, for the conduct of our life and devotion, in poems familiar as household words.

It is however in the New Testament that we have the best and the most frequent instances of this connecting together of different books by a living personality. One such instance is St. Luke. We can trace his presence and his movements in the incidents recorded in that narrative of the Acts, which he wrote without a dream of attracting any attention to himself. But he is the writer too of one of the Gospels. He is an Evangelist as well as a biographer of the Apostles. May we not say that he is a Psalmist also? for to him we owe that Angels' Song which makes our Christmas morning bright, as well as those three familiar Hymns of the Nativity, which are embodied in the Services of the Church of England. Another example is St. Peter. Not an Evangelist, and not a historian of the early events of the Church, he yet binds together the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles by the continuous thread of his own animated and vigorous life, while in his two Epistles the same disciple and apostle, of whose doings and words we have read with so much interest, stands forth to address us directly. The great instance of this personal and most eloquent connection between different books of the Sacred Volume is, of course, St. Paul; for his letters are so numerous that they constitute a very large portion of the New Testament, while he is also



the great figure in the Apostolic History, and becomes more and more commanding as we approach the end of that narrative; while the letters and the narrative are so bound together by coincidences of time and place, in small things as well as great, that these coincidences have formed the whole subject of a treatise famous in Theology.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps we shall best appreciate the distinctive characteristics of St. John, viewed under this aspect, if we contrast him with St. Luke, St. Peter, and St. Paul. Like the first of these, he is an Evangelist, and also has a very definite connection with the Acts of the Apostles: but "the beloved physician" wrote no Epistles destined to be a part of Holy Scripture: no "Acts" of his own are recorded by the pen which has so diligently recorded the sayings and doings of others: and, so far as we know, he never saw the countenance or heard the voice of the Incarnate Son of God. In certain of these respects St. Peter held common ground with St. John; he shared with him the blessed and ever-fruitful experience of the Gospel time; he is even more conspicuous on the ground of the apostolic history. He also wrote inspired letters; but he did not write a Gospel; his two Epistles are not marked by that variety of character which we find in the three by St. John; and to his early friend of the Galilean lake, not to himself, was vouchsafed the Apocalypse. In the two facts that St. John's writings are of three very different kinds, and that he was personally associated with our Saviour upon earth, we see at once that he rises to a level higher than that which is occupied even by St. Paul. The "beloved disciple" and the "apostle of the Gentiles" have indeed these things in common, that we can connect their early training and early history with their subsequent career and with their writings, and that each has a place in St. Luke's narrative, while the latter has there by far the greater place. In other respects the former has pre-eminent claims on our attention and reverence. To this we must add that the ground

<sup>1</sup> The *Hore Pauline* need hardly be named.

occupied by Peter and Paul is chiefly Biblical, whereas the protracted life of John, covering the whole of the later as well as the earlier part of the first century, enters into the range of what we popularly term Ecclesiastical History.

Passing now from the general plan of the book, to which these pages are meant to serve as an Introduction, we may take a separate glance first at the life, and then at the writings, of St. John.

As regards his life, if the writing of these pages aimed at anything like completeness, it would be necessary to say something of those two facts, which together give us our correct starting point, and a starting point full of meaning; viz., that St. John was a Galilean, and that he was a fisherman. But I turn at once to two influences which had much to do with the moulding of his character and the direction of his life.

The first of these influences is that which was connected with his mother. It is probable that we might with perfect safety write more confidently and more fully on this subject than is done by Dr. Macdonald.<sup>1</sup> Whether on the ground of hereditary transmission, or through the powerful influence of example, it seems evident that we must trace something of the mother in the son. In the first place, Salome is made conspicuous in the Gospel History; and there must be a reason for this, and a reason connected with our instruction. We might also perhaps justly lay some stress on this, that Salome somewhat throws Zebedee into the shade. The eagerness and patience with which she devoted herself to Christ, ministering to Him of her substance, following Him in His journeys, staying in Jerusalem when He was there, and even after His crucifixion continuing her service, reveal to us a warm and energetic disposition, with a readiness to believe that the kingdom of the Messiah was come. That interview with Christ, when she asked on behalf of her two sons, that they might sit, the one on the Lord's right hand and the other on His left, manifests a strong and enthusiastic character in the mother, and

<sup>1</sup> See Godet, *Commentaire sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean*, vol. i., p. 59.

the fact of a warm and close union of feeling between herself and them. We easily see that this request, viewed on one side, was foolish and ambitious. But we must not forget that the request had its good side also. At least it shows that this impetuous mother had faith to perceive that Jesus Christ was something more than He seemed; and she was willing and eager that her sons should cast in their lot with Him, however much for the present He might be "despised and rejected of men." And with this incident we must connect that other occasion, when the Lord gave to James and John the title of "Boanerges." This cannot have been a term of reproach; but, while conveying an admonition and a caution, must like Peter's name have been intended to indicate some high qualities. And it cannot well be doubted that there was by nature a fiery force and enthusiasm in John the Evangelist, inherited perhaps from his mother, and intensified by the grand example of John the Baptist, which had a high value, if only it might be trained and brought under a loving discipline.

The second influence to which we must now pass is that which was exerted on this Evangelist by St. John the Baptist. This is made very prominent in the fourth Gospel, as anyone may see very distinctly, on comparing it for this purpose with the other three. It is not precisely that the Baptist himself is made more conspicuous there than in the other narratives. It would hardly be correct to state the matter thus. It is rather that our Evangelist is distinctly set before us as the disciple of the Baptist, in preparation for a higher discipleship, and that precisely through this relationship to the Forerunner the allegiance to Christ began. The author of this book follows a true instinct in devoting a whole chapter to this subject, Chapter III.

One circumstance which tends to give us a distinctive knowledge of St. John, and a knowledge very serious and affecting, is his friendship with St. Peter. This friendship too was a very early one; and early friendships have often a tenderness and a power that belong to no other. Moreover it comes before us

with the characteristics of a definite local colouring; and this enhances to us the interest with which we think of these two disciples together. As boys and young men they were companions on the shore and on the waves of the Sea of Galilee. There they gathered pebbles and shells; and there they exercised their craft in companionship, mending and casting their nets. Each of these two men had a brother; but we have a consciousness that cannot be mistaken, that Peter was more to John, and John to Peter, than James was to the former, or Andrew to the latter. This is true to nature, and true to the experience of life. These two men had strongly contrasted characters, and yet not so strongly contrasted but that there was common ground between them, and an easy bond of sympathy of each with the other. Peter was impetuous; but so also was John, though the general bent of his mind was contemplative. John was full of the deep emotion of love for his Master; but so also was Peter, though adapted by natural qualities for an active life. The circumstances too, in which they were placed, tended, as time went on, to make this friendship closer. At the Transfiguration and in Gethsemane, as well as on another occasion, they (with one associate who died young<sup>1</sup>) were the chosen companions of their Lord. During the fearful hours which preceded the Crucifixion,—moments which neither of them could ever forget,—we see them both, by the flickering firelight, in the high-priest's house. The incidents of the morning of the Resurrection associated them in like manner, and even more closely, and laid up a store of recollections, so that this event could never be thought of by either without the presence of the image of the other; while the last chapter in St. John's Gospel not only brings the two together, under circumstances most solemn and touching, on the very scene of their childhood, and in connection with the craft of their early manhood,<sup>2</sup> but shows clearly how deeply conscious St. John was of Peter's affection towards him, and how fully he returned

<sup>1</sup> See Acts xii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> John xxi. 1-14.

it. "Lord, and what shall this man do?" The manner in which this is recorded is an echo of the friendship which inspired the question. Nor do the Scripture notices of this union of heart and life end here. Still, after the day of Pentecost, these two apostles are together, pre-eminent above the rest, at the healing of the lame man by the Beautiful Gate of the temple:<sup>1</sup> together they went from Jerusalem to Samaria, to consolidate the results of the first mission of the Christian Church;<sup>2</sup> and when finally we reach the last notice of them in the Epistles, they disappear from view together. St. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, describes Peter and John as "pillars" standing side by side in the Church of God.<sup>3</sup>

If we compare the scenes in which that earlier life of St. John was spent, which is so clearly recorded to us in the Gospel History, and those to which the dim, though most interesting, traditions of his later life in Church History belong, we are much struck by their difference. In two respects indeed the contrast is very marked. There is in the first place that contrast, which I have just touched, between the transparent distinctness of what we read in the Bible and the hazy uncertainty of what elsewhere we read regarding this apostle. All that relates to the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem, in their relation to St. John, is vivid and bright; all that relates to his connection with Asia Minor, Ephesus and Patmos, is merely lighted up by anecdotes more or less probable. But the regions themselves also are strongly contrasted in their aspect and political and social condition.

A season of sharp persecution separates the two periods of St. John's life. It seems probable that St. John may have quitted Palestine during the campaign conducted by Vespasian under the Emperor Nero, and when that emperor's general cruelties were spreading terror through the world. About this

<sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 9. It is hardly necessary to say that the James mentioned here is not the brother of John.

time St. Paul suffered martyrdom; and it is most interesting to think of St. John as entering upon the region in which the Apostle of the Gentiles had laboured so much, and which he had so richly instructed by his Epistles; landing perhaps at Miletus,<sup>1</sup> whence the message went for the Ephesian elders,<sup>2</sup> and taking up his residence at Ephesus, in the heart of the country of "the Seven Churches." The geography of the district of "Asia" connects together, in a remarkable way, the widely separated biographies of these two apostles.

The personal interest, however, of St. John, at this period of his life and in this part of the Levant, is chiefly concentrated on Patmos, a barren rocky island to the southwest of the peninsula which we popularly term Asia Minor. A large amount of historical romance has, on various occasions, been connected with islands. It is only needful to name Salamis and Malta, Elba and St. Helena, to justify this remark. But islands have also been vividly connected with what may truly be called the romance of Ecclesiastical History. Two such places are on the west and east of our own coast. Iona retains imperishably the memory of Columba and his great school of missionaries. Lindisfarne is less frequently in our thoughts; but it has a very distinguished connection with the early spread of the Gospel through the south of Scotland and the north of England. The sunny Mediterranean too, as well as our bleak northern sea, has its sacred islands. One group, famous in Church History, is that of the Lerins Islands off the south coast of France. But none has so great a name in connection with such associations as Patmos. There St. John, the "brother" of them that suffer for religion, and their "companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," was an exile, as he himself tells us, "for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> It was the custom of the Romans to send exiles to the most rocky and

<sup>1</sup> See below in this book, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. i. 9.

desolate islands. Such a scene too was suitable, if we may presume to say so, to the sublime and awful revelation which the Apostle there received.<sup>1</sup>

In the life of St. John, however, we cannot forget that the main point is not his association with any one of his brother apostles, or with all of them, but his association with JESUS CHRIST: just as we must remember a higher interest is to be found in St. John's relation to his own writings than the living personality which connects them. The method indeed of the book to which these lines are an Introduction is that which has been described, but the aim and scope is something greater. The book does tend to bring out this separate personality into clear view; but its main purpose is, through St. John, to increase our homage to CHRIST; and through St. John's writings, taken in connection with their author, to throw light upon the GOSPEL. All this course of study and reflection is meant to be made subservient to a better appreciation of the Person and Doctrine of the Saviour. Now this close association of St. John with his Master resolves itself into three subjects: first, the effect produced on St. John by the teaching and training of CHRIST; secondly, the lessons derivable from the close friendship between this disciple and his Master; and thirdly (as a consequence of these two particulars) the peculiarities of St. John's mode of representing the life of Christ, and the advantage which we gain by gazing on that biography, so to speak, through the eyes of this Evangelist.

The fact that during a period of three years St. John was under the direct tuition of the Saviour of the world, and thus

<sup>1</sup> I quote here from words used by myself in an article on Patmos in *The Dictionary of the Bible*. Dean Stanley visited Patmos on the return from his second journey in Palestine; and preaching, the day after, on John xvi. 13, he said: "We have been on the very track of the Apostle who wrote down these words for his support and ours. We have seen at Patmos and at Ephesus the last traces of St. John, with whom we parted, as it were, on the shores of his own lake of Tiberias. Let us ask ourselves what the lessons are which he has left to us."

fitted for what he was afterwards to do and to write, is of paramount importance. That this direct tuition and Divine preparation was the privilege of the apostles we all know, as a matter of course: but we too often forget this, or fail to mark its special significance. We are apt to look on our Lord's life on earth as a time of working miracles, of revealing His character, of giving utterance to instruction, with the view of its being recorded afterwards for all time; and we too frequently think of the apostles merely as the environment of this wonder-working and this blessed revelation of the Saviour's mind. His life on earth was indeed all this; but it was much more. And to the apostles was accorded the happiness of gazing and listening and moving with Him, as He "went about doing good"; but this was not all, as regarded them, or as regards us. They were under direct and most careful training for the work which they were appointed to do, by the power of the Holy Ghost, when Christ was gone from the earth. Dr. Macdonald does well in calling our attention very definitely to this point. He says most correctly that "in any account that would present truly the life and character of the disciple" it is essential to make "the freest use" of the familiar Gospel history, as showing the connection of the Master and the disciple: "for it was under the instruction and ministry of the Saviour that he received his preparation for the high office and special work to which he was called; nor can we appreciate the ministry of Christ aright until we learn to view it, not so much in its direct influence on the world at large, as designed to instruct and train the apostles for their work." And again the author says: "The Founder of Christianity did not send forth uninstructed, untrained, undisciplined men to do His work; the apostles have been so often described as rude, untaught fishermen, that it is the more important to notice their advantages over all other men in their contact and close association with the Greatest of Teachers for a period of more than three years." And once more: "While many others were



instructed and blessed through His ministrations, the chief end of the Saviour evidently was to prepare for their great office those to whom He was to commit the work of establishing His kingdom : never had men such teacher before : for three years they were under the careful training of Him who knew all the secrets of mind as well as heart."<sup>1</sup>

Such remarks, while true of the relation of Christ to the whole of His faithful eleven, have a special force in connection with St. John, partly because his apostolic work extended over the longest range of time, partly because his writings are of varied character and constitute a large and singularly precious part of the Sacred Canon, but likewise on account of his peculiar intimacy with our Lord. Not only had John, in common with all the twelve, those opportunities of learning which have been named above, but to him was vouchsafed, in a sense to which even Peter could lay no claim, a close friendship with the Saviour of the world. In this fact there is a depth of meaning which even very slight reflection enables us to appreciate as of the utmost moment. Something has been said above of the influence of Salome, of the influence of the Baptist, upon St. John the Evangelist : but here is an influence greater and more pervading, exercised in a method which gave to it the utmost advantage, and having its opportunities in all the incidental circumstances of daily life. In considering the subject that is before us, it is highly important to bear this friendship in mind, when we think of Cana and Capernaum, of the journeys to Samaria, of the visits to the Syro-phœnician frontier and to the other side of the Jordan. John saw the miracles that were wrought, whether he records them or not. He heard the Sermon on the Mount, the words spoken at Cæsarea Philippi, the discourses in the Temple. All these were opportunities of learning and preparation, and perhaps we may venture to say that they were more to him than to any others of the companions of the Lord. Certainly to him was assigned the innermost place,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 45, 72, 86.

when instruction was addressed in private to the chosen twelve. It is lawful to conjecture that he alone may have had privileges of this kind that were not accorded to the rest. It seems highly probable that he was present at that secret interview with Nicodemus which the other evangelists do not relate.<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that, at the last, St. John appears in a place of peculiar honour and power, when appointed along with the others, to be "a witness of the Resurrection."

It is evidently a great advantage to us to be able to look at the work of Jesus Christ through the medium of the biography of St. John, to see as he saw, and to endeavour to share his feelings. If we follow the Great Biography by the help of this thread, we may expect to meet some aspects of the truth which otherwise we might miss. Even if we are familiar with the general distribution of hill and dale, of wood and water, over a range of country which we admire and love, we always learn something new concerning it when we traverse it by a path, even though it be a narrow and secluded path, which we have never traversed before.

This train of thought brings us at once to the consideration of the characteristics of St. John's Gospel, as compared with the other three, and to the distinctive features of St. John's writings generally. This is far too large a subject to be dealt with adequately in a mere Introduction, or even in a volume of moderate size. Moreover these few pages are intended to have reference to his writings chiefly in one aspect, namely, as bound together by St. John's personality. Still, with this limited end in view, a few words must be said on these writings, the study of which is so much enhanced to us when we connect them by this golden thread.

As regards the Gospel of St. John, it seems to me desirable, in following the line of study to which we are invited in the volume before us, to note as sharply as possible the differences which separate it from the other Gospels, and then, in order to restore

<sup>1</sup> See p. 58.

the balance of truth, to observe with equal care the resemblances which give a deep inward unity to the four accounts of our Lord. By making the most of these two contrasted methods, and not diluting either of them for the sake of accommodation to the other, we shall, as it appears to me, best acquire a correct view of the whole case. To illustrate what I mean I will bring forward two English writers of very different dates, one of them a recent and a living writer, the other renowned nearly a hundred years ago for his varied defences of Natural and Revealed Religion.

The Bishop of Derry is writing of the style of St. John, and remarks that it is very natural if we find it like the style of the discourses in the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> "Remember that that disciple was John, and that master Jesus." There are certain favourite words such as "light and darkness, life and death, love and hate, truth and lie, world, abiding," which St. John had not taught himself to apply to his own thoughts. "He had heard them in the long golden hush of the summer evenings by the shore of the Lake of Galilee; in the sorrow of the guest chamber; between the brook of Kedron and the Garden of the Agony; during the days when the risen Lord spoke to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Such words were not merely in his memory: they had entered into his soul. "He had made them so lovingly his own, that he could use them with

<sup>1</sup> *The Leading Ideas of the Gospel*, pp. 139, 140. I have somewhat inadvertently here run off the line I was intending to follow. The Bishop of Derry is in this passage comparing the style of *the Epistles* of St. John with the discourses of Christ as given in his Gospel. Still I will leave the passage as it stands; for resemblance between the Epistles of St. John and his Gospel is a point to which, in a study like this, we are bound particularly to attend. Elsewhere in these sermons the Bishop of Derry dwells, in a most instructive and suggestive manner, on the distinctive peculiarities of this Gospel. Thus after remarking that in it the miracles are few, while yet the greatest stress is laid on them, he says that while in all the Gospels the miracles both *prove* and *teach*, in the others they chiefly *prove*, here they chiefly *teach*; and he quotes St. Augustine to this effect: "Our Lord did not merely work miracles for the miracle's sake, but that the things which He wrought might be *true* to those who could understand them, as well as *marvellous* to those who beheld them." Pp. 122-126.

unerring precision." It has been asked whether it is the son of Zebedee who has given to us lessons of abstract metaphysics, to which we find no parallel in the Synoptical Gospels; and the answer is, "Certainly, for he had heard them from Christ."

These fragments of quotation may suffice to indicate a method, which will enable us to appreciate some of the distinctive peculiarities of St. John. But in order to see the whole case clearly we must turn to the other side; and here one of Paley's chapters may be used to help us to perceive the deep inner unity which binds together this Gospel with the others. I refer to his chapter on "the Identity of Christ's Character," one of the best in his treatise on *The Evidences of Christianity*.<sup>1</sup> It has often been remarked that in St. John's Gospel there are no parables, in the strictest sense of the word. But alike in this Gospel and in the others there is a mode of teaching, characteristic of the Saviour, and different from what we find in any of His apostles. This is the Lord's habit of "drawing His doctrine from the occasion—or, which is nearly the same thing, raising reflections from the objects and incidents before Him, or turning a particular discourse then passing into an opportunity of general instruction." Instances are given from the Synoptical Gospels, such as the warning concerning "the leaven of the Pharisees," arising from the circumstance that the disciples had forgotten to take bread, the inculcation of the necessity of a childlike spirit on the occasion of young children being brought to Him, the parable of "the Great Supper," suggested by the supper at which He was present;<sup>2</sup> and parallel instances are then given from St. John, such as the address concerning "living Water" to the woman of Samaria at the well, and the discourse concerning "the Light of the World" in the presence of a blind man.<sup>3</sup> "The manner of Christ," says Paley, "discovers itself in

<sup>1</sup> Part II., Chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 5; Mark x. 13-15; Luke xiv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> John iv. 10, ix. 1-5.

St. John," and he follows the same method of comparison into other particulars. "All this," he adds, "bespeaks reality."

As regards the Epistles of St. John, contrast may be again useful, and part of their distinctive character may be set forth by a comparison with the Epistles of St. Paul. There is a remarkable absence from these three sacred letters of that constant egoism (if the term may be used) which we find throughout the correspondence of his brother apostle. It was indeed a superficial remark, which was once made by a young theologian, that he liked St. John better than St. Paul, because he says less of himself. We should be much poorer than we are, and much weaker for spiritual work in the world, if we had not been allowed to see the inner movements of St. Paul's heart. But the egoism of St. John is of a different kind. What he has to say to us of himself is that he had personally known and lived with the Incarnate Word. And, once more, there is a difference of style, which we easily connect with the characters of the two men. In St. John truth is the result of intuition; in St. Paul it is set forth in argument. We could not imagine the Epistle to the Galatians or the Epistle to the Romans written by the former.

Concerning the Book of Revelation I will say nothing, except to invite attention to the arguments by which Dr. Macdonald endeavours to fix its date. The reasoning seems to me very well drawn out, which assigns the writing of this part of Holy Scripture to a time intermediate between the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John.<sup>1</sup>

In undertaking the responsibility of editing this book, it is obvious that I do not commit myself to the author's view of the meaning of every passage in detail, or even broadly to his general interpretation of difficult parts of Holy Scripture. This is the last thing which Dr. Macdonald would have expected me to do; yet it is desirable to preclude all misapprehension on the point.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX. In an earlier part of his life Dr. Macdonald wrote a Commentary on this book.

I will give just one illustration as regards matters of detail, and then make just one reference to an important general question of Biblical exegesis.

In commenting on that passage in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, where the doctrine of the new birth is unfolded,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Macdonald says of the words "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," that the Sacrament of baptism cannot be alluded to, because it was "not then instituted as a Christian rite."<sup>2</sup> I am not here discussing the question of the precise nature of the reference which is here made to baptism, but the argument which the author employs. Surely when we remember that our Lord was about to institute the Sacrament of baptism, and knew that He was about to institute it,—when we remember further that, when St. John wrote, it had been instituted,—we find it natural to see here an anticipative reference to baptism. When we are meditating on our Lord's question to the Jews, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend where He was before?" it would not be sound logic to say that there could be no anticipative reference to the Ascension, because that event had not then taken place.<sup>3</sup> And indeed our author is here not quite consistent with himself; for when he reaches those words in the sixth chapter,<sup>4</sup> "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," his note is as follows:<sup>5</sup> "Although the Lord's Supper had not yet been instituted, we unmistakably find here the idea which underlies that Holy Sacrament, and the great doctrine which in the breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine is set forth, the expiatory death of Christ; we find the same mention of the death of Jesus, or in the same form of speech, as in the institutive words of the Supper, and proclamation of the same truths of which that ordinance is the symbol and the memorial."

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Verse 53.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 310.

Let me add, however,—and I have made the present reference to these passages partly because they give me a welcome opportunity for adding—that I cordially agree with Dr. Macdonald in the supremacy which he assigns in this book to the spiritual aspect of Christianity, as high above all outward ordinances, even if they be divinely appointed Sacraments. He has caught the spirit of the Lord's words given by St. John in the fourth chapter, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth;" and again in the sixth,—“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”

It will be conjectured that the general exegetical subject to which I have referred is the interpretation of the Apocalypse. I must confess that much of this great question still remains very dark to me; and my conviction is not clear that we are to find the full interpretation of certain chapters of this mysterious book in the cruelty, superstition, and corruption of the Papal Church. I will not here bring forward any arguments which might be employed against Dr. Macdonald's views. It is no part of my task in this Introduction to combat any opinions of the author whom I desire to recommend. And indeed I must confess that facts which history has made known to us concerning the Church of the Vatican have a very close resemblance to these portions of the prophecy in the Apocalypse. And I will here adduce the words of one of the most learned of our English theologians, who has a special claim to be listened to in regard to the subject. The Bishop of Lincoln, in his *Hulsean Lectures*, writes thus:<sup>1</sup> “Having been led in these discourses to devote the best faculties at my command to this solemn subject, I should feel myself guilty of culpable dereliction of duty in the sight of Almighty God if I did not declare that the prophecies contained in the thirteenth, fourteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Revelation of St. John

<sup>1</sup> *Hulsean Lectures for 1848*, Sec. x., p. 274.

the Divine, and which describe the guilt and portray the punishment of the mystical BABYLON, have been partly accomplished, and are in course of complete accomplishment, in the CHURCH OF ROME." "This, I well know," he adds, "is a very grave assertion; and ought not to be made without the most serious deliberation."

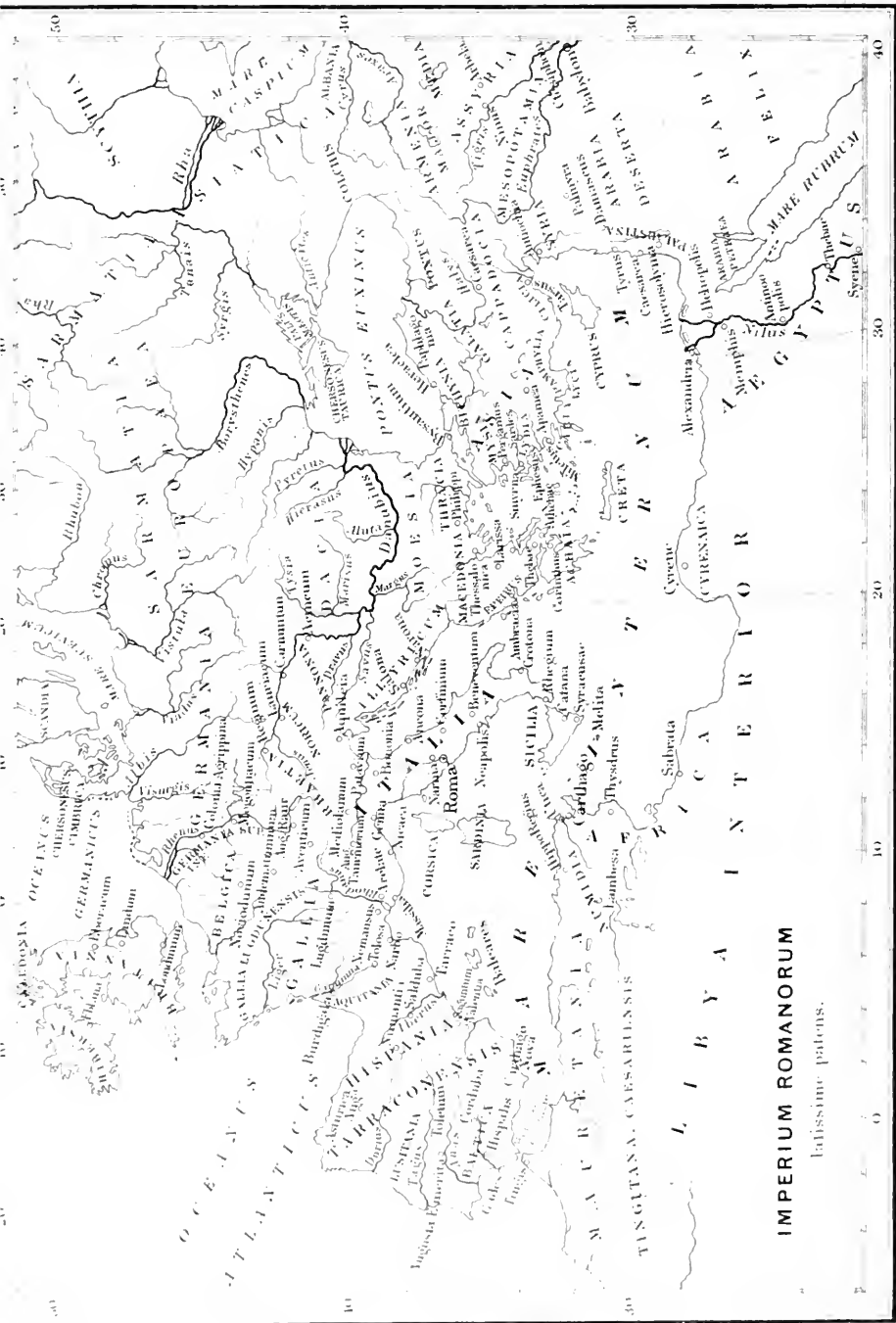
I feel the greater interest and satisfaction in being allowed to have some share in the bringing of this book before the public, because it represents, on a small scale, that co-operation between England and America, in reference to Biblical subjects, which may be expected to be full of blessing to mankind. If I may give one illustration of what I mean, I will mention the New York edition of *The Dictionary of the Bible*, enriched by the notes of Dr. Abbott and Dr. Hackett. The former of these theologians gave me those volumes on a well-remembered occasion in the Library of Harvard University. The latter, like Dr. Macdonald, has been taken from us by death. But death does not destroy the fruits of the labours of such men; and those who survive may still feel that they are fellow-labourers, on very sacred ground, with those who are gone.

J. S. HOWSON.

THE DEANERY, CHESTER,  
*Dec. 7th, 1876.*







**IMPERIUM ROMANORUM**

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New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co.

Sumner's Geog. Atlas.

THE  
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN.

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CHAPTER I.

PLACE IN HISTORY, AND CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD IN  
WHICH THE APOSTLE JOHN APPEARED.

LIFE OF ST. JOHN COEVAL WITH THE FIRST CENTURY.—DATE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.—JULIUS CÆSAR.—POMPEY THE GREAT.—HIS MARCH INTO JUDEA.—HOLY LAND BECOMES TRIBUTARY.—HE PROFANES THE HOLY OF HOLIES.—ENTERS ROME IN TRIUMPH.—JULIUS CÆSAR BECOMES SUPREME.—APPOINTS ANTIPATER PROCURATOR OF JUDEA.—HIS SON HEROD GOVERNOR OF GALILEE.—JULIUS CÆSAR ASSASSINATED.—HEROD APPOINTED KING OF JUDEA.—AUGUSTUS CÆSAR BECOMES EMPEROR.—EXTENT OF ROMAN EMPIRE.—UNIVERSAL PEACE.—BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.—DEATH OF HEROD THE GREAT.—ARCHELAUS AND ANTIPAS.—ARCHELAUS DEPOSED.—QUIRINIUS GOVERNOR OF SYRIA.—SUCCESSIVE PROCURATORS OF JUDEA.—DEATH OF AUGUSTUS.—TIBERIUS CÆSAR.—CAIAPHAS.—PONTIUS PILATE.—HEATHEN WORLD.—PAGAN LITERATURE.—ALEXANDRIAN LIBRARY DESTROYED.—CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD FROM CONDITION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.—DEVELOPMENT OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY.—THE LAW A SCHOOLMASTER.—CEREMONIAL LAW.—CLEAR DAWNING WHEN ST. JOHN CAME ON THE STAGE.

THE life of the apostle John, from near the beginning of the first century of the Christian era, stretches on to the beginning of the second. If he was one hundred years old at his death, it overlaps the second century as much as it falls short of being coterminous with the beginning of the first. A history of his life, therefore, especially when Christianity, of which he was so important a representative, is viewed in its relations to subsequent developments and changes in the condition of nations, must form one of the most deeply interesting chapters, not only in ecclesiastical history, but in the annals of the human race. Born under the reign of the first of the Cæsars, who wore undisputed

the title of emperor, he was contemporary with the remainder of the twelve, and probably outlived the last.

The greatest event of time, the birth of the world's REDEEMER,<sup>1</sup> occurred not long before the death of Herod the Great, which happened A.U.C. 750, just before the Jewish passover;<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, some four years earlier than the Dionysian reckoning, or the common era. If John was born some four or five years later than Jesus, the period of his birth would nearly, or quite exactly, correspond with the first year of the common era, whilst the dynasty of Herod still maintained a sickly existence in the reign of his son Archelans. The history of the Herodian dynasty, and that of the great empire whose authority this dynasty represented in the Holy Land, are brought so much in contact with Christian history in its beginning, or throughout the century during which the Apostle John lived, that a survey of their leading points will be justified, if it is not rather required.

One hundred years before Christ, the foremost man in the annals of the ancient world, Julius Cæsar, was born. At the early age of twenty-two, having already identified himself with the popular party, he appeared at Rome, on hearing of the death of the dictator Sulla, and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Jos. Ant., xvii., 8 (1); Wars, i., 33 (8); Wieseler, Chron. Syn., p. 57; Robinson's Harm., p. 167. Cyrenius (Luke ii. 1-7), or Quirinius, appears to have been twice governor of Syria. First, from the year of Rome (A.U.C.) 750 to 753, having succeeded Varus toward the close of 750. He was made governor the second time at the end of the Herodian dynasty, after the banishment of Archelans. (See A. W. Zumpt's, Berlin, *Commentatio de Syria Romanorum provincia a Cæsare Augusto ad Tit. Vespasianum. Comment. Epigr. ad Antiq. Rom.*, ii., 71 150.) The census, or enrolment (registration), appears to have been commenced in Palestine before Herod's death, who was a *rex socius*, *i.e.*, held his title from, and was tributary to, the Roman empire. As Herod's death occurred A.U.C. 750, just before the passover (Jos. Ant., xvii., 8), this note of time points to the year of Rome 749, as coincident with the first year of the Christian era.

Dionysius Exiguus, who in the sixth century instituted the practice of dating from the birth of Christ, fell into the mistake of making the year of Christ's birth coincident with the year of Rome 754, some four or five years too late. The Christian world, in adopting the era, adopted the mistake; and although long since discovered, no attempt, for obvious reasons, has been made to correct it.

The time, as given by Luke, when John the Baptist is said to have entered on his ministry, "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar" (Luke iii. 1, 2), and the age as given by him when Jesus was baptized, "about thirty years of age" (iii. 23), have been made to yield the same result as above in regard to the year of our Lord's birth, *i.e.*, provided they both entered on their ministry at the Levitical age of thirty. Aug. Cæsar died Aug. 29, A.U.C. 767. Tiberius had been associated with him at least two years in the administration at the time of his death. If we reckon from the time when Tiberius was admitted to this partnership, which must have been as early as A.U.C. 765, and may have been in 761, the fifteenth year of Tiberius began in A.U.C. 778; and it follows that John the Baptist was born in 748, and Christ in 749.

entered on his great career. He was shortly brought into close connection with another eminent man, more distinguished for military than civic talents, and who, after the death of Sulla, had been the chief representative of the aristocratical party, Pompey the Great. It was Pompey's breach with this party, and his eventual coalition with Cæsar, which perhaps tended as much as any one cause to give success to the plans of the latter. Long ambitious to obtain the command of the war against Mithridates, Pompey was now successful, through the growing popularity and influence of Cæsar. It was effected by the passage of a law which placed almost unlimited power in Pompey's hands over the whole Roman dominions. The measure was advocated by Cicero in an oration, *Pro lege Manilia*, which has come down to us.

It is with the movements of the Roman army under Pompey, on its return from the pursuit of Mithridates beyond the Euphrates, that we connect the Roman supremacy in Palestine. The year B.C. 63 found him marching south, through Phœnicia and Cœle-Syria, into the country of the Jews. It was then distracted by a civil war between the nephews of Aristobulus I., Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, degenerate scions of that famous Asmonean line of princes who had overthrown the tyranny established by Antiochus Epiphanes, and defeated his Hellenizing designs. Pompey espoused the cause of Hyrcanus, and with ease effected the conquest. On the surrender of Jerusalem, he went to the temple, and entered the holy of holies, the first time that any human being, except the high-priest, had dared to penetrate within its awful precincts. He carried Aristobulus with him a captive to Rome. Although the government was left in the hands of Hyrcanus, the nation was made tributary, and was henceforth compelled to acknowledge the authority of the great people whose capital lay across the sea in another continent.

Never was there a more glorious triumph accorded to mortal than that of Pompey on his return to Rome. Aristobulus was made an exception, however, to the clemency displayed on this occasion, and was retained in captivity through fear of the commotion he might excite in Judæa, if permitted to return. But if this triumph was the most glorious period in Pompey's life, his glory from that moment, as if the avenger had pursued him for his sacrilege in passing within the veil, began to decline. For twenty years he had been the first man in the Roman world, and his power had been steadily increasing; but from this time, he was not long in discovering that the genius of another had reduced him to a subordinate place. Julius Cæsar strode steadily forward to supreme power in the state. The battle of Pharsalia decided the fate of the republic and the supremacy of Cæsar. In the

following year, B.C. 47, Antipater, an Idumean, was appointed by him procurator of Judæa. His second son, Herod, afterwards surnamed the Great, though only, according to Josephus, fifteen years of age,<sup>1</sup> was made governor of Galilee. Cæsar had not completed his fifty-sixth year at the time of his assassination, on the 15th of March, B.C. 44; but by the strong domination of his will, and his varied gifts<sup>2</sup> as a commander, statesman, and lawgiver, he had rescued his country from anarchy. At his fall there was a renewal of a state of civil disorder, which continued for the period of half a generation, and was only allayed by the final establishment of the empire, under his nephew Augustus.

Before the close of the year, B.C. 40, Antipater having been poisoned, Herod, at the instance of Antony and Octavianus (subsequently known as Augustus), was solemnly appointed the king of Judæa. He married Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, in order in some degree to be endowed in the eyes of the people with a lawful title to the throne. He established his power by deeds of unparalleled cruelty, among which was at length his attempt to extirpate the entire race of the Maccabees, not excepting his own wife and children. It was to conciliate the people alienated by his atrocities, that he expended, during a long series of years, vast sums in repairing and beautifying the temple.

The emperor Augustus (Cæsar Octavianus) came to the sole and supreme dignity in the year B.C. 27. The Roman empire then included the fairest portion of the known world, enclosed by the Danube and the Rhine, the Euphrates, and the deserts of Africa and Syria, containing a population of at least one hundred and twenty millions. The sea, well named MARE INTERNUM, lay in the midst, washing the shores of three continents; and giving to the empire, as outlined on the map, the appearance of one of those huge beasts which, in the prophecies of Daniel and John, are such favourite symbols of mighty world-powers.

<sup>1</sup> Milman says he must have been at least from 20 to 25. (Hist. of Jews, ii., p. 60.)

<sup>2</sup> Besides the Commentaries he wrote works which are lost, but the mere titles of which are proof of his literary culture and extensive knowledge. (1) "Orationes." As an orator, the ancients describe him as inferior only to Cicero. (Quintil., x., 1, § 114; Tac., *Ann.* xiii., 3; Plut., *Cæs.*, 3; Suet., *Cæs.*, 55.) (2) "Anticato," in two books, in reply to Cicero's "Cato." (3) "De Analogia," in two books: disquisitions on the Latin language; or, as Cicero styles it, "De Ratione Latine loquendi;" it was written while crossing the Alps on one of his military journeys. (Cicero, *Brut.*, 72; Pliny, *H. N.*, vii. 30, s. 31; Quintil., i., 7, § 34.) (4) "Libri Auspiciorum," or "Auguralia." (5) "Apophthegmata," or "Dieta Collectanea:" a collection of good sayings. (6) "De Astris," in which he treated of the heavenly bodies. (7) "Poemata," including a tragedy, "Oedipus." (8) "Epistolæ," of which several are preserved. (See Art. *Julius Cæsar*, in Dict. of Greek and Rom. Biog. and Myth., by William Smith, LL.D.)

Over the heterogeneous millions of this vast territory, Augustus, without seeming to assume unusual power, by the simple process of uniting all offices in his own person, concealing his usurpations under legal forms, engrossed and monopolized the whole. At length for the third time the temple of Janus was closed. In this time of universal peace, a few months before the death of Herod the Great, was born JESUS CHRIST, the Saviour of the world. It was the tidings of this event, brought by the arrival of the Magians from the East, which led this bloody tyrant to issue his decree for the massacre of the innocents of Bethlehem. One of his last acts was to put to death his eldest son, Antipater. Five days after, he suffered a miserable death, his body putrefying before life was extinct, rendering him an object of loathing to himself and all who attended him.

By the will of Herod his dominions were divided among his three sons. Archelaus received Judæa, Samaria, and Idumea, with the title of king, which with him was no more than an empty title, and now that the true King of Zion had come, was to pass away from Judah for ever. Herod Antipas received Galilee and Perea; and to Philip was assigned the north-eastern portion of the country beyond the Jordan, Trachonitis.<sup>1</sup> Both Archelaus and Antipas hastened to Rome, where the latter sought to have his father's will set aside, and obtain the royal dignity for himself. Augustus ratified, in all essential points, the will of Herod the Great, with the promise of continuing the title of king to Archelaus, should he be found to deserve it. His government, however, notwithstanding his large professions of moderation, proved most corrupt and tyrannical; and charges having been brought against him, he was deposed and banished, in the tenth year of his reign. His territories were attached to Syria, and governed by Roman procurators, who held their court in Cæsarea, on the Mediterranean, visiting Jerusalem on great public occasions.

Quirinius (the Cyrenius of Josephus and Luke) was the governor of Syria at this time; and Coponius was sent to exercise the office of procurator under him in the government of Judæa. Quirinius had been governor of Syria before, from A.U.C. 750 to 753, when the taxing that was going on at the birth of Jesus, and which seems to have been interrupted by the death of Herod, was completed. Thus the sceptre which Herod the Great left to Archelaus, subject to the will of the emperor, proved to be but a mere shadow, as Augustus permitted him to wear the title only by mere sufferance and conditionally, and on his failure to fulfil the conditions, soon deposed him from the government altogether. The title for ever lapsed, and the reins of government passed into the hands of Roman governors

<sup>1</sup> Dion Cass., *lv.*, 27; Jos. Ant., *xvii.*, 1 (3); Wars, *i.*, 28 (4).

and procurators. Marcus Ambivius succeeded Coponius, who was followed by Annus Rufus, by whom the office was filled at the period of the death of Augustus. After the deposition of Archelaus, and the government of Judæa had fallen to the administration of Quirinius, he appointed Annas (Ananns he is called by Josephus<sup>1</sup>) to the high priesthood. This was in A.D. 7, according to the Dionysian or common era (which, to avoid confusion, will be used in this work), the same year in which Archelaus was deposed. He continued to fill the office till the death of Augustus. This illustrious ruler lived to be seventy-five years of age, and, weighed down with cares and domestic misfortunes, died in A.D. 14. One of the most memorable epochs in the history of literature, as well as in the civil history of mankind, reached its noonday splendour during his reign. But the grand distinction of his reign was, that it was that "fulness of time" when everything had been prepared for the appearing of the great DELIVERER of the nations.

The man who swayed the sceptre during the larger portion of our Lord's life, and who was still upon the throne when JOHN went forth on the duties of his apostleship, was TIBERIUS. He was well advanced in life when he became emperor, and he held the office for twenty-three years, till A.D. 37, being nearly eighty years of age at the time of his death. He spent his closing years in infamous debauchery in the island of Capræa, having retired altogether from the imperial city. On his accession to the throne, he appointed Valerius Gratus to the procuratorship of Judæa, to succeed Annus Rufus. Gratus at once deposed Annas from the high-priesthood. His successor, Ismael, son of Fabus, after a short time was succeeded by Eleazer, son of Annas, the old high-priest, who, after a single year, was deprived of the office, and it was given to Simon, son of Camithus, who held the office for another year; when it was conferred on Joseph Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas, who filled the office during the remainder of the reign of Tiberius. Other sons of Annas filled this office at a still later period. Gratus administered the government eleven years, when he returned to Rome, and Pontius Pilate, whose name is so familiar in New Testament history, came as his successor, A.D. 25 or 26. Under the hated Roman yoke, the Jews clung only the more strongly to their Messianic hopes; but it was for a political deliverer they longed, who should break this yoke, and restore, only on a more splendid scale, the kingly power and state of David. Hence they were the more deeply offended by the humble form of Jesus, and the spiritual kingdom which He professed to found, and which He sought to convince the people fulfilled the Scriptures.

<sup>1</sup> Ant., xviii., 2 (1).





TIBERIUS CÆSAR.



No one fact is made more evident in the classics of pagan antiquity than that, at the very moment this history opens, the entire heathen world, even the most civilized portion of it, were sunk in deplorable ignorance of everything relating to the true religion, in the grossest superstition and idolatry and in the most abominable corruption and depravity of manners. The great doctrines respecting God and a future life, which the light of nature teaches, or which had been diffused in the world by tradition, were obscured and darkened. The very mythologies had outlived themselves. The wisest men were in the greatest perplexity, and knew not what to believe. They knew and felt (for they had tried the experiment in circumstances where there could be no influences of a divine revelation, or, if any, only the feeblest traditional light) that the world by "wisdom," *i.e.*, by philosophy, could never know God. Hence the confessions of the wisest of them (for such in effect are all their ethical writings), that the mere light of nature is not sufficient to conduct men to the path of virtue and happiness; that the only sure and certain guide must be a divine discovery of the truth.<sup>1</sup>

Pagan literature having reached its highest point of culture, marked, at the same time, the loftiest pinnacle which the human mind could of itself reach. We look in vain for any distinguished name, in this literature, subsequent to the age of the Antonines. It is a most remarkable and significant fact, that not a single valuable contribution to literature from that day to this has proceeded from the entire heathen world. The literature of the Saracens, which made Bagdad and Cordova seats of civilization and refinement, was Mohammedan. Mohammed was of Abrahamic descent; and the Koran was derived, to a considerable extent, from the Scriptures. Every Moslem scimitar was ready to leap from its scabbard to chase idolatry from the world. All that the mind could accomplish in philosophy

<sup>1</sup> In the Apology of Socrates, he is represented as uncertain whether death is a state of unconsciousness and annihilation, or the passage of the soul to another state. Ἐννοήσωμεν δὲ καὶ τῆδε, ὡς πολλὴ ἐλπίς ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι. Διούνη γὰρ θάτερόν ἐστι τὸ τεθνάναι· ἢ γὰρ οἷον μηδὲν εἶναι, μηδ' αἰσθησῶν μηδεμίαν μηδενὸς ἔχειν τὸν τεθνεῶτα, ἢ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα μεταβολὴ τις τυγχάνει οὐσα καὶ μετοίκησις τῆ ψυχῆ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἐνθένδε εἰς ἄλλον τόπον, κ.τ.λ. (Apol. Soc., c. 32). In either case, he argues that we have much hope that death may prove a blessing, ἀγαθόν. In the Phædo, in which it is probable we have more of Plato's own modes of thought than those of Socrates, while the immortality of the soul is proved with as much certainty as it is possible for the human mind, in a fallen state, to arrive at, no one can read it without feeling on what vague and uncertain grounds the whole (ἐλπίς) hope rested. If the greatest minds of antiquity were in such darkness, as their speculations on topics of this nature and ethics generally prove, their writings may be taken as the confession of the Gentile world, as to their need of a divine revelation.

and culture, without some superadded influences, was done in the palmy days of Greek and Roman literature. The republic of Rome was the very last result which a prolonged and careful study of jurisprudence and the science of politics could elaborate; the religion of Rome, the best that could be wrought out by the unassisted human faculties. As if conscious of the weakness of every separate system, it had assembled the gods of all nations in its Pantheon to find, if possible, in the huge conglomerate what had been sought in vain among its separate parts. The writings of Homer, of Plato, of Cicero, of Seneca, record the highest achievements which it is possible for the mind of man, from its own natural vigour and perspicacity, to make.

The reason why ancient culture so soon reached its acme, is found in its deficiency of an adequate moral power. We are not to be led astray by the renown of great names, the glory of letters, the external show with which art can deck a tomb as well as a palace, in our estimate of Attic and Roman morals. Their low standard was betrayed, not only by their gay and licentious mythology and the impure mysteries of their sacred temples, but in their ungenerous, ungrateful, and unjust treatment of benefactors. They could not endure the presence of virtue, even of such virtue as grew in nature's soil. Their best citizens received the hemlock at their hands, or pined in prisons or in exile. Their art, beautiful in its forms, was cold as the marble which it chiselled, in its moral tone. They worshipped statuary, and their temples were without even natural religion. Disgusting depravity and horrid nameless crimes prevailed among the best members of society, in the best days of those polished states. Poetry, philosophy, and eloquence were mere æsthetic workers, and could, no more than the gilded canopy of a sick man's couch, save a body which was festering with ulcers, from decay. Ornaments and rich drapery might hide the diseased mass, but could not cure. Let their history be divested of its fine rhetoric, let the veil be lifted from the manners of private life, and society be seen in all its living reality, and there can be no doubt a most startling "picture of tragic truth" would be presented.

"Scholars and artists," said the late Dr. Wayland, "have mourned for ages over the almost universal destruction of the works of ancient genius. The Alexandrian library is believed to have contained a greater treasure of intellectual riches than has ever since been hoarded in a single city. These, we know, have all vanished from the earth. It furnished fuel for years for the bath of illiterate Moslems. I used myself frequently to wonder why it pleased God to blot out of existence these productions of ancient genius. But the solution of this mystery is found, I think, in the remains of Hercu-

laneum and Pompeii. We there discover that every work of man was so penetrated with corruption, every production of genius so defiled with uncleanness, that God, in introducing a better dispensation, determined to cleanse the world from the pollution of preceding ages. As when all flesh had corrupted His way, He purified the world by the waters of a flood; so when genius had covered the earth with images of sin, He overwhelmed the works of ancient civilization with a deluge of barbarism, and consigned the most splendid monuments of literature and art to almost universal oblivion. It was too bad to exist, and He swept it all away with the besom of destruction."

Even the craving for the sight of human blood had become, like hunger for bread, a recognised popular appetite, which it was one of the functions of government, in the public amphitheatres, to satisfy. "It was," says Schlegel, "as if the iron-footed god of war, so highly revered from of old by the people of Romulus, actually bestrode the globe, and at every step struck out new torrents of blood; or as if dark Pluto had emerged from the abyss of eternal night, escorted by all the Furies of passion and insatiable cupidity, by the bloodthirsty demons of murder, to establish his visible empire, and erect his throne for ever on the earth."

All attempts to infuse new life into the pagan system proved utterly futile. It lay like a pitiable torso, without head or hands, on the threshold of its crumbling temple. The experiment which was commenced when men built the tower of Babel, had been fully tried, and this was the result. Neither the austerities of Egyptian theology, nor the moralities of stoical philosophy could infuse new life into a religion which contained the active elements of its own dissolution. False themselves, and destitute of the spirit of faith and love, these imperial props to a falling idolatry were destined to pass away.

The human mind could never have advanced further, but must have certainly and hopelessly declined, had not a new element of life and power been imparted by Him who made it. Like soil which, from long and injudicious tillage, is worn out, it needed some new and fertilizing agent or influence to save it from hopeless sterility. That influence came with the introduction of Christianity, which not only brought the divine teachings of JESUS, and the inspired writings of His apostles, but the sublime productions of Hebrew bards and prophets to the knowledge of mankind. New views of men and of life, and a new organization of society were to spring from the power of love divinely revealed. "In this great central point of history," to use again the words of Schlegel, "stood two powers opposed to each other. On one hand we behold Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero, the earthly gods and

absolute masters of the world, in all the pomp and splendour of ancient paganism, standing as it were on the very summit and verge of the old world, now tottering to its ruin; and on the other hand we trace the obscure rise of an almost imperceptible point of light, from which the whole modern world was to spring, and whose further progress and full development through all succeeding ages constitute the true purport of modern history." It was an era for which the world had long been waiting and preparing. During the domination of the Ptolemies, the Jewish Scriptures had been translated, with great care, into the Greek language, and the Jews, scattered far and wide, had talked of their prophecies to their heathen neighbours, until some of them were gradually taken up by them, as if they had been actually prophecies of their own oracles.<sup>1</sup> Revealed knowledge was no longer to be confined, shut up in narrow bounds. The same great providential act, which breaks its bonds, and unlocks its prison house, enlarges its commission, confirms its credentials, and sends it forth to conquer and regenerate the world.

But the character of the period in which the apostle John lived, as shown from the condition of the Jewish people (his own nation), and the state of opinion among them, as influenced by the inspired writings in their possession, and their expectation of a Messiah, have a still more important connection with his life and the productions of his pen.

No sooner was the early promise given, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, than we discern a tendency in sacred history towards the great end indicated in that promise; namely, the manifestation of the Son of man, in whom and through whom alone the counsel of God could be fulfilled. To preserve the knowledge of divine truth among men, and to prevent heathenism from becoming universal, the danger of which, on account of the corruption in man, was imminent, Abraham was called, and the visible church instituted. In the promise to him—"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,"<sup>2</sup>—the purpose of redemption flames out with the brightness of the sun,

<sup>1</sup> Virgil, in one of his noblest bursts of poetry, drew from the prophetic visions of Isaiah:—

" Ipsæ lacte domum referent distenta capellæ  
 Ubera; nec magnos metuent armenta leones.  
 Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.  
 Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni  
 Occidet."—*Bucol.*, Ecl. iv., 21.

There was a very general expectation in the world that some personage, who was to perform a great work for humanity, was soon to be manifested. (Comp. Isa. xi. 6-9; xxxv. 9; lxxv. 25.)

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xii. 3.

which, although still far below the horizon, begins to scatter the darkness of the night. The Messiah is now to be found in the seed of Abraham. This is a decided advance on the idea presented in the first promise respecting the Seed of the woman. The believing Israelites are expressly told from what quarter they are to expect deliverance to arise; and are further taught that the promised salvation will consist, not merely in the destruction of evil—the bruising of the serpent's head, but in positive blessings.

Next they have the promised salvation in the words of the dying Jacob. No longer in the terms merely of the promise made to Abraham, the particular line of Judah is designated, and we have the first distinct mention of a personal Messiah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."<sup>1</sup> At length Moses appears as a deliverer from bondage and a lawgiver, and in him the idea of a personal Messiah becomes even more distinct: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."<sup>2</sup>

The very law which was given by Moses was calculated to show man his need of redemption, and awaken a desire to obtain it. It showed him the need of grace—grace that can come only from One who is able to sustain the honour of a violated law. The law was his schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. God did not relax His holy demands. The curse remained; it thundered in the ear of man, "Thou shalt surely die, unless a Deliverer be found." It kept pealing and echoing along the ages which preceded the advent of the Redeemer, in louder and more distinct reverberations, according as they cherished a knowledge of the law; and dying comparatively away as that law, for any season, was lost and buried out of sight. It presented the idea of a personal Jehovah, the Creator of all things, and the Governor of all, as an Avenger of sin, and the Rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him. In the ceremonial law and the worship it prescribed, we see, moreover, how significant and typical of Christ it was in all its parts. The *spiritual* worshipper could not rest in these things; he would have found them in themselves empty ceremonies, or a yoke of bondage. They pointed him to a future, better service. They were a shadow of good things to come. In the sacrifices the atoning work which a broken law demanded was portrayed. The victim, a lamb without blemish and without spot, represented a Saviour so holy and well-pleasing to God, that He can take away the sin of the world. The whole Jewish economy, in its priests,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xviii. 15; Acts iii. 22; vii. 37.

its tabernacle and its temple, its festivals and purifications, was but a shadow and a type of a coming One unto whom the gathering of the people should be, and in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. At the same time, the early promise continued to blossom out in prophecies, which shed beauty and fragrance over the dreary desert by which the Church was making her steady way towards the promised land. Their history, their captivities, their deliverances were a perpetual prophecy to the Jews of their deliverance from a worse—a spiritual bondage. The interpositions of God to deliver them from earthly enemies and straits prefigured a higher work to be done in the future.

The highest splendour of the history of the old covenant appeared in David, when the promise was given that his Seed should reign for ever, and that the throne of his kingdom should be established for ever.<sup>1</sup> There is a further development of the expectations connected with the coming of Messiah. The quarter whence the Star that should come out of Jacob was to arise is more specifically mentioned. The family of David is singled out from the tribe of Judah, and made the bearer of the line of the promise. First, the revelation was in the most general form,—the Seed or Offspring of the woman; next, this promised Offspring is to be of the seed of Abraham. Again, the boundaries are narrowed, and we see the Star arising out of Jacob, and Shiloh coming out of Judah. And, lastly, the house of David is selected out of Judah, and Bethlehem, the city of David, is pointed out as the birth-place of the Saviour. The peaceful, prosperous reign of Solomon was prophetic of the reign of the Prince of peace, and the building of the temple expressed, in its perfection and reality, the conception of the Christian Church. Psalms were heard in the temple and at the hearthstones of the people, which spoke of the future King. The pious Hebrews were always, as it were, in the attitude of expectation. There was a gradual advancement from the first ray which broke on the darkness of the night, to the clear dawn, which foretold the going forth of the Bridegroom out of His chamber. The plan of salvation had been gradually developed, and made clearer and clearer, as the time for the full manifestation of its Author and Finisher drew near. And, while this was going on, the salvation itself was imparted to every one who in faith built on the foundation laid in Zion, according to the measure of truth revealed to him. Many died “in faith, not having received the promises (or the things promised), but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13; 1 Kings viii. 25; Ps. lxxxix. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xi. 13.



We have a long catalogue of such worthies. It was in the growing light of a dawn like this that such men as John, and Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, came on the stage of life. They were neither blind nor infatuated. It is not to be wondered at, that when Jesus was pointed out to them by him whom all men counted as a prophet, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, they followed Him, and were convinced that they had "found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. John i. 45.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY LIFE AND NATURAL TRAITS OF ST. JOHN.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE HOLY LAND.—RUINS.—SACRED ASSOCIATIONS.—NATIVES OF GALILEE.—BETHSAIDA.—CHILDISH PASTIMES.—SEA OF GALILEE.—ZEBEDEUS.—HIS EARLY DEMISE.—JEWISH EDUCATION.—PROFANE AND SACRED LITERATURE.—SCHOOLS IN THE POST-EXILE PERIOD.—EDUCATION OF APOSTLES.—MODE OF INSTRUCTION.—JOHN AT SCHOOL.—OUTWARD LIFE OF THE BOY.—JUDAS THE GAULONITE.—SAMARITANS.—PILGRIMAGES.—JERUSALEM.—SAUL OF TARSUS A COEVAL OF JOHN.—THE PASSOVER.—JOHN YOUNGEST OF THE TWELVE.—WAS HE EVER MARRIED?—MEANING OF BOANERGES.—STRONG ELEMENTS IN HIS CHARACTER.—SUSCEPTIBILITY TO IMPRESSION.—COMPARED WITH AUGUSTINE AND LUTHER.—HIS INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER.

THE importance of Palestine, the principal theatre of the earlier events now to be narrated, is not to be estimated by its geographical extent. Its breadth, from the Jordan to the sea, is scarcely at any point more than fifty miles: and its extreme length, from Dan to Beersheba, not far from one hundred and eighty. It occupies the northern portion of the high mountain tract which lies between the great plains of Assyria and the shores of the Mediterranean. On its northern frontier rise the ranges of Lebanon. On the east, the vast fissure of the Jordan valley and the desert separated it from the empires on the plains of Mesopotamia, and the cities that rose on the Euphrates and Tigris, so well-known in ancient history. Another great desert separated it on the south from Egypt, a land which had taken the lead of all others in arts and civilization. On the west, it was accessible only by the sea; but afforded no great harbours inviting and protecting commercial enterprise. It thus stood midway between the two seats of ancient empire and civilization. And when at last the West began to rise as a new power, as the nearest point of contact between the two worlds, it became the scene of the chief conflicts of Rome with Asia. It has thus been the chosen field where the gauge of battle has been thrown down between powerful armies, from the days of the Assyrian kings to those of Mehemet Ali.

The wide and fertile plains of Sharon<sup>1</sup> and Shechem and Esdraelon,

<sup>1</sup> The scattered trees are apparently the remnants of a great forest which once existed here. The Septuagint translates "Sharon," in Isa. lxx. 10, by the word *δρυμός*, *forest*, with reference probably to the feature by which it was then dis-

like its everlasting hills, remain as of old; but the land is far from what it once was in populousness and fertility. It is literally a land of ruins. "There is no country," it has been said, "in which they are so numerous, none in which they bear so large a proportion to the villages and towns still in existence. In Judæa it is hardly an exaggeration to say that, whilst for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation, except the occasional goatherd on the hill-side, or gathering of women at the wells, there is yet hardly a hill-top of the many within sight which is not covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages."<sup>1</sup> These ruins tell us that we must not judge of the resources of the ancient land by its present depressed and desolate state. How different must have been the aspect of the country, when every hill was crowned with a flourishing town or village, or was a terraced garden to its summit! The neglect of the terraces which supported the soil on the steep declivities, the destruction of the forests,<sup>2</sup> and the gradual cessation of rains, consequent on this loss of vegetation, has subjected the country to the evils of sterility and depopulation. Once herds and flocks grazed upon a thousand hills; fields of wheat and barley, and plantations of figs and pomegranates, citron and palm, variegated the landscape, and afforded food, or the promise of food, to the crowded population. In comparison with the deserts which surrounded it, even to a people emigrating from the banks of the Nile, it might well have been denominated a "land flowing with milk and honey."

And what sacred historical associations, running back to the time of world-renowned patriarchs, and inspired seers, cluster around every part of the land! This was the goodly land Moses had viewed from the top of Pisgah, where the tribes, after their long wandering in the wilderness, under the leadership of Joshua, obtained possession, and found rest. Here were Hebron, and Bethel, and Sychar, and Bethlehem, and Nazareth. Here was Jerusalem, its mountain-site, the towers and gates and battlements of its lofty and complete walls, tinguished. It was famed for the excellence of its pasture land; and within its borders Herod the Great built Cæsarea, which became the residence of the governors of Judæa.

At Shechem "there is no wilderness, no wild thickets, yet there is always verdure; not of the oak, the terebinth, and the carob-tree, but of the olive-grove—so soft in colour, so picturesque in form, that for its sake we can well dispense with all other wood." (Van de Velde, i., 386.)

Esdraelon runs from the shores of the Mediterranean on the west to the valley of the Jordan on the east. It reaches, where it is widest, about twelve miles from the hills of Samaria to the mountains of northern Palestine.

<sup>1</sup> Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 117. London, 1862.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Olin's *Travels in the East*, ii., p. 428 Dr. Robinson's *Bib. Res.*, i., pp. 507, 553; iii., p. 595.

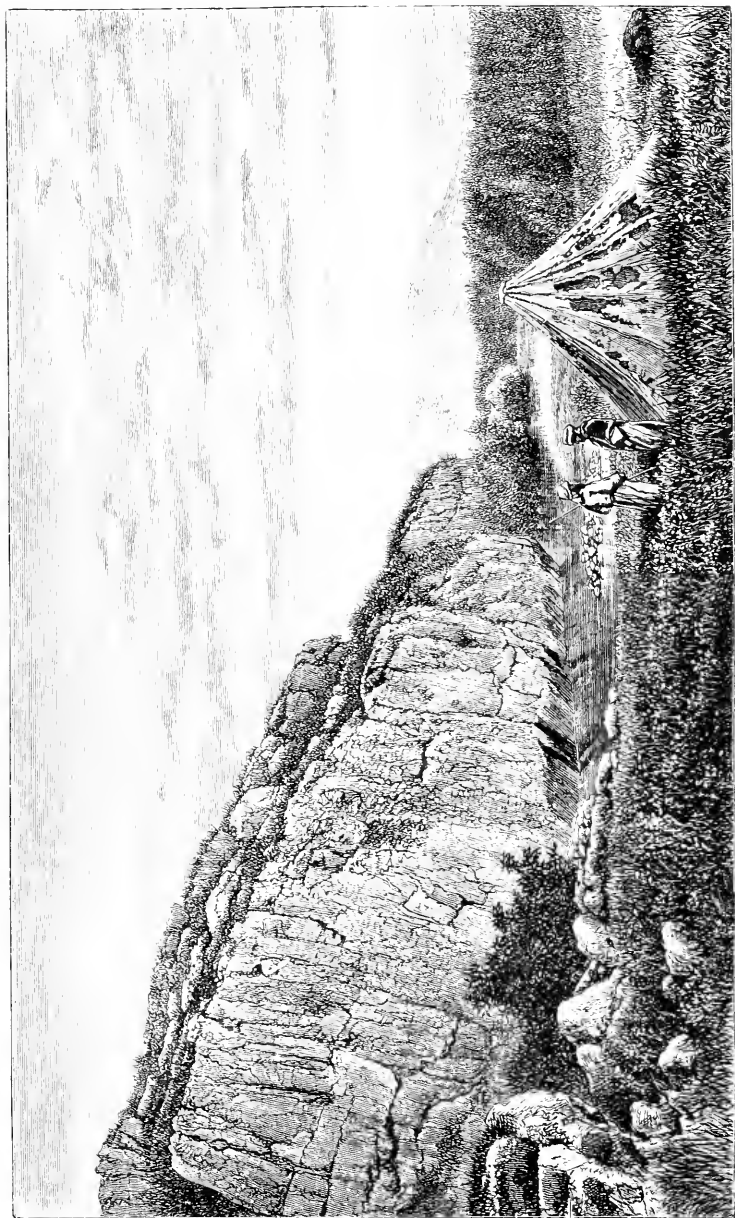
giving to it, to all beholders, a commanding and picturesque appearance. It had been the scene of great wonders for centuries before the birth of John; and it was destined to be of greater still. Here holy prophets had delivered their messages, and David and Solomon had reigned. Here Isaiah touched his harp. Here was the first temple in which the Shechinah had once dwelt; and the second the glory of which was to be greater than the former, by the presence of Him who was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person."

John, the apostle, was a native of Galilee, in the north of Palestine, probably the town of Bethsaida, on the western shore of the lake, not far from Capernaum and Chorazin. Such have been the devastations in that region, that it is now difficult to fix upon the exact site of these cities.<sup>1</sup> The green slopes of Tabor and the snowy summits of Hermon were in full sight of his childhood's home. Galilee includes the ancient territories of Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, the whole northern section of the country. Josephus describes the soil as rich and well cultivated. Fruit and forest trees of every kind abounded; numerous large cities and populous villages, amounting in all to no less than two hundred and forty, thickly studded the whole face of the country. The inhabitants were industrious and warlike, being trained to arms from their infancy.<sup>2</sup> The northern border ran from Dan westward across the mountain-ridge, till it touched the territory of the Phœnicians. The upper Jordan, from the fountain of Dan, the Sea of Galilee, and the river Jordan, formed the eastern border. The southern ran from the Jordan by Scythopolis, up through the valley of Jezreel to Gilboa, and along the base of the hills of Samaria and Carmel. And on the west it was bounded, from the foot of Carmel, by the territory of Ptolemais.

It was divided into two sections, "Upper" and "Lower" Galilee.

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's Res., ii., pp. 404, 405; iii., pp. 347-361. There were two towns named Bethsaida, one near the northern extremity of the lake, on the eastern shore; the other in the neighbourhood of Chorazin and Capernaum, on the west side of the lake. The former is mentioned Luke ix. 10, near which the five thousand were fed; the ruins of it are still to be seen at the distance of little more than four miles beyond where the Jordan enters into the lake. The latter was the city of Andrew and Peter; and like Chorazin and Capernaum, has been so completely effaced, that its precise locality is a matter of some doubt.

<sup>2</sup> Jewish Wars, iii., 3 (2, 3); Life, 45. The "soil is universally rich," is the language of the Jewish historian, "and fruitful, and full of plantations of trees of all sorts, inasmuch that it invites the most slothful to take pains in its cultivation by its fruitfulness; accordingly, it is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle. Moreover, the cities are here very thick; and the very many villages are everywhere so full of people, that the very least of them contain above fifteen thousand inhabitants."



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SITE OF BETHSAIDA.



“Lower Galilee included the great plain of Esdraclon, with its offshoots, which run down to the Jordan and the Lake of Tiberias, and the whole of the hill country adjoining it to the north, to the foot of the mountain range. It was one of the richest and most beautiful sections of Palestine. With the exception of a few rocky summits round Nazareth, the hills are all wooded, and sink down in graceful slopes to broad winding vales of the richest green. The outlines are varied, the colours soft, and the whole landscape is characterized by that picturesque luxuriance which one sees in parts of Tuscany. Upper Galilee embraced the whole mountain range lying between the Upper Jordan and Phœnicia. It is the region to which the name of ‘Galilee of the Gentiles’ was given in the Old and New Testaments.<sup>1</sup> The summit of the range is tableland, part of which is beautifully wooded with dwarf-oak, intermingled with tangled shrubberies of hawthorn and arbutus. The whole is varied by fertile upland plains, green forest glades, and wild picturesque glens, breaking down to the east and the west.”<sup>2</sup>

His parents were Zebedæus and Salome.<sup>3</sup> Their home, if the interpretation of the name Bethsaida (house of fish) can be trusted, was close to the water’s edge. A short distance to the north of the supposed site of Capernaum is a beautiful little bay, with a broad margin of pearly sand. There is every reason to believe that this is the site of Bethsaida.<sup>4</sup> No site along the whole shore seems so admirably adapted for a fishing town. Here is a bay sheltered by hills behind and projecting cliffs on each side; and a smooth sandy beach, such as fishermen delight to ground their boats upon. On this beach the child John doubtless might often have been seen gathering the pebbles and shells, playing in the sand, or launching on some little pool, his mimic boat. As he grew, he would pass many a happy day sailing on the lake, or engaged in taking the fish with which it

<sup>1</sup> Isa. ix. 1; Matt. iv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Professor J. L. Porter’s Handbook, pp. 427, 440.

<sup>3</sup> On a comparison of Matt. xx. 20, xxvii. 56, Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1, Salome must be regarded as the wife of Zebedæus. Most of the ancient traditions make her the daughter of Joseph by a previous marriage; *i.e.*, the step-daughter of Mary the mother of the Lord. But according to Wieseler (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1840, iii.), she was the sister of Mary, making John a cousin of Jesus. Cave, in his *Antiquitates Apostolicæ*, refers to the opinion of Jerome as to the nobility of the family from which St. John sprang, giving this as the reason why he was known to the high-priest, and could introduce St. Peter into his judgment-hall: “Propter generis nobilitatem notus erat Pontifici et Judæorum insidias non timebat.” He also refers to Nicephorus, who gives as a reason why St. John was known to the high-priest, that he had lately sold the estate left by his father in Galilee to the high-priest. (Cave, ii., p. 260.)

<sup>4</sup> Robinson’s *Bil. Res.*, iii., p. 358. Prof. J. L. Porter, in *Kitto’s Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Bethsaida*.

abounded. Although boats and fishermen are now rarely seen on its surface or along its shores, it was once covered with them, and populous towns dotted the whole region around. It is about fourteen miles long, and at the widest point nine miles broad. As seen from any of the surrounding heights, it is described as a fine sheet of water,—“a burnished mirror set in a framework of rounded hills and rugged mountains, which rise and roll backward and upward to where hoary Hermon hangs the picture against the blue vault of heaven.” To see it from one of its overhanging promontories, as the day breaks along the eastern mountains, and, one by one, the stars begin to fade, and every moment the scene shifts, and changes from bright to brighter, from glory to glory, the eastern cliffs throwing down their dark shadows on the bosom of the lake; and when the note of the lark rings out suddenly, silvery and joyous, as if from the very midst of the fading stars, and bird after bird, in rapid succession, commence their early matins, until the whole vault of heaven seems vocal with the invisible choristers,—it may doubtless well be pronounced “the very perfection of this style of beauty.”<sup>1</sup> In the crowded population of Galilee in the days of John, where, in a country scarcely thirty miles square, Josephus could raise in a few days one hundred thousand volunteers for the war against the Romans, this inland sea was the centre of a busy life, which must greatly have enhanced its attractiveness and interest. Nowhere else in the whole land, except in Jerusalem, could Messiah have found such a sphere for

<sup>1</sup> Thomson's *Land and Book*, ii., pp. 71-78. Even the humorist, Mark Twain (Mr. Clemens), who writes so contemptuously of certain descriptions of the Sea of Galilee, which he quotes, seems himself to have been most deeply impressed with the scene at night: “Night is the time to see Galilee. Gennesaret, under these lustrous stars, has nothing repulsive about it. Gennesaret, with the glittering reflections of the constellations flecking its surface, almost makes me regret that I ever saw the rude glare of the day upon it. Its history and its associations are its chiefest charm in any eyes, and the spells they weave are feeble in the searching light of the sun. *Then*, we scarcely feel the fetters. Our thoughts wander constantly to the practical concerns of life, and refuse to dwell upon things that seem vague and unreal. But when the day is done, even the most unimaginable must yield to the dreamy influences of this tranquil starlight. The old traditions of the place steal upon his memory and haunt his reveries, and then his fancy clothes all sights and sounds with the supernatural. In the lapping of the waves upon the beach he hears the dip of ghostly oars; in the secret noises of the night he hears spirit-voices; in the soft sweep of the breeze, the rush of invisible wings. Phantom ships are on the sea, the dead of twenty centuries come forth from the tombs, and in the dirges of the night-wind the songs of old forgotten ages find utterance again. In the starlight, Galilee has no boundaries but the broad compass of the heavens, and is a theatre meet for great events; meet for the birth of a religion able to save the world; and meet for the stately Figure appointed to stand upon its stage, and proclaim its high decrees” (*Excursion to Europe and the Holy Land in the steamer Quaker City*, pp. 512, 513).



His teaching and His miracles, where He could draw around Him the multitudes "from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan"; and where "His fame" could spread "throughout all Syria." The traveller obtains the first glimpse of its waters, in their deep basin, six hundred feet lower than the Mediterranean, from the top of Tabor; and they lie open wide before him from the Mount of Beatitudes.<sup>1</sup> Christ's residence and ministry on its shores, and its being the native region of so considerable a number of His apostles, have rendered it the most sacred sheet of water on the face of the globe.

That John's father was a man of worldly substance is evident from the fact, to which the sacred record refers, that he was assisted by hired servants<sup>2</sup> in the management of his boats and the mending of his nets. The mention of his ownership of a house, and of the fact of his being personally known to the high-priest Caiaphas, all go to establish the fact of the comfortable circumstances, and respectable position of the family to which he belonged. His mother was an ardent and pious woman, who ministered to the wants of Jesus, and united in the purchase of the spices for his body, and, as appears from the few incidents related of her, was evidently possessed of more than ordinary energy of character. The family, although usually classed with fishermen,<sup>3</sup> according to ecclesiastical tradition was of noble origin. Possibly, Zebedæus and his sons pursued fishing more for pleasure and recreation, than as a means of livelihood. It was, however, a Hebrew custom for the sons of the most reputable families to be trained up to some useful calling or trade. So little mention being made of the father, the presumption is not unnatural that he died not long after his sons James and John became the followers of Jesus. This may be the reason why the mother is so much more prominent in the gospel history, and may serve to explain the somewhat anomalous designation, "the mother of Zebedee's children;" that is, of the deceased Zebedee.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, pp. 319, 320.

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 20, *μετὰ τῶν μισθωτῶν*, "with the hired servants." Meyer, after Grotius, says it was only proof Zebedæus was not without means, that his sons could leave him with servants to complete the work in which they were engaged. *Τὰ ἴδια*, in John xix. 27, means *one's own things*, i.e., possessions, property. *Spec. one's own house* or *home*. See Robinson's Lex. of N. T.; Xen. Hist., x., 5. If John owned a house in Jerusalem, that fact may have brought him into contact with the high-priest, or afforded an opportunity of his continuing an acquaintance which we suppose, as will be seen on a subsequent page, may have begun in his early youth. John xviii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Francis Trench, in his *Life and Character of St. John*, quotes Chrysostom as speaking of St. John as sprung from a poor fisherman: *πατρὸς ἀλίως πίνητος* (Hom. I. in Johan.).

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xx. 20; xxvii. 56. Some have supposed that Zebedee became a follower

There were two other young men of Bethsaida, besides John's brother James, who became connected with the family of our Lord, Andrew and Peter. With them, no doubt, James and John had often been associated in the pastimes, studies, and occupations of youth. His advantages of education and literary culture we cannot presume were, like those of Saul of Tarsus, of the highest order; on the contrary we have reason to believe that his knowledge of letters, properly speaking, was comparatively limited. He had doubtless been carefully instructed by his parents in the rudiments of the Mosaic law, in the leading events of the marvellous history of his nation, and in the sublime and animating predictions of the prophets. It was a proverb among the Jews, that he was the vilest of men who suffered his son to grow up without being educated in the principles of religion. The songs of David, such psalms as the twenty-third, the forty-second, the forty-fifth, the hundred and third, and the strains of Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Malachi, were not without their appropriate influence in forming the character and stimulating the intellectual life of the youthful John. Whilst in Galilee he would be exposed to a contact with Gentiles, which he would have escaped at Jerusalem, and his dialect<sup>1</sup> and pronunciation would be affected in a marked degree from this contact; he was at the same time removed from the Pharisaic influence that would have encompassed and permeated him with its spirit of narrow bigotry, had his home been in Judæa; and he had a mother who, there is reason to believe, made it her first care to nourish in his heart the Messianic hopes that filled her own.

Without undervaluing the profane literature of the ancient world, as it had assumed form at the period of the advent of Christ (and it had just then reached its highest development<sup>2</sup>), when we compare it, for all the most valued purposes of education, with sacred literature, as it existed at the same epoch, the advantage is unspeakably on the side of the latter. The former may have the advantage of securing certain refinements in æsthetical culture, in poetry, rhetoric, and criticism, and in philosophical speculation; but have truth and purity no indispensable connection with right education? Do we not know that some of the most elegant specimens of ancient classical literature are so polluted with licence and passion as to render them wholly unfit for use in

of Christ. But Lampe in his Prolegomena on John says, "Sunt qui suspicantur, cum nusquam historia ejus porro mentionem faciat, brevi post vocationem filiorum suorum eum diem obiisse."

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 73, ἡ λαλιά σου δὴλόν σε ποιεῖ. "Thy dialect maketh thee known." The dialect of the Galileans was defective in the pronunciation of the Hebrew gutturals. In the Talmud are accounts of amusing misunderstandings in consequence of these and other defects.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. I.

schools for training and developing the faculties of the young? Does that deserve the name of education, which, without even the postulates of truth, can only train the faculties to skill in the dialectics of error, and, by the very process, undermine the foundations of sound morality? John, although surrounded with Gentiles, was not brought up where Greek ideas had gained the ascendancy. It doubtless could be said of him, as it was subsequently said of Timotheus, whose father was a Greek, that from a child he had known the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

In the post-exile period of the history of the Jews, there began a new era in the education, and the provisions for the education, of their youth.<sup>2</sup> As the people during their captivity had in a measure lost their vernacular, or had greatly corrupted it by the use of foreign terms, Ezra, the scribe and restorer of the law, found it necessary on their return, to gather around him those who were skilled in the law, and with their assistance to train a number of public teachers. The more accomplished of these collected large numbers of young men at Jerusalem, whom they instructed in all things pertaining to the law and the prophets; others were sent into the provincial towns to gather scholars and form synagogues. The schools continued to increase in importance, and the intercourse of the Jews with the Babylonians, the Persians, and the Greeks, extended their notions of education, and led them to study foreign languages and literature. Simon b. Shetach, B.C. 80, has the credit of having introduced superior schools in every large provincial town, and ordained that all the youth from the age of sixteen should attend them,—the first example of Government education. The estimate which had come to be placed on juvenile education may be learned from such declarations as the following, found in the Talmud: "The world is preserved by the breath of the children in the schools." "A town in which there is no school must perish."

The provisions thus made for general or national education were those in which the apostles of Christ shared, and are therefore of the greatest importance and interest to Christians. The kind of schools which existed at this period, the mode of instruction, and what was considered to constitute the proper education of a respectable Jew, may be learned from the Talmud and the Midrashim. A school or teacher was required for every twenty-five children. Up to the age of six years they must be instructed by their parents, and then sent to school. The

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Neh. viii. 1-8; Ecclus. ii. 9-11; Mishna, Aboth, i. 1. "Scrolls were given to children upon which were written passages of Scripture, such as *Shema* (*i.e.*, Deut. vi. 4), or the *Hallel* (*i.e.*, Ps. cxiv.-cxviii., cxxxvi.); the history of the creation to the deluge (Gen. i.-viii.), or Lev. i. 18 (*comp.* Jer. Megilla, iii. 1; Gittin, 60, a; Soferim, v. 9)."—Ch. D. Ginsburg.

parents never ceased to watch that their children should be in the school at the proper age, and in the class punctually from day to day. The greatest care was taken that the books, or scrolls, from which instruction was given, should be correctly written, and that the lessons should not be above the capacities of the scholars. Besides the elementary schools, designed for popular education, there were superior colleges, at first confined to Jerusalem, under the management of the "doctors," as they are called in the New Testament, and members of the Sanhedrin.<sup>1</sup> Gradually these academies were spread over all the countries where Jews resided. Alexandria, Sepphoris, Tiberias, and places too numerous to mention, became distinguished for these seats of learning. The method of instruction was chiefly catechetical, or the Socratic. All manner of subjects were treated,—theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, astronomy, astrology, medicine, botany, arithmetic, geography, architecture. "The Talmud, which has preserved the topics discussed in the colleges, is an encyclopædia of all the sciences of that time, and shows that, in many departments of science, these Jewish teachers have anticipated modern discoveries."<sup>2</sup>

In one of the schools connected with the synagogue at Bethsaida, John was, no doubt, found at the required age—six years. His parents, we cannot presume, would be less zealous than other Jewish parents that their son should be found promptly and punctually in his place. They had already taught him to read the Scriptures, for Jewish children were required to be able to study the Scriptures at the age of five years. We see the young lad John going, led by his brother or mother, to the synagogue school. To this day, in the East, in the schools connected with the synagogues, pupils may be seen seated on the ground with their tutor, coming or reciting their tasks. If there were schools of a higher grade already in Galilee, as we have reason to believe there were (as we know there were at a period shortly later),<sup>3</sup> the worldly estate of Zebedæus was such as to enable him to put their advantages within the reach of his sons. Or he may have sent them to sit at the feet of masters at Jerusalem; and in this way John may have attracted the attention of and

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 41. The Talmud has preserved the names of the presidents and vice-presidents of the colleges, with those of the most distinguished masters and scholars under each. Hillel the Great, in whose family the presidency became hereditary for fifteen generations, was president from B.C. 30 to A.D. 10. He was succeeded by Simon, who, in the year 30, was succeeded by Gamaliel, the teacher of the apostle Paul.

<sup>2</sup> See the excellent article, "Education," by Christian D. Ginsburg, in Kitto's Cyclopædia.

<sup>3</sup> Tiberias, after the destruction of Jerusalem, was famous during several centuries for its rabbinical academy. Lightfoot's *Horæ Heb.*, p. 110, *seq.*

become known to the high-priest Caiaphas. Those winning traits that so commended him to the great TEACHER and the great HIGH-PRIEST may have secured for him the regards of his earthly teacher, and, through him, of the head of the Jewish Church, under whose auspices and supervision these higher schools at Jerusalem would naturally fall. Gifted with an intellect of great clearness and penetration, patient and conscientious in his duties, the high-priest may have fixed on him as one of the probable future lights of the Sanhedrin. But however all this may have been, he heard the law read, and listened to discussions and discourses from Sabbath to Sabbath in the synagogue, and to the conversation of pious friends and neighbours in the house of his parents. The Jewish child was encouraged to listen, even in the presence of the most venerable doctors, by the privilege he was permitted to exercise of asking and answering questions. Nurtured thus in the pathetic histories of his people, his heart was filled with a love for his brethren, his kindred according to the flesh, which fitted him in an eminent degree to become, as he afterwards was, up to the period of their dispersion, the apostle of the Hebrews.

The outward life of the boy could not fail at the same time to be deeply affected by the political agitations which were felt throughout the whole of Palestine. He was of sufficient age when that remarkable man, Judas the Galilean, or rather Gaulonite (called the Galilean, probably, because Galilee was the chief theatre of his action), began to preach revolt against the Roman government. The principal themes of his eloquence were the sovereignty of God over his people, the unlawfulness of paying tribute, and the degradation of subjection to a foreign yoke. He had for his confederate Sadoc, a Pharisee. Multitudes gathered around them, who were full of burning zeal for their country and their law. The watchword of their party was, "We have no lord and master but God." The country was for a time entirely given over to the control of the warlike throng whom Judas had gathered by his fiery eloquence. But the might of Rome was irresistible; Judas perished, and his followers were dispersed.<sup>1</sup>

Like other Jews, John grew up with bitter prejudices against the Samaritans. From the period of the establishment of a separate worship and temple, the breach between the Jews and Samaritans had been irretrievable. The very name of either people became a term of reproach to the other. Whilst the same Quirinus (Cyrenius) under whom the revolt of Judas the Gaulonite took place, was prefect and Coponius was procurator of Judæa, as the Jews were celebrating the passover, a body of Samaritans made their way at midnight into the

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Hist. of Jews*, ii., pp. 124, 125; *Jos. Ant.*, xviii., 1 (1).

temple, and scattered through the cloisters dead men's bones.<sup>1</sup> This greatly intensified the hatred of the Jews for the Samaritans. It is not improbable that this act of desecration occurred not far from the time of John's first visit to Jerusalem to attend the passover.

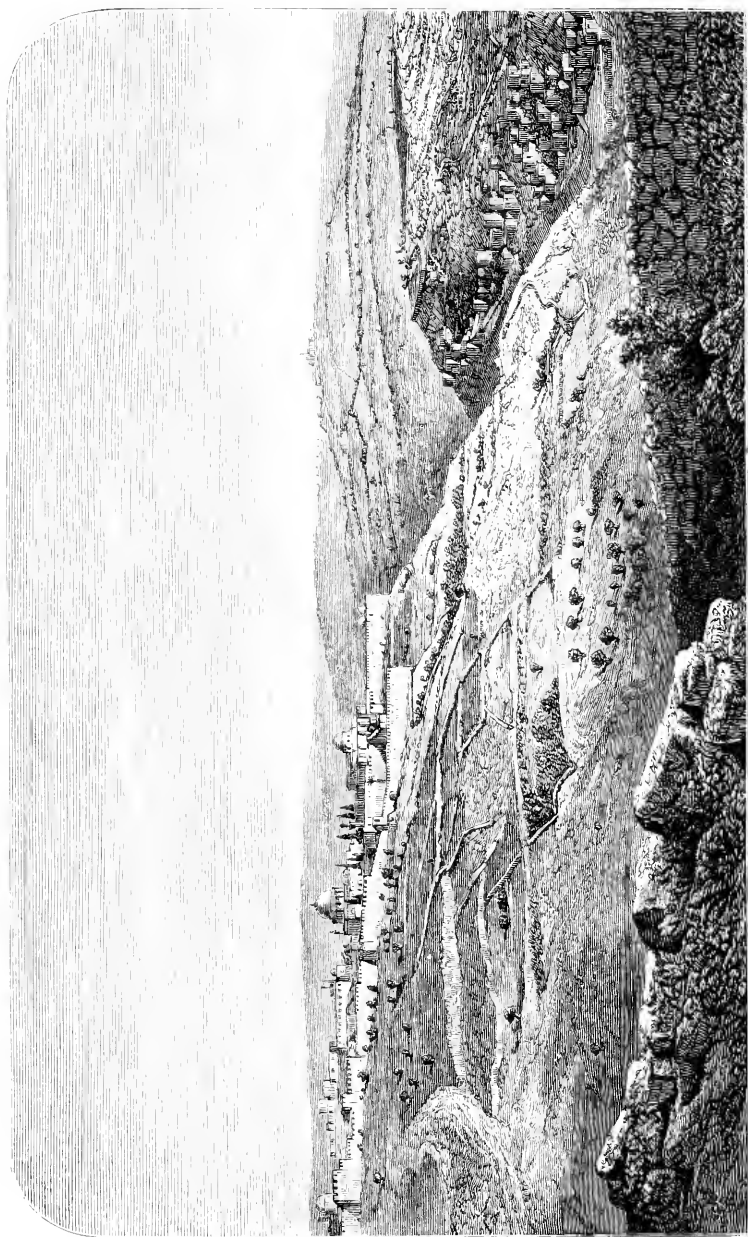
At an early period of life commenced the periodical pilgrimages of every male of the Jewish nation to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> At twelve or thirteen years of age, therefore, must John have made his first acquaintance with the holy city. With his parents and brother (who was probably the elder of the two), he might be seen joining some one of the caravans that went up stately to Jerusalem, on the occasion of the great festivals of the nation. There must have been something grand and imposing in the movement of these throngs, chiefly composed of men and boys, in discharge of a sacred duty. To avoid the annoyances incident to a journey through Samaria, and the positive danger of collision with an unfriendly people, the usual route was through the valley of the Jordan, for a considerable distance lying beyond, or on the eastern side of, the river; crossing it at or near Bethshean or Scythopolis, and passing on through the confederation of the ten Greek cities, known as Decapolis; and continuing till the territory of Samaria had been left behind, and the ford of Bethabara, nearly opposite Jericho, was reached.

How grandly must have sounded the psalms the people sang on these pilgrimages, designated in our version as "Songs of Degrees" (cxx.-cxxxiv.), as they echoed along the valleys, and through the gorges, and up the mountain sides.<sup>3</sup> What must have been the thoughts and emotions of John when, going up from Jericho through Bethany, and reaching the top of Olivet, his eyes for the first time rested on the holy city. Jerusalem was at this period surrounded by walls in those parts where it was not fortified by abrupt and impassable ravines. These walls did not stand one within another in narrower circles running round the whole city, but each defended one of the quarters into which the city was divided. They were guarded by towers built of solid

<sup>1</sup> Jos. Ant., xviii. 2 (2).

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xvi. 16.

<sup>3</sup> No one can fail to be struck with the peculiar appropriateness of these psalms for the use of pilgrims gathering from the most distant quarters. The first is heard as in Mesch, or in the tents of Kedar, races far to the north or the south, in lamentation of the situation. In the next, the worshipper lifts up his eyes to the hills, and, looking forward to the journey, sings, "The sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night." In the next there is an exhilaration as if the journey had been commenced, or was on the point of being commenced. "I was glad," etc. And so on; it would not be difficult to assign each psalm to some particular stage of the journey. The hundred and thirtieth, "Out of the depths," *De profundis*, comes like a wail of agony from the wearied, footsore travellers, out of some deep defile, with the craggy height above them. But at last they see Jerusalem; they bless the Lord, with all the servants of the Lord in the temple.



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JERUSALEM.





masonry. There were over seventy of these, running to a great height, with broad flights of steps leading up to them. The whole height of one of them (Hippicus) was about 140 feet, and it was nearly forty-four feet square, with battlements and pinnacles. Another (Phasaelis) was a solid square of seventy feet. It was surrounded by a portico, and defended by breastworks and bulwarks; and above the portico was another tower, richly ornamented with battlements and pinnacles, so that its whole height was nearly 170 feet. It looked from the distance like the tall Pharos of Alexandria. These lofty towers, built of white marble, the blocks so fitted that they seemed hewn out of the solid quarry, stood upon the old wall that ran along the brow of Zion.<sup>1</sup> He goes to the temple, and becomes familiar with its stately worship, with the sacrifice, the incense, the altar, and the priestly robes.<sup>2</sup> Nothing escapes the notice of his eye, or the attention of his active mind. He was receiving impressions and drinking in influences that would affect his character in all his future life.

At the very time John first visited Jerusalem, there was probably one there with whom he was destined in the future to be associated, and who was to become the most eminent in the apostleship. He was a youth not far from his own age, born neither in Galilee nor in Judæa, but in a Gentile city, Tarsus of Cilicia, yet of the purest Hebrew descent. He had enjoyed the best advantages of his native city, famous for its schools; but had now come to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, in the great rabbinical school of which he was the head. The school had been established by Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel. The fame of Gamaliel is celebrated in the Talmud. He was revered for his wisdom and eminent for his learning, and candour seems to have been a marked feature of his character. He was called the "Beauty of the Law." But his celebrity was to rest chiefly on the distinction in the world to which the remarkable youth would rise, who, as we have said, was probably sitting as a pupil at his feet<sup>3</sup> when John was present, under the requisition of the law, for the first time, at the celebration of the passover. It is by no means impossible that these two youths, who were not very far from being, if they were not quite exactly, coevals,<sup>4</sup> may have met for the first time in the temple at the

<sup>1</sup> Josephus. Milman thinks his authority for the topography and description of the walls unquestionable. *Hist. of Jews*, ii., p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Prof. E. H. Plumptre, *Art. John*, *Smith's Bib. Diet.*

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxii. 3. The words, *παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ*, are to be connected with *πεπαιδευμένος*, *taught*, rather than with *ἀναγεθραμμένος*, as they refer to scholars receiving instruction from the teacher in his *cathedra*, while they are seated on the floor or low benches at his feet.

<sup>4</sup> Dean Howson, in the *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, says, "He must have been born in the later years of Herod, or the earlier of his son Archelaus" (i., p. 41, C. Scribner's ed., New York, 1854).

celebration of this great feast, although as entire strangers, or knowing and recognising each other only as equally ardent worshippers at the altar of their fathers. On the day known as the Preparation of the Passover (14th of Nisan), the representatives of the several companies of the people, who had joined together as offerers of the same lamb, presented themselves at the temple, and having been divided into separate bands for convenience of numbers, were successively ushered in with the paschal sacrifices, until the court of the temple was filled. The doors were then closed, and as the trumpets were sounded, the priests in their official robes immediately placed themselves in two rows, holding bowls of gold and silver in which the blood of the victims might be caught and borne to the altar.<sup>1</sup> In some such scene as this, the two young Israeliites, one from the plain of Cilicia and the shadow of Mount Taurus, the other from the Sea of Galilee, may have met. They could appreciate it, and were capable of receiving impressions from it, as very few youths of their age could,—impressions that never could be lost, and which may be recognised in the Epistle to the Hebrews of the one, showing how the divinely-instituted types and symbols of the Old Testament economy have their actual and complete accomplishment in Christ; and in the rich liturgical imagery of the Apocalypse of the other.

Little did the parents of John think of the honour and distinction that awaited him. They anticipated nothing higher for their active-spirited boy, guiding his little boat over the smooth, glassy sea, or fearlessly and dexterously bringing it to the shore, when some sudden gust came down from the adjacent hills, than that he should succeed to the humble estate, or a share of it, and the position of his father. They little thought that his history would be studied, and his character admired, long after the names of most of the great ones whose renown then filled the earth should have passed into oblivion.

The opinion that John was the youngest of the twelve disciples rests not merely on tradition, but is supported by the historical evidence that he lived to see the close of the first century, and was himself nearly or quite one hundred years old. If John reached this great age, the argument of Jerome that he must have been a mere boy when he was called is shown to be of little force. The idea of his perpetual youth has no better foundation, or rather is an idle story of the monks, to which they gave currency on finding in Constantinople an antique agate intaglio, representing a young man with a cornucopia, and an eagle and figure of Victory placing a crown on his head. They maintained it was a portrait of John, sent to their hands by miraculous preservation. It proved to be a representation of the apotheosis of Ger-

<sup>1</sup> Mishna Pesachim, v. 5-10.

maicus. Whether he was ever married, as it is evident Peter was,<sup>1</sup> we have no testimony one way or the other in the New Testament. If he had been, however, the presumption clearly is, that the fact would in some way have been referred to in the narratives of the evangelists, or in the Acts of the Apostles. He had a home, presided over, it may be, by Salome his mother, to which he could take that "blessed among women," the mother of his Lord, who had been committed by a dying injunction to his filial care.<sup>2</sup> Salome was ready, there can be no doubt, from the singular devotion manifested for the Son, and from the relationship and friendship which had existed between the two women, to unite with her son in the faithful execution of the solemn charge. The earliest testimony on the question whether John had a wife, is that of Tertullian in the third century, who numbers John among those who had restrained themselves from matrimony for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He was an ascetic, and sought to use the example of John as favouring those monastic views and practices which had begun to find place in the Christian Church. Other fathers have made great use of the case of John as an instance of celibacy in accordance with monastic principles. St. Augustine alludes frequently to the circumstance, insisting particularly that he was engaged to be married when he was called, but gave up his betrothal to follow Jesus.<sup>3</sup> But all this rests on mere tradition.

What may be regarded as the proper significance of that peculiar title, "*Boanerges*, sons of thunder," given to him and his brother James? The composition and derivation of the word *Boanerges* has been the occasion of much discussion and difference of opinion. It occurs only in Mark. It "is no doubt a double modification (Greek and Aramaic) of some Hebrew phrase which cannot now be certainly identified."<sup>4</sup> It is well we have Mark's translation of it. It is natural to look for its significance, as applied to the sons of Zebedæus, in some-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 25-27.

<sup>3</sup> Lampe says, "Constans satis traditio Patrum illum cœlibem testatur et fuisse, cum vocaretur, et permansisse. An vero satis antiqua sit, de eo disceptatur" (Proleg. in Joan., I., c. i., § 13). And, in the end of the same section, he ridicules the idea that St. John was the bridegroom at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and, at his vocation to be a follower of Christ, immediately afterwards left his wife: "Tertullianus de Monogamia, c. xvii. Joannem Christi spudonem vocat, quod nempe se continuisset a conjugio propter regnum cœlorum. Favere quoque videtur huic opinioni, quod huic Discipulo potissimum matrem suam Dominus commendaverit. Istud tamen libentes concedimus, nulla probabilitate arridere, quod addunt alii Joannem in nuptiis Canæ, quibus Jesus intererat, sponsum fuisse, ejusque vocationem intercessisse ne maritus feret, et quæ illius furfuris sunt alia." See also Cave's *Antiq. Apostol.*, Life of St. John, § 10.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander on Mark iii. 17; and Poole's Synopsis.

thing earnest, bold, and fervid in their manner of address or their mode of action, revealing a corresponding type of character. In their ordinary speech, they used strong expressions, and there was a directness which brought the matter right home to those whom they addressed. When they preached, they addressed the consciences of men, they wielded the terrors of the law. They remembered the tones and warning manner of that preacher from the wilderness whose voice first arrested them in their youthful career, kindled the latent enthusiasm of their souls, and gave form and meaning and the expectation of a speedy accomplishment to the predictions of a coming Deliverer. Like him they cried aloud, and shouted their warnings in the ears of men. They could not have been dull, prosaic, and spiritless in their address.<sup>1</sup>

From his honoured position at the Last Supper and his peculiar designation as "the disciple whom Jesus loved,"<sup>2</sup> and because, in his epistles and gospel he dwells so much on love,<sup>3</sup> John has been frequently described as being all mildness, distinguished by a feminine softness, and destitute of strong, positive elements. But to imagine that he was a merely contemplative being, tame, and of a weak sentimental nature, is unquestionably to do serious injustice to his character. His natural traits appear rather to have been those of decision and energy; traits which it is not the province of divine grace to eradicate, but to regenerate and sanctify. He possessed a temperament, indeed, which, if it had not been subjected to the influence of this grace, might have made him fiery and fierce, if not cruel and unforgiving. The love which dwelt in him in so eminent a degree might easily, under adverse influences, have been changed into its opposite, violent hatred. It was the strong manly qualities of John which so commended him to the regards of the Redeemer of

<sup>1</sup> "Omnino videtur mihi Christus in hujus nominis impositione respexisse ad vaticinium Agg., ii. 7, ubi verbum illud comparat unde nomen hoc derivatum est" (Beza in Poli. Syn. *ad loc.*). Theophylact says, *υιους δε βροντης ονομαζει τους του Ζεβεδαιου ως μεγαλοκηρυκας και θεολογικωτάτους*, great preachers and eminent divines. (Comm. in Marc.) Trench says, they "were surnamed 'sons of thunder,' as resembling thunder in spiritual power and effect. So he who resembled abstract perdition is entitled the 'son of perdition,' and he who resembled abstract consolation is called in Scripture (Acts iv. 36) 'the son of consolation'" (Life of St. John, p. 23). See Lampe's Proleg., §§ 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> John xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2; xxi. 7 and 20.

<sup>3</sup> Trench well remarks on the periphrasis "the disciple whom Jesus loved," as applied to himself by St. John, that he "refers to himself as one *passive* and not as one *active*. He speaks of another who loves him, and not of himself as loving another;" and cites Lampe in his Comment. on John, "Apostolus non se Jesum *amasse*, sed a Jesu *amatum esse* pronunciat, amorem divinum absque ullo merito suum amorem prevenisse secundum 1 Joh. iv. 19 agnosceus."

the world, and led to his selection for the great share he had in the work of laying the foundation of the Christian faith, amid opposition, confusion, and blood. In him the searching eye of the Redeemer recognised faculties which, diverted from the low ends of worldly ambition and contest, might be exalted to the great works of divine benevolence. He could see how the impulses which, misdirected or left uncontrolled, must tend only to evil, "could be made the guide of truth and love," and in his "fiery ardour, the disguised germ of a holy zeal," which under His careful tuition "would become a tree of life, bringing forth fruits of good for nations." It was in perfect keeping with these characteristics, which Josephus ascribes to the whole Galilean race, "ardent and fierce," that when the inhabitants of a certain Samaritan village refused to show Jesus hospitality, the two brothers, James and John, the more ready doubtless to take fire on account of the old national grudge, desired permission to call down fire from heaven for their destruction.<sup>1</sup> It was a delicate susceptibility to impression which led John to respond so readily,—and sometimes in a way not so amiable,—to the events and disclosures which were ever multiplying around him, as he followed his Master. To refuse hospitality to such a being as he knew his Master to be, seemed to him unpardonable. This same quick susceptibility appears on another occasion, when he came and told the Saviour that he had rebuked a man for casting out devils, because he did not follow Christ in his company.<sup>2</sup>

The character of John, even when more matured, showed itself strongly coloured by the same constitutional peculiarity. "Had this native quality been left to itself, unchecked by parental influence, and unchastened by the grace of God, that John whose soul, pouring itself forth in inspired writings, one delights to observe so yielding to the slightest touch of heavenly truth, would have been known, if at all, only as the dissolute prey of contending passions. His susceptibility would have been like the perturbations of angry waters, which

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 54. Attempts have been made to show that the apostles were faultless, or to excuse the faults and errors which are mentioned in the New Testament. Even Peter's denial, and Judas's betrayal have had their apologists. And this act of James and John has had some to excuse it. Ambrose of Milan, in commenting *in loco*, maintains that their zeal was only such as would have met approval in the Old Testament times. He says, "Nec discipuli peccant, qui legem sequuntur," and then refers to the punishment of Hophni and Phinehas, and to the incident in the history of Elijah to which James and John referred. Even Calvin says of these two disciples, that "they desired vengeance not for themselves, but for Christ; and were not led into error by any *fault*, but merely by *ignorance* of the spirit of the gospel, and of Christ."

<sup>2</sup> Mark ix. 38; Luke ix. 49.

surrender themselves to every coming gust. But, in the confirmed Christian and apostle, this trait appears like the rapid and transparent picturing of fast succeeding beauties and glories of the opening heavens on the bosom of some stream, charmed by the presence of an unseen presiding spirit. If this responsive picturing in his soul was sometimes overcast with a shade from untimely objects, such a disfiguring shadow was but transient."<sup>1</sup> He used no softened, honeyed terms, when he described or rebuked sin and evil-doers. With him a false professor was "a liar;" a hater of his brother, "a murderer;" a denier of fundamental doctrines, "antichrist."<sup>2</sup>

Such were the strong vigorous traits in the character of this apostle. There was nothing half-way or vacillating in him. Just those qualities which, if he had remained on the sea of Galilee, would have made him the noble, brave, and generous seaman, and, without restraint, might have made him a man of enmities and altercations, the leader of a forlorn hope in a struggle against oppression and tyranny,—by the grace of God made him a disciple whom Jesus took to His heart with a peculiar affection and confidence. It needed but the merest spark to kindle his resentment into a fiery glow. The most eminent servants of Christ have been those who were once, like Saul of Tarsus, or like Bunyan and John Newton, most determined foes; or, who would, like Calvin and Brainerd, have become so but for the grace of God. Were we to seek the apostle's counterpart among men of the post-apostolic times, we should find it sooner in Augustine, or even Luther, than in such men as the gentle Melancthon. Regenerating grace does not impart (John's call to be an apostle did not in his case) any new natural faculties. It takes men just as it finds them, and makes of an impetuous, headstrong Peter, a courageous, firm, persevering apostle; it takes the iron will of a Luther, and bends it to that of the divine mind, and infuses into it a principle of new obedience, without impairing its inherent firmness and strength. It converted the native prowess of John's character into a burning zeal for his Master, which shone out with lustre when he went, in advanced age, to preach the gospel to a gang of robbers, in the fastnesses of the mountains, where they were lying in wait for blood. It converted his ambition to be first<sup>3</sup> among his associates, into a holy emulation to promote the glory of God, and serve his brethren and his fellow-men, by performing just those services which become the servant of all, and the least of all. He at length learned the import, not only of those solemn words, "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism

<sup>1</sup> Rev. E. E. Salisbury, in *Dib. Repos.*, iv., p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> See I. and II. Epist. *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 20-28.

I am baptized with," but of that other saying, which could never be forgotten, nor fail to fill him with abasement: "He who will be great among you, let him be your servant." His aspiration then was not after a throne, at the right hand of his Lord, in a temporal kingdom, but after increase of grace, and fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. To see Christ in His glory, and be like Him, would fill up the measure of His longing, and accomplish His most fondly cherished hopes.

As to his intellectual character, there can be no doubt he was a man of a very high order of abilities. The skill he at length acquired in the use of the Greek, as shown in the gospel from his pen, is evidence of one given to constant self-improvement, and who had acquired the habits of an accurate scholar. The education he received was probably of a higher order than has been commonly supposed, as was that of the apostles generally. He possessed a mind which, as it developed and ripened, was capable of taking the most profound view of things. He gave full evidence in his writings of having penetrated deeply into the groundwork of the Christian scheme. "He manifestly strove to attain a glimpse of divine things, in their primitive reality,—to view them not in their *mode* and *manner*, as topics of logical discrimination, addressing themselves to the understanding, but in their *essence*, as recognisable by the enlightened and sanctified reason. If the Spirit of inspiration assisted him to surpass the ordinary apostolic conception of divine truth, and to take deeper views of the gospel, these must be considered as at once tokens of special divine favour and manifestations of constitutional profoundness of mind." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bib. Repos., iv., p. 309.

## CHAPTER III.

### ST. JOHN AS A DISCIPLE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

PREPARATION FOR THE ADVENT.—THE PROPHET OF THE PREPARATION.—  
HIS IMPORTANT INFLUENCE OVER JOHN THE EVANGELIST.—HIS BIRTH.—  
PREDICTIONS CONCERNING HIM.—HIS PROTOTYPE.—MIRACLES AT HIS  
BIRTH.—HIS HOLINESS.—INFLUENCE OF SUCH A CHARACTER ON ONE  
CONSTITUTED LIKE JOHN THE EVANGELIST.—HIS LIFE IN THE WILDER-  
NESS.—ST. JOHN A DISCIPLE THERE.—MATTER OF HIS PREACHING.—  
MANNER.—IMPRESSION ON HIS YOUNG GALILEAN DISCIPLES.—JESUS  
POINTED OUT TO THEM AS THE LAMB OF GOD.—JOHN AND ANDREW  
FOLLOW JESUS.

ALL really important events and characters in history find in the Messiah that central point around which they revolve in their several places, as parts of one great whole. He is the "desire of all nations."<sup>1</sup> "All things were created by Him and for Him."<sup>2</sup> In the fulness of time, when the process of preparation was completed, and the world's need of redemption was fully disclosed, He appeared. "In Judaism, the true religion was prepared for man; in heathenism, man was prepared for the true religion." A circumcised Idumean, or Gentile, was the king of the Jews, when He to whom that dignity of right belonged, was born in Bethlehem of Judæa.

But notwithstanding this long preparation, issuing in so remarkable a condition of things in the heathen and Jewish world,<sup>3</sup> there was a special preparation for the introduction of the ministry of Christ. John the Baptist was its prophet and herald. It was not for mere dramatic effect that this man appeared on the stage, but for a great practical purpose. He came to arouse the people from their spiritual stupor, and call them to repentance, and thus prepare the way of the Lord. The long night of four thousand years had been brightened with many stars and constellations, but he was "the prophet of the Highest,"<sup>4</sup> to betoken that darkness was about to pass away, and all those stars to melt into the brightness of a glorious morning.

But it was the relation he sustained to St. John, and the influence he must have exerted upon him, and several of his fellow-apostles,

<sup>1</sup> Hag. ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 16.

<sup>3</sup> See Chap. I.

<sup>4</sup> Luke i. 76.





**PALESTINE**  
 Illustrative  
 of the Period of  
**CHRIST**  
 AND THE  
**APOSTLES**

The Ten Cities of the Decapolis  
 are underlined

Scale of Engl. Miles



giving them the first intimation of the advent of Christ, and distinctly pointing Him out personally to them, which demands some special notice of this remarkable man, in this place.

The people, sunk in unbelief, apathy, and spiritual declension, needed a strong voice to arrest their attention, awaken them to reflection, and arouse them to an attitude of expectation. Other and older prophets had foretold the coming of Christ at a distant future age; but he came with the thrilling joyful message, that that Saviour was immediately to appear, and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. He comes up from the recesses and labyrinths of the desert to the banks of the Jordan,<sup>1</sup> with his rough garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins. His countenance bears no aspect of effeminacy or sensual indulgence. It is hard and bronzed with his rugged abstinent mode of life. With the flashing eye and the spirit-stirring voice of a theopneust, such as the world had not seen for several centuries, he takes his position on the banks of the stream, and cries to all who come within the sound of his voice, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Never was there a more impressive scene; never a more commanding speaker; never one before him who had a more important message. His mission was to arouse the people, to rebuke their sins, and baptize with water, as a symbol of that preparatory repentance, which was to open the way for the coming Messiah.

John the Baptist was of sacerdotal family. His father, Zacharias, being an aged priest, was serving in his regular course in the temple, when the revelation or promise was made<sup>2</sup> to him of the birth of this son. His mother was a cousin of Mary, the mother of our Lord. He was born, according to the conjecture of Reland,<sup>3</sup> which there is reason to believe is well founded, at Jutah, or Juttah, a city of

<sup>1</sup> "The wilderness of Judæa," the rocky district in the eastern portion of the territory of the tribe of Judah, was the place where from early youth he had lived in retirement. But the place where he exercised his ministry is given by St. John as "in Bethabara beyond Jordan" (chap. i. 28); *i.e.*, it was on the eastern bank, and probably near Succoth, the more northern ford. He was nearer Galilee than Judæa, which accounts for his having Galileans among his disciples. The place was only about a day's travel from Nazareth. The place where John describes him as baptizing, subsequently, was in "Ænon near to Salim." The most ancient MSS. the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine, and others, for "Bethabara" read "Bethany." Origen states that in his time this reading prevailed, but he changed it to the more ancient name Bethabara, that it might not be confounded with the place where Lazarus and his sisters lived. But the evangelist made the distinction by saying *ἐν Βηθανίᾳ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου*, in Bethany beyond the Jordan.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 5-13.

<sup>3</sup> Palest., p. 870.

the priests in the mountains of Judah, south of Hebron, which still exists under the same name.<sup>1</sup> His advent, like that of the Lord, had been predicted long before he was born. In the rapt vision of Isaiah, when he was commanded to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and foretell the solemn and stately march of mountains and deserts, to prepare the way of the Lord, this notable individual is made to appear in the foreground, as herald of the advancing retinue of the great King: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."<sup>2</sup> But the prophet Malachi, even more distinctly predicted the forerunner: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me, and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet." And the Saviour, speaking of John, declared, "This is Elias, which was for to come." John, it is true, told the Jews that he was not Elijah. They were expecting that old prophet in person to rise from the dead, to go before the Messiah, to prepare His way. They interpreted too literally; and if John had answered their question affirmatively, they would have been led into great mistake. But although John was not literally Elijah, he came in the spirit and power<sup>3</sup> of that eminent prophet; and thus was the prophecy fulfilled. Whether we look at the character of his distinguished prototype, the wonders he performed, or the honours conferred on him, he stands pre-eminent among the great men of the first dispensation; nay, among those of every dispensation and age. He stood up with a fearless front, and flung back the charge of troubling Israel in the face of the monarch, whose hands were dripping with the blood of his brother-prophets.<sup>4</sup> Rain and dew were withheld at his word, and came at his command, and even fire from heaven. His career on earth was closed with a splendour which suited well so magnificent a history. In a chariot of fire, with horses of fire, he went up by a whirlwind into heaven. It was in the spirit and power of this great prophet, that, according to the message of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, his predicted son should go before Messiah.

Miracles preceded and attended his birth. It was part of the angel's message to Zacharias, that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, from his mother's womb.<sup>5</sup> His peculiar holiness from his birth

<sup>1</sup> Rob. Bib. Res., ii., p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1, iv. 5; Matt. xi. 14; John i. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Luke i. 17.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Luke i. 15.

may well be taken into consideration, in forming an estimate of the remarkable man under whose moulding influence the evangelist John, with all his native quickness of susceptibility to impression, fell, just at that period when he would most deeply experience the benefit of it, in preparing him for that great future of his life which was about to open before him.

Mourning over the corruption of the times, and led by the Spirit which filled him, John the Baptist retired to the desert regions in the vicinity of the Jordan, lying to the north of the Dead Sea, and devoted his days to holy meditation, or to the instruction of the few who at length heard of his sanctity and wisdom. It is altogether probable that John the apostle, and others who are mentioned as present with John the Baptist as "his disciples," when he came bearing witness to Jesus,<sup>1</sup> had for some time shared in this instruction in the wilderness. They had gone down from Galilee into the wilderness where John was, and put themselves under his instruction. These disciples evidently stood in a nearer relation to him, implying a longer and more intimate acquaintance than could have been claimed for the multitude in general, that thronged about him. How important a bearing on their training for their future work must the tuition of such a man have exerted! They needed no one to assure them of the genuine purity, the humility, and self-abnegation of his character. They saw him in private, in his unrestrained and familiar moods, as well as in public. His garments were coarse; he drank neither wine, nor strong drink, but lived a life of abstinence and austerity, satisfying his simple wants with a nourishment which the wilderness afforded.<sup>2</sup> He kept under

<sup>1</sup> John i. 35-42.

<sup>2</sup> Several species of locusts are mentioned in Scripture, which were used for food (Lev. xi. 22). The migratory locust (*Edipoda migratoria*) may be taken as the type of its family. They are used as an article of diet in Africa and Abyssinia, and other countries they frequent, thus compensating in some way for the amount of vegetable food they consume. (See Bible Animals, by the Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A., F.L.S., p. 596.) Herodotus describes the Libyans as making use of the locust for food. (*Melp.*, chap. 172. See also Pliny, *H. N.*, vi., 35.) Signor Pierotti says, in his "Customs and Traditions of Palestine," that locusts are excellent food, and that he was accustomed to eat them, not from necessity, but from choice. Burekhardt says that he saw among the Arabs "locust-shops," where they were sold by measure. Dr. Thomson says that in Syria they are eaten only by the poorest of the people. (Land and Book, ii., 108.) They are boiled alive in salt and water, then dried, and fried in butter, or their bodies ground into fine dust, and eaten with milk or honey. This locust-dust mixed with honey was no doubt the food of John the Baptist. Some commentators, under the impression that locusts were not fit for food, conjectured that the original reading must have been, not ἀκριδες, but ἐγκρίδες (cakes), or καρίδες (shrimps). The honey of bees flowed in abundance from the clefts of the rocks in the wilderness; and there was a kind of honey that issued from fig-trees, palms, and other trees.

In the accompanying plate there are two species of locusts represented. Those

his body, not ministering to the lusts of the flesh. Josephus gives an account of one of his own instructors, Banus by name, which throws light on the manner of John's life in the desert, and that of the disciples who gathered around him: "He lived in the desert, and used no other clothing than grew upon trees, and had no food other than that which grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by night and day. I imitated him in these things, and continued with him three years."<sup>1</sup>

It was "the wilderness of Judæa,"<sup>2</sup> from which the Baptist, the first master of John, is said to have come preaching. There is a wilderness-region, in the South Jordanic country, where he had probably spent his earlier years; but it was in a locality farther to the north, in the vicinity of Bethabara, and much nearer Galilee, where he entered on his ministry. Bethabara was "beyond Jordan," that is to the east of the river. The special locality where he first made his appearance was probably near the more northern ford,<sup>3</sup> not far from Succoth, the ford by which Jacob crossed from Mahanaim,—by which the Midianites endeavoured to escape in their flight from the sword of Gideon, and where Jephthah slew the Ephraimites. This wilderness, whether on the eastern or western side of the Jordan, has never been inhabited, except for purposes of ascetic seclusion, as by the Essenes and the hermits of later times. It was here that the prophet Elijah made his last appearance, before he was taken from the sight of his disciple and successor. And here his great representative, as if the old prophet had risen from the dead, suddenly appeared. He had been residing there, making his abode, like the sons of the prophets, in the leafy thickets of the Jordan forest. His food was the locusts of the desert and the "wild honey," or "manna," that dropped from the tamarisks; his clothing was a garment of camel's hair, fastened with a "leathern girdle round his loins."

Here what sweet communion he had with God! He lay down to sleep in the fear and love of God; he awaked to adore and glorify Him; and with Him he daily walked, thus strengthening every holy resolution and growing in every grace, until he was prepared to come forth from his seclusion in that full-orbed brightness, which at once inspired the multitude with awe, and sent the fame of him to every quarter of the land. The holiness of John was one grand element of his greatness, and of his fitness for the office to which he was called. No holier man, on the wing, with long heads, are a species of *Truxalis*, those on the ground the common migratory locust.

<sup>1</sup> Life, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ænon was not situated near this ford, as is commonly supposed. See Note 3, p. 59.

not even Enoch, who walked with God, and was translated, nor Elijah, who rode to heaven in his chariot of fire, had appeared before his time. This was the eminence, doubtless, to which He who came after him, the latchet of whose shoes he felt himself unworthy to unloose, particularly referred, when He said that there had not arisen among men "a greater than John the Baptist."<sup>1</sup> It was this that so qualified him to be the teacher of those Galileans, of whom the youthful John was one, who were so soon to be called to follow Jesus as His first disciples, and were eventually to be appointed His apostles.

He had all the qualities which go to form the great teacher and preacher of truth. In addition to that first and most important qualification of all, godliness and a blameless life, he evidently possessed a commanding intellect, enabling him to comprehend the great truths committed to him, and by his earnestness and ability to express these truths clearly and forcibly; and at the same time, to put himself into contact and sympathy with his pupils and hearers, he had that power of self-impression which is a distinguishing mark of all great teachers. Prior to His entering on His public work, our Lord does not appear to have opened His lips to give any instruction to men; indeed, it is quite evident, although they were kinsmen, that, prior to his baptism of Jesus, John had had no intercourse with Him, and did not even know His person. Yet none of the inspired men that went before John the Baptist excelled or equalled him, in the clear view he had of the doctrine which was to be taught by Messiah. How clearly he taught the necessity of repentance and faith in the Mediator, in order to life eternal! With a mighty hand he struck at once at that great error which hung like a millstone around the neck of the chosen people, that descent from Abraham and the observance of outward ceremonies were the only requisites for admittance into the kingdom of God. The most undoubted Abrahamic succession, and the most scrupulous attention to the externals of religion would do them no good, without repentance for sin, and a right reception of the promised Saviour. "Who has told you," he said, "that by simple baptism at my hands you can escape the coming wrath? I tell you, Nay. Trust not to your old saying, 'We are the children of Abraham'; for I tell you that God's kingdom is not confined to the race of Abraham, and that from these very stones that lie upon the river's brink, He can raise up His children. Repent ye, repent ye! and do works meet for repentance."<sup>2</sup>

He proclaimed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, a doctrine which the twelve apostles understood so imperfectly, until the Spirit Himself was poured out on them on the day of Pentecost. He told his disciples and hearers that He who was about to come should baptize them with the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iii. 7-12.

Holy Ghost; that as he (the Baptist) applied water to the bodies of men, so Christ would apply His Spirit to their souls, until He should thoroughly penetrate their being, and form within them a new principle of life.<sup>1</sup> "He whom God hath sent (meaning not himself, but Messiah, the Son of God) speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."<sup>2</sup> These unquestionably are the words of the Baptist, and not of the evangelist, as has sometimes been suggested. In them he "adverts to the reasons confirming what he had said, namely, that the precedence is due not to him, but to Jesus. It is, he means to say, only just that His fame should be spread, and the number of His disciples increased, inasmuch as He was sent from heaven, endowed with gifts immeasurably great; nay, was the beloved Son of God, the Lord, and promised Saviour."<sup>3</sup> If such were the public teachings of the forerunner, what must have been his teachings in private to those who attached themselves to him as disciples? What a preparation St. John had in these private instructions for that higher discipleship to HIM who taught as never man taught.<sup>4</sup>

John the Baptist was distinguished, as a preacher, for great fervour and earnestness; and perhaps we may see the effect of his very manner on one so susceptible as the evangelist, in his having won the title of a son of thunder. He was a voice, "a voice crying in the wilderness." That voice went pealing and echoing among the crowds gathered on the banks of the Jordan: "REPENT YE;" "PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD." Turning to the Pharisees, "Who hath warned you, O generation of vipers, to flee from the coming wrath? Repent ye, and by your works give evidence of the genuineness of your repentance. For, lo! He cometh; He cometh who shall baptize, not only with the Holy Ghost,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iii. 11; John i. 33.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 34-36.

<sup>3</sup> Tittm. in Bloomf.

<sup>4</sup> The question which he sent to Jesus from prison, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" presents a striking instance of the effect of the state of the body on the mind; for it is manifest that he sent his disciples with this question, not to resolve any doubts of theirs, but his own. His exclusion from air and light and exercise had affected his health, which had reacted on his mind. Accustomed to the freedom of the wilderness, he droops like a caged lion or chained eagle. In his gloomy prison he was overtaken by an hour of darkness, in which he began to call in question his former convictions. In the Elijah-like wrath and impetuosity which distinguished him, and led him to look for judgments against the corruptions of the times, he was disposed to interpret the miracles of mercy of the Lord, and His receiving of publicans and sinners, to His disadvantage.



but with fire. A sifting by fire will go along with the mighty operations of the Spirit, and consume all who will not appropriate the latter. He will hew down all the trees which bring not forth good fruit, and cast them into the fire. Lo! I see the Mighty One advancing with His fan in His hand, to purify the threshing floor of His kingdom; and He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Such were the stirring appeals he addressed to his auditors. All classes, not only self-righteous Pharisees, but the common people, and soldiers<sup>1</sup> from the Roman garrison, were drawn together. Jerusalem and all Judæa and all the region round about Jordan went out to listen to his thrilling appeals, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. How deep must have been the impression on the young men from Bethsaida in Galilee, who had joined John, before he appeared publicly at the fords of the Jordan, and received baptism at his hands, before the great sensation produced by his public harangues! It is very evident that they had found their way to the spot at a very early period of John's ministry, and had attached themselves to him as personal attendants and disciples. With the crowd that went out to him, they hung upon his burning words. His earnest solemn appeals deeply moved their hearts. They listened again and again, not doubting that they were the words of a prophet of God. There can not be the least doubt that they were with him on that memorable occasion, when John pointed out JESUS to his hearers, as He emerged from his fearful encounter with the powers of darkness in the wilderness, as "THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD."<sup>2</sup> "Behold the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot, of whom the sacrificial lamb, offered for so many ages by the Jewish nation, is but a type, whose blood is sufficient for the remission of all sin."

The next day, John the Baptist was standing on the banks of the river, or had not yet, more probably, come forth to his daily work of preaching and baptizing, and two of the Galilean youths, who had attached themselves as disciples, were with him.<sup>3</sup> The multitude do not appear to have been present, it was too early in the day; Jesus is seen again walking in the distance. John, directing their attention to Him, simply says, "Behold the Lamb of God!" He no longer speaks to the multitude; He speaks to them personally. He calls on them to behold the Saviour of the world. He, whose public appeals were so

<sup>1</sup> These soldiers, Luke iii. 14, are designated by a term *στρατευόμενοι* (not *στρατιῶται*), which denotes that they were in performance of their duty as soldiers. Wherever great crowds of people were drawn together, there the military commander of the district was required to be present, with sufficient force to quell tumult or insurrection.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 35-42.

powerful, could be just as faithful in the private, personal appeal. His words, which have been so often repeated, in directing men to the Saviour, were not without effect at their first utterance. The personal appeal and reiteration of the testimony he had publicly borne in regard to Jesus, have the desired effect. Christ, in the Old Testament, had been presented to them, not in a dim, uncertain light; and if they had before enjoyed the private instruction of John, Christ must have been made in the prophecies to stand out distinctly to their faith, for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."<sup>1</sup> It is no less "the spirit" of the entire Old Testament. Its appointed sacrifices, drenching the earth with the blood of animals selected as without blemish or spot, pointed to the great sacrifice to be made for sin, they testified in characters of blood to the Lamb of God that taketh away sin. He therefore uses a term to designate Jesus familiar to and well understood by these young disciples. The paschal lamb and the lamb in the daily sacrifice were typical of a suffering Saviour. But there is doubtless a distinct allusion to the great prophecy in Isaiah,<sup>2</sup> where Messiah is foretold as a lamb led to the slaughter; as bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows; stricken for the transgression of His people; His soul made an offering for sin. They therefore understand their master to say, "Behold the Lamb, foretold by prophets, slain from the foundation of the world! Believe in Him! He takes away sin by bearing it, atoning for it, so as to exempt all who believe in Him from the punishment due to their sins." "They followed Jesus." It was the beginning of their faith. Their connection with, and instruction by, John, was the first step or stage in it; it was the immediate preparatory process, *this* was the second.

As they walk in silence and reverence behind Jesus, He notices them, and encourages them to come nearer to Him and to speak, by the question, "What seek ye?" He wishes to inspire them with confidence (filled with awe as they must have been, by what they had just learned from John, that their eyes were then actually resting on the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world), and therefore He does not wait for them first to speak to Him. To their question, "Where dwellest Thou?" they receive the prompt invitation, "Come and see." They accompany Him to the place; and for the first time listen to the speech of Him who spake as never man spake. They tarried with Him the remainder of that day. We cannot doubt that the time was fully occupied with instruction suited to their necessities and worthy of Him. It was the beginning of a new life. It was their sense of need of One who could do more for them than John, who could atone for their sins, and forgive them, which led them to follow Him so

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xix. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. liii.

promptly. Their knowledge was very imperfect, as consequently must have also been their faith. But it was sufficient to lead them to attach themselves personally to Christ, and to confide implicitly in Him as their Teacher and Guide. The light which shone in them, however feebly, from that moment continued to wax stronger and stronger, even unto the perfect day.

The name of one of these young men is given, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He was afterwards called to the apostleship. The name of the other is not given, but there can not be the least doubt it was St. John the Evangelist, known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He carefully suppresses his name in other instances in which he unmistakably refers to himself. When an old man, in the city of Ephesus, this scene in his youth, on the shores of the far-distant Jordan, rises up distinctly before his view. He sees again the prophet from the wilderness, in his strange garb, as he stands on the banks, and points out the Saviour of the world. He sees himself and his companion as they timidly follow after Jesus. He recalls the very hour of the day, as well as the place, of the first interview with the Saviour, whom he had loved and served so long: "It was about the tenth hour." He had long resided among the Gentiles when he wrote this; the Christian community he addressed was largely composed of Gentiles; the Jewish nation for a full quarter of a century had been dispersed and scattered far and wide. It would have been misleading to the mass of his readers had he designated the hour according to the division of the day made by the Jews, who commenced their day at sunset, dividing it into twelve hours till sunrise, and again from sunrise till sunset, into the same number. He therefore adopts the horology of the Romans, who commenced their civil day as we do, at midnight, dividing it into twelve hours till noon, and again from noon till midnight, making the day to consist of twenty-four hours of equal length, at every season of the year. It was then about ten o'clock in the morning, or two hours before noon, instead of two hours before sunset, when John and Andrew followed Jesus. John the Baptist, as has been already suggested, had not commenced his labours for the day; the crowd had not time to gather from the places where they had passed the night. That it was not a hurried visit in the evening, but an interview extending from an hour in the morning, till night, seems to be clearly indicated, by the language that the two disciples "abode with him that day."<sup>1</sup> That was a memorable day in the history of our

<sup>1</sup> Lampe, who writes on the Life and the Gospel of John with so much learning, and whose work in *Joannem* has proved a thesaurus to many who have followed him, although he says the tenth hour was *quarta pomeridiana*, yet adds:—"Passim interpretes hæc verba accipiunt tanquam terminum a quo. Verum eo magis propendeo,

apostle. We know not what were the topics the Great Teacher discoursed upon; John gives no intimation. That they were topics worthy of the occasion, we can not doubt; and that they served to convince the young men that they had found Christ, we know.<sup>1</sup> The whole subsequent life of the apostle took its shape and direction from the interview to which he was invited on the morning of that day.

John the Baptist was the connecting link between the old and the new economy. He was the herald immediately preceding that Saviour, whom other prophets from remote ages had foretold. The great sensation produced by his preaching, the multitude that thronged about him, did not cause him to forget his true position, or to aspire to any higher work than that which had been assigned him. He was not disturbed when John and Peter and Andrew ceased to own him as their master, and followed Jesus. He had himself directed them to Him, as the Lamb of God. It is interesting to know that the words he used, now so familiar to the Christian ear, were instrumental in leading the evangelist who records them,—who held so conspicuous a place among the apostles, and whose name and writings have been so dear in all ages,—and his companions to the knowledge of the Saviour, the first example of their saving effect. “Ye yourselves bear me witness,” John the Baptist said to the Jews, “that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.”<sup>2</sup> These are noble words, worthy of one who was full of the Holy Ghost. They were uttered in rebuke of those who sought to excite his jealousy, because Jesus, or the disciples of Jesus, baptized, and more were now flocking to Christ’s than to John’s ministry. The fruit of the little handful was beginning already to shake like Lebanon.<sup>3</sup> He reminded them that he had constantly, both in public and private, disavowed any claim to the Messiahship, but had merely been sent to preface His way, who was to fill that great office. He likens Christ to the Bridegroom, and himself to the paronymph, or friend of the Bridegroom, who acts in His behalf, in the ceremony of solemnizing the marriage, and rejoices greatly at the happiness of his friend: “He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom.” The Church is His; won by His love,

*ut ea pro termino ad quem habeam. Cui enim in vicinia Jesus noctem transegisset, procul dubio jam ante meridiem prodit, et a Joanne conspectus est, ac reliquam partem diei ad decimam usque horam discipulis dedit” (Com. in Joan., i., 39).*

<sup>1</sup> John i. 41.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 28–30.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. lxxii. 16.

ransomed at a great price, a price which He alone could pay, purified and adorned by His grace. The friend of the Bridegroom stands and hears Him, and rejoices greatly at the satisfaction of the Bridegroom, and that He has at length come to the long-expected espousals. "This is my joy," says John; "I am glad like one that officiates at the marriage of a friend. He must increase, but I must decrease. My personal influence with the people is destined steadily to decline, whilst His fame and glory are destined just as steadily to advance." But the prospect did not disturb him. Instead of diminishing it rather contributed to enhance his satisfaction. There was no faltering in his tone when he said, "This my joy therefore is fulfilled." It is not improbable that he said these things with the clear presentiment of his early and cruel death:—"My goal is near at hand; I must decrease; my race is nearly run. But it having been appointed me to be the herald of Messiah, to be the friend of the Bridegroom, to lead his chosen bride to him, I am satisfied; I ask no greater honour, no greater joy!" It is to be remembered that John the Baptist was in the prime and vigour of his days, and that the words, therefore, are those of one who was still a young man. He was but a few months older than Christ, and it is supposed entered on his ministry about six months before Christ. About the same length of time after Christ entered on His ministry, the ministry of John was brought to a close. By his faithful rebuke of sin, he offended Herod Antipas, who ruled in Peræa, where he mainly resided. He was seized and imprisoned in the border-fortress of Machærus.<sup>1</sup> Here he was beheaded, and his head on a platter was paraded at a feast given by Herod to his high captains, as a present to a daughter of Herodias who had danced before them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant., xviii., 5 (2).    <sup>2</sup> Mark vi. 19-29.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ST. JOHN UNDER THE TRAINING OF THE GREAT MASTER HIMSELF, FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY TO ITS CLOSE.

FIRST MEETING WITH JESUS.—RETURNS TO GALILEE WITH JESUS.—CALL TO THE DISCIPLESHIP.—KANA-EL-JELÏL.—HIS FAITH STRENGTHENED.—CAPERNAUM.—WITH HIS MASTER, JOINS CARAVAN TO JERUSALEM.—ROUTE.—TRANS-JORDANIC COUNTRY.—SACRED REMINISCENCES.—JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE.—NICODEMUS.—ST. JOHN PROBABLY PRESENT AT THE INTERVIEW.—RURAL PARTS OF JUDEA.—ST. JOHN ENGAGES IN HIS FIRST PUBLIC WORK.—UNWRITTEN HISTORY.—CENTRAL PALESTINE.—JESUS AMONG THE SAMARITANS.—WONDERFUL RESULT.—IMPRESSION ON ST. JOHN.—NAZARETH.—MIRACLES.—ST. JOHN FORSAKES ALL FOR CHRIST.—HIS FIRST CIRCUIT IN GALILEE WITH JESUS.—CALL OF ST. MATTHEW.—DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS AND THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED FROM THE DEAD.—ST. JOHN'S TRAINING AND PREPARATION FOR HIS WORK.—AGAIN AT JERUSALEM.—APOSTLES APPOINTED.—THEIR NAMES.—THEIR GIFTS.—SERMON ON THE MOUNT, AN INAUGURATIVE DISCOURSE.—ANOTHER CIRCUIT IN GALILEE.—CHRIST BEGINS TO TEACH BY PARABLES.—THE TWELVE SENT FORTH BY TWO AND TWO.—WHO WAS ST. JOHN'S ASSOCIATE?—JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA.—DAYS OF DARKNESS DRAWING NEAR.—LAST YEAR OF ST. JOHN WITH CHRIST.—VISIT TO THE GENTILE WORLD.—JESUS FORETELLS HIS OWN DEATH.—THE TRANSFIGURATION.—ITS DESIGN.—ITS EFFECT ON ST. JOHN.—FAULTS OF THE APOSTLE.—JEALOUSY AND BIGOTRY.—ANGER.—RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.—PEREA.—PARABLES AT THIS TIME.—AMBITION OF ST. JOHN.—END OF PUPLAGE DRAWING NEAR.—LAST PUBLIC DISCOURSES AND PARABLES OF JESUS.—IMPRESSIONS ON ST. JOHN.—ST. JOHN SENT WITH ST. PETER TO PREPARE THE FEAST OF PASSOVER.

We have met the evangelist with his first teacher, that remarkable man, John the Baptist. He was with him in the Trans-Jordanic country (Perea, as it was called in the Greek nomenclature of its Roman conquerors) where John was baptizing. How long he had been his disciple, it does not appear. We find him in his company shortly after Jesus had been made known to the Baptist, as the promised Messiah, by the appointed sign, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He."<sup>1</sup> After His baptism, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness," and it

<sup>1</sup> John i. 33.

was probably on His return from the scene of temptation, that John the Baptist stood and two of his disciples ; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, " Behold the Lamb of God ! "

Here in this secluded region, away from those stirring centres of life, Jerusalem and the Sea of Galilee, where David when an exile from his capital, under the rebellion of Absalom, mourned in bitterness of spirit as he felt all God's waves and billows go over him,<sup>1</sup> Jesus, the Son of God, was first pointed out by His forerunner to that young disciple, who was to win the appellation, and be known in the ages to come, as " the disciple whom Jesus loved." Could we fix upon the site of Bethabara, we might know that we were not far from the exact spot. But it has pleased Him who knows the infirmity of our nature, —our tendency to rest in a veneration for sacred places, instead of a true spirit of reverence and devotion,—to substitute pilgrimages for a self-denying walk and prayerful life,—that neither tradition nor human monuments should preserve any certain evidence of the exact locality of many of the most interesting scenes and events recorded in the New Testament. To such travellers as Wilson, Olin, Durbin, Stanley, Thomson, and Porter, and such explorers and geographers as Niebuhr, Raumer, Robinson, and Lynch, we are indebted for information which enables us to test traditions, and to separate those which have a foundation in probable truth from those which are the inventions of superstition or of ignorance. Through them we obtain knowledge which is far more favourable to devotion and piety than that veneration for places which a little investigation, or a small measure of common sense, will be sure to explode.

It is with such enlightened guides as these, that it is proposed to trace the steps of the beloved disciple as he follows Jesus during the years of His public ministry, receiving instruction and gifts and graces, qualifying him for the Apostolate, and while prosecuting his own ministry in his native land.

Familiar as the gospel history is, showing the connection of St. John with our Lord, the freest use must be made of it in any account that would present truly the life and character of the disciple ; for it was under the instruction and ministry of the Saviour, that he received his preparation for the high office and special work to which he was called. Nor can we appreciate the ministry of Christ aright until we learn to view it, not so much in its direct influence on the world at large, as designed to instruct and train the apostles for their work.

John returned to Galilee with Jesus almost immediately after his first introduction to Him. The journey seems to have been commenced on the very next day, and the company to have consisted of Jesus,

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlii.

John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. By what route they reached Bethsaida, or the Sea of Galilee, from the desert region about the Jordan, it would be difficult now to determine. The green slopes, cultivated valleys, and populous towns and cities of Galilee, must have presented a striking contrast to the jagged cliffs of the Jordan, and the knolls and rocks, thrown together in wild confusion, as they rise irregularly and recede to the highlands on the west, and to the mountain heights on the east beyond Jordan. Going up from Beth-shean, or Scythopolis, as they approached Tabor, they would enter on that arm of the great plain of Esdraclon<sup>1</sup> which sweeps round the base of the mount, and extends far to the north, forming a broad tract of tableland, bordering upon the deep Jordan-valley and the basin of the Lake of Tiberias. If they ascended Tabor, there was presented to the eye a landscape, extensive and beautiful, one of the finest in Palestine, or perhaps in the world. Directly beneath, lies spread out the great plain, which extending far to the north, even now contains several villages, but at that time swarmed with a busy population. The view embraces also the western part of the great plain of Esdraclon, as far as to Carmel. On the right of Nazareth a portion of the Mediterranean is seen in the north-west, as well as slight glimpses in other parts. In the north and north-east are Safed<sup>2</sup> and its mountains, overtopped by snowy peaks beyond. At the distance of about three hours' travel is seen in the great plain a low ridge with two points, called by the Latin monks the Mount of Beatitudes. On the right the whole outline of the basin of the Lake of Tiberias can be traced; but only a small spot of the lake itself is visible in the north-east. Beyond the lake the eye takes in the high tablelands of Gaulonitis; and farther down beyond the Jordan, the higher mountains of the ancient Bashan and Gilead. On the south, the view is bounded by the mountains of Gilboa, forming the northern side of the valley of Jezreel.<sup>3</sup>

After his call, when he left his father and the servants in the boat, mending their nets<sup>4</sup> (his call to the discipleship, in distinction from his appointment as one of the twelve apostles), John appears to have been an almost constant attendant of our Lord. He saw the greater number

<sup>1</sup> The Greek form of the Hebrew word Jezreel. The city of Jezreel was situated near the eastern extremity of the plain, on a spur of Mount Gilboa. In the O. T. the plain is called the Valley of Jezreel.

<sup>2</sup> It is situated on a bold spur of the Galilean Anti-Lebanon. It was one of the holy cities of the north (Tiberias was the other), associated with the last efforts of Judaism, where, according to rabbinical belief, Messiah would establish His throne. It has been supposed to be the city on a hill, *πολις ἐπ' αὐτῷ ὄρους κείμενη*, Matt. v. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Rob. Bib. Res., ii., p. 354.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. iv. 21; Mark i. 19.



of His miracles, and heard the most of His discourses and parables. He gives an account of eight miracles,<sup>1</sup> among the most interesting and important performed by Christ, which are not mentioned by the other evangelists. It may not be easy to suggest a reason why such important miracles as the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda and the raising of Lazarus, are not found in the synoptists, as the three earliest evangelists are sometimes called; in regard, however, to the miracles at the marriage in Cana, and the healing of the young man lying sick at Capernaum, it may be said that these were performed before Matthew, the first of the evangelists, and the only apostle, save John, in their number, was called to the discipleship. John was, no doubt, present at the performance of the miracle in Cana of Galilee.<sup>2</sup> If it was three days after the commencement of the journey from the Jordan<sup>3</sup> when this miracle was performed, and if our Lord went by the Sea of Tiberias, and took the disciples already called with Him, He must have prosecuted His journey, made as it doubtless was on foot, diligently. Cana, from the nearest point He left the Jordan, was at a distance of fifty or sixty miles; by the Sea of Tiberias the distance must have been still greater. It would require two days for Jesus to reach that Sea. From an incidental remark made by Josephus,<sup>4</sup> it would appear that Cana was a night's march distant from Tiberias. By modern travellers, it (*i.e.*, Kâna-el-Jelil) is said to be seventeen miles distant from Capernaum and Tiberias, eight miles north of Nazareth. This Tiberias (for there was another town of this name to the north-east, on the opposite shore of the lake), was on the western shore. This shore and the little plain of Gennesaret<sup>5</sup> were the most thickly peopled district of Palestine. It was filled with towns

<sup>1</sup> Of the thirty-three commonly enumerated, as for example in Trench's work on the Miracles, he has but eight. In these thirty-three, however, are not included several events of the most highly miraculous character,—such as the incarnation itself, the transfiguration, the voice from heaven in presence of the Greeks, the falling backward to the ground of the Roman soldiers in Gethsemane, when Jesus said, "I am He," etc.

<sup>2</sup> "There want not indeed some and especially the middle writers of the Church, who will have our apostle to have been married, and that it was his marriage which our Lord was at in Cana of Galilee, invited thither on account of his consanguinity and alliance; but that being convinced by the miracle of the water turned into wine, he immediately relinquished his conjugal relation, and became one of our Lord's disciples. But this, as Barrow himself confesses, is trifling, and the issue of fabulous invention, a thing wholly unknown to the fathers and best writers of the Church, and which, not only has no just authority to support it, but arguments enough to beat it down" (Cave's Lives, i., p., 270).

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Life, 16, 17.

<sup>5</sup> el-Ghuweir. It was probably as the Saviour surveyed this plain from the Sea, that the parable of the sower was spoken.

and villages. It was, as has been said, to the Roman Palestine, what the manufacturing districts are to England. Nowhere, except in the metropolis itself, could be found a more busy scene of life. With the Hebrew dwellers by this inland sea, there were mingled the Gentile races of Lebanon and of Arabia, with here and there Greeks and Romans scattered among them. Here might be seen the heathen tax-gatherers, or publicans, sitting by the lake side, at the receipt of custom. Here were the women that were sinners, corrupted by Gentile manners, or who had come from neighbouring Gentile cities. Here the Roman centurion quartered with his soldiers, to be near the palaces of the Herodian princes, or to repress the turbulence of the wild Galilean peasantry. Here were the hardy boatmen, preparing their vessels or their nets to launch out for a draught.

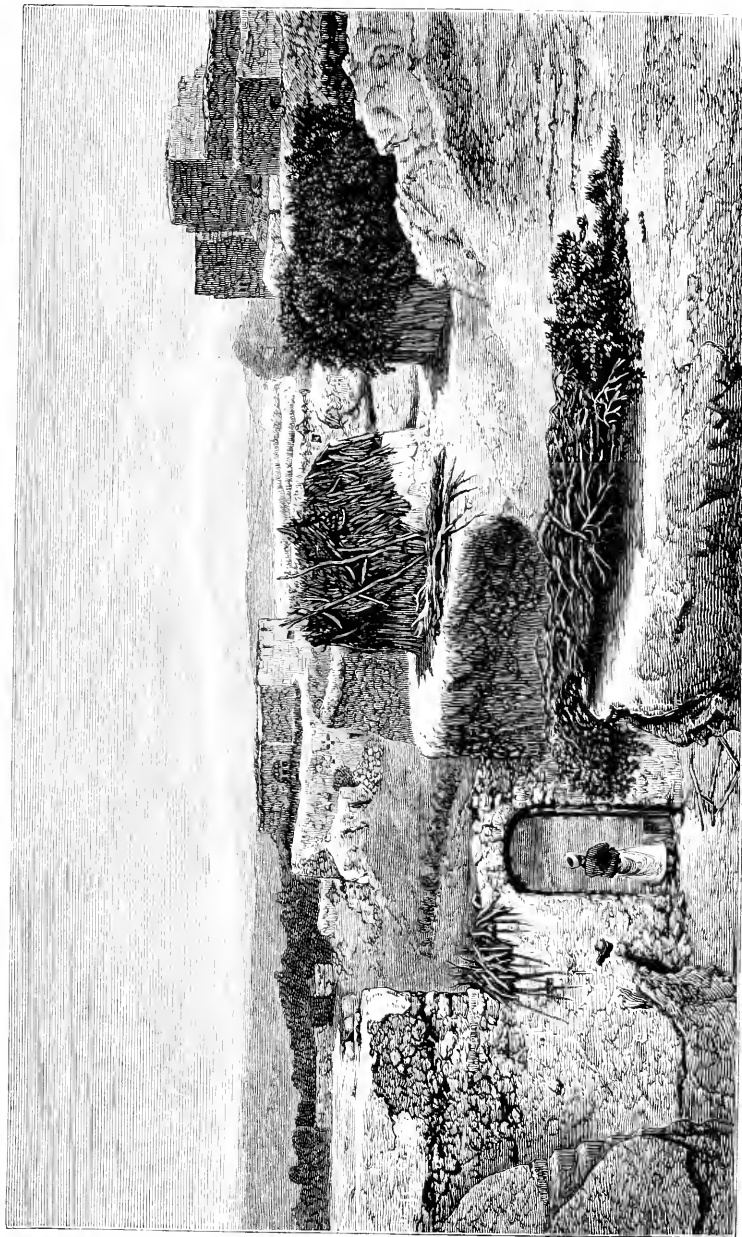
Passing through this busy scene, Jesus went with the disciples, the five who had then been called, to Cana. It was the home of one of them, the guileless Nathanael,<sup>1</sup> whom Philip had brought to Jesus while He was at the Jordan. The situation of this town is described as fine, on the southern declivity of a hill, overlooking the plain el-Büttanf. It appears once to have been a village of considerable size, of well-built houses. There is not, it is now said, a habitable house in the village. There are traces about it of high antiquity, in the cisterns and fragments of water-jars found there. It is probable that it was never a place of any considerable importance. The miracle of Christ caused its name to be known, and has preserved it from oblivion. In former times, the house in which the marriage feast was celebrated, and the water-pots themselves were exhibited to travellers at this place; but now the monks show them at another place (Kefr Keana) three miles north-east of Nazareth.<sup>2</sup>

There can be no doubt that the faith of John and of his companions was greatly strengthened on this occasion. We are expressly told that His disciples, as well as Jesus Himself, were invited to the wedding. They then, probably for the first time, saw the manifestation, or bursting forth of His glory,<sup>3</sup> and partook of the astonishment of the company, as the water with which the servants filled the jars became wine. "And His disciples believed on Him." They had before believed on the testimony of their first master, John the Baptist; but now they could have said to Him, as the believing Samaritans afterwards said

<sup>1</sup> In the lists of the apostles (Matt x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13) he is called Bartholomew, never Nathanael. St. John gives him his real name (chap. xxi. 2). Bartholomew means, *son of Tolmai*; and he was thus designated in the lists of the apostles probably to distinguish him from some other Nathanael, for whom it was desirable he should not be mistaken.

<sup>2</sup> Rob. Bib. Res., ii., p. 316; Kitto's Bib. Cyc.

<sup>3</sup> John ii. 11.



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CANA OF GALILEE.



to the woman, or in words similar, "We believe not because of thy saying; for we ourselves have seen His glory manifested, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." It was with John the commencement of a series of proofs that Jesus was the Messiah, which had their climax only when He rose in triumph from the dead.

From Cana, John went with Jesus, his mother, and his brethren, back to the Sea of Tiberias, to a city in the immediate vicinity of Bethsaida, Capernaum, situated near its north-western shore. This city subsequently became, after the rejection of our Lord at Nazareth, the principal place of His residence in Galilee, and was probably favoured with more of the works and words of Jesus than any other single place. The most eminent biblical geographers, however, cannot agree as to the precise location of the place, which derived its chief importance from having become the adopted home of the Saviour. Robinson has fixed its site at Khân Minyeh, in the northern end of the plain el-Ghuweir. But Dr. Wilson, Dr. Thomson, and Ritter fix it at Tell Hûm. It is gone! It has been effaced from the earth! "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell."<sup>1</sup> Who or what can stand before the word of Him who did not strive, nor cry,—who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax? The whole region, once filled with flourishing towns, has been swept and desolated by Arab hordes.

The occasion of this visit to Capernaum is not indicated in the inspired narrative; but the fact is mentioned that it continued but few days.<sup>2</sup> There is no intimation that He taught, or that He performed any miracles at this time. As the passover was at hand, the first occurring after our Lord entered on His ministry, it is not improbable He went there for the convenience of joining one of the numerous parties of pilgrims coming down from Northern Palestine and Lebanon, and gathering, as a convenient centre, at Capernaum, to form a caravan for a journey to the capital. They came from different and distant cities and towns of Syria; from the coast of Tyre and Sidon; from Ba'albek or Heliopolis; and from beneath the palm-trees of Damascus; all men of one race, but of various languages and costumes. There are, doubtless, representatives here from the shores of the Caspian Sea, from within the boundaries of the ancient Persian empire, and from the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and from all those northern and north-eastern countries to which Hebrews had either been carried in their captivities, or had emigrated in prosecution of their commercial enterprises. Companies increase as the pilgrims draw near the borders of the Holy Land, and are so multiplied

<sup>1</sup> Ma't. xi. 23.

<sup>2</sup> John ii. 12.

as they arrive among the populous towns of the plain of Gennesaret, as to form a numerous caravan. It was to join one of these, as may be plausibly supposed, that Jesus went with His relatives and disciples to Capernaum.

The most direct route from Capernaum to Jerusalem, the route through the valley of the Jordan, would have been south, through Bethsaida, past Seythopolis, or Beth-shean, to Succoth; thence across the Jordan, and down the east side of the river to a point opposite Jericho, and thence to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> If this was the route taken by our Lord and the company with which He and His friends joined themselves, then He retraced, in part at least, the course by which He had recently gone from the scene of John's baptism to Galilee. For the sake of a clear understanding of the influences to which our young disciple was now subjected from the scenes and associations through which he passed on this journey, let us endeavour to follow him, in its different stages, to his entrance into the holy city. On former similar occasions his mind had not received that spiritual quickening which came from recent intercourse with the forerunner, and from the companionship he now enjoyed with the Lord Himself.

The journey would require from three to four days. Great would be the change, as they left the shores of the lake, covered with an almost tropical vegetation, and entered on the wild scenery of the Jordan valley. Crossing the plain of Gennesaret, some five miles wide, at one spot on the western shore, where the mountains which hem in the lake suddenly recede, the verdure and fertility would reach their perfection. The barley-fields would be seen almost white to harvest, the wheat beginning to ear, and the fig-trees beautiful with blossom. Watered by living springs which pour forth copious streams, the richness of the soil is displayed in magnificent corn-fields; whilst along the shore rises a thick jungle of thorn and oleander, abounding in birds of brilliant colours and various forms. The whole impression is said to recall the image of the valley of the Nile.<sup>2</sup> Josephus describes this plain as one of surpassing loveliness and fertility, possibly with some exaggeration, as one favourable alike to trees, plants, and fruits of every clime.

Marvellous must have been the change as the pilgrims descended into the Jordan valley. "The desert" is the ordinary name by which this valley has been known in all ages. Unlike most other rivers, the Jordan, from the point where it leaves the Sea of Galilee to its entrance into the Dead Sea, presents not a single feature of civilization. And with the one exception of Jericho, situated some

<sup>1</sup> Coleman's *Hist. and Bib. Geog.*, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley's *Sin. and Pal.*, p. 374.

six or eight miles west of the river, in the plain, this has been true of it from the beginning of history. Hardly a single city or village has ever adorned its banks. Leaving Succoth, the pilgrims would enter on this desert region. Arriving at some ford to which the road leads, they cross the river, and pursue their journey, thus avoiding the territory of the hostile Samaritans and the pagan cities of the Decapolis.

It is the land which, in the partition of the country, had been assigned to the two tribes, Gad and Reuben. It is well adapted to flocks and herds. They moved along between the river and Mount Gilead, which cut them off from the great Arabian plateau to the east. It was here that Laban overtook Jacob; and when they separated, Jacob went on his way to Mahanaim, where the angels of God met him.<sup>1</sup> The Gilead range is everywhere covered with luxuriant herbage. The rich pasture-land presents a striking contrast to the nakedness of Western Palestine; and nowhere except among the hills of Galilee and the heights of Carmel, is there anything to be compared with it. Here the two tribes, Reuben and Gad, rich in flocks and herds, and with a country so suited to their pursuits, retained almost unchanged the nomad pastoral habits of their patriarchal ancestors. Here the sons of Saul were refugees, and found protection, while vainly endeavouring to re-establish the authority of their house.<sup>2</sup> Here Elijah the Tishbite, the great prophet of Ahab's time, had his home. He has been well described as "the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced."<sup>3</sup> Here David found a sanctuary during the rebellion of Absalom. All these incidents would now have a significance to John they never had before.

They journey on till the northern extremity of the mountain range which overhangs the eastern shore of the Dead Sea comes in sight. Here, from the top of Nebo, the summit of Pisgah, to Moses had been granted a view of the promised land; and somewhere among the gorges of this spur of Abarim, this eminent servant of God had his burial. Some belonging to the tribes of Gad and Reuben join the caravan as it advances. To the left they see Heshbon, where Herod the Great had erected one of his citadels, or strong military posts, as a place of retreat from the disaffected metropolis,<sup>4</sup> whose resentment he had so much cause, on account of his continual crimes, to dread. The whole scene through which they were passing abounded with reminiscences of the most sacred character, belonging both to the earlier and later periods of Hebrew history. We cannot suppose that the great Teacher could on

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxii. 1, 2, 22.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. ii. 8, *seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Stanley's *Sin. and Pal.*, p. 327.

<sup>4</sup> Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, ii., p. 81.

such an occasion, in such a company, pass through it without uttering many things for the instruction of His disciples. But no record is found in the evangelists of any of His words or works. He performed many works which John has emphatically told us there had been no attempt to report.<sup>1</sup>

They have now arrived near that point, so celebrated in Jewish history, where the passage of the Jordan was effected by the tribes, under the leadership of Joshua, on taking possession of the promised land.<sup>2</sup> A city celebrated in the history of Palestine lies to the west of the river, built upon an oasis in the desert, watered by living springs that break out of the limestone ranges above it, and a copious stream whose course through the deep defile may be traced by a line of verdure along the valley. From the mountain sides of Gilead, as they approach the ford, the forest gardens and verdant fields of Jericho must have been a most interesting and welcome feature in the otherwise forbidding landscape. This city stood at the right of the main pass or road from the Jordan to the south-west towards Olivet and Jerusalem. Beautiful as the spot is now, it must have been far more so in the days of its prosperity and grandeur. It was here that one of the great miracles which attended the first settlement of the Israelites in Palestine occurred.<sup>3</sup> It was here that the prophet Elisha healed the fountain of waters.<sup>4</sup> It was the water which served to convert this barren plain almost into a paradise. The stream of the Kelt, issuing from a ravine, flowed across it; and besides the large fountain of Elisha, there was still another further north. Within the range of these waters the soil was exuberant in its fertility. The fruits, spices, and perfumes of tropical climes could be produced there in great abundance. Its palm-groves yielded the choicest of indigenous fruits; its balsam-groves that fragrant balsam, or balm of Gilead, which in ancient times was so highly esteemed, both as a perfume and a medicine. The revenue of these balsam-gardens had been presented by Antony to Cleopatra; and there is a tradition that she caused slips of the balsam-shrub to be taken to Egypt, and planted at Heliopolis.<sup>5</sup> It was at Jericho that Herod the Great and this famous queen met, and where he seriously meditated putting her to death. Here he built another of those strong citadels for refuge from an exasperated people, of whose vengeance he had so much reason to stand in dread. He built towers and palaces; and it was evidently his favourite place of residence. It was here he died, and in the amphitheatre the news of his death was announced to the assembled soldiers and people. Such as Herod the Great and

<sup>1</sup> John xxi. 25.

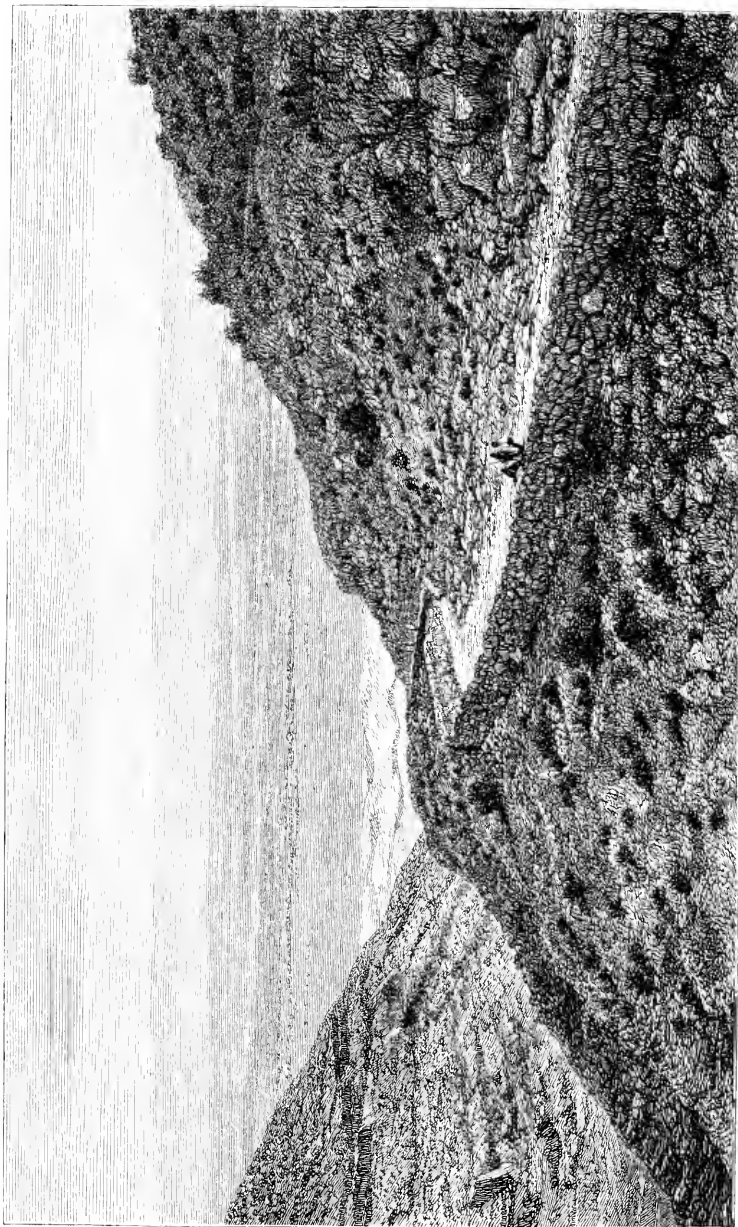
<sup>3</sup> Josh. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Josh. iv. 1-8.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings ii. 19-22.

<sup>5</sup> Brocardus, *Descrip. Ter. Sanct.*, xiii.





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ON THE ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO.



Archelaus had left it, such was Jericho when Christ and the company He was with journeyed through it on His way to Jerusalem to the first passover, after the commencement of His public ministry. As they pass beyond the walls, it is to travel beneath the shade of the sycamores,<sup>1</sup> which for a short distance skirt the Jerusalem road. Then they begin to climb the wild, dreary mountains, the bare limestone-hills. On every side are deep, frightful ravines, defiles, and gorges. For miles and miles not a house nor a tree even, it is said, can now be seen. In one spot travellers come upon the remains of a large *khân*, or inn. At length a height is reached from which the first glimpse of the line of trees and houses on the summit of Olivet is gained. The present road lies by Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha, over the south point of Olivet, into the deep narrow vale of Jehoshaphat, to St. Stephen's gate.

The Jewish pilgrims were in the habit of cheering the long and toilsome road with songs. The fifteen Psalms, beginning with the one hundred and twentieth, called "songs of degrees," which are said to have been used during the journeys to Jerusalem at the time of the great festivals, might better be described as *songs of up-goings*, with reference to the progress made in ascending the mountainous road to Jerusalem, especially by those who made their approach by the route through the valley of the Jordan. How grand must have been the effect as the voices of the pilgrims rose, "I will lift up mine eyes;" or, as some one more devout than the rest commenced in the shades of the evening, or the dawn of the morning, and then the whole caravan joined in, "Unto the hills, from whence cometh my help!" Again they break out in song, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord." As they descry the situation of Jerusalem, they sing, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion. . . . As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people." As they enter the gates, and march along the streets, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." And as they come to the temple, "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion!"

The young son of Zebedæus had never made the journey to Jerusalem before in such company, never under such circumstances and influences, as now. He was with the great Teacher, who no doubt availed Himself often of the opportunity to speak as never man spake before. Never were the sacred associations of the scenes through which he passed, richer or more significant. The splendour of Jerusalem, which, after its adornment by Herod the Great, was equalled by no city of the

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 4.

East except Antioch, and no city of the West except Rome, set like a jewelled crown on mountains towering thirty-eight hundred feet above the Jordan, and twenty-five hundred above the level of the Mediterranean, must have often excited his admiration as he went up in former years to the great feast. But with what different eyes, especially with his improved and expanding notions respecting the Messianic kingdom, he must have seen it as it first appeared in sight from the brow of Olivet, as he journeyed with the KING OF ZION! The most conspicuous and glorious object of all was the temple, so enlarged and beautified by Herod the Great, who had already greatly adorned the city, and gratified his passion for sumptuous building by the erection of towers, theatres, and amphitheatres. A new fabric of more regular and stately architecture than the old, which had been much dilapidated through the sieges of five hundred years, now crowned the brow of Moriah with its glittering masses of white marble and pinnacles of gold.<sup>1</sup> There were four immense towers at the north-west part of the wall. There stood the palace of the Asmoneans, the palace of Herod, with its lofty storeys and turrets, and other public buildings; while the fortress of Antonia, rising in the immediate vicinity of the temple area, towered above every building within the city, and formed, with the temple, the most striking feature in the view.

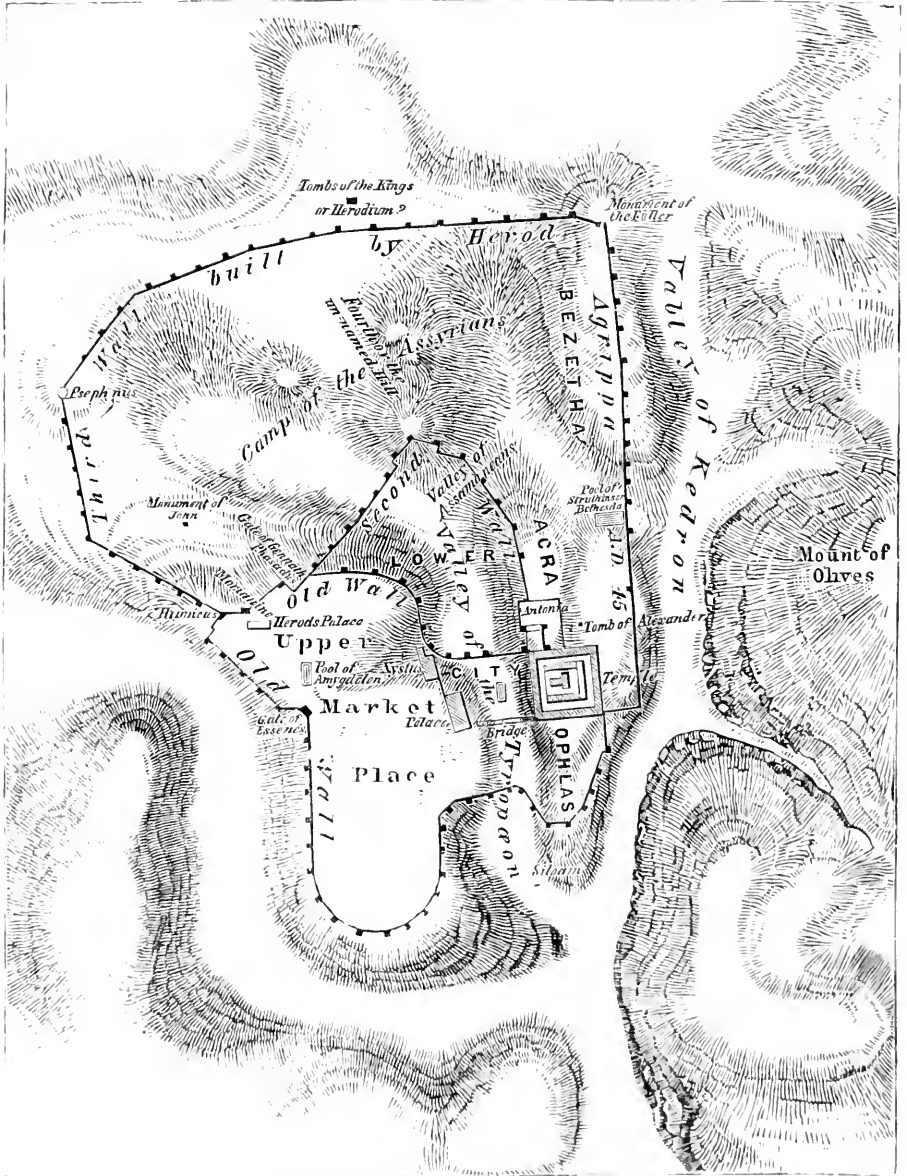
With Jesus John goes to the temple, and beholds that wonderful miracle, for it can scarcely be regarded as anything less, the expulsion of the traders and money-changers from its sacred precincts.<sup>2</sup> What was it but power over the secret will which made those profaners so obedient to One who came as a Galilean peasant, with no signs of external power? It brought Him at once conspicuously before the authorities and the people who thronged to the feast. By this act He proclaimed Himself the Son of God, jealous of His Father's honour. It is probable that the purification took place on or before the first day of the feast, at which time the paschal lamb was offered. It pointed to that purification which the offering of the true Paschal Lamb was designed to effect in the divine kingdom. This passover according to Friedlieb was on the 11th, but according to Greswell was on the 9th, of April.<sup>3</sup> If the Lord's baptism was, as has been supposed, early in January, then some three months had intervened, and John, for about half this period, as our Lord was forty days in the wilderness after His baptism, had been under His instruction. What progress he had made since Jesus had been first pointed out to him as the Lamb of God, and he had followed Him,—especially within the last few days, while

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Hist. of the Jews*, ii., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> John ii. 13-17.

<sup>3</sup> Andrews' *Life of our Lord*, p. 152.





JERUSALEM. PLAN OF WALLS.

journeying through scenes so rich in sacred associations, and since he entered the holy city! He had now heard Him say, in reference to His death and resurrection, in asserting His right to reform the abuses of religion and establish the true faith, in words indeed which he did not then fully comprehend, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But after His resurrection he understood that "He spake of the temple of His body."<sup>1</sup>

However confused and exaggerated in some particulars may seem the account given by the Jewish historian, Josephus, his topographical sketch of the city and temple, as they existed in his day, is invaluable. There may be reason to distrust his accuracy when he professes to give exact details, measurements of heights and magnitudes. These, in many cases, were probably only matters of estimate or conjecture. As a general view, however, of the city and temple, his description, there can be no doubt, is perfectly reliable. According to this writer, Jerusalem, except where it was defended by precipitous and impassable valleys, on which sides it had but a single wall, was enclosed by a triple wall.<sup>2</sup> It lay upon three hills, separated by intervening valleys. Mount Zion, the highest of these hills, on account of its fortifications had been called by King David, the citadel or fortress. The hill on which the lower city, containing the bazaars, was built, Akra, had the form of the moon when it is gibbous, or between the quarters and full moon. The valley between these two hills was the Tyropœon, or the valley of the cheesemongers; it extended quite down to a fountain of sweet and abundant water, Siloam. Over against Akra, but separated from it by another valley, broader than the Tyropœon, was Moriah, with the temple. In the extreme part of the upper city, or Zion, was an open space or park, called Xystus, connected by a bridge with the temple, where the people sometimes assembled *en masse*. The single wall which surrounded all those parts of the city which were defended by precipitous valleys, began at a tower called Hippicus, and extended south to a place called Bethso, and thence, in the same direction, to a point over Siloam; then, turning east, terminated at the eastern portico of the temple. The first, and oldest, of the triple walls began at the same tower, Hippicus, and running along the northern brow of Zion to the Xystus, terminated at the western portico of the temple. The second encircled only the northern part of the city, from near the tower of Hippicus to the castle of Antonia. The third, built after the time of Christ, beginning at the same tower, first ran northwards, then sweeping round towards the east, and afterwards towards the south, was joined to the ancient wall in the valley of the Kidron. On the

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> The third wall was not built till the year of our Lord 45, by Herod Agrippa.

western side of the temple area were four gates,—one leading over the valley to the palace on Zion, by the bridge just mentioned; two to the suburb on the north; and the remaining one to the lower city on Akra, first by steps down into the intervening valley, and then by an ascent. The hill, Bezetha, lay quite near, on the north of the temple. The hill Moriah, on which was the temple, was in the eastern part of the city, facing the Mount of Olives, overlooking the valley of the Kidron.<sup>1</sup> Our learned countryman, Dr. Robinson, who has investigated the topography of the modern city with so much care and patience, on the spot itself, with the volumes of Josephus in his hands, is not aware of any particulars which can excite a doubt as to the faithfulness of this historian and eye-witness, in his general description of Jerusalem, or as to the identity of the site of the ancient and modern cities.<sup>2</sup> The valleys of the Tyropœon, and that between Akra and Moriah, although greatly filled up, are still distinctly to be traced; while the hills of Zion, Akra, Moriah, and Bezetha, are not to be mistaken; and the deep valleys of the Kidron and of Hinnom, and the Mount of Olives, are prominent features, too gigantic to be forgotten, or undergo any perceptible change.<sup>3</sup>

The temple, according to Josephus' description, stood upon a rocky eminence, on which there was scarcely level space enough at first for the fane and the altar, the sides being everywhere steep and precipitous. Solomon built a wall around this summit, and then built up a wall on the east, filled in on the inside apparently with earth, on which he erected a portico, or covered colonnade. The temple itself was thus left naked on three sides, and stood out boldly to one surveying the city from Olivet, or approaching it from any direction. In process of time the whole enclosure was built up, and filled in quite to a level with the hill. The enclosure thus constructed was a quadrangle, measuring four stadia, or about half a mile, around it. The interior of this enclosure was surrounded by porticos or covered colonnades along the walls, and the open part was paved with variegated stones. This open part was what has been called by Christian writers the court of the Gentiles. Near the middle of this court an ornamental wall or balustrade of stone, three cubits high, formed the boundary of a smaller enclosure, which neither Gentiles nor the unclean might enter. Within this, an inner wall, forty cubits high from its foundation, surrounded the second or inner court. It was encompassed on the outside by fourteen steps, leading up to a level area around it of ten cubits wide, from which again five other steps led up to the interior. The

<sup>1</sup> Jos. Wars, v., c. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bib. Res., i., p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley, Sin. and Pal., p. 166, *seq.*



principal entrance of this inner court was on the east; there were also three entrances on the northern side, and three on the south. Afterwards three others were added for the women, one upon the north, south, and east, respectively. Within this second court was still the third or most sacred enclosure of all, which none but the priests might enter, consisting of the temple proper, and the small court before it, where stood the great altar. To this, from the second court, there was an ascent by twelve steps. It was this *Naos*, or body of the temple, which was rebuilt by Herod the Great, who also built over again some of the magnificent porticos around the area. But no mention is made of his having had anything to do with the massive walls of the exterior enclosure.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robinson thinks it can hardly be a matter of question that the area of the present mosque of Omar occupies the same location in part or in whole.

Some idea, from this somewhat minute description, may now be formed of the scene that met the eye of the youthful John, if we suppose, that, when at Bethany, instead of following the road round to the valley of the Kidron, he took the path across the mountain. From the brow of Olivet all Jerusalem lay before him. Mount Akra, and Bezetha, covered with bazaars and houses; and immediately below him Mount Moriah, crowned with the temple, blazing in the reflection of a bright vernal sun. The shape of the city was that of an irregular oblong. Mount Moriah lies near the middle of its eastern side, nearest to Olivet. About north-west from the temple lay what was called the lower city, or Akra. North, lay Bezetha. At the south-west end of the city rose Mount Zion, the city of David. The towers upon the walls contributed to its imposing appearance. The first or old wall had sixty, the second forty, and the third ninety. The walls, by which Mount Moriah had been built up and extended from the valley below, on the north, east, and west, were 450 feet high; on the south side this wall rose to the astonishing height of 600 feet. Some of the stones employed in building these walls having a surface of seventy-five square feet. John descends the mountain; he enters the city. From the elevated top of Mount Zion, the upper city, he has a nearer view of the temple. As he continues his walk, and enters the sacred enclosure, through the outer parapet, he sees the cloisters, or double porticos, on the north-east and west sides, supported by 162 columns, on the top of which rested an exquisitely finished cedar ceiling. These pillars were entire shafts, hewn out of solid marble, perfectly white, forty-four feet high. On the south side the portico was triple, or had three rows of these marble pillars.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jos. Ant., xv., 11; Wars, v., 5.

<sup>2</sup> Jos. *ibidem*. Salamiel, pp. 33-52.

If he entered as a guest into any of the houses, it was through a large gate or door, leading from the narrow street to a court or open space, around which the house was built, and from which it received its light. Except one latticed window or balcony, there are no windows towards the street. Round this open court are seats; and perhaps a fountain plays in the centre. It is paved with marble, and is the usual place for receiving guests. Doors open from it into the apartments, and when the house is more than one storey, into spacious chambers, with galleries running around, defended by balustrades. The streets of the city are narrow and gloomy, with rough pavement; in some places passing by arched ways, through the edifices themselves.

Such is the city, as to its external aspect, into which the young disciple of Jesus has come. Such the scene which is presented to his view, as he stands on Olivet or Zion, or goes round about the city marking its bulwarks, and telling the towers thereof.<sup>1</sup>

Of the miracles which Christ performed during his brief stay in Jerusalem at this time, and of which St. John must have been a witness, no particular mention is made by any of the evangelists. It is simply recorded that "many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did."<sup>2</sup> John gives an account of the deep impression upon the mind of a member of the Sanhedrin, a learned doctor, named Nicodemus. For the sake of a more unrestrained and private interview, this man came to Jesus by night. What Nicodemus had seen and heard of His miraculous power had convinced him that Jesus was "a teacher come from God." There is nothing improbable in the supposition that John, who had accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem, was present on this occasion. How impressive the sight when this master in Israel, with grave and venerable aspect, approached the young Teacher, to listen to His wondrous words! John, too, could hear them, and hear the sighing of the wind among the mountains, to which the rabbi's attention was directed, as the Lord instructed him on the mysterious subject of the nature and necessity of regeneration. He heard him say "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He heard Him say, "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 everlasting 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."<sup>3</sup> And how could such

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlviii. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> John ii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 5-16.

words as these, as they fell from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, be listened to by a man of so susceptible a nature as the young disciple, without making the deepest impression? As John alone of the evangelists records the interesting conversation with Nicodemus, the reason may be that he alone was present. And the same may be true as it regards some of the other discourses he alone records. Matthew had not been called as yet to the apostleship. We know that St. John was one of the three disciples who were admitted to a closer intimacy, and were more constantly with Jesus. Neither of the other two was the author of a Gospel.

Jesus does not appear at this time to have remained long in Jerusalem, but went into Judæa,<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, into the rural districts adjacent, or into the province of Judæa in distinction from the city, doubtless returning to Jerusalem to attend the great feasts of Pentecost and of Tabernacles. John accompanied Him, and with his fellow-disciples engaged in his first public work, that of baptizing, no doubt under the direction of Jesus, for "Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples."<sup>2</sup> As John, and Andrew, and Peter, and perhaps Philip and Nathanael, had been the disciples of John the Baptist, when such great multitudes flocked to him to be baptized, the rite was not new to them. John the Baptist was still prosecuting his work, but had left the Jordan, and come also to Ænon near to Salim.<sup>3</sup> The Pharisaic party, not understanding the relation between Jesus and His forerunner, and judging them according to the ordinary principles of human nature, sought to stir up jealousy between the parties. This was the occasion when John the Baptist uttered that testimony which John the Evangelist records,<sup>4</sup> than which nothing can be nobler or finer. The evangelist was evidently once more within the sound of his old master's spirit-stirring voice, when these grand words were uttered.

John was at this time absent from Galilee with Jesus about two

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> John iv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 23. As the passage, as it stands in the evangelists, seems to require that this place should be found, not only at a distance from the Jordan, but in Judæa, there is reason to believe Dr. Barclay (1858) has discovered Ænon at Wady Fârah, a secluded valley about five miles north-east of Jerusalem. Here are very copious springs (*ῥῆματα πολλά*), and the name Selom, or Seleim, the appellation of another wady close by. If John was baptizing near Scythopolis, according to Jerome (Onomasticon, under Ænon and Salem) and Thomson (Land and Book, ii., 176), or near to Nablus, according to Robinson (Bib. Res., ii., 279; iii., 298), *i.e.*, in Samaria, it seems strange that the passage, John iii. 23, should be found where it is in the narrative, *i.e.*, before Jesus and His disciples had left Judæa. The narrative plainly demands that Ænon should be found in Judæa, in the same region where Jesus and His disciples were then baptizing.

<sup>4</sup> John iii. 27-36.

thirds of a year. He arrived in Jerusalem in April; and the return journey must have been made in December, or the latter part of November.<sup>1</sup> We have no minute account of the manner in which these months were employed; how many parts of Judæa were explored; whether the place of His nativity, Bethlehem, was visited; whether it was at this time Jesus formed His intimacy with the family at Bethany; what may have happened at the feasts of Pentecost and of Tabernacles; what discourses were delivered, what miracles were performed. Here are months in the Lord's brief ministry of almost unwritten history. That He was constantly engaged in doing good, there can be no doubt. His favoured disciple was constantly with Him.

Jesus hears of the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and it determines His departure for Galilee.<sup>2</sup> As this journey was made in the direction of Nazareth, and from the vicinity of Jerusalem, we cannot doubt as to the particular route taken. It was not now by the valley of the Jordan. Jerusalem rested on the southern edge of a grand and lofty plateau, which occupies the entire area of Central Palestine, interrupted only by the valley of Esdraclon, crossing it midway between its northern and southern extremity. Along the summit of this mountainous tract lay in ancient times, as now, the great road leading from Jerusalem through Samaria into Galilee. Dr. Robinson, in passing over this route, to his surprise came upon traces of an ancient paved road, similar to the Roman roads, probably a military way, the pavement remaining entire for a considerable distance.<sup>3</sup> The country wears a sterile, desolate aspect. Twelve miles from Jerusalem, the travellers reach Bethel, a spot around which cluster so many sacred associations. Yet the whole region around it is said to be bleak and forbidding in aspect,<sup>4</sup> and the surface so covered with stones that Jacob could scarcely have discovered a spot where a pillow could not easily be made ready for his head.<sup>5</sup> Three or four acres of ruins mark the site of this ancient

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 35. Seedtime fell in the beginning of November, so that the fields were already giving promise of harvest. According to Lev. xxiii. 5-7, etc., and Jos. Antiq., iii., 10 (5), the firstfruits of the barley-harvest were presented on the second day of the paschal week. The wheat-harvest was two or three weeks later. On the chronological value of the passage, see Robinson's Greek Harmony, p. 189, and Wieseler's Chron. Synopsis, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iv. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Bib. Res., ii., p. 262.

<sup>4</sup> Rob. Bib. Res., i., p. 418.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. xxviii. 11. Among the great lessons of the significant vision granted here to the patriarch, "a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it" (Gen. xxviii. 12), was this: that the servants of God, wherever they are, wherever they rest or wander, whether in sickness or health, whether in joy or sorrow, are the objects of His care and love, and He exerts a special providence in their behalf. There is great com-

place. To the eastward rises a lofty hill, on the summit of which was the parting scene between Abraham and Lot; and where, after Lot's departure, the Lord said to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look; . . . all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it."<sup>1</sup> In the surrounding cliffs are many rock-hewn tombs, the same doubtless that existed in the days of king Josiah.<sup>2</sup> It was through this interesting region, where every summit seemed to be a memento of what was sacred in the past, and the valleys still to be echoing with the voice of God and the words of patriarchs and prophets, that John was now passing in company with the great Teacher. The narrow territory of Benjamin is soon crossed, and they come to the hills known as "the mountains of Ephraim," the central mass in this hilly range, nearly equidistant from the northern and southern boundary of Palestine. Here the rocky soil begins to be broken into plains, in the heart of the mountains, and to be diversified with running streams and stretches of vegetation. The road is picturesquely wooded. The change is so marked coming from among the sterile hills of Judah and Benjamin that it is no wonder they should have been styled "the smiling hills of Ephraim."<sup>3</sup> It leads on by the ancient Gophna of Josephus and Ptolemy, a name which does not appear in Scripture, unless it may be the same as Ophni.<sup>4</sup>

The next place of special interest in sacred history reached on this

fort and strength to the good man in the thought that this providence of God is over and around us.

(Mr. Charles Scribner, the founder of the publishing house, New York, that still bears his name, died amid the mountains of Switzerland, at Lucerne, Aug. 26, 1871. He went abroad for the recovery of health, which seemed for a time to be greatly benefited, but here fell a victim to typhoid fever. Heaven was as near as if he had laid himself down to that last sleep beneath his own roof. Those huge mountain-piles on which he looked out from the cottage window may have helped his dying vision to see the ladder Jacob saw, reaching as steps or stairs to the very gate of heaven. At his funeral was sung:—

"There let the way appear  
Steps unto heaven;  
All that Thou sendest me,  
In mercy given:

Angels to beckon me  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!"

He was a good man, of singular purity and unworldliness of character. He possessed admirable judgment, and his finished education and refined taste qualified him in an eminent degree for the profession he adopted. But it was his conscientiousness, his humble, unostentatious piety which imparted to his character its singular attraction. He was modest and humble, true and faithful to his friends.)

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xiii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> De Pressensé's *Life of Christ*, p. 296.

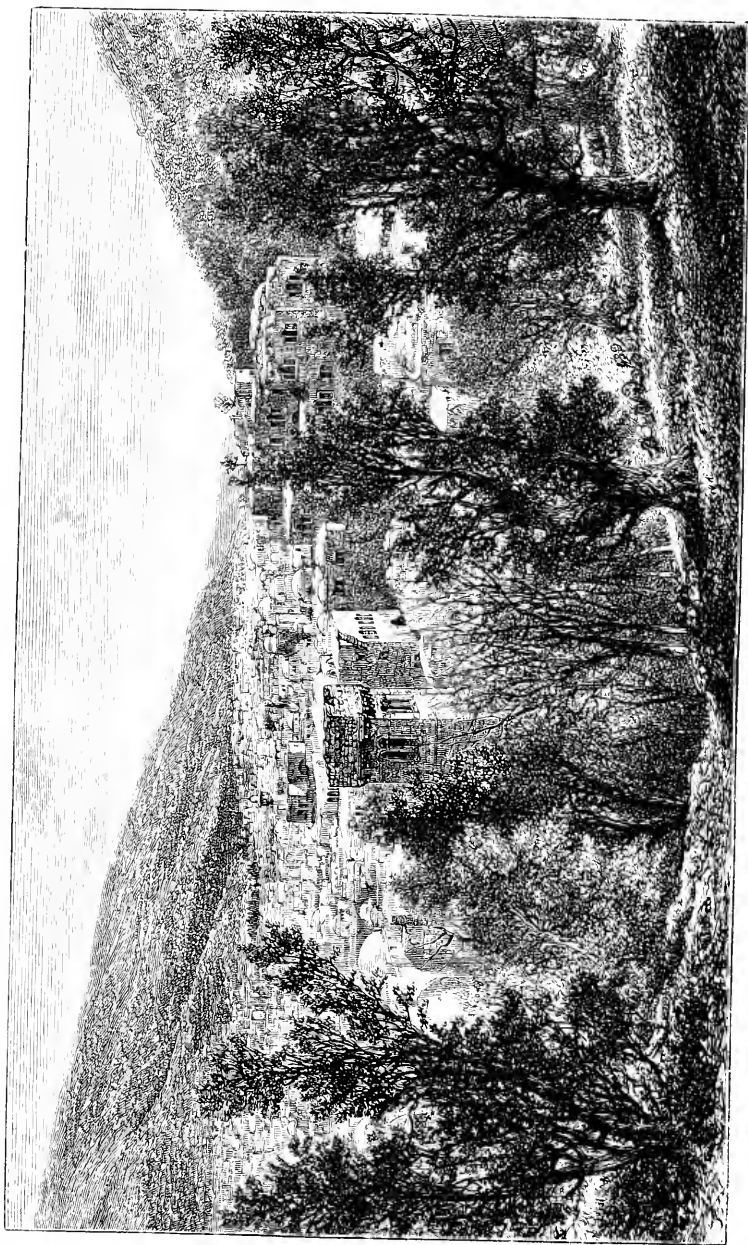
<sup>4</sup> Josh. xviii. 24.

road, is Shiloh. It was the sanctuary of the nation, or the place where the ark remained, from the time of Joshua to Samuel; and it was the great sanctuary of the house of Joseph during the whole period of their supremacy; yet from the days of Jerome, until the spot was identified by Dr. Robinson<sup>1</sup> in 1838, the site of Shiloh was completely forgotten, and its name transferred to Gibeon. It was here Samuel was dedicated to God, and His childhood spent in the sanctuary, and a feast was held to the Lord yearly. And it was here the last general division of the land was made among the tribes.

From the hills amongst which Shiloh is secluded, our travellers descend into a wide plain, described as the wildest and most beautiful of the Ephraimite mountains. From the midst of the fields, unbroken by boundary or hedge, start up olive trees, unenclosed as the fields in which they stand. When Dr. Robinson passed along here, in the middle of June, "the fields of millet were green and beautiful." Over the hills, which close the northern end of this plain, far away in the distance, is caught the first glimpse of the snowy ridge of Hermon. Its western side is bounded by the abutments of two mountain-ranges, running from west to east. These ranges are Gerizim and Ebal.<sup>2</sup> In the opening between them was the site of ancient Shechem. Nâbulus, a corruption of Neapolis, the "New Town," founded by Vespasian, after the ruin of Shechem, now occupies the site, or very nearly the same site. It is a long and narrow city, stretching close by the north-east base of Mount Gerizim, in a small deep valley, half an hour distant from the great eastern plain. Keeping the road along its northern side, the traveller passes some high mounds, apparently of ashes; where all at once the ground sinks down to a valley running towards the west, with a soil of rich black vegetable mould. Here a scene of luxuriant and almost unparalleled verdure bursts upon the view. The whole valley is filled with gardens and orchards of all kinds of fruits, watered by fountains which burst forth in various parts, and flow westward in refreshing streams. It breaks upon the view like a scene of fairy

<sup>1</sup> It was not a city, but the "camp of Shiloh" (Jud. xxi. 12). It was the last encampment, or the "last relic of the nomad existence of the chosen people." In the rabbinical traditions the sanctuary was described as "a structure of low stones, with a tent drawn over the top;" *Mishna* (ed. Surenhusius), vol. v., 59. When the sanctuary was removed, the place was deserted, and became desolate to a proverb, Jer. vii. 12, 14; xxvi. 6. It is the careful manner in which the location is specified in the Scriptures which enabled Dr. Robinson to discover it. Judges xxi. 19; Bib. Res., ii., p. 269; Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xi. 26-29. The blessing was to be on Mount Gerizim, the curse on Mount Ebal. This was accomplished by half the tribes standing on one mount, and half on the other; those on Gerizim affirming blessings, and those on Ebal curses, as pronounced by the Levites who stood with the ark in the valley below. Deut. xxvii. 11-26.



*Copied by permission from a photograph taken by E. FRITH.*

SHECHEM.





enchantment. Nothing is seen to compare with it in all Palestine.<sup>1</sup> The traveller who approaches this valley from the richer scenery of the north, is no less struck by it than those who contrast it with the barren hills of Judæa. "The awful gorge of the Leontes is grand and bold beyond description. The hills of Lebanon over against Sidon are magnificent and sublime. The valley of the hill of Naphtali is rich in wild oak forest and brushwood. Those of Asher, Wady-Kara, for example, present a beautiful combination of wood and mountain-stream, in all the magnificence of undisturbed originality. . . . Carmel, with its wilderness of timber trees and shrubs, of plants and bushes, still answers to its ancient reputation for magnificence. But the vale of Shechem differs from them all. Here there is no wilderness; here there are no wild thickets; yet there is always verdure, always shade, not of the oak, the terebinth, and the carob-tree, but of the olive grove, so soft in colour, so picturesque in form, that for its sake we can willingly dispense with all other wood. Here there are no impetuous mountain torrents, yet there is water; water, too, in more copious supplies than anywhere else in the land, and it is just to its many fountains, rills, and watercourses, that the valley owes its exquisite beauty."<sup>2</sup>

It was into this beautiful valley that Jesus on His way to Galilee came with His disciples. They were now in Samaria, among a people between whom and the Jews were no friendly relations. The name, Samaritan, was a term of reproach among the Jews; and the town of Shechem, or Sichem, probably in consequence of the contempt of the Jewish common people, went by the name of Sychar.<sup>3</sup> To this city, or to the well near it, known as Jacob's well, which Dr. Robinson found to be about thirty-five minutes distant from the present city, Jesus, wearied with travelling over the mountains of Ephraim, came

<sup>1</sup> Bib. Res., ii., p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. M. Van de Velde, late Lieut. Dutch R.N., i., p. 386.

<sup>3</sup> Land and Book, ii., p. 206. An interesting statement has recently been made public. It is contained in a letter of the Rev. C. H. Payson, of New York, travelling in Palestine, dated April 6th, 1873. The Rev. J. El Karey, who is a native of Samaria, partly Jew, partly Arab by birth, and now by faith a Christian, has been successfully labouring at Nâbulus, for the last five years, under the auspices of an English missionary society, as a missionary physician. Discovering in the synagogue at Nâbulus, a record kept by the priests, that reaches back hundreds of years before Christ, containing an account of interesting events connected with the synagogue, it occurred to him to search this record, to see if it contained any reference to this visit of Christ. He ascertained that the name of the leading priest in the time of Christ was Shaffer; he did not find, however, what he sought, but was rewarded by the discovery of this statement:—"In the 19th year of my priesthood, and the 4281st year of the world, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, was crucified at Jerusalem."

and rested, while His disciples went into the city to purchase food.<sup>1</sup> It was the first spot on which Abraham halted, when he came into the land which God had promised to give him,<sup>2</sup> and where he built the first altar to the true God. At the mouth of the valley in which Shechem was built, the traveller of to-day may see a white Mussulman chapel, which covers the alleged tomb of Joseph, in the parcel of ground which his father Jacob bequeathed to him. Near it a few fragments of stone show the place of Jacob's well. A large stone covers or fills its mouth, and it is choked by the ruins that have fallen into it. Of the special localities made sacred by the visit, the discourses, and the miracles of Jesus, it is almost the only one absolutely undisputed. Dr. Robinson thinks we may rest with confidence in the opinion that this is Jacob's well, and here was the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and that here the Saviour taught the Samaritan woman. Here he had halted, at a distance of some thirty-five miles from Jerusalem, as travellers still halt, on this same great thoroughfare, by the side of the well. Up that narrow valley, His disciples leaving Him, wend their way to the city, to obtain food. As He was sitting there, a woman, in the cool of the early morning,<sup>3</sup> came with her picher to draw water. He entered into conversation with her. Far and wide around them extended the noble plain of waving corn. The vale was musical with the songs of thousands of birds.<sup>4</sup> Above them, as they talked, on one hand, rose to the altitude of some 800 feet Gerizim, crowned by the temple, of which vestiges still remain, where the Samaritans said men ought to worship, and to which, after so many centuries, their descendants still turn as to the only sacred spot in the wide world;<sup>5</sup> and on the other, to about the same height, the somewhat steeper and less watered Ebal, from which the words of the curse were spoken. The light of the rising sun was fast dispersing the shadows they cast over the valley that lay between.

While the conversation with the woman was going on, John and his fellow-disciples were absent in the city. In consequence of the

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 3-6.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ὥρα ἢν ὠσεὶ ἔκρη, *i.e.*, the hour was somewhere about the sixth hour. If John adopts the Roman horology here, as he evidently does in other instances, this must have been at an early hour in the morning, between six and seven o'clock, after a journey which had been prosecuted during a considerable portion of the preceding night. It could not have been at evening, for the sun at Nábulus would set at the end of November, not far from five o'clock, and at six in that country of brief twilight, it would have been quite dark. A night-journey, so common among travellers in Palestine at the present day, would account for the fatigue of our Lord.

<sup>4</sup> Land and Book, ii., p. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley's Palestine, p. 242.

mortal hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, there was no little peril, and it therefore required courage in this little band of the followers of Jesus to venture within the city. The long-continued animosity had been deepened by what had happened some years before, under the government of Coponius. During the feast of the passover a company of Samaritans, entering Jerusalem by night, had attempted to interrupt the solemnity, by profaning the sanctuary with human bones. This explains the astonishment of the woman that Jesus should address her, and ask a favour of her, as well as that of the disciples when they returned with the food they had purchased, and found their Master engaged in conversation with her. Jesus must have communicated to John, who alone records the details of the interview with the woman, this part of this interesting episode in His ministry.

While the woman hastened into the city to invite the people to come out and see a man who had told her all the things that ever she did, the Saviour addressed His disciples, and made use of an expression which indicates the season of the year, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?" From the form of the expression, we infer that the harvest was yet four months distant. And as the harvest had its legal commencement, when a sheaf of the first-fruits was to be waved before the Lord, about the first of April, if we count back four months, we obtain the last of November, or the first of December, as the time when this visit was made by Jesus to Samaria.

Such was the effect of the woman's report on her countrymen, and of the discourses which they themselves heard from Him, that He remained there two days, at the earnest solicitation of the Samaritans; and many believed on Him. A most wonderful result! With what amazement must John and his companions have contemplated it!

Leaving Shechem, the Saviour and His disciples journeyed on through the valley, which presents on every side a beautiful and inviting landscape of green hills and dales, ornamented with olive-groves and fountains. At the distance of two hours' travel, they pass the city of Samaria, the ancient capital of the ten tribes. Here was the scene of many of the miracles and acts of the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha. It occupied a situation of great strength, beauty, and fertility combined. It was built on a large isolated hill, rising by successive terraces, at least six hundred feet above the valleys that surround it. From the topmost terrace, far away over the rich plains and hills, can be descried the blue Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> But they press on through the valley of Jezreel, remarkable as the scene of great battles, and by the

<sup>1</sup> Thomson's Land and Book, ii., pp. 197, 198.

lofty ridge now known as Little Hermon. The hills of Central Palestine descend on the north, through long broken passes, to the great plain of Esdraclon. Through these passes the lines of communication must have run between the north and south; and by one of them Jesus and His little band of followers must have journeyed, skirting the western side of the plain, until they arrive at Nazareth, the place where He had passed the years of His childhood and youth.

NAZARETH! one of the most interesting spots to the Christian, on the face of the earth, but once so obscure and unimportant that it is not named in the Old Testament, nor even by Josephus, who shows the most intimate knowledge of the whole region, but seems to be totally ignorant of the existence of this place.<sup>1</sup> The residence of the Son of man in it for thirty years, has imparted to it all the history it has in the annals of the world; a history which might well be coveted by the most renowned city on earth! The same great features and outlines and glorious works of nature, with which the Saviour was familiar may still be seen there. The narrow vale, on the side of which the village is built, extending up the steep mountain back of it, of course remains very much as it was then. The same fountain to which the young Jesus came, still supplies the pitchers of the children of Nazareth. Shut in by swelling eminences, gently-rounded hills rising round it, as if to guard it from intrusion, Nazareth itself must have always been wanting in prospects and distant views.<sup>2</sup> The carpenter's Son would have to climb the western hill, rising at least some five hundred feet above the bottom of the wady, to catch a view of the distant sea, and breathe its fresh breezes. From thence his eye might rove over a vast expanse of sacred scenery. On the southeast Tabor rises with its rounded dome; Hermon's white top in the distant north; Carmel and the Mediterranean Sea to the west; and in the nearer prospect, on the west, overhanging the plain of Acre, the town of Sepphorich, the Roman capital of the province, where Herod held his court.<sup>3</sup> "Here the Prince of Peace looked down upon the

<sup>1</sup> "There is a sort of latent beauty and appropriateness in the arrangement by which He who made all things out of nothing should Himself come forth to the world out of a place that had no history. Within the last hundred years, Nazareth has gradually grown in size, and risen into importance, until it has become the chief town of this district. It is now larger and more prosperous than in any former period in its history, and is still enlarging. The present population must exceed three thousand. The present growth of Nazareth is mainly owing to the unchecked inroads of the Arabs, from beyond Jordan, which has rendered it unsafe to reside in Beisân and on the great plain of Esdraclon" (Dr. Thomson's *Land and Book*, ii., p. 129).

<sup>2</sup> *Land and Book*, ii., p. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Or Seffûrich; obviously the Sepphoris of Josephus and Tsippori of the rabbins. It is not mentioned in Scripture. It was rebuilt and fortified by Herod

great plain, where the din of battles so oft had rolled, and the garments of the warrior been dyed in blood; and He looked out, too, upon that sea over which the swift ships were to bear the tidings of His salvation to nations, and to continents then unknown. How has the moral aspect of things been changed! Battles and bloodshed have indeed not ceased to desolate this unhappy country, and gross darkness now covers the people; but from this region a light went forth, which has enlightened the world, and unveiled new climes; and now the rays of that light begin to be reflected back from distant isles and continents to illuminate anew the darkened land where it first sprang up.”<sup>1</sup>

The report of the wonderful works of Jesus in Jerusalem and Judæa had preceded Him, brought back by those who had gone up from Galilee to the feast; and the Galileans, as a general thing, perhaps proud of the honour He had reflected on His country, were disposed to receive Him. He came back preaching, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Strange to tell, at Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and to which He had already given greater fame than it had ever enjoyed before, although all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded from His mouth, He was thrust out of the synagogue, and brought to the brow of a precipice of the hill on which the city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong; and they would have done it had He not escaped out of their hands. A precipice of this hill breaks off in a perpendicular wall, forty or fifty feet in height, which may well have been the spot to which the Nazarenes led Jesus, to execute their murderous purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Of the fulfilment of this prophecy, “He was despised and rejected of men,”<sup>3</sup> St. John thus early became an astonished witness. He began now to learn what was involved in discipleship to such a Master. He retired with Him to Cana, the home of Nathanael, a town some seven miles to the north, where the great miracle of turning water into wine had been performed. Whilst here another very remarkable miracle was wrought. A nobleman, supposed to be Chuza, one of the chief officers of Herod’s court came in great haste and anxiety, and besought Him to come at once to Capernaum to heal his son, who was lying at the point of death. He would have Christ instantly leave the work in

Antipas. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the great Jewish Sanhedrin is said to have been established here, for some years before it was transferred to Tiberias. It was called by the Romans Diocæsarea. Jos., Life, 9, 45, 65; Ant. xiv., 15, (4); xvii., 10, (9), etc.; Reland’s *Palestina*, p. 998; Robinson’s *Bib. Res.*, ii., p. 344.

<sup>1</sup> Rob. Bib. Res., ii., pp. 337, 338.

<sup>2</sup> Rob. Bib. Res., ii., p. 335. But see also Land and Book, ii., p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Is. liii. 3.

which He was engaged, no matter what distress there might be to be relieved at Cana, and hurry to the bedside of his dying son, not knowing while he gave so much evidence of faith how inadequate it was, and that the Lord, though at the distance of a score of miles, with a word could heal the sick just as effectually as if He were present and could lay His hands on him.

The visit of the nobleman probably prepared the way for Christ to come to Capernaum, and may have led to His selecting it as His future Galilean home, as Bethany came to enjoy a similar honour in Judæa. On arriving at Capernaum He went into the synagogue, where He taught with so much power that they who heard Him were astonished. Here John saw a demoniac healed by a command to the unclean spirit to come out of the man, and he heard the spirit cry, "Thou Jesus of Nazareth, art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God."<sup>1</sup> So great were the crowds on one occasion that pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, that He went into a boat, and taught the people standing on the shore. At the conclusion of His discourse, He directed Peter, to whom the boat belonged, to put out into the deeper waters, and cast the nets. In another vessel were James and John. So great was the number of fishes that they were overwhelmed with astonishment. From this time they forsook all and followed Him; and He told them that from henceforth they should catch men.<sup>2</sup> Whatever may have been the secret thoughts and purposes of John and his companions heretofore, as to the future course of their lives, their plans were now fully formed. Whatever prospects the world may have held out, he now resolved to forsake all and follow Christ, and devote his life to His service as He should direct. He had been called to the discipleship; he now freely chose it for himself. Accompanied by His disciples, Jesus at once starts on His first circuit through Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and healing all manner of diseases, and His fame spreads over the whole province of Syria.<sup>3</sup> The whole region was crowded with people, as attested, not only by history, but by the ruins of towns and cities which fill it. It was a new mode of life to John; and by what he daily heard and saw, his faith in his new Master had occasion to be strengthened.

On returning to Capernaum He performed another miracle, similar to the healing of the nobleman's son,—that of the centurion's servant,

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 21-28; Luke iv. 33-37. John and his fellow-disciples had every conceivable form of evidence that the Master whom they followed was the promised Messiah. Not only voices from heaven above, but voices from beneath proclaimed Him. The demoniacal possessions which marked the period of our Lord's appearance were overruled in this way, and may have been permitted for this purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Luke v. 1-11.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. iv. 23-25; Mark i. 35-39; Luke iv. 42-44

whose faith and humility were such that, feeling unworthy the Saviour should come under his roof, he desired Him only to speak the word, remaining where He was. His faith received the highest commendation; his request was granted, and his servant healed.<sup>1</sup> In Peter's household He performed the miracle of healing his wife's mother by touching her hand. And we are told that all the sick of this city, whatever diseases they had, were brought to Him, and He cured them all; so that once in the history of this sin-stricken world, there has been a considerable place or city, in which for a time, no sickness could be found. The whole train of human maladies was kept at bay by Him, to whose word they were as obedient as soldiers to their commander, or servants to their master. John was present at Capernaum on this happy occasion. He was, moreover, about to receive a new companion in the discipleship, selected from a class whom, doubtless, in common with the Jews generally, he had been in the habit of looking upon with contempt. Matthew or Levi, the publican, was called from the very receipt of custom; he probably being the tax-gatherer for the district of Capernaum. Our Lord thus closely identifies Himself and His followers with a despised class. At the feast which Matthew made for Him in his own house, were many publicans and sinners; and He seizes the occasion to give the offended Pharisees some wholesome instruction, which may have been equally suited to John and his companions, previously called to the discipleship.<sup>2</sup> The list, as it now stood, was John, James, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew.<sup>3</sup> Christ loved them all; and when He had chosen the twelve who were to be apostles, all were dear to Him; even those whose names scarcely appear in the evangelical narrative, except in the apostolic catalogues there given. He loved Judas Iscariot. But Peter, James, and John, appear to have stood in a nearer relation to Him than the others. They formed a kind of inner circle; the innermost nearest circle of the loving trusting hearts that gathered around Him. But of this favoured triad John was admitted to the closest intimacy, and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 5-13; Luke vii. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 9-17; Mark ii. 14-22; Luke v. 27-39.

<sup>3</sup> The humility of Matthew is very worthy of notice. He speaks of himself in his gospel as if he had but the slightest possible connection with the narrative. He was "a man named Matthew," and he records in the simplest manner possible the two facts that he was in the discharge of the duties of his office when Christ called him, and that he immediately followed Christ on being called. He refers to himself on but one other occasion—in the catalogue he gives of the names of the apostles, Matt. x. 3. Mark and Luke mention the fact that Matthew, or Levi, as they call him, made a great feast in his house, at which Jesus was present in company with many publicans and sinners. Mark ii. 15; Luke v. 29. Matthew himself, in referring to this feast, makes no allusion to the fact that it was made by him (chap. ix. 10).

must already have had many opportunities of enjoying its privileges. He was to be best known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

Near the close of the first year of the Lord's ministry, these three disciples were permitted to be present, when all others were excluded, on a most important occasion—that of the resurrection of a person from the dead—the first miracle of the kind by our Lord of which record is made, and of which, probably, there had been no example among the Jews since the days of the old prophets. The person on whom this miracle was wrought was the young daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. Having caused the company, who were gathered around the body weeping, and indulging in all those manifestations of grief customary among the Jews, to leave the room where the corpse was lying, He went in with the father and mother, and the three disciples just named, and taking the child by the hand called her back to life again.<sup>1</sup> The impression of that scene on the spectators could never pass away. John was one of them, and shared in the joy of the parents as they received back to life and health their little daughter; saw her walk, and eat, and smile again. From that hour he must have looked with increasing wonder and admiration on the Master whom he was following. Another miracle of a similar kind almost immediately followed. Jesus went out to Nain, a town in the vicinity of Capernaum, and seems to have gone expressly to meet a funeral procession at the gate. It was that of a young man, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. He touches the bier, and says, "Arise;" and he that was dead sat up and began to speak.<sup>2</sup> It was about this time that John the Baptist, lying in prison, oppressed with solitude and inaction, sent a message<sup>3</sup> to Jesus, which betrayed a disturbance of that faith he had so confidently expressed when he pointed Him out to Andrew and John as the Lamb of God. How must these old disciples of the Baptist have wished that he could see and know what had been granted to them!

Thus closes the first year of the Lord's ministry, and of John's association with Him as a disciple; a year of constant labour, in which were gathered in the first fruits of the spiritual harvest in Judæa and Samaria and Galilee. No adequate view of the history of this disciple can be given, without presenting those parts of the history of the Master, in which especially he had a more immediate personal concern, nor can we otherwise discern the influences which served to form and develop his character and fit him for his work. The history of his connection with Christ exhibits his preparation—his training and educa-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 22-43; Luke viii. 41-56.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 11-17.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xi. 2-19; Luke vii. 19-35.



tion, it may be said—for the great work to which he was called. However little he may have known of schools and academies, he had for his tutor Him whom he learned to style the Light of the world.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of St. John's second year under the tuition of the great Teacher, we find him again at Jerusalem with his Master, whither he had gone to be present at the passover.<sup>2</sup> We have no intimation by what route this journey was made, nor of the incidents of the journey. We pass over what occurred at the pool of Bethesda,<sup>3</sup> as full of instruction and impressive as the scene must have been to John, and the events of the return-journey, except to notice that the charge of violation of the Sabbath, which the Pharisees brought against Him, on account of His healing the impotent man at Bethesda, seems to have led Him on the way to instruct His disciples in regard to the true sanctity of the Sabbath; and thus to bring into bolder contrast the spiritual system He taught with the ceremonial system of the Pharisees. On the following Sabbath he repeated the lesson in the synagogue (probably at Capernaum), where He had healed the man with a withered hand, and silenced His enemies. It was now that the Pharisees first began seriously to plot against His life. It was this probably that had led Him to withdraw so soon to the Sea of Tiberias, which hitherto had been the chief theatre of His ministry. Great

<sup>1</sup> John i. 7-9; viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 46, etc.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 1.

<sup>3</sup> The monks and many travellers have chosen to find the pool of Bethesda in the deep reservoir or trench on the north side of the area of the great mosque, or temple-area; and in the two long vaults at its south-west corner they profess to find two of the five ancient porches. But there is not the slightest evidence that can identify it with the Bethesda of the New Testament. Dr. Robinson thinks that this was a trench designed to protect the fortress of Antonia on the north. The name Bethesda has probably been assigned to it in comparatively modern times, from its proximity to St. Stephen's gate, which was erroneously held to be the ancient Sheep-gate. *Bib. Res.*, vol. i., p. 330 *seq.* Dr. Robinson suggests, with great probability, that the Bethesda of Scripture is to be found in the pool of the Virgin, situated at a short distance outside the present wall of the city, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, into which the water is supposed to come from a fountain beneath the temple-vaults, and from which it flows, by a subterraneous passage, under the hill Ophel, into the pool of Siloam. After a careful examination of the subject, we are constrained to accept the suggestion that the fountain of the Virgin, or the upper pool of Siloam, is the true site of the ancient Bethesda. The discovery of Dr. Robinson that the upper pool is intermitting or irregular in its flow (for he may be said to have discovered it, as the fact had been overlooked by the learned world for centuries), throws great light on the passage which records Christ's miracle at Bethesda. It strongly confirms the results of the best criticism on John v. 1-9, which regards the closing words of the third verse, in the English, "waiting for the moving of the water," to the end of the fourth verse—in the Greek, from the word *ἐκδεχομένων* to the word *νοσήματι*—as spurious. But see the author's "Bethesda and its Miracle" in *Biblioth. Sac.*, vol. xxvii., No. 105, Jan., 1870; Art. v.

multitudes gathered around Him. They came from all parts of Judæa and Galilee, and from the countries lying to the south-east of Tiberias, Idumea and Peræa, and to the north-east, from the region about those great ancient marts of trade, Tyre and Sidon.<sup>1</sup>

At night He sought retirement; He went out into a mountain near Capernaum, and spent a whole night in prayer.<sup>2</sup> That night of prayer had some reference, there can be no doubt, to what was to occur the following day. In the morning, "He called unto Him His disciples; and of them He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles." In this honoured list occurs the name of John, who, together with his brother, the first apostolic martyr, received the surname, *Bounerges*, sons of thunder.<sup>3</sup> It was a great office, the greatest to which man was ever called. In virtue of it he was to be endowed with miraculous power, and the gift of inspiration; he was to receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and to be entrusted with the organization of the Church and the dissemination of the religion of Christ among men. He had been already more than a year with Christ, before he received solemn appointment to this high office. His tuition and discipline were to be continued during the whole period of the Lord's ministry; and after His ascension he was to receive those supernatural gifts which would qualify him to perform the high functions he would be called to exercise. The Founder of Christianity did not send forth uninstructed, untrained, undisciplined men to do His work. The apostles have been so often described as rude, untaught fishermen, that it is the more important to notice their advantages over all other men in their contact and close association with the greatest of teachers for a period of more than three years.

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vi. 12, 13. The calling and training of the apostles was a most momentous part of the work of Christ. When in John xvii. 4-6, He says τὸ ἔργον ἐτελείωσα, κ.τ.λ., *I have finished the work*, etc., He defines the declaration more precisely, ἐφανερώσά σου τὸ ὄνομα, κ.τ.λ., *I have declared thy name unto the men which thou gavest me*. The great work of His public life was concentrated in the preparation of those who were to be His witnesses. His ministry had for its chief end the training of the twelve apostles. This is a fact which must not be overlooked, if we would rightly estimate His miracles and instructions, and the influences that were concerned in the education of such men as John and his associates. "From the time of their being chosen, indeed, the twelve entered on a regular apprenticeship for the great office of the apostleship, in the course of which they were to learn, in the privacy of an intimate daily fellowship with their Master, what they should do, be, believe, and teach, as His witnesses and ambassadors to the world. Henceforth the teaching of these men was to be a constant and prominent part of Christ's personal work." This idea has been elaborated at great length in a work which has just fallen under the author's notice: "The Training of the Twelve," by the Rev. Alex. B. Bruce. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872. See p. 31, etc., *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Mark iii. 17.

It was at or near this period, that Christ delivered, and, as it appears, especially for the instruction of His disciples, that wonderful discourse, known as the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>1</sup> It may, without any straining or violence, be regarded as a discourse inaugurative of the apostolic office, and designed expressly for the instruction of those who were to fill this office. It opens with the beatitudes, and proclaims the spirit of the new dispensation; and thus it is to the New Testament what the Ten Commandments were to the Old. It was designed to show these men, preparing for their work as apostles, that the precepts Christ gave, instead of abrogating, enforce, in its true spiritual import, the law given on Sinai, expanded into the new law of love. It is a discourse which excites admiration the more it is studied, and the more its adaptation to its end is discovered. It was a fit occasion for giving the men, who were to be "apostles of the Lamb," and whose names were to be inscribed on the "twelve foundations" of the New Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> some special instruction; and for a public declaration respecting the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, and the life and character of those who would become His followers. It was the apostles, who were to be charged with carrying forward the great work of evangelizing the world, who were primarily meant when Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Ye are the light of the world." It was, however, intended for all who felt drawn to follow Him, to teach them what they had to expect, and what would be expected of them. It was intended to exhibit the kingdom of Messiah as the consummation for which the old dispensation had prepared the way.

The apostles gathered immediately around Him, while the multitude, at the foot of the slope on which He was seated, would hear from His own lips, those great truths respecting the requisites for entering His kingdom, the results of admission therein, and the relations of the members to one another, and to their fellow-men.<sup>3</sup> "We are no more in the burning desert, at the foot of lightning-crowned Horeb, in a land of terror, where the divine voice reverberates like thunder among the naked rocks. JESUS is seated on a grassy slope, which by a gentle incline sinks down to the Lake of Tiberias. The gorges of Hattin, to which tradition assigns this great gospel-scene, command the enchanting landscape of the country of Gennesaret. Every utterance of nature is peace and love; and nothing is more easy than to picture to one's self the Master in such a scene, surrounded by His twelve apostles,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 1, 2. He went up into the mountain, ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, that He might separate His disciples from the great throng that was gathered about Him, and address His instructions more particularly to them.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Neander's Life of Christ, chap. ix.

and addressing them in the hearing of the multitude, seated on the flowery grass His first word is not a threat, but a blessing. The new law is not, like the old, a terrible manifestation of the divine holiness, flashing on the eyes of men, in condemnation and unapproachable purity. No; it is, in its very essence, grace and pardon; He who proclaims it is the Saviour of mankind. And yet every beatitude has a corresponding anathema. Matthew restricts himself to the benedictions, because he knows full well that they are sufficient in themselves to condemn Phariseeism. The Sermon on the Mount is not the opening of an idyl; it is the prelude of a drama, of a conflict; thus, from its commencement, it is transfused with a solemn foreboding. On these enchanted shores of the Sea of Galilee we see again the burning bush, out of which speaks again the High and Holy One. The God of sovereign compassion is also a consuming fire."<sup>1</sup>

As Jesus came down from the mountain, followed by the multitude, He exhibited again His miraculous power, by healing one afflicted with that terrible form of disease, the leprosy. He immediately made another circuit, accompanied by the twelve now appointed to the apostolic office, through all the cities and villages of Galilee, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. They shared in this blessed privilege, and thus exercised their gifts and gained experience.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the seven whose names have already appeared (John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, James brother of John, and Matthew), the men who constituted this sacred band, and who were henceforth to be so intimately associated with John, were Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot.<sup>3</sup> They were accompanied by the pious women, who ministered to Christ of their substance; some of whom were the same who were to attest their fealty and heroism at His crucifixion, Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, the wife or widow of Chuza, Herod's steward.

Our Lord at this time commenced that method of instruction by parables, of which He made so great use, and the meaning of which He often unfolded to His disciples in private; as for example, that instructive series in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, all relating to the same subject,—the kingdom or Church of Christ; in which we have (1) the establishment, (2) the government or discipline, (3) the extension, (4) the internal or spiritual growth, (5) the preciousness, (6) the purchase, and (7) the final perfection of the kingdom, so strikingly set

<sup>1</sup> De Pressensé's *Jesus Christ*; *Times*, *Life*, etc., pp. 321, 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Luke* viii. 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Nathanael is the same as Bartholomew, Lebbeus or Thaddeus the same as Jude the brother of James, Simon the Canaanite the same as Simon Zelotes. Of Simon not a single circumstance is recorded beyond the fact that he was one of the twelve. He is the least known of all the apostles.

before us. On their return to Capernaum, to escape the throng of people that were continually about Him, and enjoy a season of quiet, He gave direction to the apostles that they should set sail for the other side of the lake. It was on this occasion a certain scribe desired to follow Him, to whom He made the plaintive reply, which could not have been without its effect on so susceptible a nature as that of John, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man<sup>1</sup> hath not where to lay His head." It was evening when they set sail, and Jesus, wearied with His recent manifold labours, was soon asleep. A storm arose, and they were in great fear; they awake Him, and He performs for the first time the miracle of stilling the tempest.<sup>2</sup>

Passing over the miracles, the discourses, the parables, and the third tour which Jesus made through the cities and villages of Galilee, all of which must have been full of instruction to the disciples, who had already become so dear to Him and to the whole band, we come to the period when the Saviour was moved with compassion as He saw the multitudes perishing as sheep having no shepherd, and sent forth the twelve, by two and two, in all directions, giving them power to work miracles, particularly to heal the sick, and commanding them to preach the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup> They were not to pass beyond the boundaries of Palestine among the Gentiles; they were not even to enter any city of the Samaritans. It was a mission exclusively to their own people, or kindred, according to the flesh, the Jews. He gave them the substance of what they were to preach: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He gave them a charge as to their deportment, and the manner in which they should cast themselves unreservedly on the care and protection of divine providence in prosecuting their work. The Jews in every part of the land must first hear the glad tidings before they could look abroad to other fields, however white to the harvest. We are not told who was John's companion on this missionary tour. Perhaps it was Peter. More probably it was his brother James. They were "sons of thunder," and no doubt prosecuted their mission with a zeal and fervour becoming the title they had received. But the par-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 20. This title, *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, *the Son of man*, is here for the first time applied to Christ, by Himself, and is never, although it occurs some sixty times, applied to Him by any other person in the gospels. After His ascension we find it applied to Him by the martyr Stephen (Acts vii. 56); and in the Apocalypse (i. 13 and xiv. 14). It is used in Dan. vii. 13, where everlasting dominion is ascribed to Messiah. Dr. J. Addison Alexander, who seldom in a matter of this kind falls into mistake, in commenting on the words of Stephen in the above passage in Acts, says, the title "is nowhere else in Scripture applied to Christ except by Himself."

<sup>2</sup> Mark iv. 35-41; Luke viii. 22-25.

<sup>3</sup> Mark vi. 7-13.

ticular history of the sayings and doings of these young men, sent forth on an embassy of such high importance, is not recorded. We are simply told that they returned and reported to Jesus all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. It was a critical period in their history. What a moment it must have been to John and his companions when for the first time they exercised their newly acquired power of performing miracles! Was there no danger lest the possession of such a power should work in them a spirit of presumption and self-consequence? But the Lord was with them to strengthen them in their weakness. They do not, on this first occasion in which they venture forth without their Master, appear to have encountered much opposition or persecution. The mission with which Jesus charged them had been proportioned to their weakness. It was not prosecuted among the philosophic heathen, nor the hostile Samaritans, but was confined to their own countrymen, and mainly, probably, to Galilee. And their preaching was limited to the general announcement that the promised Messiah had appeared,—a message indeed of the weightiest import. They were criers and heralds of the great fact, and knew enough, especially John and those of their number who had been disciples of the forerunner of Christ, to be entrusted on this embassy alone. They proclaimed without fear what they knew of truth, that Messiah had come; and Jesus, the Master they followed, and who had sent them, was He.

On the return of the twelve He takes them into a desert place for rest, thus showing His regard for the health and physical comfort of those whom He had called to labour for Him. He departs privately by boat to an uninhabited region on the other side of the lake. But the people saw in what direction He sailed, watching the boat no doubt from the highlands near the shore, and hastened to the spot by thousands. The country was thronging with people again preparing to go to the passover at Jerusalem. They had followed in such haste that they found themselves in that desert-region without food. Five loaves and two small fishes in the possession of a lad was all the food found in the company. With these He performed the miracle of feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, and after all had eaten twelve baskets full were left, one for each of the apostles; as if there was something symbolical in this, designed to teach them that of the bread of life of which they were made the bearers to nations, the supply could never be exhausted. Such was the effect of the miracle on the thousands that they resolved by force to make Him their king. What must have been the effect of all this enthusiasm on the minds of the apostles? May not the idea of being first in the kingdom in the minds of John and James, which had its development at a later period,

have had its inception at this time? Our Lord sends the apostles back to the other side, and hides Himself in a mountain at hand. During the night they are overtaken by a violent storm on the lake, and are filled with the utmost terror. Jesus comes to them walking on the sea; but they take Him to be some phantom or spirit of the storm. As soon as He enters the vessel the tempest is calmed, and they find themselves at the point where they wished to land. The thousands who had been fed follow Him back to the western side of the lake, and He delivers to them a most important and instructive discourse, unfolding the spiritual nature of His kingdom and of the blessings to be conferred on His followers. The effect was that many who had professed to be His disciples left Him; but the apostles remained firm in their attachment. Many when they discovered that no worldly advantage was likely to accrue to them, went back and walked no more with Him. But John and his associates were steadfast; and in face of the gathering dangers could say in strong emphatic language, "We believe and are sure that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." It was on the occasion of His faithful discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, after the miracle of feeding the five thousand, in which Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Bread of Life, and said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have no life in you," that this profession was solemnly made by the twelve, one only of their number not joining sincerely in it.<sup>1</sup> Probably those things which had caused some who had been numbered among His disciples to turn back had begun to affect the mind of Judas, and cause his dreams of earthly riches and grandeur to fade away. The days of darkness were drawing near; the hour of dreaded conflict was at hand; Christ joins none of the caravans that are moving on towards Jerusalem to the passover. He knew how intense the spirit of opposition and hatred to Him had become; and as His hour had not yet come, He resolves not to go to Jerusalem, but to remain and prosecute His ministry in Galilee. Whether John remained with Him or went to the passover does not appear.

We enter upon the last year of the apostle's training for his work under the tuition of Jesus. At the beginning of this year occurred a most interesting episode in the Saviour's life. Disappointed by His not appearing at Jerusalem at the passover, the scribes and Pharisees send a delegation to Galilee, which gives Him an opportunity of rebuking to their face, in the hearing of His disciples, their vain traditions, as they deserved. It was probably their object to stir up Herod against Jesus; He, therefore, withdrew for a season into Phœnicia, to

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 1-71.

the celebrated Tyre<sup>1</sup> and Sidon,—the second time of His passing beyond the bounds of the holy land into the great Gentile world. It was the occasion of His meeting with the Syro-Phœnician woman. John was with Him; and it was doubtless the first time he had looked, with his own eyes, upon that world with which he was to be so familiar in his later years; although, in Galilee and in Decapolis,<sup>2</sup> he had from his childhood been, to a considerable extent, familiar with Gentiles, or persons of Gentile extraction. It was, therefore, a memorable occurrence in his life; it entered into the preparation through which he was passing for his great work. Our Lord went still farther to the north, and passed along the base of Lebanon, coming down on His return through the region east of the sources of the Jordan, upon the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee, to the district of the “Ten Cities,” built, or rebuilt, by the Romans, Decapolis so called, largely populated by Gentiles, where He resumed His miracles and teaching.

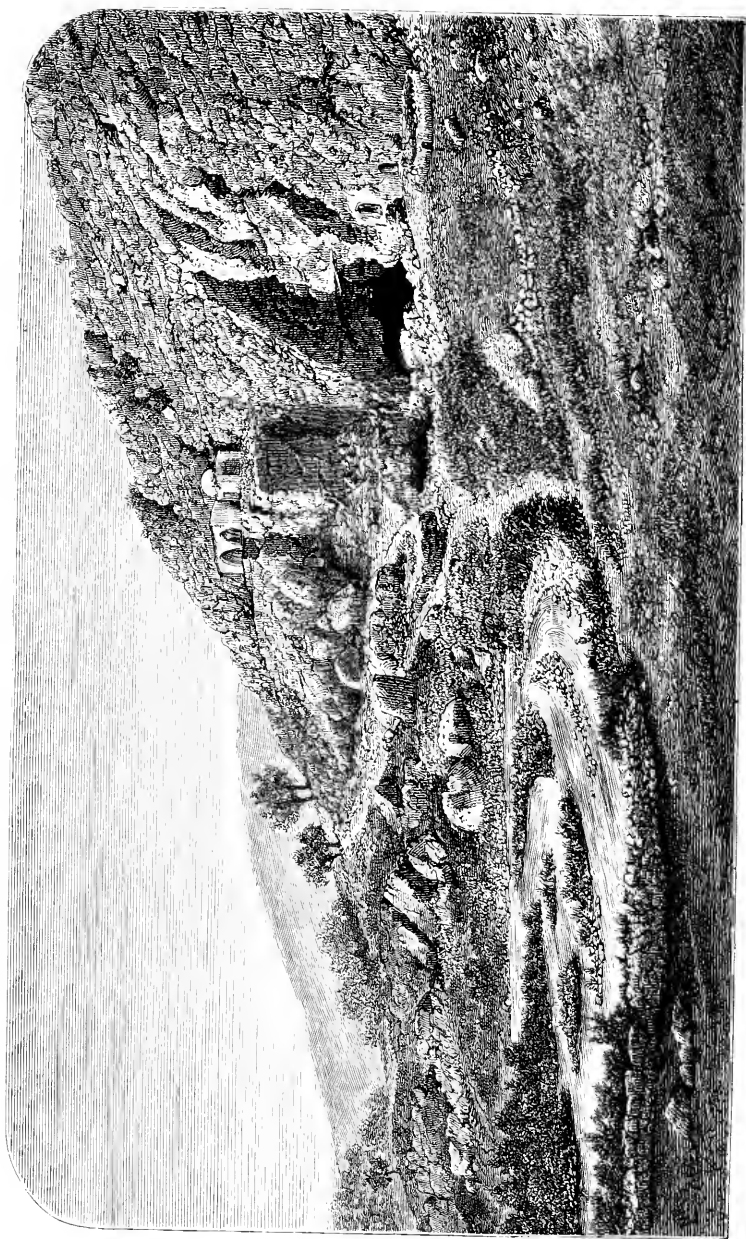
But passing on to another interesting period in the history of John’s preparation for his apostolic work under the teaching of Christ, we find him with his Master, in company with other disciples, near the northern boundary of the holy land, in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi. Here stood the temple which Herod the Great had erected in honour of Augustus Cæsar. Here was the easternmost and most important of the two recognised sources of the Jordan. Here were trees of every variety of foliage, and a park-like verdure, and a rush of waters through deep thickets. The situation combines in an unusual degree the elements of beauty and grandeur, “a Syrian Tivoli.” The ruins of the ancient town are found in a recess at the southern base of the mighty Hermon, which towers to an elevation of 7000 or 8000 feet, and so near that its snowy top is shut out from view.<sup>3</sup> It was

<sup>1</sup> Tyre, in the time of Christ, although shorn of its ancient magnificence, was still celebrated for its manufactures and trade, which it retained for a long time afterwards. Jerome in the 4th century calls it the noblest and most beautiful city of Phœnicia; and as late as the 7th century it retained its ancient celebrity for its purple. But from the beginning of the 16th century to the middle of the 18th, nothing but ruins and hardly any inhabitants were found there. Its present inhabitants live among the broken ruins of its former magnificence, eking out a scanty livelihood upon the exports of tobacco, cotton, wool, and wood. Sidon is a more ancient city, about twenty miles north of Tyre, and at present is larger and better built than its ancient rival.

<sup>2</sup> Not a district or distinct territory, but a confederation of cities, subject to a jurisdiction peculiar to themselves, like the once free cities in the German States. Like the coast of Tyre and Sidon, or Phœnicia, they afforded a refuge from any persecution Herod might be disposed to undertake. On the east side of Jordan there were Gadara, Pella, Gerasa, and others; and on the west Scythopolis.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley’s Sin. and Pal., p. 397; Rob. Bib. Res., iii., p. 404.





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CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.



as Jesus was journeying through this beautiful region towards Cæsarea Philippi, that John with his fellow-disciples so emphatically professed their faith, in the words, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>1</sup> It was made in answer to Christ's own question: "Whom say ye that I am?" From this time Christ began more distinctly to teach them,—as distinctly as words could do it,—that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, and be killed, but that He should rise again; and to set before them the self-denying, cross-bearing life, which would inevitably be theirs as His followers, and in performing the work specially allotted to them. It no doubt put them to a severe test. Their minds had been filled with visions of a temporal kingdom, in the honours of which they were to have a principal share. It was difficult for them to be reconciled to the idea that His enemies were to triumph over Him,—that He must suffer and die. Peter cried out, speaking, no doubt, representatively, as in the confession just previously made he had done (*i.e.*, expressing the feelings of John and other associates, as well as his own), "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not happen unto Thee."<sup>2</sup>

Soon after this conversation, our Lord took John, with Peter and James, up into a high mountain, identified by ecclesiastical tradition with Mount Tabor, the highest peak of Galilee, but more probably one of the summits forming part of the magnificent chain of Great Hermon, lying to the north of Cæsarea Philippi. It is impossible to look up from the plain to these towering peaks, and not be struck with the appropriateness of some one of these to the scene. Here, one of the most wonderful events with which the history of John is connected, nay, one of the most wonderful mentioned in the Scriptures, took place. As Jesus prayed<sup>3</sup> a sudden and most astonishing change took place in His whole appearance. It was that which is known as the transfiguration. They saw the fashion of His countenance change, till it shone like the sun, and His garments became "white and glistening,"<sup>4</sup> "white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." If the transfiguration took place at night, as supposed by Dean Alford and others, it would of course serve to make this brightness appear only the brighter. It was a glory, not shed upon Him or around Him from other sources, but which broke forth from that fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in Him. The rays of His divinity shone through the thin veil of His humanity, affording a feeble glimpse of the glory, which He, as the brightness of the Father's, had in Himself. It was unspeakable, beyond

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 13-28; Mark viii. 27-30.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 21-23.

<sup>3</sup> Luke ix. 29.

<sup>4</sup> ἐξαστράπτων, flashing forth light.

all earthly splendour, such as mortal eye had never seen before, and such as will never be seen again till the second advent of the Lord.

To add to the grandeur of the scene, two other personages appear, one of whom had been in heaven nearly fifteen hundred years, and the other nearly a thousand, arrayed in celestial brightness, who enter into conversation with the transfigured Christ on the very subject on which He had been conversing with His disciples, "His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Here were these ambassadors from the city of God, representing the law and the prophets of the Old Testament;—here were Peter, James, and John,<sup>1</sup> the pillars of the New Testament Church; here was the great Head of the Church; about them, doubtless, the holy angelic hosts. A cloud floats near the top of the mountain, illuminated as if it embosomed a sun, or the Day-spring from on high was tabernacling within it. As they entered into the cloud, or the cloud began to envelope them, Moses and Elias disappeared, and they saw them no more. And there came a voice out of the cloud, as from One making it his chariot, or his pavilion, who said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." It was He who had just spoken of suffering and dying of whom the voice spake, whom John and Peter were to see led bound as a prisoner by Roman soldiers, treated with contempt by sneering Jewish priests, crowned with thorns, buffeted and spit upon, and dying on the accursed tree. The transfiguration was a manifestation designed to assure John and Peter and James, and, through them, their associates in the Apostolate, that their faith was well founded in Him as the promised Saviour of the world; to cast some rays of light forward on the dark days just ahead; to relieve the gloom of Gethsemane, and the midnight which was ere long to hang at noon around the heights of Calvary. And what John saw and heard in the "holy mount," prepared him to understand some of the wonders that were to be displayed before his rapt vision in the island of Patmos, and which were introduced by the sight of One, like unto the Son of man, walking amidst the golden candlesticks, whose countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.<sup>2</sup> Amid the terrors of the night in the garden, and of the day of crucifixion, John could not forget the scene in the mount; and during his long and eventful life, however severe the conflict or dark the prospect, he could not forget

<sup>1</sup> Lampe thus states the reason why (*Triga illa*) this triad was selected to be with Christ on this occasion, and several others of great interest and importance: "Causam cur tres hos discipulos, ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότερους, eleganter nominat Clemens Alexandrinus, ceteris totiens prætulit Salvator, recte summi Theologi in liberrima Domini voluntate posuerunt."

<sup>2</sup> Rev. i. 13-16.

that scene! The mystery of the Lord's person, as both Divine and human, which had been discerned and professed, when He said with Peter, that "He was the Christ, the Son of the living God," was now more clearly revealed. It was a truth far surpassing the common Jewish conception of the Messiah; and it took the deepest hold of the mind and heart of the apostle, as is clearly evinced by his history and writings.

Again Jesus foretells His death and resurrection in the plainest language.<sup>1</sup> The disciples, still mistaking the nature of the kingdom of Christ, ask Him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He places a little child in the midst of them, and gives them an impressive lesson on humility, which He follows with important discourses exemplifying the suggestiveness and richness of His instructions on all occasions, on offences, forbearance, and forgiveness of enemies.<sup>2</sup>

But John, privileged with instructions like these, beloved as he was, was by no means free from faults, faults of the gravest character. The Saviour loved sinners; He loved imperfect men. John was not one of those tame, spiritless beings, whom it seems as difficult to love as to hate. He had an aspiring, resolute, retaliatory, daring spirit. It was not far from this period that the record made by Mark and Luke<sup>3</sup> concerning him occurred. John said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbade him. But Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us."<sup>4</sup>

It was shortly after this that he accompanied Jesus as He was going up to the festival of Tabernacles at Jerusalem (having taken His final leave of Galilee before His crucifixion), through central Palestine, the route by which He had travelled on a former occasion (in going from Judæa to Galilee), which led through the beautiful vale of Shechem and over the smiling hills of Ephraim. As the inhabitants of a certain Samaritan village would not receive Him, that is, show Him hospitality, James and John cried out, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?"<sup>5</sup> He around whom heaven had shone with such brightness on the mount was treated with disdain by these obscure villagers.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 30-32; Luke ix. 43-45.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xviii. 1-35; Mark ix. 33-50; Luke ix. 46-50.

<sup>3</sup> Mark ix. 38-41; Luke ix. 49, 50.

<sup>4</sup> "Hic autem exserte introducetur imprudentiam tam facto, quam dicto ostendens. In facto, quod Joanni cum aliis discipulis commune fuit, hoc erat vitium, quod non constabat, quo animo ille dæmonia ejiciens erga Jesum fuerit, et nihilominus illum increparent" (Lampe, Joannis Proleg., lib. i., c. ii., § 18). He is very acute on what he styles the *nævros*, blemishes, of St. John.

<sup>5</sup> Luke ix. 51-56.

The anger of the two brethren was kindled. Vengeance was in their hearts.<sup>1</sup> Their fierce Galilean spirit was aroused; they remembered the old ancestral hatred. But Christ told them they knew not what manner of spirit they were of.

Arriving at Jerusalem about the middle of the feast, John heard the Saviour boldly assert His Messiahship, in the presence of a large company of people; and he was with Him from day to day, as He put to confusion His enemies, and convinced many that He was what He claimed to be, the Messiah.<sup>2</sup> He appears with Him again in Jerusalem, at the feast of Dedication, in the winter, walking in Solomon's porch,<sup>3</sup> and heard Him declare so plainly to the party hostile to Him, "I and My Father are one," that they would have stoned Him on the spot, had He not escaped and retired beyond the Jordan. He was with Him when He was summoned back to Bethany by the illness of Lazarus, and when He performed the astonishing miracle of raising him from the dead after a burial of four days. He alone of the evangelists records this great miracle.<sup>4</sup> It was *the* miracle, so great an impression did it produce at Jerusalem, which led the Sanhedrin formally to decree His death. Jesus, therefore retired, as His work was not yet done, from Jerusalem; and we find Him again in Perea, the country east of the Jordan. John was with Him here, and listened to an important course of instruction on a large variety of subjects. He uttered at this period of His ministry some of His most interesting and instructive parables: *e.g.*, the great supper, the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, Lazarus at the rich man's gate, the importunate widow, the unjust judge, the Pharisee and the publican, and the labourers in the vineyard. As He sets His face once more towards Jerusalem, He again foretells His death and resurrection.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Observari hic potest immitis quedam iracundia, quæ hos discipulos præ aliis corripuisse videtur. Illa eo vitiosior erat, quia a Magistro toties edocti erant ipsos inimicos diligere. Et hi tamen non tantum malum malo referri ex talionis lege volunt, sed omnes etiam illius loci incolas cum conjugibus, et liberis protenus extinctos cupiunt, qui etsi hospitium negassent, salvos tamen dimiserunt. Præterea abutuntur Scripture autoritate et Elie exemplum ad se transferunt, atque huic pares esse volunt, cum vocationem similem non habeant" (Lampe, Proleg. I., ii. 19).

<sup>2</sup> John vii., viii., and ix.

<sup>3</sup> *Ἐν τῇ στοᾷ Σολομῶντος*. This was a part of Solomon's temple which had been incorporated in the new edifice. It fronted to the east. Jos. Ant., xx., 9 (7).

<sup>4</sup> For the silence of the synoptists in regard to this great miracle, it is not so easy to account. That it was due to a prudential regard to the surviving family of Lazarus, in order to avoid attracting to it the attention of Jewish fanatics seems hardly consistent with the spirit and character of the evangelists. Meyer (ed. 5th, p. 439) explains the omission, from their plan to confine themselves to the Galilean ministry of Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> John x., xi.; Luke xiii., xiv., xv., xvi., xvii., xviii.

We come now to an incident in the history of John which strikingly illustrates the difficult task which Christ had undertaken of infusing right notions of His kingdom into the minds of even the best of pupils. John, in company with his brother James, through their mother, prefer an ambitious request, which greatly disturbed the other apostles.<sup>1</sup> On one occasion, Christ had informed His disciples that when seated on His throne in His kingdom, they should sit around Him on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>2</sup> With their old inherited views of a temporal kingdom, this information was enough to inspire the hearts of the sons of Zebedee with visions of glory. At once they aspired to the chief places, and enlisted their mother,<sup>3</sup> one of the pious women who ministered to Christ, to unite with them in a petition for these places. In their minds they had pictured a scene of earthly grandeur. They saw a gorgeous palace, with an imperial throne, on which was seated the Master whom they followed, and on either hand six thrones for His twelve apostles. They wished to be permitted to occupy the thrones on the right and the left, nearest to the one occupied by Christ Himself; that is, to rank next to Him in dignity and honour. And this after they had been so long with Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and who was so near the end of His ministry! Mistaken disciples! How hard it was for them to learn that the only earthly crown of their Master was to be a wreath of thorns on bleeding brows, His only royal robe some worn-out vestment of a Herod or Pilate, put on Him in mockery, His only sceptre a brittle reed! How hard to understand that He was to be proclaimed king of an earthly state, only by the mocking inscription on the cross which was to bear up His lacerated body! They did not know that to ask for distinction in His kingdom was to ask for a share in the cup and baptism of His sufferings. That share in due time they received, one, the first apostolic martyr to appease the vindictive spirit of the same enemies who imbrued their hands in the Saviour's blood;<sup>4</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 20-28.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>3</sup> "Hoc splendidissimum domus sue erat decus, hic summus felicitatis apex, duos tam illustres in bellis Jehovæ heroes, duas stellas in regno cælorum primi ordinis, quales Jacobus et Johannes erant, utero gessisse" (Lampe, Proleg. I., i. 2).

<sup>4</sup> "Even admitting that the legend of the poison and the boiling oil has no historical foundation, it is still true that St. John as well as St. James pre-eminently shared his Master's cup and baptism" (Dr. J. Addison Alexander on Mark x. 39). "We know not how deep he (the latter) drank of the cup of sorrow during the course of years between the time of Christ's prophecy regarding his future lot and his violent death. We know not how often he was plagued, and how painfully he was baptized in the waves of tribulation going over his head, ere his work was done and his testimony finished on the earth. But this we know well, that the cup which his Master drank was his to drink also, that the baptism of his Master

other, bearing the burden and heat of the day, long the last survivor of the little band whom men used to think it a form of God's service to persecute!

But the end of the period of pupilage of the beloved disciple draws near, and we are about to see him in the most interesting points of his history, and under the most impressive scenes in his personal connection with the ministry and teaching of our Lord.

Six days before the Passover, he reaches Bethany with Jesus. It was on the evening of the following day, probably, that the supper occurred at which the risen Lazarus was present, and his sister Mary anointed the head of the Lord with precious ointment.<sup>1</sup> John saw his Master on the following day, (corresponding to our Sunday,) amidst the waving of palm branches, and the hosannas of the people, make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in the fulfilment of prophecy. He goes with Him to the temple, where He is welcomed by the children. In the two following days an immense amount of instruction was concentrated. He goes out with Him at evening to Bethany, returning to the temple with Him in the morning, listening to what He says to His disciples by the way, and to what He says to His enemies, who were tempting Him by their questions in the temple. He seems to have drunk in every word of His predictions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as He walked along its streets, or looked back surveying the devoted city from the sides of Olivet.<sup>2</sup>

On Thursday, the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan, "the day of unleavened bread," called also "the preparation of the passover," Peter and John were sent into the city to make preparations for celebrating this feast. Christ told them that they should meet a man in the streets bearing a pitcher of water, whom they were to follow to his house, and say to him, "The Master saith to thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?" In this incident, John and his companion had new proof of the prophetic power, or prevision, and the power of miracles possessed by Christ, in His foresight that they would meet a man in the streets of Jerusalem carrying a pitcher of water, and in the prompt obedience of this

was his also wherewith to be baptized, and that he was not only one of the 'glorious company of the apostles,' but also of 'the noble army of the martyrs,' slain 'for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God' " (Trench's *Life and Character of St. John*, p. 72).

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xxvi. 6-13; John xiii. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> St. John was one of the four disciples mentioned by St. Mark (xiii. 3-5), Peter, James, and Andrew being the others, to whom Jesus declared the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the far-reaching ones with which they were connected, and which were to be more fully declared by St. John himself in the Apocalypse.



stranger (as we may presume him to have been, or his name would have been given) to Christ, to show them a chamber in his house where they might make ready.<sup>1</sup> A precisely analogous case of prevision and miraculous power over the human will occurred when the two disciples were sent, as Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, to a neighbouring village to procure the animal on which He was to make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> The paschal lamb was slain between the hour of evening sacrifice, the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, and sunset, at which the 15th of Nisan, the day of the crucifixion began. John or Peter, representing the household or company to which they belonged, was to aid the Levites in sacrificing the lamb. It was then to be carried to the house where it was to be eaten, and they were also to provide bread and wine, bitter herbs, and all that was necessary for the proper celebration of the feast.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 7-14. "It may be observed," says Trench, "that a great peculiarity was attached to the circumstance of a '*man* bearing a pitcher of water.' It would have been no sign to speak of a *woman* bearing a pitcher of water; for that business always has been, and is still, the exclusive task of the women. An Eastern missionary brought this to my notice" (*Life and Character of St. John*, p. 85, note).

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxi. 2, 3. See an ingenious and suggestive discourse on this subject by Henry Melville, *Sermons*, new edit. 1844, p. 534.

"We can declare the incident before us," he says, "a singular exhibition of the power of prophecy and the power of miracle; an exhibition, moreover, as appropriate as it was striking. We can suppose that our Redeemer, knowing the bitter trials to which His disciples were about to be exposed, desired to give them some proof of His superhuman endowments, which might encourage them to rely on His protection when He should no longer be visible among them. What shall be the proof? Shall He control the tumultuous elements? Shall He summon legions of angels? Shall He shake Jerusalem with the earthquake? Shall He divide the Jordan? Nay; it was not by any stupendous demonstration that the timid disciples were likely to be assured. They rather required to be taught that the knowledge and power of their Master extended to mean and inconsiderable things," etc.

## CHAPTER V.

PREPARATION FOR HIS WORK, FROM INTERCOURSE AND INSTRUCTION IN PRIVATE, IN THE LAST DAYS OF CHRIST, ESPECIALLY AS A WITNESS OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER.—STRIFE.—WASHING DISCIPLES' FEET.—TREACHERY OF JUDAS FORETOLD.—ST. PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD.—INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.—VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.—INTERCESSORY PRAYER.—GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.—THE AGONY.—ST. JOHN PRESENT.—ST. PETER AND HIS SWORD.—FLIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES.—ST. JOHN REGAINS HIS NATURAL BRAVERY.—ST. JOHN ALONE ACCOMPANIES CHRIST TO THE PALACE OF THE HIGH-PRIEST.—PALACE DESCRIBED.—ST. PETER ADMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF ST. JOHN.—JESUS LED BEFORE PILATE.—CHARGED WITH SEDITION.—BEFORE HEROD.—MOCKED.—HEROD AND PILATE MADE FRIENDS.—AGAIN BEFORE PILATE.—PILATE'S WIFE.—ST. JOHN AT THE SIDE OF CHRIST.—BEARING THE CROSS.—SIMON THE CYRENEAN.—THE PENITENT THIEF.—WHAT ST. JOHN WAS TAUGHT.—ST. JOHN AND THE MOTHER OF JESUS.—THE BLOOD AND THE WATER SEEN BY ST. JOHN.

WHILE many others were instructed and blessed through His ministrations, the chief end of the Saviour evidently was to prepare for their great office those to whom He was to commit the work of establishing His kingdom. Never had men such teacher before. For three years they were under the careful training of Him who knew all the secrets of mind as well as heart. But of all the discourses and scenes in our Lord's history, which were fitted to make abiding salutary impressions, none were more so than those which distinguished the concluding period of His visible presence with them on earth. We are, as far as possible, to place ourselves by the side of "the beloved disciple," and hear what he heard, and see what he saw.

As the shadows of the evening gather, or soon after it becomes dark, Jesus and His disciples assemble in the large upper room, which had been discovered by Peter and John in a manner which so strikingly exhibited to them the presence and power of their Master and Lord. Although it was the fifth day of the week, or Thursday, the evening which now commenced, introduced according to the Jewish method of dividing time, the sixth day, or Friday.<sup>1</sup> The whole nation are

<sup>1</sup> The time of killing the paschal lamb was between the ninth and eleventh

engaged in the same solemn service. Even His enemies cease for a time from their plottings. The din of the crowd has subsided, and an unusual quiet, although Jerusalem is full of people, reigns throughout its streets. The great PASCHAL LAMB, although but few may have any knowledge of the nearness of the event prefigured by so many thousands of victims since the exodus from Egypt on that dreadful night of the flight of the destroying angel, was about to be led to the slaughter. With one of the cups of wine in His hands, which had been provided for the feast,<sup>1</sup> Jesus gives thanks, and the feast proceeds. He tells them with pathetic tenderness that, before He drank the fruit of the vine again, the kingdom of God should come. The old strife, which of them should be accounted greatest in that kingdom, arose. If they could have foreseen the events of the next few hours, would they have spent any of the moments of that solemn interview in vain jangling about mere rank and place? Our Lord seized upon the opportunity to renew the instructions which it was so evident were still needed by His disciples. Did the strife originate, this time, with the ambition of John and his brother, or did it extend through the ranks of the entire twelve? He tenderly sought to recall them to the contemplation of His own example. He would have them be not like the kings and lords of the nations, who exercise authority over their fellow-men, but like Himself, who had been among them as one that serveth, as one who performs the part of a menial or waiter, while others partake of the feast. It was the spirit of humility, of self-forgetting concern and love for others, which the Saviour sought to promote in His followers, and which could alone prepare them for their proper place in the promised kingdom. And then He reiterates the assurance of that kingdom: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

That He might more deeply impress on His disciples the lesson that they should live in harmony and humility one with another,<sup>3</sup> the

hour, *i.e.*, between our three and five o'clock in the afternoon, ἀπὸ ἐννάτης ὥρας μέχρι ἑνδεκάτης. (Josephus's Wars, vi., 9 (3).) It was eaten the same evening: Exod. xii. 8; Num. xxxiii. 3. The true time of killing the passover in our Lord's day was towards sunset of the 14th of Nisan. The time of eating was the same evening, or after the beginning of the 15th, as the Jews commenced their day at sunset.

<sup>1</sup> Four cups of red wine mingled with water were usually drunk during the progress of the meal. The first was in connection with the blessing invoked, and corresponds to the cup mentioned in Luke xxii. 17. See Bib. Sac., Aug., 1845, p. 405, *seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxii. 24-30.

<sup>3</sup> John xiii. 20.

Saviour rose from the table (it was probably just after they had partaken of the first cup of wine, before the bitter herbs had been brought in, and the proper meal commenced),<sup>1</sup> He laid aside His garments, and poured water into a basin, and proceeded to wash the disciples' feet. The question who should perform this necessary service may have given rise to the dispute among them, just rebuked by the Saviour. He washed even Judas's feet, but did not fail to make an affecting allusion to that base act of which he was soon to be guilty, in the words: "Ye are clean, but not all." When He came to Peter, that earnest disciple refused to permit Him to perform so humble a service for him, until he heard the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me;" when he instantly exclaimed, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." This drew from the Saviour the profound and practical truth, that while there is a cleansing that needs no repetition, it nevertheless does not dispense with daily purification; "He who is washed (or hath bathed) needeth not save to wash feet." The grand lesson of this touching scene was, that in imitation of Him, their Lord and Master, who had humbled Himself, they were to seek all their pre-eminence in humility and love, in generous, self-denying services for one another.

While the paschal feast is proceeding, another interesting and most thrilling scene occurred. As they ate, probably in silence, after what they had just been taught on the subject of self-denying love, by the words and example of their Master, a visible sadness came over Him. He "was troubled in spirit."<sup>2</sup> This is the record of John, who was in a position, as will be presently noticed, easily to observe every passing expression of His face. The cause of this sadness or trouble of spirit is not long concealed. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me," broke the painful silence; and the exclamation passed from one to another, "Lord, is it I? Is it I?" and searching glances went from face to face. Simon Peter made a sign to John who was lying on Jesus' breast, his posture betokening the peculiarly endearing tie that subsisted between them, to ask who was meant. It was in connection with this incident, and as if to explain

<sup>1</sup> Ἦρὸ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς, κ.τ.λ. It is not said how long *before*: but the meaning probably is, that the feet-washing took place before the commencement of the meal proper. Alford, in answer to the question, how long before the feast this took place, says, "probably, a very short time; not more than one day at most." But Alford held that the meal our Lord ate with His disciples, at which the announcement was made that one of them should betray Him, was not the ordinary pass-over of the Jews, but only in some sense or other regarded as the passover, and that it was eaten on the evening of the 13th (*i.e.*, the beginning of the 14th) of Nisan. See his note on Matt. xxvi. 17-19.

<sup>2</sup> Ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι. (John xiii. 21.)

his loving posture, that he styles himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," a title which he repeatedly applies to himself during the short residue of the Lord's history from his pen. His position<sup>1</sup> enabled him to observe what others did not see, and to hear what others did not hear. This may be one of the reasons why he records discourses not contained in the other evangelists, two of whom were not of the number of the apostles. To John's question, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus replied, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop,<sup>2</sup> when I have dipped it." At length Judas summons sufficient assurance to ask the question, "Master, is it I?" Instantly he received the sop at the hands of Jesus, with the words, "That thou doest, do quickly." Judas went immediately out. The twilight was passed. "It was night."<sup>3</sup> Darkness shrouded the form of the wretched guilty man as he hurried away through the nearly deserted streets. Scarcely any sound vied with the echo of his own footsteps, save the moaning of the night wind through the valleys and the gorges of the mountains, which were round about Jerusalem. At some appointed place, the chief priests, or their agents, with their silver, awaited his coming. After Judas had departed, these striking words fell from the Saviour's lips: "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." Let the traitor go; let the unclean be separated from the clean; let him do that which he has resolved to do quickly. I shall only the sooner be glorified, and God shall be glorified in Me. Could John ever forget these words or the occasion of them, or when tenderly turning to the eleven He added: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me, and as I said unto the Jews, . . . so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."<sup>4</sup> Late in life, in the very latest of his writings, we have evidence that this new commandment still rang in his ears. And when, according to tradition, in extreme old age, he had to be carried into the church, and could only, as he lifted his trembling hands, utter a few words, they were, "Little children, love one another."

<sup>1</sup> The Jews had adopted the Persian manner of reclining at their meals on divans or couches, each on his left side, with his face towards the table. Thus the second guest to the right hand would lie with his head near the breast of the first, and so on. (Lücke, ii., p. 565.) This explains what is meant by the "leaning" of one of the disciples on Jesus's bosom, *κείμενος* . . . *ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. That John is the disciple meant there can be no doubt. See also John xix. 26; xxi. 7 and 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Τὸ ψωμίον*, morsel.

<sup>3</sup> John xiii. 30.

<sup>4</sup> John xiii. 21-35.

But another painful communication remained to be made by Jesus to His disciples. It was introduced in this wise: as He had told them He was going away, Peter wished to know whither He was going, and why he could not accompany Him; adding, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake." "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee both to prison and to death."<sup>1</sup> How little he knew himself, or the severity of the trial at hand! "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow [before the cock crow twice] this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me."<sup>2</sup>

The passover meal was now ended; but in connection with the third cup, the "cup of blessing," which terminated that feast, the Lord proceeded to a most solemn and interesting service; He instituted the holy sacrament of His supper. He took of the fragments of that great Jewish festival which had been celebrated so many hundreds of years, but which was now, as a type, to have its accomplishment, and consecrated them to a new and nobler use, a sacramental use, that His death might, through all the coming ages of time, even to His second visible advent, be showed forth, and believers in Him might by faith be made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after the supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood which is shed for you."<sup>3</sup> If John still retained his place on the bosom of Jesus, he was probably the first to receive the bread and the cup at His hands.

In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the fourth Gospel, he reports the address or addresses which Christ delivered at the institution of this sacrament. How full of beautiful, weighty, pathetic, and instructive thoughts! These golden sentences the beloved disciple with rapt attention caught as he leaned on his Master's bosom. Neither Mark nor Luke were present to hear them; and at the early period when Matthew wrote, the general church may

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxii. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 34. De Wette supposes that Jesus meant merely the division of the night, called ἀλεκτοροφωνία, the *cock crowing*, between midnight and morning. But it was the crowing of the cock (Mark xiv. 68) that roused the memory and the conscience of Peter. According to the Mishna, the priests and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were forbidden to keep fowls because they scratched up unclean worms. And the scarcity of cocks in Jerusalem seems to be intimated by the absence of the definite article before ἀλέκτωρ, a *cock*. This is the more noticeable as it is wanting in all the four Gospels. And it makes the fulfilment of the Saviour's prediction only the more remarkable. The crowing of a cock was an unusual sound in Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 19, 20.

not have been sufficiently prepared to receive instructions so profound and spiritual, and he was not selected by the spirit of inspiration to put them on record.<sup>1</sup> The chief end of this valedictory discourse was consolation, and its chief topic the revelation of the Holy Comforter. Viewed as a whole, it may be regarded as the fitting casket for this precious jewel, the doctrine of the Comforter. In addition to consolation and encouragement from the promise of the Holy Spirit to compensate for His own departure, He exhorts the apostles (they were His only auditors, and He was concluding His special instruction to them) to continued faith in Him, to zeal and faithfulness, not to become estranged from one another, and not to shrink from any duties their office might impose on account of dangers and hardships. On the conclusion of His address, He gives them the reason why He forewarned them of the hatred of the world, and the offence of the cross, that He might guard them against being surprised by it, and that they might fortify their minds against the temptation to give up either their steadfastness or their comfort.<sup>2</sup>

Upon the conclusion of His discourse, the Saviour offered up a touching and fervent prayer. It is one of the most wonderful portions of inspired truth. It unfolds the grand mystery of the gospel. In one breath the Suppliant speaks as the incarnate Son of God; in another He seems to wrestle like a dependent man. Again He seems to plead as the Mediator of His people, but not unfrequently expresses Himself with Divine majesty and authority. It is the loftiest effort of the human spirit to rise to the height to which this prayer soars. As the Jewish high priest on the day of atonement was required to make intercession for himself, for his household, the priests and Levites, and for the whole nation,<sup>3</sup> so our all-sufficient High Priest on this His great day of atonement solemnly interceded with God His Father for Himself, that He might be received into glory, His original glory in heaven; for His household, the apostles and disciples, that God would preserve them in His name, give them a spirit of unity and concord, and protect them in and from the wicked world; also for all future believers, through their preaching, that they might be endued with the same spirit of unity and concord; and for the conversion of the whole world; and that finally they might partake of His glory in heaven, and be supported by His love and presence on earth.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 26; xvi. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> 'Nowhere throughout the entire Gospel has the language of Christ such perfect artlessness, and a character so adapted to the minds of His disciples, as here (xiv. 2, 3, 16, 18, 21, 23; xvi. 23, 24, 26). As Luther says, 'He speaks as he must who would charm and win the simple' (Tholuck on John, trans. by Krauth, Philad., p. 330).

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xvi. 17.

<sup>4</sup> See Bloomfield's Greek Testament *in loco*. It bears in the Church the name

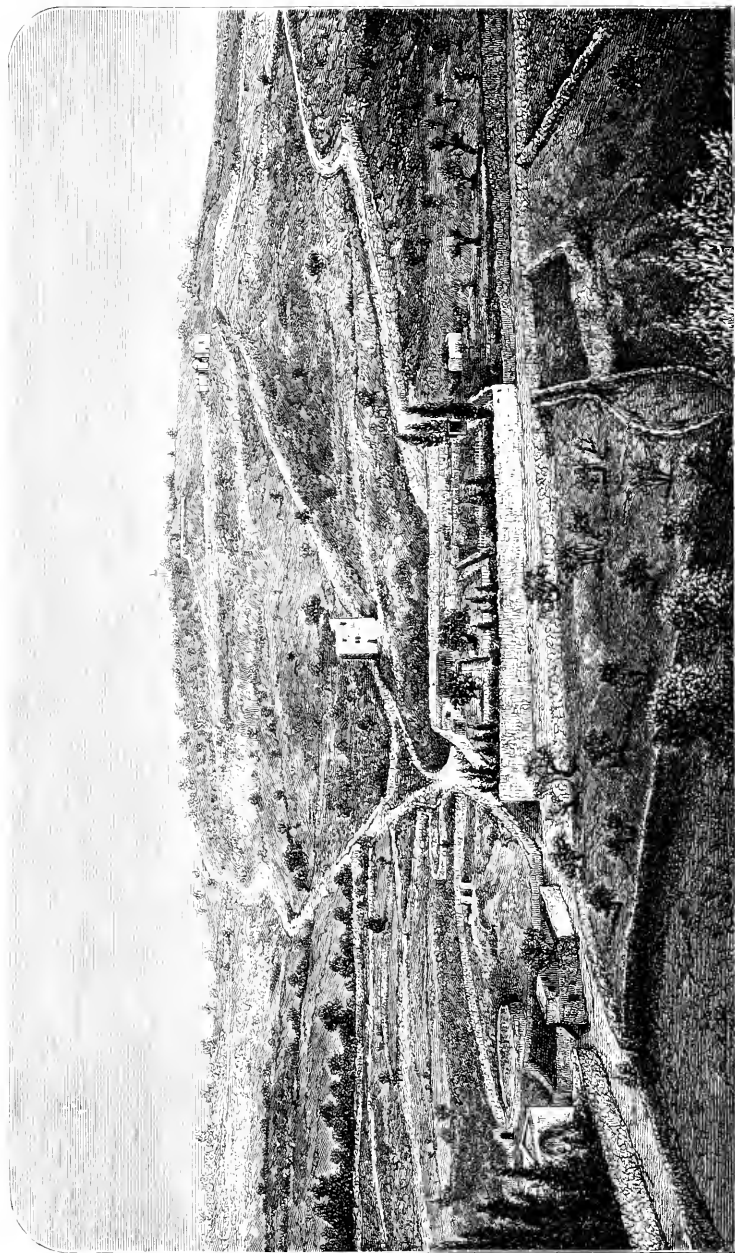
When the prayer was ended Jesus and His disciples united in singing a hymn of praise. If they used one of that series of psalms (known as the Hallel, comprising the hundred and thirteenth and the five immediately following it in the psalter) which the Jews were in the habit of repeating at the passover, then we know the strains of adoration, confidence, and love that poured from their lips. "Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living." "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sore, but He has not given me over to death." "The stone which the builders refused has become the head-stone of the corner." How must strains like these have sounded from the lips of the Saviour and His eleven followers in that guest chamber in Jerusalem, just as He was about to go to Gethsemane to be betrayed!

Let us accompany Him to Gethsemane. The evening is already far advanced, the midnight hour approaching. He leads His disciples out of the city, and instead of turning towards Bethany through the valley of Siloam, turns in the other direction, enters the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and crossing the brook Kedron just at the foot of the Mount of Olives, enters the garden, "which delves like a sanctuary of grief into the narrowest and darkest depths of the Valley of Jehoshaphat."<sup>1</sup> Above, in the distance, can be seen gleaming in the light of the moon, then at its full, the white sepulchres on the edge of the cliffs which overhang the valley, and the lofty porches of the temple on Moriah. He takes with Him Peter and James and John, the same three who had seen His glory in the mount, and penetrates farther into the recesses and thickets of the valley, to make them now the witnesses of that bitter agony when His soul was to be exceeding sorrowful. In His deep grief the Man despised and rejected of men, the Man of sorrows, seeks a more complete solitude. He withdraws Himself from the favoured three who had accompanied Him thus far, and hides Himself under the shadow of the trees, the mountain, and the night. Then falling on His face He prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great

"Oratio Sacerdotalis," the sacerdotal prayer. Melancthon states the substance of it thus:—"Primum de ipso precuratur, postea de tota ecclesia, et de hac petit quatuor res precipuas ecclesie, conservationem veræ doctrinæ, concordiam ecclesie, applicationem sui sacrificii, et ultimum ac summum bonum, ut ecclesia cum Christo ornetur vita, letitia, et gloria æterna."

<sup>1</sup> Lamartine, i., p. 264.





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GARDEN OF GETHESEMENE.



drops of blood falling down to the ground."<sup>1</sup> The wind sighed among the olive trees, and the waters of the Kedron moaned as they rolled over their rocky bed. When He returned to where He left the disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow. He went away the second time and offered the same prayer, and when He returned again found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. Again He goes away, and a third time pours forth the same prayer. Returning He finds them still sleeping, and with all the gentleness of a mother, or tender nurse, says, "Sleep on now and take your rest."<sup>2</sup> Then, as if a sudden rustling among the thickets, suppressed voices, or the tramp of approaching steps broke the stillness and admonished Him of the presence of His foes, He cries out in the ears of His sleeping followers, "It is enough; the hour is come. Behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners! Lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand!"<sup>3</sup> As He spoke, the silent shades of the garden are illuminated with torches and lanterns, and filled with the confused noise of an approaching crowd in search as for some thief or robber. It is Judas, who well knew the secluded retreat to which Jesus often resorted with His disciples, at the head of a band of Roman soldiers and officers, and a rabble such as would be attracted at a late hour of the night from a large city by the martial array and the gleam of the torches and lanterns. Jesus does not flee, nor attempt to conceal Himself, but calmly advances, with the question, "Whom seek ye?" At His words, "I am He," they went backward and fell to the ground as if smitten by invisible hands. He asked again, "Whom seek ye?"<sup>4</sup> and Judas, in fulfilment of his promise, arose from the ground, and approaching with "Master, Master," on his traitorous lips, kissed Him. The stern soldiers at once made the arrest. How like some terrific dream must these sudden events have seemed to John and his companions, just aroused from their deep slumber! Peter remembered his valorous words, and doubtless thinking that this was the time of trial of which his Master had given him warning, began to brandish one of the swords which were in possession of the disciples. But he effected nothing more than to cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest;

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke xxii. 43, 44.

<sup>2</sup> Calvin and Beza think these words are used ironically, by way of rebuke. And Meyer says: "The profoundest grief of soul, especially when associated with such clearness of spirit, has its own irony. And what an apathy had Jesus here to encounter!" Lange adds: "If the essential principle of irony is security and perfect composure of spirit, we recognise here the sacred irony, which does not speak in contempt of weakness, but in the triumphant consciousness that the fight was already won." (Lange on Matt. xxvi. 45.)

<sup>3</sup> Mark xiv. 41, 42.

<sup>4</sup> John xviii. 4-6.

though it is evident he came near destroying a human life, he does not appear to have ventured on a combat with the soldiers. With a miraculous touch our Lord healed the wounded ear, and commanding Peter to put up the sword, said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" Then turning to the multitude He said, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Me? <sup>1</sup> But the Scripture must be fulfilled."

The disciples seeing their Master, without any show of resistance, submitting to arrest, and fearing that what had befallen Him would befall them, as accomplices in the crime that might be charged against Him, appear now for the first time to have fully awakened to the perils of their situation. All of them, not excepting even John, forsook Him and fled away among the trees and rocks of the valley. It was not long, however, before John recovered his natural bravery of spirit, and we find him again by his Master's side. He shrank not again from any of the terrors of that gloomy night, nor of the succeeding day, the day of crucifixion.

It is noticeable that John, who records at such length the sayings of Jesus at the institution of the supper, makes no mention of His agony in the garden. The reason of this doubtless is that he had nothing to add to the full and graphic account given by the other evangelists. "All the bitter consequences of the fall were concentrated in that agony. It was an anticipation of the bitterness of that cup which He was to taste in His death on the cross. The will of God to Him at this crisis of His history is that terrible death, at once the full manifestation and the full punishment of the sin of mankind. He had accepted the will of His Father in all the various circumstances of a life in which He has already mingled much of sorrow and reproach; by virtue of this obedience, He has never ceased a single day to carry on His work of redemption, but this moment brings Him face to face with surpassing grief and ignominy. He has doubtless already accepted all that awaits Him; but the prospect more or less remote of sacrifice is another thing from the sacrifice itself. Therefore it is that He who found His meat and drink in doing the will of God must yet learn obedience in that garden of agony, with strong crying and tears. Herein appears the reality of His humanity. These words, the echo of His broken but submissive heart, inaugurated the era of salvation for man; for in Christ they brought man back definitively into the paths of obedience."<sup>2</sup>

All the Galilean bravery of spirit of the disciple Jesus loved had

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 55.

<sup>2</sup> De Pressensé's *Times, Life, and Work of Christ*, p. 447.

returned; and he remained, as far as circumstances would permit, close by His side all that dreadful day, until he saw His corpse removed from the cross for interment by the two rich disciples. It was doubtless from his example that Peter, who had used the sword, and perhaps on this account felt that he was in peculiar peril, recovered some measure of his natural courage and resoluteness. He turned from his flight, or emerged from his hiding-place in the thickets of the valley, but still followed Jesus afar off. He did not come near His person to be recognised as one of His followers, but kept on the outskirts of the crowd. John, who was known to the high-priest, went boldly into the palace by the side of Jesus, and was there one of His acknowledged followers, His only visible friend.

The palace, like other oriental houses of the better class, was built around a quadrangle or court, into which there was an arched gateway through the front of the house, which could be closed with a massive folding gate, having a smaller gate, or wicket, for ordinary admission, attended by a porter or portress. The interior court was open to the sky and paved with stones, on which the rooms opened directly, or upon galleries above. A fire had been kindled (for the morning was cold) on the pavement of the court. John desecrating Peter at the gate, which excluded the noisy rabble, and only too glad to be joined by his old companion, interceded successfully with the portress for his admission, and he sat down like an unconcerned spectator with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire, to see the end. Jesus was standing before the high-priest in the audience room of that functionary, which occupied one side of the court, and where He could both see and be seen by those sitting around the fire. A maid-servant from one of the overhanging galleries descries Peter "beneath,"<sup>1</sup> and recognises him as one of the followers and friends of Him who stands accused before her master. She hastens down, and, carefully scrutinizing his countenance by the flickering light, says, "Thou wast with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it by the make-belief that he could not understand her, or did not know what she meant. He had been following his Master afar off, and was now acting a part, playing unconcerned spectator, where he should, with John, have appeared as open friend; and he is afraid to admit to a serving-girl his true relation to Jesus. He felt however ill at ease; some one else might recognise him if he continued so near the blazing fire. He accordingly retreated into the shadow of the porch,<sup>2</sup> or covered passage way, which led through the front of the building into the court, and where he thought he would be safe from the peering eyes of maid-servants passing to and fro through the court yard or along the galleries above. But the damsel who was

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiv. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiv. 68.

stationed there to attend the gate knew him, or suspected who or what he was, as it was at the instance of John she admitted him, or she had been informed by her officious fellow-servant; and she asked him if he was not one of this Man's disciples. He promptly answered "I am not." He does not pretend that he is ignorant of her meaning, but flatly denies his discipleship. She insisted that he was, and said to the persons standing near, or looking through the bars from the outside, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." And the cock crew.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime a preliminary examination was proceeding before Caiaphas, while the Sanhedrin were assembling. Jesus stood bound before him, wearing the chain which had been put upon Him by the command of the old rabbi, Annas. The high-priest asked Him of His disciples and doctrine. Jesus replied, "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? [the accused: Am I to give testimony in My own case?] Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them."<sup>2</sup> At this one of the officers struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Answerest Thou the high-priest so?" What a spectacle it must have been to John when he saw the hand of this rude official fall upon Jesus! How difficult it must have been for him to restrain that resentment which his nature held as the steel holds fire!

Peter, who perhaps would gladly have escaped through the gate, but would not venture after it had been proclaimed there that he was one of the adherents of the Prisoner, had gathered courage, as an "hour"<sup>3</sup> had passed away, and no new accuser had appeared, to return to the court, and was again sitting by the fire, where he could both see and be seen by his Master. Several who stood by now renewed the charge that he was one of the followers of Jesus, and referred to the provincialisms, which marked his expressions and pronunciation, in proof that he was a Galilean: a sort of circumstantial evidence that he was one of them. But the proof became positive, and indeed overwhelming, when one of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman of the Malchus whose ear Peter cut off, asked, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" Evidence like this must be met with a stronger denial; and to prevarication and falsehood the infatuated man added profane oaths. "And the second time the cock crew."<sup>4</sup> The Lord turned a mingled look of sadness and rebuke on His disciple.<sup>5</sup> Instantly Peter recalled the prophecy respecting his denial; and the crowing of the cock was like a trumpet-call to his guilty soul. It

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 71; Mark xiv. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xiv. 71, 72.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 19-21.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xxii. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 59.

pealed and echoed through all its secret chambers and inmost recesses. It aroused his slumbering conscience. The first crowing of the cock, when he was seeking to hide himself in the shadow of the porch or covered passage way, if noticed by him, had no such effect. But now the alarum had sounded. It told him as if the very words had been syllabled in this matin-call of the unconscious bird, what he had done: "Peter, oh, Peter, thou hast denied thy Lord." Just that thing had happened which his Saviour foretold, and which he thought when he spoke so vehemently never could happen. Lifting a trembling glance to his Master, he caught a reproving look from His loving eye, and all the fountains of his soul were broken up within him. He rushed away to seek some solitary place to vent his overpowering grief. John alone of all his fellow apostles was a witness of Peter's defection, and of this sorrowful scene. How painful it must have been to him! What must he have thought when he saw one who had been so prominent, with whom he had been so intimately associated in the most solemn and tender scenes, so weak and so wicked? He utters not a word, but looks on in silent amazement. It is from him we learn that it was through his intervention Peter gained admission to the palace of the high-priest.<sup>1</sup> But his account of Peter's sin and humiliation is more brief than that of any of the evangelists; while that of Mark, who is commonly supposed to have written under the supervision of Peter himself, is more graphic and full in its details than any other.

The Sanhedrin,<sup>2</sup> in obedience to a hasty summons, had now assembled in the audience chamber of the high-priest. The gathering of this grave body, in the gray of the morning, just as soon as it was day,<sup>3</sup> was a singular spectacle. The aged and severe Annas, who had sent Christ bound to Caiaphas, was there. Nicodemus alone (and perhaps Joseph of Arimathea) casts a friendly look on Him. All others glared fiercely on Him, and sought for witnesses among the attending

<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Sanhedrin, *συνέδριον*, so called in Matt. v. 22, Mark xiv. 55, Luke xxii. 66, John xi. 47, Acts iv. 15. It was the supreme council of the Jewish nation, composed of seventy members besides the high-priest, in imitation of the seventy elders appointed by Moses, Num. xi. 16. (Jos. Antiq. ix. 1 (1).) The members were selected from former high-priests, the chief priests, or heads of the twenty-four courses, elders, and scribes. The high-priest for the time was, *ex-officio*, *princeps* or president. This court appears to have had cognizance of all important causes, both civil and ecclesiastical, and to have met ordinarily in a hall near the temple, called by Josephus, *βουλή, βουλευτήριον*. (Wars, v., 4 (2); vi., 6 (3).) On extraordinary occasions they were convened in the high-priest's palace: Matt. xxvi. 3, 57. Under the Romans, the right of capital punishment had been taken away from this court. See Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.*, and John xviii. 31. *Rob. Greek and Eng. Lex.*

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 66.

crowd, to make out some charge which would be punishable with death under the Roman law. There was no lack of false witnesses; but because their testimony was false it lacked the necessary agreement and consistency. Christ stood in perfect silence, surveying the scene with a placid dignity which might well have awed His judges. At length the presiding officer arose in his place, and addressing Jesus, said, "Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee?"<sup>1</sup> But Jesus still held His peace. With mingled solemnity and fierceness the high-priest cried out, "I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God."<sup>2</sup> Then was heard that calm, majestic voice: "I AM; and hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." At these words the high-priest rent his garments, and pronounced Him guilty of blasphemy. "What further need have we of witnesses?" he said. He immediately put the question to the Sanhedrin, and they pronounced Him "guilty of death." Then some spat in His face, and buffeted Him; others blindfolded Him, and, striking Him in the face, bade Him in mockery tell which of them it was that smote Him. John heard and saw all this. With his intense affection for the Saviour, it must have been an occasion of the deepest suffering to him. There can be little doubt he would have preferred to receive the blows, and would have welcomed all the indignity heaped upon his Master. It was an occasion, moreover, of severe discipline to his indignant spirit. It must have cost him no small effort to quell that anger which, as we have seen, was so quick to rise at any slight or disrespect to One whom he knew to be so spotless and pure.

The Jewish council had reached their decision, had finished their session. Their next step, as they could not under the Roman law put any man to death, was to carry Him before the Roman governor, and insist on His being capitally punished. The guard were accordingly directed to lead Him to Pilate's<sup>3</sup> judgment hall. They themselves followed, but would only approach the entrance. With their hearts

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiv. 60-61.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 63.

<sup>3</sup> The name of Pilate appears in the Annals of Tacitus, and the testimony of this historian as to the time when the foundations of the Christian religion were laid is in perfect harmony with that of the evangelists. In stating that Nero himself was believed to have ordered the conflagration of Rome, and in order to suppress the rumour, charged the persons commonly called Christians with the crime, he adds: "Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per Procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus est:" *i.e.*, Christ, the founder of that name (sect), was capitally punished by Pontius Pilate, Procurator (of Judæa), in the reign of Tiberius. *Annal.*, xv. 44.



filled with hatred and murder, they refused to enter that hall lest they should incur ceremonial defilement, and be disqualified for observing some of the remaining rites of the passover. Pilate, in condescending to come out and confer with them, betrays his anxiety to conciliate their good esteem. On some account he seems to have felt the insecurity of his position in the government of the province, and imagined that he might strengthen it by making himself popular with the heads of the people over whom he ruled. At the same time, he evinces throughout the trial a strong desire to evade the responsibility they sought to lay upon him. He wishes them to take Jesus and judge Him according to the Jewish law; but this they would not agree to, as it would defeat their object, inasmuch as their conquerors, the Romans, did not permit them to put any man to death.<sup>1</sup> His death they had determined upon, and no punishment short of it would satisfy them. They pleaded that the charge which they preferred was one of which not the Jewish, but only the Roman tribunal, could take cognizance. They began only the more earnestly to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation (that is, attempting to break its allegiance to Rome), and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a king." The accusation was artfully framed as far as it related to His claim to be Messiah, as involving the claim to be a king; but so far as it related to the paying of the tribute it was wholly false, for they had utterly failed<sup>2</sup> when they sought to ensnare Him into saying something on this subject which might be interpreted as of a hostile bearing to the Roman government. Pilate could discover no way by which to evade the responsibility of proceeding with the trial, without appearing indifferent to the safety and rights of the imperial government, which he could at that time by no means afford to do.

He therefore returned<sup>3</sup> to his judgment seat, and formally arraigned the Lord Jesus Christ at his bar. He asked Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" The Lord at once admitted that He claimed to be a king, but in no such sense as to make Him liable to the charge of treason. "I am a king, but My kingdom is not of this world. I have no armies to fight for its establishment, nor to defend Me against arrest or insult." The accusation that this meek, mild Prisoner, without armed followers, had any treasonable designs against the Roman government was evi-

<sup>1</sup> The account found in the gospel touching the civil condition of the Jews at this time corresponds in a striking manner with other authorities. Lardner has discussed the subject with an exhaustive learning, and has come to the conclusion that the Jews did not possess the power of life and death, which was in the hands of the Roman governor. Vol. i., pp. 83-164.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxii. 15-22.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvii. 11; Mark xv. 2; Luke xxiii. 3; John xviii. 33.

dently, in the opinion of Pilate, simply absurd. He therefore left the judgment seat the second time, and went out and said to His accusers, "I find in Him no fault at all."<sup>1</sup> Then the chief priests and elders accused Him of many things. They felt that their cause was becoming desperate, and they hoped that in the multiplicity of their charges one might be found that would stir up the animosity and cruel nature of Pilate against the Prisoner, and result in His condemnation. While this was going on, Jesus stood in calm and silent dignity, and was so unmoved that the astonishment of His judge was excited.<sup>2</sup> "Answerest Thou nothing?" he says. And He answered him never a word. Why should He attempt to answer such unscrupulous accusers? But Pilate did not interpret His declining to answer as a disrespect. It was a sacred privilege, which, under the circumstances, He had a perfect right to exercise, and which His judge therefore respected.

Again Pilate addressed the chief priests and people: "I find no fault in this Man."<sup>3</sup> But this only excited them the more; and they cried out, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." He was an agitator, if not a traitor. The mention of Galilee as the region where Jesus commenced this work of agitation suggested to the perplexed governor a mode in which he might escape from his dilemma. He immediately inquired if the man were a Galilean; and being answered in the affirmative, sent Him to Herod, the governor of Galilee, who was on a visit to Jerusalem at that time.<sup>4</sup> There can be no doubt that the disciple who accompanied the Lord to the palace of the high-priest, where he was so well known to that functionary and his retainers, stood with the same firmness by His side, both before Pilate and Herod. And he alone of all the apostles probably was present. In being the witness of these scenes, how important the lessons he must have learned, fitting him for his future work, not merely as the inspired narrator of the Lord's history, but for that long service in doing the Lord's work, during a considerable portion of which he was the sole survivor of his apostolic companions.

The soldiers led Jesus forth to the quarters of Herod.<sup>5</sup> This was Herod Antipas, the same cruel ruler who had caused the head of John

<sup>1</sup> John xviii. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxiii. 4, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiii. 6-12.

<sup>5</sup> The share Herod took in the trial of Jesus is referred to in Acts iv. 27. The feud between him and Pilate may have had some connection with the slaughter of the Galileans mentioned in Luke xiii. 1, ὧν τὸ αἷμα Ἡρόδης ζήσσει μετὰ τῶν θυνσιῶν αὐτῶν. Herod was unscrupulous and cruel. With his cruelty there seems to have been united a peculiar cunning, justifying the title, Ἦ ἀλώπηξ αἵτη (Luke xiii. 32).

the Baptist to be brought on a platter in the midst of a gay revel, at the request of a girl, the daughter of his paramour, whose dancing had pleased him. This wicked man was exceedingly glad to see Jesus, and had desired, we are told, for a long time to see Him, for the singular reason that he had heard many remarkable things respecting Him, and he hoped to see some wonderful work performed by Him. He immediately began to question, and appears to have insisted on obtaining an answer; but we are expressly told that our Lord answered nothing. He did not once open His lips. Herod was not permitted to hear the sound of that gracious voice which had fallen, in the sweetest accents, on the ears of the humblest of the people. The chief priests and scribes, who had followed to be present at this tribunal, stood and vehemently accused Him; but their charges were of the same groundless, absurd, or indefinite nature which distinguished them before Pilate. No answer that He could give would silence them, or satisfy a judge whose principal wish was to gratify a morbid desire for sight-seeing. The result of His arraignment before Herod was that Herod with his men of war set Him at naught, mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. Another singular result is stated; to wit, that Herod and Pilate, who before were enemies, were made friends on the same day. That which undoubtedly was a mere expedient on the part of Pilate to get clear of an embarrassing case was probably interpreted by Herod as an act of concession, or of deference and respect; and thus the Lord of glory, in passing from one to the other of these wicked men, restored them to friendship.

Christ stands again in the presence of Pilate, and as He was accused of practices unfriendly to the Roman government, His case must be disposed of in a manner which would not give His enemies an opportunity of accusing him of malfeasance in office to the emperor. What was his next step? He first distinctly declares to the accusers of Christ that neither he nor Herod had been able to discover the least evidence of guilt<sup>1</sup> on the charge they had brought against Him of seeking to lead the Jewish people into revolt; but as they had a custom that he should, at the feast of the passover, release unto the people one prisoner, whomsoever they desired, he would release the King of the Jews. He put the question whether he should do this. There was then on trial, or awaiting his trial, a notable criminal, one Barabbas, a robber, who had been engaged in an insurrection, in which murder was committed. Pilate therefore referred it to the crowd gathered around his judgment seat, to say whether he should release Barabbas unto them or Jesus Christ. Whilst the multitude are preparing to give their decision, and the chief priests and elders are engaged in

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii.; comp. Matt. xxvii. 15-26; Mark xv. 6-15.

persuading them to ask Barabbas, woman, in the person of Pilate's wife, like a good angel, appears on the scene, to plead in favour of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> She sent to her husband on the judgment seat, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream concerning Him." But in vain; the man who will not heed the monitions of his own conscience will disregard the warnings and forebodings of an anxious wife.

At length the question was put to the people by the governor, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?<sup>2</sup> Prepared as they had been, by their rulers, they promptly, evidently to the disappointment of Pilate, answered, "Barabbas." He had hoped that the answer would have been "Jesus," or, at least, that there would have been dissensions among them. But what, he says, shall I do unto Him whom ye call the King of the Jews?<sup>3</sup> Immediately they cried out, Crucify Him. Again he said, "Why, what evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him." How can you ask me to give sentence of death against Him; "I will therefore chastise<sup>4</sup> Him, and let Him go. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that He might be crucified. And the voices of them and the chief priests prevailed."

Pilate had yielded point after point to the demands of the accusers; had shown that he had no sincere regard for the principles of justice; and now yields all. He resorts to the vain ceremony of washing his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person;"<sup>5</sup> which called forth that fearful exclamation of the people, "His blood be on us, and our children!"

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him, and having committed Him to the custody of the soldiers, they took Him into the prætorium, or common hall<sup>6</sup> of the palace, and called together the whole cohort

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 19. A partial knowledge of Roman history might lead the reader to question the historic credibility of Matthew in this particular. In the earlier periods, and indeed as long as the commonwealth subsisted, it was very unusual for the governors of provinces to take their wives with them (Senec. De Centrov., 25); and in the strict regulation, which Augustus introduced, he did not allow the favour except in peculiar and specified circumstances (Sueton., Aug., 21). The practice, however, grew to be more and more prevalent, and was (says Winer, *Real-wört.* in "Pilate") customary in Pilate's time. In the beginning of the reign of Tiberius, Germanicus took his wife with him into the East. Piso, the prefect of Syria, took his wife also along with him at the same time. Tacit. Annal., ii., 54, 55. See Lardner's Works, vol. i., p. 145; Kitto's Cyclop., Pilate.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 21, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xv. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiii. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xxvii. 24, 25.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xxvii. 26-30.

or garrison that they might make sport of the Condemned. They took off His garment and put on Him a purple robe; they plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head; and for a sceptre placed a reed in His hand. They then bowed the knee to Him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Having wearied themselves with this rude sport and mockery, they next gratified the brutality of their nature, they took the mock sceptre from His hand, and smote Him on the head, and spat upon Him.

But Pilate, although he had given sentence, appears to have relented. Perhaps whilst the scene which has been described was going on in the prætorium, his wife had again remonstrated. At all events he again seeks to release Jesus. He goes forth to the chief priests and rulers, and caused the Condemned to be led out, His limbs lacerated and bleeding from the cruel scourge, still wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe,<sup>1</sup> and said to them, BEHOLD THE MAN! "Those words, that scene, have become immortal. Painters have dipped their pencil in that purple robe, and sought for ages to depict that expression of suffering majesty. The Church of Christ caught up the motto and the image, and pressed them to her bosom."<sup>2</sup> Pilate doubtless hoped that some pity would be excited in the bosom of the beholders, and that they would yet consent that he should release Him. But no, they cried out, Crucify, crucify Him; if the Roman law does not condemn Him, by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. These words only increased the terror of Pilate. He accompanied Christ back into the judgment hall, and earnestly inquired, Whence art Thou? But he received no answer. Pilate then said, Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above," was the calm reply. Again Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews, and said, Behold your King. But they cried, Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him.

For three or four weary hours this trial had been going on, and now it was concluded; and Pilate delivered Him unto them to be crucified.

We cannot doubt that that disciple who accompanied the Lord to the palace of the high-priest was near Him, perhaps walked by His side, on His way from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back to Pilate, and on His way to Golgotha; and would gladly, if he had been

<sup>1</sup> Probably a scarlet (Matt. xxvii. 28) military cloak, belonging to one of themselves, which was intended to represent the imperial purple. Hence Mark and John describe it for what it was intended to be—a purple, *πορφύραν*, robe (Mark xv. 17; John xix. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Homer's Sermons, edited by Dr. Edwards A. Park.

permitted, have borne that cumbrous cross which crushed the Saviour to the earth. He stood near the cross, after Jesus was fastened upon it,—the only representative of the apostles on that scene of blood, unless perhaps the shamed and sorrowing Peter was somewhere there, on the outskirts of the crowd, his heart powerfully attracted by love towards that Saviour whom he had denied.

Taking our station, with the beloved disciple, as near as possible to the person of the suffering Saviour, we join the procession as it takes its departure from the palace of the high-priest. Jesus no longer wears the purple robe in which He had been mocked. The cross to which He was to be nailed had been prepared. It was probably a tree, with limbs of a proper size and shape to adapt it to the purpose. Peter styles it a tree,<sup>1</sup> and it repeatedly receives the same designation from the historian Luke.<sup>2</sup> It is laid on the Condemned, and the procession starts for the place of execution. Suddenly its progress is arrested. The Saviour sinks beneath the burden that has been laid on Him. No severity of the soldiers can cause Him to rise beneath it. It is not obstinacy, it is exhaustion. One Simon, a Jew, from Cyrene, who is met in the way, is compelled to take the cross and bear it after Him.<sup>3</sup>

As they move on, a voice of lamentation and wailing is heard from the great company of people that followed.<sup>4</sup> It proceeds from the women, to whom the Saviour turned, and said, "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children"; and then uttered a prediction of the calamities that were coming on the nation.

To add to the ignominy of His crucifixion, two others, malefactors, were led with Him to be put to death.<sup>5</sup> Arrived at the place known as the Skull,<sup>6</sup> or in Hebrew, Golgotha, as the Sufferer probably still

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 30; x. 39; xiii. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus seems to have borne the cross as far as the city gate. It was as they were coming out (*ἐξέρχόμενοι*, Matt. xxvii. 32) that they met Simon the Cyrenian coming in from the country (*ἐρχόμενον ἀπ' ἀγροῦ*, Mark xv. 21). The scene of the crucifixion was beyond the northern, now known as the Damascus gate. Mark says of this Simon that he was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," an expression which seems to imply that they were well-known persons in the Church at the time Mark was writing. Perhaps Rufus is the one whom Paul greets, Rom. xvi. 13. But the attempt to identify them is altogether conjectural.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiii. 27-32. "Viri muliebres animos ostenderant in fuga et desertione Christi. Infirmus sexus hic prævalet fortiori. Tantum valet amor Christi et robur spiritus etiam in vasis imbecillioribus."—Lampe in *Evang. Joan.*, cap. xix., 26.

<sup>5</sup> See the four evangelists.

<sup>6</sup> *Κρανίον*, the skull, Luke xxiii. 33. In Matthew, Mark, and John, it is called *κρανίον τόπος*, skull place. Cyril of Jerusalem, Reland, Paulus, Lücke, De Wette, Meyer, and others, understand the name as descriptive of the shape of the hill of crucifixion. See a very interesting monograph on this subject by the late lamented Fisher Howe, Esq., of Brooklyn, N.Y.

exhibited signs of syncope, they offered Him wine mingled with myrrh; or it may have been a mixture intended to stupefy the mind and deaden the sense of pain; but when He tasted He refused to drink.<sup>1</sup>

It was the third hour, corresponding to our nine o'clock in the morning; and they crucified Him. He was nailed to the tree by His hands and feet, and with Him they crucify the two thieves, and plant the crosses the one on His right and the other on His left hand. Then was heard that prayer of boundless love, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." This was the first of those weighty utterances which John heard dropped from the lips of Jesus, as He hung upon the cross.<sup>2</sup> How impressively he must have been taught that there is forgiveness with God for those who have despised and rejected Christ through ignorance! He was to preach the gospel to many such. He was to preach the gospel to those who took part in the crucifixion of Christ, and would have occasion to say, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it."<sup>3</sup> He fully believed God to be a forgiving God, as is evidenced by all his writings; and he found in it the grandest of all motives to the forgiveness of enemies. It was this which qualified him in so eminent a degree for his work as a preacher of the gospel.

The next scene in the crucifixion, presented to the eye of John, was the act of the four soldiers who officiated as executioners, in dividing the garments of Jesus, and casting lots for His seamless robe. It is a matter of business with them; they must not miss the perquisites of their trade! They have one more service to perform before they sit down to watch the slow and steady advance of death, and make sure

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> The form of the cross varied. Sometimes it was in the shape of the letter X. This was called St. Andrew's, or *crux decussata*. Sometimes in the shape of the letter T, called St. Anthony's cross, or *crux commissa*. And sometimes in the following form †, the Latin cross, or *crux inmissa*. It was on a cross of the latter kind our Lord is supposed to have suffered. There is a beautiful tradition which assigns the perpetual shiver of the aspen to the fact of the cross having been of this tree. But Lipsius, who has displayed such wealth of erudition on this subject, thinks (*De Cruce*, iii., 13) that it was of oak, which was common in Judæa. There is another tradition, that the cross consisted of three kinds of wood: cypress, pine, and cedar. And still another that it consisted of four kinds: cedar, cypress, palm, and olive. That it was wood is certain, but of what wood no evidence remains. "The principal standard," says Gibbon, writing of the reign of Constantine, "which displayed the triumph of the cross, was styled the *labarum*, an obscure though celebrated name, which has been vainly derived from almost all the languages of the world. It is described as a long pike intersected by a transversal beam. The silken veil which hung down from the beam was curiously inwrought with the images of the reigning monarch and family" (*Decline and Fall*, chap. xx.).

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 17.

that they have accomplished their work. Pilate had written a title<sup>1</sup> to be put up over the head of Jesus on the cross. It was in the three great languages of the world, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and was in these words, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. There was something significant in its being in these three languages, as well as in the title itself. It contained a message for the whole world, not only the Jewish, but the Gentile—not only the learned, but the unlearned. Pilate, although he meant it not so in his heart, but doubtless imagined that some apology for his unjust sentence might be found in the inscription he ordered to be placed on the cross, proclaimed a great truth, that Jesus was *a* King, and not the King of the Jews only, but the King of nations, the King of kings. It was one more attempt to quiet a troubled conscience; and he could not be persuaded by the solicitations of the chief priests to remove or to change it. Thus Divine providence seems to have overruled the mind and heart of Pilate to proclaim the kingship of Christ at the very moment when shame and reproach were heaped on Him.

And now commenced before the eyes of the loving disciple a scene of cruel mockery.<sup>2</sup> The rabble, as they passed by the cross, wagged their heads, and pointed the finger at Him, crying out, "Ah, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." And with them the chief priests and scribes and elders joined and said, "He saved others, Himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." And even the voices of the thieves, hanging in tortures by His side, were heard reviling Him, "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us." But lo! a scene of wondrous grace. Something, (perhaps it was the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,") touched the heart of one of them, it being a prayer for the forgiveness of those who were engaged at that moment in crucifying Jesus; and he bethought himself, If these can be forgiven, why not I? And he began to pray in earnest, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The grace that put this prayer into his lips seems singularly to have enlightened him, not only in respect to the power and glory of Christ, but in respect to His kingdom. Through

<sup>1</sup> *Αἴτια*, Matt. xxvii. 37; ἡ ἐπιγραφὴ τῆς αἰτίας, Mark xv. 26; ἐπιγραφὴ, Luke xxiii. 38; *τίτλος*, John xix. 19.

After the celebrated vision of Constantine of a flaming cross in the heavens with the inscription, *In hoc signo vinces*, or *vinces*, he ordered a cross of gold and gems to be made, and his new standard, the labarum, besides the pendent cross, supported the celebrated monogram of Christ, which was also on the shields and helmets of the legion. The labarum is represented on the coins of Constantine the Great and his immediate successors.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 39-41; Luke xxiii. 35-57.



all the ignominy of the passing hour, he saw the Saviour amidst the glories of His heavenly reign. It is possible this man had heard the gospel from the Saviour's lips, for He had visited all portions of Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and had preached to all classes of the people. It was a most surprising act of faith. He believed in Christ while he was on the cross, without support, utterly destitute of any sign of power, and undergoing a most ignominious death. "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," was the gracious answer to his prayer. The depth of his repentance was attested as clearly as the strength of his faith, when he rebuked his companion in guilt and suffering, in the words, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this Man hath done nothing amiss." Of course, the deeper his sense that his punishment was justly deserved, the more deeply would he be affected by the sufferings of the Holy One at his side.

The beloved disciple was a deeply interested spectator of this scene. Amid the confused outcries, one voice was heard calling his Master Lord, and beseeching for a share in the glories of His kingdom. It was a new revelation to John of the power and grace of the Saviour. He could never forget it, nor cease to feel its influence, as an apostle and minister of Christ. He remembered it in old age, when, according to a well known and well founded tradition<sup>1</sup> he pursued the young robber into the very lurking places of the banditti of which he was the captain, and besought him, not without effect, to renounce his wicked ways, and repent.

We next see the beloved disciple himself brought forward in a most conspicuous and interesting manner in the scene of the crucifixion. We have the account from his own pen: "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."<sup>2</sup> His mother was standing there in anguish. Good old Simeon's prophecy was now fulfilled; the sword was piercing her soul.<sup>3</sup> He first turns to her, and commits her to the filial care of John; He then turns to him and says "Behold thy mother!" As if He had said, "I am now dying; I am sundering all human relations; and upon thee I devolve the honour and duty of being a son to her in My stead and room. When I am gone, comfort her and provide for

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Alex., *Τὸ ὁ σὺ ζῶ μένος πλούσιος*.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 25-27.

<sup>3</sup> Luke ii. 35.

her." What a pattern in Christ's tender care for His mother, when He was enduring the terrible agonies of the cross, we have for all children towards their parents! Unlike the Master whom he had followed, who had not where to lay His head, John had a "home," which from that hour he gladly shared with her whom he had been so solemnly charged to treat as a mother. How tenderly he watched over her, as she descended into the vale of years! And when her pilgrimage was ended, how piously he committed her ashes to the sepulchre, to await the second coming of Him who once hung upon her breasts, and called her mother!<sup>1</sup>

It was noon, or the sixth hour, when suddenly the sun was darkened, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.<sup>2</sup> An awful silence seems to have pervaded Calvary during those three mortal hours. The mocking words and jeering voices of the crowd were stilled; even the soldiers were dumb with terror. During these three darkened hours not a word was spoken, as far as we can gather from the sacred narrative, by Christ Himself or not until they were about to close. At the ninth hour, as the darkness began to clear away, a bitter cry of agony was heard from the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" It was the hiding of the Father's face which constituted the bitterest ingredient in the cup He drank. As the darkness passed away, there was revealed to the throng the pale dying countenance of the Son of God. One dipped a sponge in the acid drink used by the soldiers, and, putting it on the end of a hyssop branch, raised it to His lips. Again He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished:" "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit;" and He bowed His head, and gave up the Ghost. *It is finished* is but one word in the original.<sup>3</sup> But what a world of joyful meaning is contained in that one word! At the moment of His death there were other fearful portents. The earth quaked and the rocks rent, the veil of the holy of holies in the temple was rent asunder, and the graves of many that slept were

<sup>1</sup> To use, says Trench, the language of the learned Gill: "Some say she lived with John at Jerusalem, and there died; and others say that she died in the twelfth year after the resurrection of Christ, being fifty-nine years of age, and was buried by John in the garden of Gethsemane." But it has pleased God, adds Trench, to envelop all this in doubt and mystery, and with this we are to be satisfied. Nay more, being taught by the errors of the Church of Rome in regard to Mary, we may mark the wisdom of God in wrapping up the matter thus. *Life of St. John*, p. 112. A correspondent of the *New York Observer* in a recent number (Oct. 8th, 1871) gives an interesting account of the superstitious beliefs and practices maintained at the present day at Rome, respecting the assumption of Mary, which has now become an article of faith, the present infallible pope obliging people to believe what was condemned by one of his predecessors.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 45-56; Mark xv. 33-41; Luke xxiii. 44-49.

<sup>3</sup> Τετέλειονται! John xix. 30.

opened. We are amazed at the supine inattention of the unbelieving to these evidences, which were represented by the hand of Providence to their very senses: turning aside from the awful spectacle, and busying themselves in the ordinary occupations of life, unconscious of what was passing around them. Better to interpret this indifference, with a well-known historian,<sup>1</sup> as another mournful proof of the "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," than attempt to reason away the miracles of the crucifixion, saying that the trembling and the darkening of the sun were the natural phenomena of a volcanic region, and the resurrection of the dead was nothing more than visionary appearances confined to the depressed and awe-struck minds of the disciples.<sup>2</sup> These were real and wonderful miracles, not to be attributed to the operation of mere natural causes, but to the mighty power of God, as if nature were in part in sympathy with Him who died. There was at least one there who did not share in the indifference with which the great multitude regarded these miracles, but whose mind was deeply impressed by them, and who afterwards, if he did not then, came to understand the deep significance which was involved in them.

When the soldiers came to hasten the death of those who were hanging on the crosses, that their bodies might not remain there on the Sabbath day, they found our blessed Lord already dead. Not a bone of Him was broken. The record of the apostle John here, besides being full of interest, is notably that of an eye-witness: "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

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. xv. end.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Christianity*, by Milman (London, 1840), i., p. 363. His language is: "This supernatural gloom appears to resemble that terrific darkness which precedes an earthquake. . . . The same convulsion (the earthquake) would displace the stones which covered the ancient tombs, and lay open many of the innumerable rock-hewn sepulchres which perforated the hills on every side of the city, and exposed the dead to public view. To the awe-struck and depressed minds of the followers of Jesus, no doubt, were confined those visionary appearances of the spirits of their deceased brethren, which are obscurely intimated in the rapid narratives of the evangelists." To which he adds in a footnote: "Those who assert a supernatural eclipse of the sun rest on a most dubious and suspicious tradition," etc. We vastly prefer the manner in which the author of the *Decline and Fall* speaks of these and other miracles of the Bible. Milman's views of the miracles of the Bible are quite fully stated in the preface to his *History of the Jews*. He says that "in the passage of the Red Sea, the east wind which 'the Lord caused to blow,' and which threw back the waters, was in itself probably no rare phenomenon," etc.

knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." <sup>1</sup> This flowing of the blood and water together from the wound of the spear made a deep impression on John; nothing in the scene of the crucifixion seems to have made a deeper impression. It was in particular reference to this that he makes his testimony so strong and emphatic. He makes it thus emphatic, because the testimony is so important: important not only as part of the conclusive evidence that the death of Christ was a real death, but because the beloved disciple saw something eminently significant, as we learn not only from the manner in which the record is made, but also from his First Epistle, in the twofold stream of water and blood which flowed from the wounded side of Christ. We learn from that epistle <sup>2</sup> that the water and the blood belong to a ternary of witnesses to the efficacy of faith in Jesus Christ. In them is the evidence that He is an all-sufficient Saviour. The water and the blood flowing together from the same fountain are symbolical of the sinlessness and the sufferings of the Redeemer, which cannot be separated in His work of atonement. And they are at the same time significant of the two great benefits, sanctification and justification, which also cannot be separated in believers who partake of the benefits of His atoning work. This passage in his epistle, written late in life, shows how deep was the impression on the mind of John made by the events of which he was a witness on the day of crucifixion, and how he was qualified thereby to become an inspired teacher of the Church. We cannot well understand how he was fitted for his great and important work, except as we give prominence to the educating influence of the ministry of Christ, especially of its concluding period.

And now the evening of this eventful day, the brightest, darkest, most memorable day, on which morning ever dawned or evening closed, had come. And there came a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, who went in boldly unto Pilate (by this act openly confessing his faith in Him now that He was dead), and craved the body of Jesus. With him another rich man and counsellor, Nicodemus, who had before confessed Christ, united in paying rites of burial to His body. Never was money more worthily expended than for the linen and spices with which these men wrapped the body of Jesus. They laid it in a new sepulchre wherein never had man before been laid. John, no doubt, as well as the women of Galilee, saw what was done. There we leave this body, till the promised morning comes.

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 32-35.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John v. 6-8.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ST. JOHN A WITNESS OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

CHIEF FUNCTIONS OF AN APOSTLE.—EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AS ADDRESSED TO ST. JOHN.—HIS TESTIMONY ON THIS SUBJECT.—MARY MAGDALENE'S MESSAGE TO ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN.—FIRST APPEARANCE OF CHRIST.—ST. JOHN SEES THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE, AND BELIEVES.—CHRIST APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE.—TO ST. PETER.—TO THE TWO DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.—TO TEN APOSTLES IN THE EVENING.—TO THE ELEVEN, EIGHT DAYS AFTER.—TO ST. JOHN AND SIX OTHERS AT THE SEA OF GALILEE.—TO FIVE HUNDRED DISCIPLES ON A MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE.—THE ASCENSION.—COMPETENCY OF APOSTLES AS WITNESSES.—ST. JOHN NEITHER AN ENTHUSIAST NOR AN IMPOSTOR.

As it was one of the chief functions of the office for which St. John was preparing, and in the exercise of which he was to spend his long life, to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ, it becomes important to notice the nature and sufficiency of the evidence on which he and his associates in this office founded their testimony.

It was in the open, empty sepulchre of Jesus that St. John says he "saw and believed."<sup>1</sup> Some have argued that he meant no more than that he believed what Mary had said about the removal of the body.<sup>2</sup> But this entirely disagrees with the force of this expression as used by him, and with the immediate context: "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead;" *i.e.*, up to this time he and his companions had not understood the Scripture, but now he understood it, and believed. The open sepulchre had opened his eyes. The fact of Christ's resurrection holds so essential a place in the religion St. John went forth to propagate, and in which he performed so conspicuous a part, that whatever other facts are proved, unless this be established, Christianity, as a divinely revealed system, lacks proof; and he spent his life under the power of a gross delusion. There might be evidence, for example, that all that is said respecting the birth of Christ happened just as it is recorded, and that we have a true account of His teaching, His purity, His death; but without the proof of His resurrection it would only be established that a good man had lived and taught, and was martyred. Now what was the evidence presented to the mind of St. John and his fellow-

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 8.

<sup>2</sup> See Newcome, Ebrard, Stier.

apostles, which convinced them, and rendered them unimpeachable witnesses of this fact ?

The evidence John had that Christ's death was a real death, was, in the first place, of the clearest and most satisfactory nature. The soldiers that crucified Him made themselves sure that He was really dead.<sup>1</sup> When they came to break His legs, for the purpose of hastening His death, they found that He was dead already ; but that there might be no danger of mistaking a swoon for real death, one of them pierced His side, —the spear penetrating to the heart,—and forthwith came there out blood and water. The apostle John testifies with great emphasis that he saw this done, saw the blood and water gushing, as the soldier withdrew the spear.<sup>2</sup> The body was taken down from the cross, and Joseph of Arimathea having obtained permission of the governor to take charge of it,<sup>3</sup> in company with Nicodemus, wrapped it in linen with costly spices, and laid it in a new sepulchre in a garden near the place of crucifixion.<sup>4</sup> This was before sunset on Friday. On the following day, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, and said, " Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." They requested that a guard might be placed to prevent His disciples from coming by night to steal Him away. Their request was granted ; and they were told to make it as sure as they could. They went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.<sup>5</sup>

The Jewish Sabbath, corresponding to our Saturday, passes. Early on the morning of the first day of the week there was a great earthquake ;<sup>6</sup> an angel from heaven rolled back the stone from the door of

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 33.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 34-37. The short time He was suspended on the cross (as those subjected to this form of punishment often survived two or three days, and cases are cited of crucified persons, on being taken down, who were restored to life : Jos., Life, 75 ; Herod., vii. 194) might to some suggest a case of swoon rather than death. But even Renan admits that we have a sufficient guarantee that Jesus was actually dead, in the suspicious hatred of His enemies. " They must have made certain that He was actually dead " (Life of Jesus, chap. xxvi.). The *crucifragium* was not added to crucifixion in His case, because the soldiers could find no signs of life in Him, but to assure themselves that He was dead they deemed it sufficient to thrust the lance into His side.

<sup>3</sup> According to the law of the Jews, the body should have been taken away and buried in the spot set apart for criminals ; Mishna, *Sanhedrin*, vi. 5. According to that of the Romans it might be given to whomsoever claimed it. Digest., xlviii. 24, *De cadaveribus punitorum*. If Jesus had not numbered among His disciples such men as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, the Jewish rule would probably have been followed.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxvii. 57-60 ; Mark xv. 42-46 ; Luke xxiii. 50-53 ; John xix. 38-42.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xxvii. 62-66.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xxviii. 1-4 ; Mark xvi. 1-4 ; Luke xxiv. 1-7 ; John xx. 1-18. In

the sepulchre, and Jesus arose, but no mortal eye saw Him come forth. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and other Galilean women, having prepared spices for the body, came to the sepulchre. They found the stone rolled away, but the body of Jesus was not there. Mary Magdalene returned immediately into the city, to inform Peter and John. While she was gone angels appeared to the other women, who told them they were seeking the living among the dead; that Jesus, according to His own word, had risen; and directed them to go into the city and tell His disciples. On their way, in obedience to the angels, Jesus met them, and they embraced His feet, and worshipped Him. This was His first appearance. He dispatched them immediately with the same charge they had received from the angels, to go and tell the apostles, and that they should see Him in Galilee.<sup>1</sup>

Meantime John and Peter, in consequence of what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, hastened to the sepulchre. They ran both together;<sup>2</sup> and John did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre, and was stooping down, and looking on the linen clothes, when Peter came up, and passed immediately in. John is most graphic in his description of this scene. This was the occasion on which he said, he "saw and believed." The graveclothes were there, and he was struck

Matthew, where in the A. V. it is said there was a great earthquake, in the original the language is *σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας*, *there was a great shaking or concussion*. Nothing is said about the earth as in chap. xxvii. 51, *καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐσεισθη*. Whether this shaking extended to the earth has been and may be questioned. It may have extended only to the sepulchre. There was a shaking or trembling of the rock-hewn tomb. An earthquake so near, and yet which was not felt throughout the city, could scarcely be called "great."

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 5-10; Mark xvi. 5-8; Luke xxiv. 4. "A difficulty arises here in fixing the order of time between our Lord's appearance to Mary Magdalene and that to the other women. This arises from the use of the word *first* in Mark xvi. 9, which seems to imply that this appearance to Mary Magdalene was the first of all: 'He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.' Yet the whole course of events shows conclusively that Jesus had previously appeared to the other women. We are therefore compelled, and that in accordance with good and ordinary usage, to regard 'first' as put here not absolutely but *relatively*. That is to say, Mark narrates three, and only three, appearances of our Lord; of these three that to Mary Magdalene takes place *first*, and that to the assembled disciples the same evening occurs *last* (Mark xvi. 14). In any series or succession of events, where *πρῶτον* and *ὑστερον* are employed, whatever may be the number of intervening terms, *πρῶτον* marks the first of the series, and *ὑστερον* the last of the same series, and no other" (Robinson's Greek Harm., § 164).

<sup>2</sup> "Mirum est," says Calvin, in his comment on this incident, "quum tam pusilla ac fere nulla tam in discipulis quam in mulieribus esset fides, tantum fuisse ardoris. Et certe fieri non potest quin pietas eos impulerit ad quærendum Christum. Manebat igitur semen aliquod fidei in eorum cordibus, sed ad tempus suffocatum, ut nescirent se habere quod habebant."

with the care with which the napkin that was about His head had been folded, and laid in a place by itself.<sup>1</sup> They went away, leaving Mary, who had followed them back, standing without the sepulchre weeping. Stooping down, she looked in, and saw two angels, who addressed her tenderly in these words, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." As she turned around, she saw Jesus, whom, through her blinding tears, she mistook for the gardener, but whom she immediately recognised, as He pronounced her name. This was Christ's second appearance.<sup>2</sup>

His next appearance was to Peter, probably early in the afternoon of the same day; for He had been seen of Cephas, before He appeared to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus.<sup>3</sup> It was towards evening of the same day that He drew near and went with these disciples, as they walked, communing in their sadness. Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. They invited Him as they approached the village to take up His abode with them; and as He took the bread which they set before Him, their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight.<sup>4</sup>

His next appearance (His first to John) was to the disciples, assembled on the evening of the day on which He arose from the dead, Thomas alone of the eleven being absent. As John saw the risen Lord, what must have been his emotions! The disciples had closed the door for fear of the Jews, when of a sudden He stood in the midst of them. They were filled with terror, supposing that it was an apparition or spirit which they saw. But He reassured them, by His well-remembered tones, in the well-known words, "Peace be unto you." He showed them His hands and feet. He told them to handle Him, that they might have sensible proof that He was not a mere spirit. He asked for food, and ate it in their presence. He opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures as never before. He appointed them to be witnesses of His death and resurrection. He renewed the promise of the Father to them, that they should be endued with power from on high, and directed them where to wait until this promise should be fulfilled.<sup>5</sup> These five appearances all took place at or near Jerusalem, on the same day on which our Lord arose.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 3-10.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xvi. 9-11; John xx. 11-18.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 5; Luke xxiv. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiv. 13-35.

<sup>5</sup> Mark xvi. 11-18; Luke xxiv. 36-49; John xx. 19-23. He breathed upon them, adding in explanation "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It was a sign of the inspiration they were to receive to fit them to preach the gospel and proclaim forgiveness of sins. "But it was something more than a sign or symbol; a Divine



Eight days after He appeared again to the apostles, when Thomas was present. The doors were closed as on the former occasion, when Jesus stood suddenly in their presence. John of course was present. He was not alone, in some solitary place, in the still watches of the night. He had the senses of ten other men in which he could confide, in addition to his own, testifying to the reality of what he saw. He saw Thomas, who was so slow of faith, convinced, and the test which he had prescribed applied: “ 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.” The convinced apostle cried out, MY LORD, AND MY GOD.<sup>1</sup>

The apostles now went away into Galilee to await the appointed time to meet their risen Master on a certain mountain, designated by Him. While they were waiting He appeared to seven of them, St. John being of the number, engaged in fishing on the Sea of Tiberias. They had toiled all night, and taken nothing. When the morning dawned, they saw a person standing on the shore, who told them on which side to cast their net. They cast as directed, and were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. St. Peter at once exclaimed, “ It is the Lord,” and cast himself into the sea, and swam to the shore. The other disciples followed, dragging the net filled with great fishes. They found a fire of coals, and a repast already prepared. And now occurred that touching scene, when the Lord proposed the searching, thrice-put question to St. Peter, “ Lovest thou Me ? ” and called forth from him the heartfelt exclamation, “ Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.”<sup>2</sup> It was on this occasion that our Lord, in answer to a question of St. Peter, said of the beloved disciple, “ If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? ” a saying

operation accompanied it. It formed a link of connection between the promise of the Spirit and its fulfilment; between the impressions which Christ's personal intercourse had made upon the apostles, and the great fact which we designate as the outpouring of the Spirit.” See Neander's Life of Christ, § 301.

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 24-29. The words of Thomas, Ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου, are not a mere exclamation of astonishment, but a confession of his faith. This is evident from the εἶπεν αὐτῷ, and the impossibility of referring Ὁ κύριός μου to any other than Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> The threefold question manifestly has reference to the threefold denial of Peter. In the first two questions our Lord uses the word ἀγαπᾷς, *lovest thou*; in the last, φιλῆις. In his answers Peter invariably says φιλῶ σε. It is a declaration of his personal attachment, and yet it is expressed with humility, as the circumstances demanded. Though he might be wanting in the Divine measure of love that belongs to Jesus, he knew that he loved Him. He uses a word of less meaning than that used by Christ, and when the Saviour, in His last question, used the same term, he answered with increased emphasis, “ Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest,” etc.

which the disciples falsely interpreted as meaning that "that disciple should not die."<sup>1</sup>

The appointed time had arrived, and John went with his companions to the mountain. It was on this occasion, it is supposed, that our Lord showed Himself to more than five hundred brethren at once, the greater part of whom were alive at the time St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians.<sup>2</sup> The formal appointment to meet His disciples on the mountain in Galilee was doubtless made known to the whole brotherhood as extensively as possible; and this concourse was probably gathered, not only from the surrounding country, but even from Jerusalem; for who of His followers, who knew of the appointed meeting, and could reach the place, would willingly have been absent? On this occasion, in this great convocation, the eleven, it is to be presumed, were in a solemn manner set apart to the apostleship. They were commissioned to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever had been commanded them. And the promise was added, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

At last St. John saw Him, with all the apostles, at the time of His ascension. He led them out of Jerusalem as far as to Bethany,<sup>3</sup> where He was parted from them and carried up to heaven. While they beheld He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. As they stood gazing up into heaven, at the place where He had disappeared, two men in white apparel came and told them that this same Jesus, who had been taken up from them into heaven, should so come, in like manner, as they had seen Him go into heaven.<sup>4</sup>

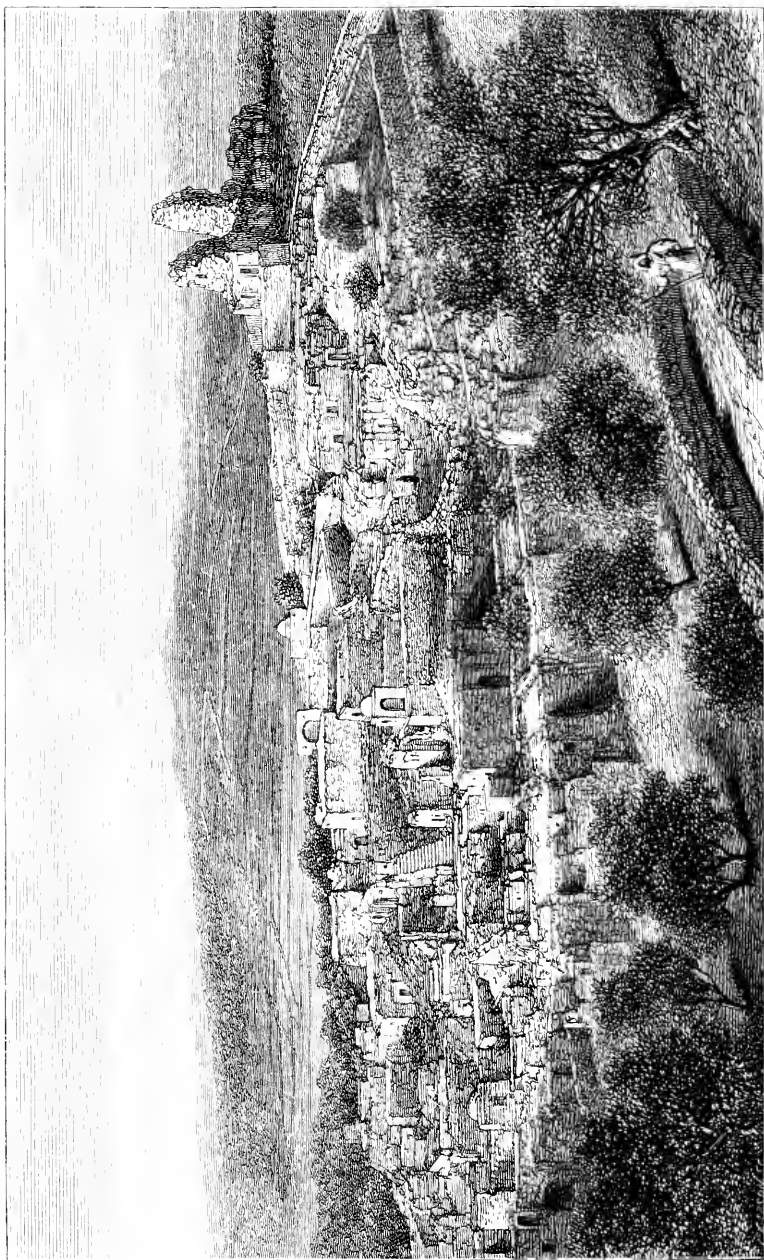
Thus was the proof completed. His departure from the world, like His entrance into it, was miraculous. Nothing was wanting

<sup>1</sup> John xxi. 1-24. The erroneous interpretation of our Lord's words respecting St. John, that he should not die, laid very strong hold on the early Church. Dean Stanley says that it "required nearly seventeen centuries to shake it entirely off." *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolical Age*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ἐξῶ εἰς Βηθανίαν, Luke xxiv. 50, "He led them out as far as to Bethany." It was here, as He blessed them, that He was parted from them, and ascended to heaven. Bethany lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, not far from a mile below the summit of the ridge. In Acts i. 12 Luke relates that after the ascension the disciples returned to Jerusalem "from the mount called Olivet." Luke uses the terms Bethany and Mount of Olives as interchangeable, and almost synonymous. Comp. Matt. xxi. 17; Mark xi. 11, 19, 20; Luke xxi. 37; and see an article by Rev. Dr. Edw. Robinson, in reply to the objections of the Rev. Mr. Newman, of Oxford, in the *Biblioth. Sac.* for February, 1843, p. 176, *seq.*

<sup>4</sup> Mark xvi. 19, 20; Luke xxiv. 50-53; Acts i. 9-12. Were the two men Moses and Elias? See Alexander on Acts i. 10.



*Copied by permission from a photograph taken by F. ESTLIN.*

BETHANY.



essential to a full conviction in the mind of John, and of his brother apostles, that He was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. In His ascension St. John saw the humanity of Jesus glorified, and a clear manifestation of His essential deity. Such were the many infallible proofs by which He showed Himself alive after His passion. The fact of His death, let it be added here, was never called in question by His enemies, but was fully admitted by the story to which they sought to gain credence, and to give currency, through the agency of the soldiers who were set to watch the tomb, that while they slept His disciples came and stole Him away.

It is true none of the witnesses were present when He arose. No mortal saw Him come out of the tomb, as Lazarus was seen to come out when he was raised from the dead. But He was seen alive in the same body in which He suffered, during forty days, by those who saw Him dead and buried, who were distinctly advertised, before His final departure from the world, that they were appointed to be witnesses of these things; and He was also seen by many others, who had the most undeniable evidence that He was crucified, dead, and buried. There was no expectation with the women to whom He first appeared, nor with His disciples, that He would rise again. Although He had repeatedly foretold His resurrection, it is evident they had not understood Him, and knew not the Scriptures that He must rise again. Certainly they were not looking for His return at the time He appeared. They were not in a frame of mind to be deceived by some phantom of the imagination. The women, to whom He first appeared, held Him by the feet as they worshipped. Mary Magdalene, mistaking Him through her tears for the gardener, instantly knew His voice as He pronounced her name.

If it be asked why He did not show himself publicly at Jerusalem, in the streets and in the temple, as before His crucifixion, it is a sufficient answer, that it would have been contrary to the whole course of His former life and ministry, in which He never sought to dazzle and confound the senses of men; and to that fundamental principle of His kingdom, which He had laid down, that it cometh not with "observation," as well as to His direct teaching that they who believe not Moses and the prophets (and He might have added who believed not, in view of His own teaching and miracles) would not believe though one rose from the dead.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, in his new *Life of Jesus*, advocates the theory that the appearances of Jesus to His disciples were nothing more than *visions*, and has prepared his argument with special care. A vision is distinguished from an appearance in that it exists for the mind only. He lays special emphasis on the passage, 1 Cor. xv. 3-8, in which the apostle speaks of the appearance to himself, on the way to

The apostle John, therefore, had as good evidence, and his testimony is as reliable, as if he had been present when the angel rolled away the stone, and the Lord of life emerged from the tomb. He had every opportunity to be satisfied of the verity of the facts to which he testifies. In bearing this testimony, he sacrificed or endangered all his temporal interests, and had not the least prospect of any earthly advantage or reward. He was steadfast to this testimony, when the fiercest persecutions raged. If he did not seal it with his blood, which was literally true of nearly, if not quite, all the rest of the apostles, we nevertheless have in him an example of unwavering steadfastness in it through all the trying and chequered scenes of a life, continued to quite a century, through persecutions which his brethren, whose course was shorter, escaped; which certainly renders his testimony of no less value. These men unite in telling us how at first they were unbelieving, or wholly ignorant of the meaning of Scripture, and of the Saviour's own predictions on the subject, and were even terrified at the sight of the risen Lord. They show us by what evidence they were convinced of His resurrection;<sup>1</sup> and being convinced, they never afterwards swerved.

Damascus, as of the same nature as that to His disciples at Jerusalem. And he argues that the appearance to Saul of Tarsus must have been simply and purely a vision, from his own words, Gal. i. 16: "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." But St. Paul does not confound a vision with an actual appearance. His argument, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, for the bodily resurrection of believers, would have no foundation if he had intended to speak of a mental vision, rather than the actual sight of the risen Christ, when he says, "He was seen of James, then of all the apostles, and last of all He was seen of me," etc.

Renan, with less or rather with no attempt whatever at argument, refers to the morbid condition or strong imagination of Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed of seven devils. "Divine power of love!" he exclaims, "sacred moments in which the passion of a hallucinated woman gives to the world a resurrected God."

<sup>1</sup> "One and all of them regarded His first appearance to them sceptically, and took pains to satisfy themselves, or made it necessary that Jesus should take pains to satisfy them, that the visible object was no ghostly apparition, but a living man, and that man none other than He who had died on the cross. The disciples doubted now the substantiality, now the identity, of the person who appeared to them. They were therefore not content with seeing Jesus, but at His own request handled Him. One of their number not only handled the body to ascertain that it possessed the incompressibility of matter, but insisted on examining, with sceptical ingenuity, those parts which had been injured with the nails and the spear. The power of imagination and nervous excitement we know can do much. It has often happened to men in an abnormal, excited state, to see, projected into outward space, the creations of a heated brain. But persons in a crazy state like that, subject to hallucination, are not usually cool and rational enough to *doubt* the reality of what they see; nor is it necessary in their case to take pains to overcome such doubts. What they need, rather, is to be made aware that what they think they see is *not* a reality: the very reverse of what Christ had to do for the disciples, and *did*, by solemn

Such is the evidence that St. John the apostle was no mere enthusiast, led astray by an impostor, and deceived by the phantasies of his own excited imagination. He saw the risen Lord, again and again, in company with others, with every advantage of being certified that He was the same Jesus whom he saw expire on the cross. He received the testimony of others who saw Him when he was not present, and in whom he had the best reason to repose the fullest confidence,—that of Peter, of the two disciples going to Emmaus, of James who had been once the unbelieving kinsman of the Lord, his own mother Salome, Mary Magdalene, and other women of Galilee. His confidence in the fact of Christ's resurrection, instead of growing weaker, became stronger as he advanced in age, in knowledge, and experience. His account<sup>1</sup> of it was written when he was far advanced in years. And at a still later period he says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you."<sup>2</sup>

When we inquire, more at large, what was the nature of that evidence which convinced him, in opposition to all his Jewish prejudices, against all the passions of corrupt nature, and all the powers of a frowning world, the answer is not difficult. The resurrection of Christ did but crown a life which began in a miracle and was a life of miracles. He had seen Jesus again and again perform works in which there was a sensible departure from the established laws of nature. He had seen effects which could not possibly have been the result of any other cause than the direct interposition of the power of Him who is the author of nature and its laws. There could be no delusion or mistake, for these miracles were palpable facts, addressed to the senses, and many of them were attended by lasting effects. He had seen men raised to sudden health from sickness, or who were born blind seeing, or crippled walking; he had seen the dead, from the couch, from the bier, and from a four days' burial, coming to life, and continuing active for a season (after reviviscence) in the affairs of this world. He saw this power of miracles not pompously displayed, nor exercised for the destruction of enemies or the aggrandisement of friends, but unostentatiously employed for benevolent and holy ends.

There was another form of evidence, to wit, the prophecies respecting Messiah, in the ancient Scriptures, which John could plainly see

assertion that He was no spirit, by inviting them to handle Him, to satisfy themselves of His material substantiality, and by partaking of food in their presence" (The Training of the Twelve, by Bruce, p. 497).

<sup>1</sup> John xx.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John i. 1-3.

were accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth. These Scriptures were in the custody, as they still are, of the Jews themselves, who for ages had preserved them with the utmost care and reverence. The prophecies they contain were delivered centuries before the birth of Jesus; and nearly three hundred years before that event, the Scriptures containing them had been translated, and widely disseminated in the Greek language, the language of the then literature of the world.<sup>1</sup> They contain distinct predictions of the particular seed, line, and even family, of which Jesus was born. They foretell the place, the time, and circumstances of His advent. They describe His forerunner. They predict in graphic terms the very miracles He performed. They foretell that He would be despised and rejected of men, that He should be slain, should lie in the grave, but should rise again.<sup>2</sup> The fulfilment of these Old Testament prophecies in Jesus of Nazareth was the finger of God pointing directly to Him. They who saw them fulfilled in Jesus could not do otherwise than believe that He was the promised Saviour of the world. He was Himself a prophet. He foretold events so near, some regulated by the caprice of men, and others which depended purely on the will of God, that they who heard them from His lips were the witnesses of their fulfilment. He foretold again and again His own death and resurrection, the conduct of His followers after He should leave them, His ascension to heaven, and the pouring out of the Spirit. He predicted and circumstantially described the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the evidence contained in His doctrine must be added to that derived from miracles and prophecy. John heard words, as they fell warm and glowing from the lips of Jesus, which have excited the admiration for ages of some of the most gifted intellects. He felt the authority which accompanied His teaching—a certain majesty and power which belonged to unmixed truth and perfect goodness. His reason, his conscience, his heart, were addressed by ONE who needed not that any should testify what is in man; who could unfold the most secret feelings; who could so hold up a mirror to his inner nature<sup>3</sup> that he should see even more than he knew to be there before. It was not

<sup>1</sup> The most probable date of the completion of the translation of the Scriptures into Greek is about the year B.C. 285, when Ptolemy Lagus and Ptolemy Philadelphus were kings of Egypt. It is called the Septuagint, either because the number of translators supposed to be engaged in it was seventy, or because it was approved by the Jewish Sanhedrin, consisting of seventy-two persons. This version was in common use in the synagogues, and it is from this that the New Testament more frequently quotes than from the Hebrew.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xl. 9; xli. 27; Hag. ii. 6-9; Micah v. 2; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5; Isa. vii. 14; Zech. ix. 9; Isa. xliii. 1-3; xxxv. 5, 6; liii., etc.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 22; Luke ix. 55, etc.



possible that the Son of God should come into the world without bringing with Him convincing evidence in His words, as well as His works, whence He came. He brought that evidence in its fulness and brightness; and the reason why all men should have yielded to it is intimated in the words which He Himself, recognising the light which one branch of the twofold evidence in His favour reflected on the other, addressed to a company of Jews, who were divided in their opinions in regard to Him: "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."<sup>1</sup> While the works of Christ proved His doctrine true, His doctrine was the evidence that His works were wrought by the power of God.

<sup>1</sup> John x. 37, 38.

## CHAPTER VII.

### HISTORY OF ST. JOHN IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

HE RETURNS TO JERUSALEM TO AWAIT THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.—  
GALILEE NO LONGER HIS HOME.—APOSTLES ASSEMBLED IN THE UPPER  
ROOM.—ST. JOHN AND THE MOTHER OF JESUS.—MARY DISAPPEARS FROM  
HISTORY.—MATTHIAS ELECTED AN APOSTLE.—DAY OF PENTECOST.—  
APOSTLES IN ONE OF THE STOAS OF THE TEMPLE.—TONGUES OF FLAME.  
—THREE THOUSAND CONVERTED.—ST. JOHN ENGAGED IN EVANGELIC  
WORK.—ITS EFFECT ON HIM.—MIRACLE AT THE GATE BEAUTIFUL OF  
THE TEMPLE.—ST. JOHN'S FIRST IMPRISONMENT.—ARRAIGNED BEFORE  
THE HIGH-PRIEST.—SECOND TIME IMPRISONED.—THE WORK ADVANCING.  
—MISSION OF ST. JOHN AND ST. PETER TO SAMARIA.—TIBERIUS.—  
CALIGULA.—AGRIPPA I.—PUBLIUS.—PETRONIUS.—CLAUDIUS.—MARTYRDOM  
OF ST. JAMES.—ANTIOCH.—THE JEWISH PARTY.—COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.  
—ST. JOHN A PILLAR OF THE CHURCH.

On the spot where His sacred feet last rested, John bowed, and worshipped the ascended Saviour. He then returned with his companions into the city, there to await, agreeably to the direction, the promise of the Spirit to be received from Him. Daily he resorted with them to the temple, praising and blessing God. He had seen His open sepulchre; he had seen Him ascend; and he knew that He was entered into His glory, and was able to fulfil His promise, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you."

Galilee, so long hallowed by the presence and deeds of Jesus, is no more the apostles' home. They are to obey the command, "Go ye into all the world;" but Jerusalem is for the present to be their headquarters, and to be made the centre of the great movement. "When they were come in they went up into an upper room:" was it the same in which they had partaken of the Passover, and the Lord's Supper, already consecrated by the farewell words of their crucified and ascended Lord?<sup>1</sup> Here were all the eleven, not one

<sup>1</sup> Τὸ ὑπερφῶν, the upper chamber. It was not an apartment in the temple, as some of the earlier interpreters supposed, but belonged probably to the private residence of some friend of Jesus. The article, the upper room, Dr. J. Addison Alexander thinks, refers to something previously mentioned, or already known. "This is altogether natural if we suppose them to have still frequented the same upper room, in which they had partaken of the Passover, and which had been designated by the Lord in a remarkable manner (Matt. xxvi. 18; Mark xiv. 15; Luke xxii. 12). This is much more probable than that they had procured another

missing,—Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alpheus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. And they continued, with the most perfect unanimity of feeling and sentiment, from day to day, in prayer and supplication. The pious women, who had been so faithful to Christ, in His life and death, were admitted to the privileges of this little assembly. Among them were Salome the mother of John, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary the mother of James the less.<sup>1</sup> This is the last time the name of the mother of our Lord occurs in the New Testament history. John had received the charge from the lips of the Saviour, dying on the cross, “Son, behold thy mother!” He cheerfully accepted it, for he tells us<sup>2</sup> that from that hour he took her to his own home. His father, Zebedæus, who had been possessed of property, was probably deceased; and it would seem that John already had a house, or was able to provide one, in Jerusalem. It was not with the beloved disciple as with his Master, who had not where to lay His head. To his home he took Mary, that “blessed among women”; and with what filial devotion he provided for her wants, soothed her sorrows, and smoothed her pathway to the tomb! According to one tradition, she died early in Jerusalem; according to another, she accompanied John when he removed to Ephesus, and died there at an advanced age. But whether her stay on earth was longer or shorter, she never had occasion to suspect that her confidence in the words, “Behold thy son!” had been misplaced. It is a most striking comment on the position the Church of Rome assigns to her, that she fills so small a space both in inspired and in uninspired history. She retires from the stage of human affairs, disappearing in the family circle of the beloved apostle, and nothing is known of the events of her subsequent life, nor of the circumstances and period of her death.

As the apostles continue, day after day, in prayer and supplication, in the upper room, and in their visits to the temple, praising and blessing God, they are led to take notice of the gap in their number, occasioned by the defection of Judas Iscariot. In order to complete

place for their assemblies, either in a private house, or in the precincts of the temple. Even supposing that they could have been accommodated in one of the chambers or small houses which surrounded the courts of the temple, they could have had no reason for preferring it to one already consecrated by the presence and farewell words of their ascended Master.” See Alexander on The Acts, *in loco*.

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 13, 14. J. A. Alexander thinks there is no express reference to the women that accompanied Him from Galilee, but that, according to a strict translation, the meaning is that there were *women* as well as men in the assembly; *i.e.*, it was not confined to either sex.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 27.

their number as originally constituted, the disciples in and around Jerusalem are called together. They assembled to the number of about one hundred and twenty. Peter takes the lead. He is spokesman, as on former occasions in their intercourse with their Master, not on account of any superiority or primacy, as of right belonging to him, but probably on account of his age, and his character for ready action. John must of course have taken a deep interest in the important transaction; but if he is less conspicuous here, and throughout the history of the Acts, than Peter, it must be remembered how much he was his junior, and how closely they were associated, insomuch that the acts and words of the one may almost be regarded as the acts and words of the other. With solemn prayer, Matthias was chosen to fill the place "from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."<sup>1</sup>

Fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, ten days after His ascension, something very wonderful occurred in the temple at Jerusalem. The city was full of people. There were assembled representatives of the Jews who had settled among the different nations of the earth. They were men of a serious or devout class, who had come to be present at Jerusalem on the occasion of a great religious festival. Some had come from the regions adjacent to the Caspian Sea, and from the borders of the ancient Persian empire; others from the countries lying between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates; others from the shores of the Ægean Sea; others came from Arabia; others from Africa; and others still from Rome, the capital of the world.<sup>2</sup> The festival they had come to attend occurred at the end of seven weeks, or a week of weeks, from the second day of the Passover, and hence was called the feast of weeks. In the time of the apostles, it had

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 24-26. The view has been advocated by Stier and others, that Paul was the true twelfth apostle, and that the appointment of Matthias was in opposition to the will of God. The circumstance that the labours of Matthias as an apostle are not mentioned no more proves that he was not an apostle, than the silence in respect to several of the twelve proves that they were not apostles. Paul never claimed that he was one of the twelve, but makes a distinction between them and himself, as in 1 Cor. xv. 5. Matthias must have been, according to what is implied in Peter's address, a constant attendant of Christ from the beginning to His resurrection and ascension. Some have conjectured that he was one of the seventy disciples sent forth by Jesus, and there is nothing unreasonable in the suggestion.

<sup>2</sup> Even Judea is introduced into this catalogue of foreign names. Olshausen adduces the circumstance that St. Luke, writing probably from Rome, considered the geographical position of Judea from the point of view at Rome, rather than Jerusalem. Bengel and Meyer account for its insertion from the fact that the dialect of Galilee was different from that of Judea, and this dialect was that of the speaker.

received the name of Pentecost, or fiftieth; *i.e.*, it was the feast of the fiftieth day after the second day of the Passover. According to a tradition of the Jews, it commemorated the giving of the law on Sinai with fire from heaven. They had come to worship the God of their fathers in the capital of their nation. Probably they had been present at the preceding Passover, and had remained, or had been "dwelling," at Jerusalem in the meantime. It may have been the first occasion on which some of this host of pilgrims had visited the holy city. It was to be ever memorable to thousands of them, and in the history of the Church and the world.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples were all, with the same delightful accord, or union, in one place.<sup>1</sup> The place probably was the temple, to which the apostles, since the ascension, had been in the habit of daily resorting for praising and blessing God. They knew the relation which this great festival had to the giving of the law by Moses; and the public ceremonials would not only draw them, but lead them to protract their stay at the temple; so that the place in which they were gathered was most probably one of the oratories, or *stoas*, which occupied the upper range of the inner court of the temple. They were full of expectation, awaiting the advent of the promised Comforter from the Father. To the great mass of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the throng of strangers, they were unnoticed and unknown; or, if not altogether unknown, they were regarded as of very little account.

Suddenly,<sup>2</sup> there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the apartment, and lambent flames, like tongues of fire, playing around, lighted upon each of them. Now were fulfilled the words of their great Master. The Comforter had come. The awful rush as of that mighty wind and the tongues of fire were the sensible signs, addressed to their eyes and ears, of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The old law on Mount Sinai was given amid darkness, tempest, and fire, and thunders, which shook the mountain; and now as the Church was about to be reorganized, on the basis of a new and better covenant, this assembly, representing the body of believers, hear the sound as of a mighty breathing about them, and see the flashing of flames, which in the shape of tongues alight on each of them. These

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii.

<sup>2</sup> ἄφνω, unexpectedly. The disciples were not looking for anything so extraordinary. It is not said that a wind or tempest accompanied the manifestation, but that there was ἦχος, a *sound* as of a mighty rushing wind or breathing, πνοῆς. The common impression that the tongues were divided into two or more is not sustained by the original, as the word διαμεριζόμενοι means *distributed*; *i.e.*, the pointed tongue-like flames were distributed upon each of them.

external sensible signs of spiritual influence were followed by the influence itself: "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Their speaking in languages different from their own, and previously unknown, was miraculous, and another sign of the presence of a Divine power. The design of this gift was not merely to facilitate the preaching of the gospel; it served, like any other miracle, but with a special propriety and force, to prove the reality of an extraordinary spiritual influence. "And it served as a symbol to prefigure the vocation of the Gentiles, whose exclusion from the Church, or chosen people, had been typified of old by a corresponding prodigy, the miraculous confusion of tongues at Babel. As the moral unity of mankind had been then lost, it was now to be restored by the preaching of the gospel to all nations."<sup>1</sup>

The body of the disciples, on whom the tongues of flame were sitting, and who were speaking with other tongues, so that the multitude, composed as it was of men speaking so many different languages,<sup>2</sup> heard them speak every man in his own language, became of course at once the centre of attraction. They were filled with astonishment, as well they might be, when they heard these Galileans address them every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born. There was a general exclamation, "What meaneth this?" But some tried to make light of it, and said, "These men are full of new wine."<sup>3</sup> But Peter, with the eleven, stood up, and addressing the multitude, showed them that what had occurred was the fulfilment of a signal prophecy of Joel, and demonstrated, in a discourse of great power, the Messiahship of Jesus. The hundred and twenty, who appear to have shared in the gift of tongues, scattered among the crowd, probably acted as interpreters, so that every man might be able to understand the purport of the discourse. Or the meaning may be, that in whatever language Peter spoke, every man heard him

<sup>1</sup> Alexander on Acts, *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> To say that they only preached and prayed with a flow of language, and fervour entirely new to them, or that their tongues "now became the organs of the Holy Ghost" (Baumgarten), is inconsistent with the following narrative, where men from distant countries are represented as hearing every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born. Bloomfield well remarks that there is no phraseology in Pindar himself more lyrical than the high-wrought figure thus ascribed to a plain prose narration.

<sup>3</sup> *Ἰνέβριος*, *sweet*, rather than *new-made*, wine. It denotes a fermented wine in which the sweetness was retained. The word is used in the Sept. version (Job xxxii. 19) for the common Hebrew word for wine, where the reference to fermentation is essential to the meaning. Athenæus, a physician and voluminous writer, supposed to have lived in the first century after Christ, uses the word in the same sense. See Rob. Lex. N. T.

in his own. Three thousand were converted. "They joined themselves to the company of Christ's disciples, and continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Opposition, for a time at least, seems to have ceased, and awe to have fallen on all minds. The good work went on; many signs and wonders were done by the apostles; and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. St. John no doubt shared largely in the work and joy of this blessed season,—this great introductory work of the dispensation of the Spirit. How suited to his zealous mind, his loving heart! He now understood the words of Scripture, and the words of Jesus, as they were marvellously brought to his recollection. His mind was enlightened, and his soul fired with love, as never before. He shared in that blessed experience, when the infant Church, notwithstanding its sudden increase, by those who were from so many different nations, had that unity of feeling and affection, that it seemed to constitute but one family, with identity of interest and even possessions. "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread, from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people." Happy John! happy disciples all! who had followed Jesus, despite the ignominy of His cross, permitted to see a day like this!

We next see John associated with Peter in the performance of a miracle, which was the occasion of the beginning of opposition to the Christian Church, or that pressure from without which seems to have been necessary, or at least was overruled, as one of the providential causes for the spread of the new religion. As these two apostles were going up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the third stated hour, being the ninth hour of the day, corresponding to our three o'clock in the afternoon, the same being the hour of evening sacrifice, a certain man, who had been lame from his birth, and was now above forty years old, was lying at the gate of the temple, at which they were about to enter. It seems that his friends were in the habit of placing him in this, one of the most frequented localities, for the purpose of soliciting alms. Of course he was well known to those visiting the temple at this favourite entrance, called the Beautiful Gate.<sup>1</sup> As Peter and John approached, the lame man asked alms. They fixed

<sup>1</sup> As *ᾠρα* topically has the sense of *bloom*, or *beauty*, as of youth, *ᾠραίων*, applied to gate, means "beautiful," although its primary sense is *timely* or *seasonable* (Acts iii. 2). It is not certainly known what gate is meant, but probably one of the external gates leading from without into the area of the temple, or court of the Gentiles, on the east side of which was Solomon's porch. It was so called, as we may presume, from its architectural decorations. See *Biblioth. Sac.*, 1843, p. 19, *seq.*, and *Biblioth. Sac.*, 1846, p. 626; and *Robinson's Lex. of N. T.*

their eyes on him, and said "Look on us." They told him they had no silver or gold to give him, but that they would give him, or do for him, what was in their power. Immediately they commanded him, in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, to rise and walk. With the word they raised him up, and his feet and ankle-bones received strength; and he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him, and as they knew it was he whom they had been in the habit of seeing lying hopelessly lame at the Beautiful Gate, they came running together, greatly wondering. St. Peter made it the occasion of another powerful and solemn discourse, in which he charged home upon them the guilt of crucifying the Lord of glory, to the evidence of whose Divinity he points in the miracle which had just been wrought in His name. He calls on them to repent, and proclaims the second glorious coming of Christ to judge the world.

The indignation of the Jewish rulers, especially of the Sadducees, because of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which they preached through Jesus, was aroused, and Peter and John were arrested and cast into prison. But the good work of conversion went on; the number of believers was increased to about five thousand. The next day they were arraigned before the high-priest, and being asked by what power or by what name they had done this, Peter, that same Peter who had acted so cowardly at first, when his Master was standing at the bar of the same high-priest, used the occasion for a faithful discourse, in which he told his hearers that there was none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ, by whom the man who stood before them had been made whole. There the man stood, and they could not deny that a miracle had been wrought. They knew not what to do. But after conferring privately, they commanded them that they should not preach any more in the name of Jesus. The high-priest was acquainted with John, and perhaps they thought his authority would be sufficient to restrain these men. But Peter and John said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They threatened them further, but were compelled to discharge them.<sup>1</sup> The report among

<sup>1</sup> It is said that they "perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men," ἀγράμματοί εἰσι καὶ ἰδιῶται (Acts iv. 13). The Greek root γράμματα means more than mere letters in the sense of alphabetical characters: to wit, letters in the higher sense of literature, learning. They were but slightly versed in the rabbinical learning, so prized among the Jews, or in that science which was imparted by the higher education. Ἰδιῶται is rendered by Tyndale, *lay-people*: by Cranmer, *laymen*. The best sense is that they were *private individuals*, unofficial persons.



the disciples of what had taken place was followed by a most remarkable season of worship.<sup>1</sup> The place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and preached the word of God with boldness.

Thus the blessed work went on. Signs and wonders continued to be wrought by the hands of the apostles, and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes, both men and women. Again was the indignation of the high-priest and the Sadducees aroused. The entire body of the apostles appear now to have been seized and put into the common prison.<sup>2</sup> This was the second time John had been called to endure this form of persecution, and it was not to be the last. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and directed them to go to the temple and preach. There the officers found them the next day, when the great council had come together and ordered them to be produced. The apostles consented to appear, and addressed the Sanhedrin in a pungent and faithful manner, and would have been put to death had it not been for the advice of the celebrated Gamaliel. They were beaten, commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, and discharged. They left the presence of their persecutors, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

But former persecutions were greatly exceeded by one that arose soon after the seven had been appointed to relieve the apostles in the daily ministrations.<sup>3</sup> One of their number, Stephen, a man full of faith and power, "did great wonders and miracles among the people."<sup>4</sup> A large number of the priests, as well as of the common people, were obedient to the Christian faith. He argued with such power that the representatives of the synagogues, Jews of distinction, from Alexandria and Asia Minor, could not stand before him. But if they could not withstand his reasonings, they could destroy him. They therefore suborned men to bring against him the charge of blasphemy. Arrested, he was brought before the Sanhedrin, where his face was seen as it had been the face of an angel,<sup>5</sup> and where he delivered a discourse of great eloquence and power. But they gnashed on him with their teeth; and when, looking up into heaven, he cried, "Behold, I see the

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 18, *ἐν τῇρήσει δημοσίᾳ*, "in a public prison." The primary meaning of *τῆρησις* is a *watching, keeping*. We have a classical example of this word meaning *prison*, Thucyd., 7, 86.

<sup>3</sup> Acts vi. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Acts vi. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Acts vi. 9-15. It had perhaps a supernatural glow and brightness (Exod. xxxiv. 29), or an appearance superhuman and celestial.

heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," they ran upon him with one accord, cast him out of the city, and stoned him. The foreign Jews, who took the lead in bringing the accusation, probably took the lead in stoning Stephen. They do not appear to have waited for any sentence from the Sanhedrin; but the members of that council, moreover, do not appear to have made any attempt to restrain them; too willing perhaps, as the power of inflicting death had been taken away from them by the Romans, to have him destroyed in a way which would not involve them or the Jews of Jerusalem in difficulty with the procurator. It is not necessary, therefore, to suppose that the procurator was absent, or the office for the time vacant, but only that this outrage was committed by those who were strangers at Jerusalem, and could not easily be found or identified.<sup>1</sup>

One of these foreign Jews was from Cilicia, from Tarsus, its capital. He now becomes the leader, although but a young man, or occupies a most conspicuous position. And yet he was to become one of the most conspicuous leaders in the Christian church. "And the witnesses [the men who had charged Stephen with blasphemy] laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." And it was under his direction that this, the first great persecution, was continued until the disciples of Christ were scattered in every quarter from Jerusalem, and were persecuted even unto strange cities. John little anticipated the time when the fierce persecutor would take him by the hand, and greet him as a brother beloved. His zeal in conducting the persecution knew no bounds. He made havoc of the Church, invading houses, and dragging men and women to prison. He breathed out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high-priest, and obtained letters empowering him to pursue those who had fled and bring them back to Jerusalem. He says he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt that however wrongfully he acted (and no one regarded his conduct as more sinful than he himself subsequently), he acted conscientiously. After his conversion he seems to have regarded his course with the deepest shame and humiliation. "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to

<sup>1</sup> Commentators have generally overlooked the fact that the martyrdom of Stephen was at the hands of these foreign Jews, acting in a lawless and tumultuous manner. It is too much to believe that the dignified Gamaliel and his associates would have thus rushed on a prisoner standing at their bar.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 9.





*Copied by permission from a photograph taken by F. F. Hill.*

SAMARIA.

blaspheme." Three times mention is made of the fact that *women* as well as men were the objects of his cruelty.<sup>1</sup>

Again we find these two men, Peter and John (who were so unlike in character, yet were on such intimate terms), together on a most interesting and important occasion. When the disciples were scattered abroad by the persecution that arose at the death of Stephen,<sup>2</sup> Philip went down and preached at Samaria; and there was a great movement in that city, and great joy was the fruit of it.<sup>3</sup> When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of it, they deputed Peter and John, who, taking the familiar road towards their native region, came to Samaria and prayed for the Samaritans, and laid their hands on them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. It was on this occasion they were thrown in contact with the well known sorcerer, Simon Magus, who fills so large a place in primitive ecclesiastical history, who sought with money to purchase the power of conferring the Holy Ghost. His doctrines were substantially those of the Gnostics, with which John was to have so much to do in his later life, after he had taken up his abode at Ephesus.<sup>4</sup> In the Ephesian opponents to Christianity we observe the same combination of gnosis and demonistic sorceries which Simon, not without reason, is charged with being the first to attempt to engraft on Christianity. On the return of Peter and John to Jerusalem, they preached in many villages of the Samaritans. It is a pleasing thought that John may have preached the gospel of peace and

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 3, ix. 2, xxii. 4, xxvi. 10, 11; 1 Tim. i. 13-15. In that admirable work, "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," by the late Rev. W. J. Conybeare, M.A., and Dean Howson, the early life of the apostle is sketched with graphic and lifelike power. We see the boy, Saul, in his earliest development in his father's house at Tarsus; we see him at the school of the synagogue; we see him in his student life in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel; we see him at his introduction into Christian history, at the martyrdom of Stephen. It is the beginning of what is in fact a living picture of the apostle.

<sup>2</sup> All except the apostles were driven from Jerusalem; *i.e.*, all who were in any office or work which made them prominent, or known to the persecutors. It is possible the miracles the apostles performed may have caused them to be regarded with an awe which for a time gave them security. They were protected by the special providence of God, as there were reasons connected with the organization of the Church which rendered it important they should remain at Jerusalem. The apostle John was of course a deeply interested witness of this great persecution, and joined in the mourning occasioned by the martyrdom of Stephen, that man "full of grace and power."

<sup>3</sup> Acts viii. 4 *seq.* This was not Philip the apostle, but Philip, one of the seven; Acts vi. 5; afterwards spoken of as an evangelist, xxi. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Neander and Gieseler conjecture that Simon Magus was the same whom Josephus mentions (*Antiq.*, xx., 7 [2]); who was by birth a Cypriot, and who pretended to be a magician. But the Simon mentioned in the Acts was a Samaritan, as the Apostolical Constitutions, vi. 7, and Justin Martyr, himself born in Samaria (*Apology*, i. 34), inform us.

love, and been made the instrument of salvation, in that very village on which he once sought permission to call down fire of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Wonderful are the ways and works of providence and grace!

Years pass away. The reign of Tiberius, who was emperor at the time of the crucifixion, has closed. He was the successor of Augustus, born 42 B.C. His mother, Livia, married Augustus, who adopted him as his heir and successor. From his youth he was melancholy and reserved, and apparently without sympathies and affections. He was by nature cruel and revengeful; and power gave him the opportunity of gratifying his malignant passions.<sup>2</sup> His reign was in sad contrast with that of Augustus. He was not less than fifty-six years of age when he ascended the throne. At length, in the year 26 from the birth of Christ, he retired from Rome to Capræa, that he might indulge his sensual propensities in private with less restraint.<sup>3</sup> He never again passed within, although he sometimes approached, the walls of Rome. From his luxurious retreat in Capræa he issued his decrees. Suetonius and Tacitus record the murders committed in compliance with the imperial edicts. The wealthy inhabitants of Spain, Gaul, and Greece were condemned to death for mere trifles, that their confiscated estates might go to augment his exchequer. At the age of nearly eighty, A.D. 37, he died; his death, it is said, having been hastened by the hands of a freedman. He was on the throne when John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judæa preaching, and Jesus Christ entered on His public ministry. He was the man to whom the Jews referred, when they said to Pilate, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." He had several years yet to reign, when Jesus expired on the cross and accomplished His Divine mission. He was on the throne at the time of Pentecost, and of the martyrdom of Stephen, and of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

He was succeeded by his nephew Caligula, whose real name was Cains Cæsar, the youngest son of Germanicus, born A.D. 12. The beginning of his reign was distinguished for mildness and great generosity; but a severe malady, which seized him at the end of the first year, it is supposed disordered his intellect; as his fearful excesses appear rather as the acts of a madman than of a reasonable being.<sup>4</sup> He raised his wife and his horse to the consulate, and fed his wild beasts with the bodies of citizens and captives. With the number of his victims his thirst for blood seemed to increase, and murdering to become with him a matter of pleasure and amusement.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, Ann., i. 80; Suet., Tib., e. 28, e. 57, and e. 60; Dion Cass., lviii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus, Ann., iv. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Tacitus, Ann. vi.; Suet., Calig.; Dion Cass., lix.; Jos. Antiq., xix. 1.





CALIGULA.



His voluptuousness and obscenity were equal to his cruelty. He squandered almost incredible sums of money. He fell the victim of a violent death, at the hands of conspirators, A.D. 41, when he was scarcely thirty years of age; and the four years of vice, folly, and cruelty that distinguished his reign had just come to an end at the point now reached in the history of the apostle John.

The accession of Caligula was of the greatest importance to a man whose name stands connected with an event recorded in the apostolical history (which event was of the deepest interest to St. John). Agrippa was the son of Aristobulus, one of the two unfortunate sons of Herod the Great by Mariamne. His early life had been but little else than a continued series of adventures and vicissitudes. He inherited the prodigality without the wealth of the Herodian race. On the death of his mother, Berenice, he speedily wasted his estate in lavish expenditure, and found himself overwhelmed with debts. He sought to hide himself away in an insignificant village in his native Idumea. He next became a pensioner of Herod Antipas, whose incestuous wife, Herodias, was his sister. But soon withdrawing from Galilee, we find him leaving Antioch in disgrace, and retiring to Ptolemais in the deepest indigence, with scarcely any other friend than Cypros, his affectionate, noble wife. He at length succeeded in effecting a loan from a freed slave of his mother, by the aid of which he once more reached Rome. His debts still oppressed him. Antonia, the faithful friend of his mother, lent him a sum sufficient to discharge his debt to the imperial treasury. But preferring to attach his fortunes to those of Caius Caligula rather than those of the grandson of the emperor, he was cast into prison, where he remained till Caligula came to the throne.<sup>1</sup> On his liberation he was received at court, and had conferred on him the vacant tetrarchate of Philip, with the title of king, to which soon after were added the dominions of his brother-in-law, Herod Antipas, who had been banished in disgrace to Lyons, in Gaul.

The presidentship over Syria of Publius Petronius, a man who appears to have been of as upright a character as paganism was capable of producing, had also come to an end.<sup>2</sup> Some ten or twelve years had elapsed since Pentecost. Claudius was now emperor, having succeeded Caligula on the throne at the age of fifty. He is said to have been a man, although not of strong intellect, of great industry and diligence, who devoted, both before and after his accession, a great part of his time to literary pursuits. He was raised to the imperial throne, contrary to the wishes of the senate, by the prætorian guard. The first act of his government was to proclaim an amnesty, and a few

<sup>1</sup> Dion Cass., lx. 8; Jos. Antiq., xvii., xviii., xix. Wars, i., xxviii. (1).

<sup>2</sup> Jos. Ant., xviii. 8; Philo, De Legatione; Tacitus, Ann., xlix. 6, 45.

only of the murderers of his predecessor were put to death. He repealed Caligula's foolish and cruel edicts, and his government is said to have been mild and popular.<sup>1</sup> To him belongs the credit of having abolished in Gaul the blood-stained religion of the Druids. It was during his reign that the southern part of Britain was constituted a Roman province, and the apostle Paul made his second and third visits to Jerusalem after his conversion, and his first missionary journey. It is related in the Acts of the Apostles<sup>2</sup> that it was in consequence of an edict of Claudius, expelling the Jews from Rome, a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, and his wife Priscilla, had come to Corinth, where Paul found them. They were Christians. Suetonius relates that Claudius required the Jews to leave Rome, because they were continually making disturbance, under the influence of one "Chrestus." The reference, there can scarcely be a doubt, is to Christ<sup>3</sup> and the doctrine of His Messiahship, thus proving that there were Christians in considerable numbers already in the imperial city; the heathen not having yet learned to make any distinction between them and the Jews.

It was during the reign of Claudius that an event occurred which must have deeply affected John. This was the martyrdom of his brother James by Herod<sup>4</sup> (Agrippa I.), to whose dominions Claudius, at his accession, had added Judæa, so that he found himself, A.D. 41, master of the whole of Palestine, the kingdom over which his grandfather, Herod the Great, had borne sway. The cause of the slaying of James is not stated. It was probably done at the instigation of the Jews. It crowned him as the apostolic protomartyr. It must have been a severe blow to John. It struck down at his side one who was kindred in spirit, as well as in blood. "There is something touching in the contrast between the two brothers, James and John. One died by the sword before the middle of the first century; the other lived on till its close, and died a natural death. One was removed just when his Master's kingdom, concerning which he had so eagerly inquired, was beginning to show its real character; he probably never heard the word 'Christian' pronounced. The other remained until the anti-Christian enemies of the faith were 'already come,' and was labouring against them when his brother had been fifty years at rest in the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

There is but one other occasion mentioned in the Acts with which

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.*, xi. and xii.; Suet., *Claud.*; *Jos. Antiq.*, xix. 2, xx. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Claud.*, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xiii. 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, i., p. 127.

we connect John. In the early Church some of the Pharisees who believed insisted on the perpetual obligation of circumcision and other Jewish rites and practices. One of the earliest appearances of this Jewish party, with which John subsequently had so much to do, and to which there are so many distinct allusions, particularly in some of the earlier of his writings, was at Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were labouring with great success. It was one of the most celebrated cities of antiquity, about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, on the banks of the Orontes, thirty miles from the Mediterranean. It had been the metropolis of the Syrian kings, and was the capital in which the governors of the Roman possessions in Asia held their court. It was but little inferior in size and splendour to Alexandria, ranking third among the cities of the empire. It was here that the disciples of Christ were first called Christians. St. Paul made it the central point for the diffusion of Christianity among the Gentiles. It was here that certain Judaizers from Jerusalem appeared, insisting that it was necessary that Gentile converts should be circumcised. The dissension which arose led Paul, with some of his co-labourers, to visit Jerusalem, and ask for a council of the apostles and elders to consider and determine the question. This was in the year of our Lord 50. We have the record in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. The decision was in accordance with the views of St. Paul. Although the name of John does not appear in the record by Luke as among those present, it is honourably mentioned by Paul himself, when referring to this occasion in one of his epistles.<sup>1</sup> It is his testimony that John, with Peter and James (this was St. James the Less, the son of Alphæus, not the brother of John, who was already dead), "seemed to be pillars,"<sup>2</sup> and gave to him the right hand of fellowship.

On one of two former occasions, when St. Paul had visited Jerusalem since his conversion, these remarkable men (St. Paul and St. John) may possibly have met; but this was the only meeting of which distinct mention is made in Scripture. The mind, therefore, eagerly seizes on the incident. St. Paul fully appreciated the character of his brother, and recognised in him one of the strong and beautiful pillars of the house of God. He never could forget his cordial grasp<sup>3</sup> as he departed again to his work among the heathen. The incident indeed is very expressive and significant. St. John had been silent in the assembly in which the other two "pillars," Peter and James, were so conspicuous. But at the close of it he thus expressed his hearty union with the great apostle of the Gentiles, in his opposition to the Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 1-10.

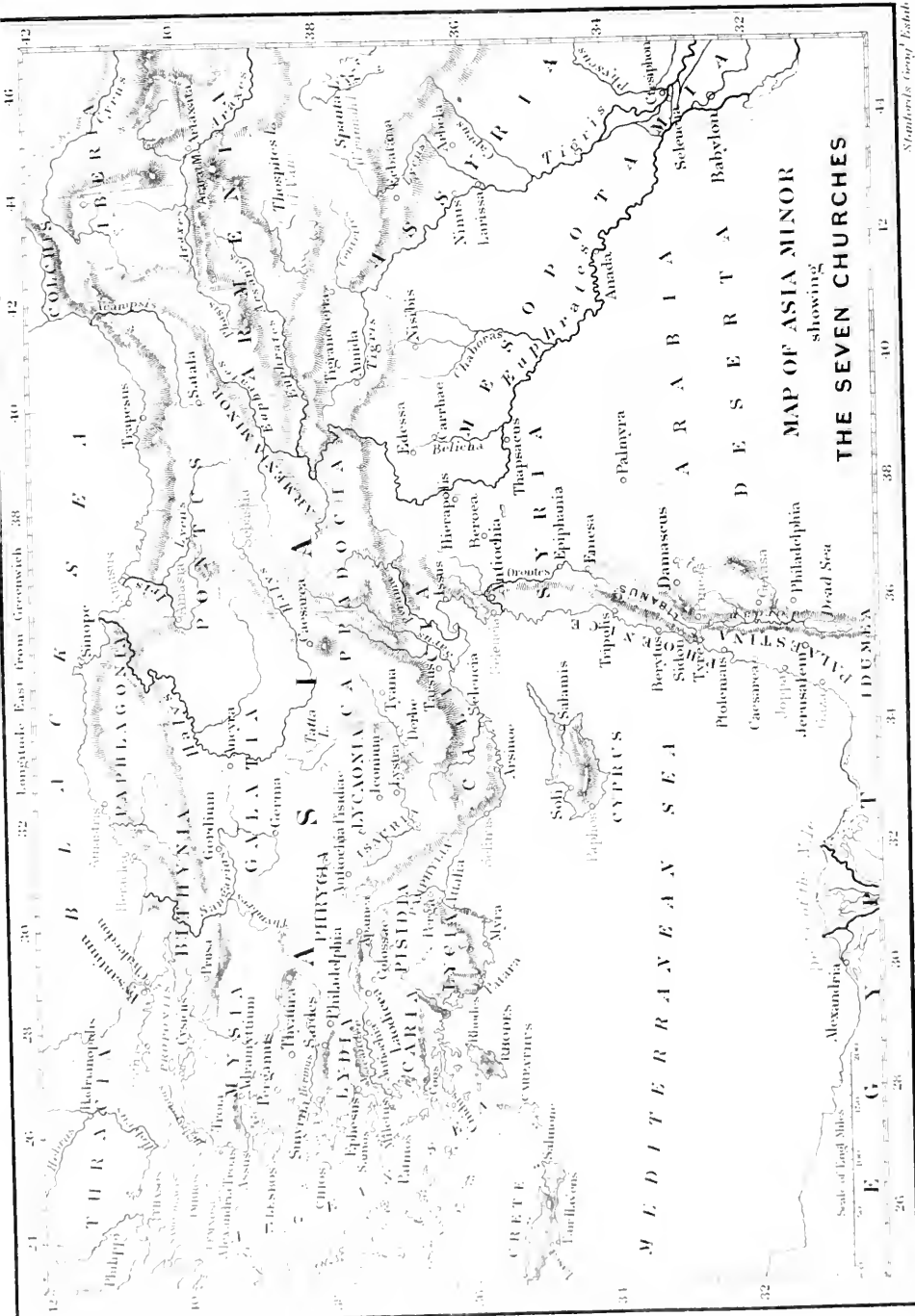
<sup>2</sup> Στῦλοι, scil. ἐκκλησίας.

<sup>3</sup> Δεξιὰς—κωνωνίας.

party, and in the work of spreading the gospel. That union has long since been made visible to all ages. St. John was destined to become his successor in the care of the very churches which St. Paul had planted and nursed with so much care among the Gentiles. "They stand together among the pillars of the holy temple; and the Church of God is thankful to learn how contemplation may be united with action, and faith with love, in the spiritual life."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson, i., p. 220.





MAP OF ASIA MINOR  
showing  
THE SEVEN CHURCHES

New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co.

Stanbards Geogr. Tabula

6. 5. 1867. 1867

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LATER HISTORY FROM TRADITIONARY SOURCES, TILL HIS ARRIVAL AT EPHESUS, AND BANISHMENT TO PATMOS.

AUTHENTIC TRADITIONS. — PARTHIAN EMPIRE AND THE EUPHRATES. — GLORIOUS CLIME.—SCENERY OF THE APOCALYPSE AND OF THE BOOKS OF DANIEL AND EZEKIEL COMPARED.—JERUSALEM'S TRIBULATION APPROACHING. — AGRIPPA II. — THE ROMAN GOVERNORS. — NERO. — FIRES ROME. — ACCUSES AND PERSECUTES CHRISTIANS. — GESSIUS FLORUS. — VESPASIAN INVADES JUDEA. — TITUS.—ST. JOHN SEES THE "SIGNS" FORETOLD BY CHRIST. — SAILS FOR ASIA MINOR. — SUPPOSED REFLECTIONS. — THE VOYAGE. — THE MEDITERRANEAN. — CYPRUS. — RHODES. — CNIDUS. — PATMOS. — MILETUS. — HARBOUR OF EPHESUS.—TEMPLE OF EPHESUS.—RECENT DISCOVERY OF ITS RUINS. — NERONIAN PERSECUTION REACHES THE APOSTLE.—BANISHED TO PATMOS.

\* THE last occasion on which St. John appears in the New Testament history proper was in the year of our Lord 50, when he met St. Paul and other apostles in a council held at Jerusalem, to deliberate and determine on the subject of circumcision, which certain Judaizing teachers sought to have continued as a rite in the Church. In following him to the close of his career, we have to make our way, as best we can, without the infallible record of the Scriptures as our guide, except as those parts of the New Testament of which he was the author clearly connect themselves with history, and take their place as authentic records in his life. In other words, for the subsequent portion of his life we are left to his own writings, and to ecclesiastical tradition or history. †

It is a natural and laudable curiosity, in the receivers of that faith to which the apostles devoted their lives, to know something more than we find in the inspired history respecting these noble witnesses for the truth, and especially respecting one who performed so important a part, and lived to the end of the century, to the middle of which only we have been able by that history to trace him. †As he lived much longer than any other of the apostles, and was personally known to the generation of Christians who were on the stage at the beginning of the second century, the traditions respecting him have of course a much higher authority than those related of any other apostle. And the traditions themselves have a greater appearance of historical truth.

Indeed, some very decidedly authentic statements of his later life, and others which seem well supported, may be derived from the genuine writings of the ancient fathers. <sup>x</sup>

<sup>x</sup> But where he spent the intervening period, from the year 50 until we find him taking up his permanent residence in Asia Minor, there appears to be no very positive information. <sup>x</sup> It seems remarkable that we find no further mention of him in the Acts after the council held that year in Jerusalem. But the same is true of Peter. Whether he spent this whole period in discharging his apostolic office at Jerusalem or in Palestine, becomes a question of deep interest. <sup>x</sup> It appears to be as well established as any fact not recorded in the Scriptures that Peter, following the emigrants and colonists of his own nation, journeyed eastward, and made the provinces of the Parthian empire and the regions east of the Euphrates the scene of his labours. <sup>x</sup>

The number of Jews in the city of Babylon and the province around it had, it is said, been increased at this time to such a degree that they constituted a very large portion of the population.<sup>1</sup> St. Peter would be led to follow them as he prosecuted his apostolic work. His First Epistle seems to have been written from Babylon,<sup>2</sup> and is addressed to the Christians scattered abroad, beginning with Pontus,<sup>3</sup> the place nearest to him on the north-east of Asia Minor. That St. Peter uses "Babylon" in a metaphorical sense for Rome is a conjecture which has few supporters among scholars. Michaelis (J. D.) very ably exposes the absurdity of the opinion that Peter dates from Babylon in a mystical sense. He remarks that, through some mistake, it has been supposed that the ancient Babylon, in the time of Peter, was no longer in being; and it is true that in comparison with its original splendour it might be called even in the first century a desolated city; yet it was not wholly a heap of ruins or destitute of inhabitants. This appears from the account which Strabo, who lived in the time of Tiberius, has given of it. This ancient geographer compares Babylon to Seleucia; saying, "at present Babylon is not so great as Seleucia," which was the capital of the Parthian empire, and, according to Pliny, contained six hundred thousand inhabitants. Michaelis further humorously remarks that "to conclude that Babylon, whence Peter dates his Epistle, could not have been the ancient Babylon, because this city was in a state of decay, and thence to argue that Peter used the word mystically to denote Rome, is about the same as if, on the receipt of a letter dated from Ghent or Antwerp, in which mention was made of a Christian community there, I should conclude that because these cities are no longer what they were in the

<sup>1</sup> Jos. Antiq., xviii. 1 9.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. v. 13.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. i. 1.



sixteenth century, the writer of the epistle meant a spiritual Ghent or Antwerp, and that the epistle was really written from Amsterdam." He continues: "The plain language of epistolary writing does not admit of such figures; and though it would be very allowable in a poem, written in honour of Göttingen [this was the residence of the professor] to style it another Athens, yet if a professor of this university should, in a letter written from Göttingen, date it 'Athens,' it would be a greater piece of pedantry than ever yet was laid to the charge of the learned. In like manner, though a figurative use of the word Babylon is not unsuitable to the animated and poetical language of the Apocalypse, in a plain and unvarnished epistle Peter would hardly have called the place whence he wrote (in the absence of any conceivable motive) by any other appellation than that which literally and properly belonged to it."<sup>1</sup> And as Babylon in Egypt was a mere military station, there can be no doubt the place named by Peter was the ancient Assyrian or Chaldean Babylon, or the city that in his day stood on its site. "It was a city of great importance and interest in a religious point of view, offering a most ample and desirable field for the labours of the chief apostle, now advancing in years, and whose whole genius, feelings, and religious education, and natural peculiarities, qualified him as eminently for this oriental scene of labour as those of St. Paul fitted him for the triumphant advancement of the Christian faith among the polished and energetic races of the mighty West. With Peter went also others of the apostolic band."<sup>2</sup>

\* As there is no trace of the labours of John in any other direction, it is not improbable, as he had thus far been so intimately associated with Peter in apostolic labours in Judæa and Samaria, they were not separated now; at least for a portion of the time Peter was in the Parthian dominions. As far back as the time of Augustine, A.D. 398, the First Epistle of John was known as the Epistle to the Parthians. He quotes 1 John iii. 2, which he introduces, "which is said by John in the Epistle to the Parthians."<sup>3</sup> It seems indeed pleasant to contemplate these eminent apostles, "in this glorious clime of the East," amid the scenes of that ancient captivity in which the mourning sons of Zion had drawn consolation and support from the word of prophecy, which the march of time, "in its solemn fulfilment," had now made the faithful history of God's children; amid the ruins of empires, and scattered wrecks of ages, attesting in the dreary desolation the

<sup>1</sup> *Introd. to N. T., Marsh's Trans.*, xxvii. 4, 5. Lardner does his utmost to maintain the mystical sense, and may be referred to: *Hist. of Apos. and Evang.*, xix. 3.

<sup>2</sup> D. F. Bacon's *Lives of the Apostles*, p. 260.

<sup>3</sup> "Quod dictum est ab Joanne in epistola ad Parthos" (*Quæst. Evang.*, c. xix.).

surety of the word of God. "From the lonely waste, mounded with the dust of twenty-three centuries, came the solemn witness of the truth of the Hebrew seers, who sang over the highest glories of that plain, in its brightest days, the long foredoomed ruin that at last overswept it with such blighting desolation. Here mighty visions of the destiny of worlds, the rise and fall of empires, rose on the view of Daniel and Ezekiel, whose prophetic scope on this vast stage of dominion expanded far beyond the narrow limits that bounded all the future in the eyes of the sublimest of those prophets whose whole ideas of what was great were taken from the little world of Palestine."<sup>1</sup>

It would seem indeed, when we open the Apocalypse, that its writer had been recently reperusing the prophecies of these captive seers; and they may have been made the more vivid, if he was permitted to do this amid the very scenes where these visions were granted. There is a striking similarity between some of the leading symbols of the Apocalypse, and those of Daniel and Ezekiel. As a single example of this close resemblance we may take the four living creatures of Ezekiel i. 5 *seq.*, and of Revelation iv. 6 *seq.*<sup>2</sup> They appear to Ezekiel out of the midst of a fiery cloud. As for the likeness of their faces, the four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side; and the face of an ox and the face of an eagle on the left. Every one had four wings. To John they appear in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne set in heaven; and the first was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle; and they had each of them six wings about him. They had the same leonine, bovine, human, and aquiline faces, pointing to the same great characteristic features in the providence that governs this world. But there is less in John's representation to strike the mind with awe. The throne is more accessible. It is not borne aloft, with lightning-like swiftness, above the heavens; it is set in heaven on a floor of crystal or of glass, and the rainbow about it is distinguished for the preponderance of its emerald rays. There are other thrones about it on which are seated redeemed men in white raiment, with crowns on their heads and palms in their hands, singing to Him who sits on the throne; for in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb as if it had been slain. And the "Babylon" which Peter used in a literal John uses in a figurative sense. He had seen with his own eyes the desolations which marked the proud city; and its overthrow became in his mind a vivid symbol of the destruction of that city which should attempt, by its usurped power, to lord

<sup>1</sup> D. F. Bacon's *Lives of the Apostles*, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> See also Dan. vii. 9-14, Ezek. i. and xlvii.; Rev. i. 8-18 and xxii., etc.

it over the consciences of men, and to enforce its idolatrous practices on the Christian world.<sup>1</sup>

× But wherever the years of this portion of St. John's unwritten history were spent, they were doubtless years of zealous activity for the Master he loved. If he returned to Jerusalem, it was not to tarry there long: The days of its tribulation, foretold by prophets and by Christ, were at hand. From the time when Pompey, in the spring of the year 63 B.C., led his army down the valley of the Jordan, and looked upon that city from the Mount of Olives, it had been virtually under the domination of the Romans. The Jews were exceedingly impatient under the foreign yoke, and repeatedly on the point of rebellion. If Agrippa I., at the risk of his own life, had not firmly resisted the purpose of Caligula to set up his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, it would have broken out under his reign, and precipitated the war that issued in the destruction of Jerusalem. But this Agrippa was no more. He died miserably,<sup>2</sup> shortly after the martyrdom of James the brother of John, and his attempt to slay Peter in like manner. His son and successor, Agrippa II., the last prince of the house of Herod, was but seventeen years of age at the time of his father's death. The emperor Claudius therefore kept him at Rome, and educated him at his court; and in the meantime Cuspius Fadus was sent as procurator to govern the kingdom, which thus again was reduced to a mere province.<sup>3</sup> Claudius at length granted to the young prince, in A.D. 48, a portion of his father's dominions in the north-east, with the right of superintending the temple and appointing the high-priest. Four years later he conferred on him the tetrarchate formerly held by Philip and Lysanias, with the title of king. It was before this youthful king that the apostle Paul made his celebrated defence.<sup>4</sup> After a long reign of fifty-one years he died in the third year of the reign of Trajan; and not far from the same time the apostle John died. Before the outbreak of the war with the Romans, he attempted to dissuade the people from rebellion; but although he had, with Herodian profusion, expended large sums of money in beautifying the temple, and was on this account popular and influential with the people, it was all in vain. When the war was begun he of course sided with the Romans. He was wounded at the siege of Gamala. He lived on terms of intimacy with the Jewish historian, Josephus, whom doubtless he influenced also to side with the Romans, and who

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xvi. 19, xvii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xii. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup> Jos. Antiq., xix. 9 (2); xx. 1 (3), etc.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xxv. and xxvi.

appears to have been still alive (he was born A.D. 37) at the end of the first century, after the death of his friend Agrippa.<sup>1</sup>

When, at the death of Agrippa I., Judæa had relapsed again to a mere province in name, as it had long been in fact, under the successive governorships of Fadus, Alexander, Cumanus, Felix, Festus, Albinus, and Florus, new causes of restlessness and indignation were given, until the bounds of endurance were reached. Outbreaks and seditions were constantly occurring, and gave premonition of that last fatal struggle which they who paid regard to prophecy, especially to the predictions of our Lord Himself, could not fail to understand. Of the feverish state of the minds of the people, and of the terrible scenes consequent on collisions with the Romans, the Jewish historian gives a detailed and graphic account.

That monster of history, whose name has become a synonym of cruelty and bloodshed, Nero, was now on the imperial throne, having succeeded Claudius in the year 55. His mother Agrippina having married the emperor Claudius, Claudius adopted Nero, although he had a son but three or four years younger. Through the management of his mother, on the death of Claudius he was proclaimed emperor. This ambitious woman wished to govern in the name of her son, as she had done to no small extent in that of her late husband. Guided by Seneca, who had been one of his instructors, and Burrhus, prefect of the prætorian cohorts, Nero governed mildly for a few years; but he soon began to indulge his frivolous and licentious inclinations, and at length all the malignant passions of his nature became aroused. He murdered Britannicus, the real heir to the throne, his mother, his wife Octavia, his tutor Seneca, and the poet Lucan. His wife Poppæa, whom he married after the divorce of Octavia, died from a kick she received from her brutal husband. The history of his crimes constitutes the greater part of the history of his life. He was ambitious to excel as a charioteer, a musician, and a performer at the theatre. He set fire to Rome, and while the city was burning, standing on a lofty tower, where he could survey the scene, played the harp, and recited a poem on the fall of Troy. He drew the means of supporting his extravagances from the exactions he made in the provinces and robbery of the temples. It was XIV. Kalend. Sextil. (19th July), A.D. 64, when Nero, according to Dion and Suetonius, set fire to Rome.<sup>2</sup> A prodigious amount of property and valuable works of art were destroyed, and many lives lost. In order to divert odium and

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Life*, 54, 65. He named one of his sons Agrippa, and preserved two of the letters he received from the king.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus leaves the matter doubtful (*Ann.*, xv. 38), whether it was by Nero's orders; but compare § 44.





NERO.

suspicion from himself, he accused the Christians of the crime, who it appears had then become numerous at Rome; and the first great persecution of the infant Church by the Gentiles was commenced. They were exposed to the severest tortures. Tacitus describes them as covered with the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs; while others were crucified, and others still, having their garments daubed and saturated with some inflammable material, were set up for lights in the night. Tacitus further says that Nero lent his own gardens for the spectacle.<sup>1</sup> Juvenal says that Christians, standing with their throats pinned to posts, burned like torches.

Gessius Florus had succeeded Albinus in the governorship of Palestine. His conduct was such that it caused the Jews to regard the government of Albinus, which had been oppressive, with comparative regret. Without pity or shame, he was a systematic plunderer of the province he had been sent to govern. He was a fit representative of the emperor then on the throne. No gains were too petty for him; no extortions too enormous. They extended, not merely to cities and persons, but to whole districts. Both Josephus and Tacitus, the one from the Jewish and the other from the Roman standpoint, attribute the last war of the Jews with the Romans to this Florus, and say that he purposely kindled the rebellion in order to conceal the wrongs he had perpetrated.<sup>2</sup> In the year 67 Nero sent Vespasian with an army of 60,000 to put down this rebellion. Soon after, having, through fear of the vengeance of an oppressed people, which he richly deserved, fled out of Rome, he perished miserably by the sword of his freedman. He was the last of the descendants of the Julian family.<sup>3</sup>

Vespasian, who had already in two campaigns conquered all the country except Jerusalem, and acquired great reputation, was proclaimed emperor at Alexandria, and a few days later, in Judæa, by the army, and very soon throughout the whole East. He was recalled to Rome by his election to the supreme authority; and his son, Titus, whom he left in command of the army in Judæa, concluded the war by utterly destroying Jerusalem and razing it to the ground. The medal which was struck in commemoration of the event bears on one side a veiled female figure sitting under a palm-tree, with the inscription *Judæa Capta*. The event was also commemorated on the denarius of his time. The period between the death of Nero and the accession of Vespasian was nothing less than a period of utter anarchy, in which the several successors of Nero played so subordinate a part

<sup>1</sup> Ann., xv. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Jos. Antiq. xviii., 1 (6); xx. 11 (1); Wars, ii. 14; Tac. Hist., v. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Suet., Nero, 50. The *cervix obesa* of Suetonius is seen in the accompanying bust.

that they may well be styled "mock emperors." It is a remarkable circumstance that the memory of this wretched man was cherished by the common people, and for many years his tomb was decorated with flowers.<sup>1</sup> It was a popular belief that he was to appear again, to be revenged on his enemies. This was the Cæsar to whom Paul appealed, and under whose reign he was a prisoner at Rome on two separate occasions, and by whose edict he at length suffered martyrdom. This was but shortly before (the summer of) the persecutor's death.

St. John would not fail, from the disturbances of the country, to understand that the days had come of which his Master had spoken, "these are the beginning of sorrows;" "let them which be in Judæa flee unto the mountains."<sup>2</sup> He was quick to discern the agitated state of the country, the signs of the destruction that was hastening; and, no doubt, under the special direction of the Holy Ghost, took his departure from Jerusalem. There is a tradition, entitled to more than ordinary respect, that the Christians leaving Jerusalem took refuge in the little city of Pella, belonging to the Decapolis, on a small eastern branch of the Jordan, about sixty miles from Jerusalem, among the mountains of Gilead. If St. John accompanied them it cannot be supposed he remained there long. We therefore conclude that about this time he embarked either at Tyre or at Cæsarea for Asia Minor. "Many of the most eminent Jews," says Josephus,<sup>3</sup> in giving an account of the defeat of Cestius, the governor of Syria, who had advanced with an army from Antioch to Jerusalem, "swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink." A year or two earlier or later would agree quite as well with the other known facts of his history.

What must have been the apostle's emotions as he sailed away from his native shores! As he looked back, and saw Hermon and Lebanon sinking in the distance, he well knew by what fearful convulsions the country was rent, and was yet to be rent; the ravages of the fierce invaders, the prophetic signs of the approaching catastrophe. Many of the events to which Josephus bears testimony, going to show the agitated state of the country, were probably well known to St. John, and of some perhaps he had been an eye witness. The legions of Rome, on their march, flew like flocks of devouring birds from city to city, sparing from death or hopeless slavery neither age nor sex. It is recorded of one city (Jotapata), that all its population, save infants and women, to the number of 40,000 were put to the sword.<sup>4</sup> Joppa and the neighbouring villages were demolished, and the surrounding country laid waste. Of all the inhabitants of Gamala, not far from

<sup>1</sup> Suet., Nero, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxiv. 8 16.

<sup>3</sup> Josephus, Wars, ii. 20 (1).

<sup>4</sup> Wars, iii. 7 (36).



Pella, not even infants were spared, and but two women escaped. The men, to escape the sword of the invaders, threw their wives, their children, and themselves, from the eminence on which their city was built, into the deep abyss below.<sup>1</sup> What emotions and thoughts must have filled the soul of such a man as St. John as he sailed away from such a scene, knowing as he did that these were but the beginning of sorrows! He had been familiar with the little inland Lake of Gennesaret from his youth. He was now on the great sea, famed for the fierce Euroclydons,<sup>2</sup> or Levanters, that vexed it. As he sailed along the shores of Cyprus, he could see the forests of which the inhabitants made their boast, and the mountains from which Judæa derived so largely its supply of metals. His course lay by Rhodes, famous from the remotest antiquity for its commerce, its literature and arts, and which was to be in after ages the residence of an order of celebrated knights that were to bear his own name. He could see the lofty mount that rose from its centre, and perhaps the far famed Colossus that spanned the entrance of the harbour, and catch the powerful fragrance with which every breeze was said to be scented, wafted from the orange groves and citron trees and the numberless aromatic herbs, which exhale such a profusion of the richest odours that the whole atmosphere of the island seems impregnated with the spicy perfume. He passes Cnidus, celebrated for its magnificent city and the worship of Venus, and enters the archipelago, among the islands made so famous by classical history. Perhaps, as he sails along, he gazes on the desolate Patmos, little thinking it was soon to be his prison, or what visions would be granted to him there.

He draws near to the port of his debarkation. His voyage has taken him over one of the main lines of traffic known to the ancient world. The Miletus, where St. Paul had embarked after his touching farewell to the elders of Ephesus, may have been the spot where St. John left the ship.<sup>3</sup> This is rendered the more probable, inasmuch as the causes which at length converted what was once the fine harbour of Ephesus into an unhealthful morass were already at work, and had made Miletus the port of that celebrated city. To increase the depth of

<sup>1</sup> Wars, iii., iv.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> The tradition that John met with shipwreck as he was drawing near the end of his voyage has no necessary improbability. "Quidam perhibet author *Vita Timothei*, a Photio excerptus, qui scribit, quod Joannes *Ephesi habitaverit*, naufragium jam ad litus passus, et e mari adhuc spirans ejectus, dum Nero crudelis in Christianos sæviret, quibus verbis adventus Apostoli Ephesum persecutioni Neronianæ innectitur. Verba authoris sunt: Καὶ γὰρ ἐν ταύτῃ διέτριβε, ναυαγήσας μὲν περὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν, ἐκβρασθεὶς δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης ἐμπνέων ἔτι, ἦν καὶ Νέρων ὁ ἐμμανὴς τὸν κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐμπνέει διωγμὸν" (Lampe, Proleg., i., c. 3, xi.).

water, the engineers of Attalus Philadelphus, about 150 B.C., narrowed the entrance of the harbour, and threw up a mole before the mouth of the river to keep back the mud. But they were disappointed at the result. The flow and ebb of the sea could no longer clear the mud away; the harbour was gradually made shallow to its very mouth, and finally destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

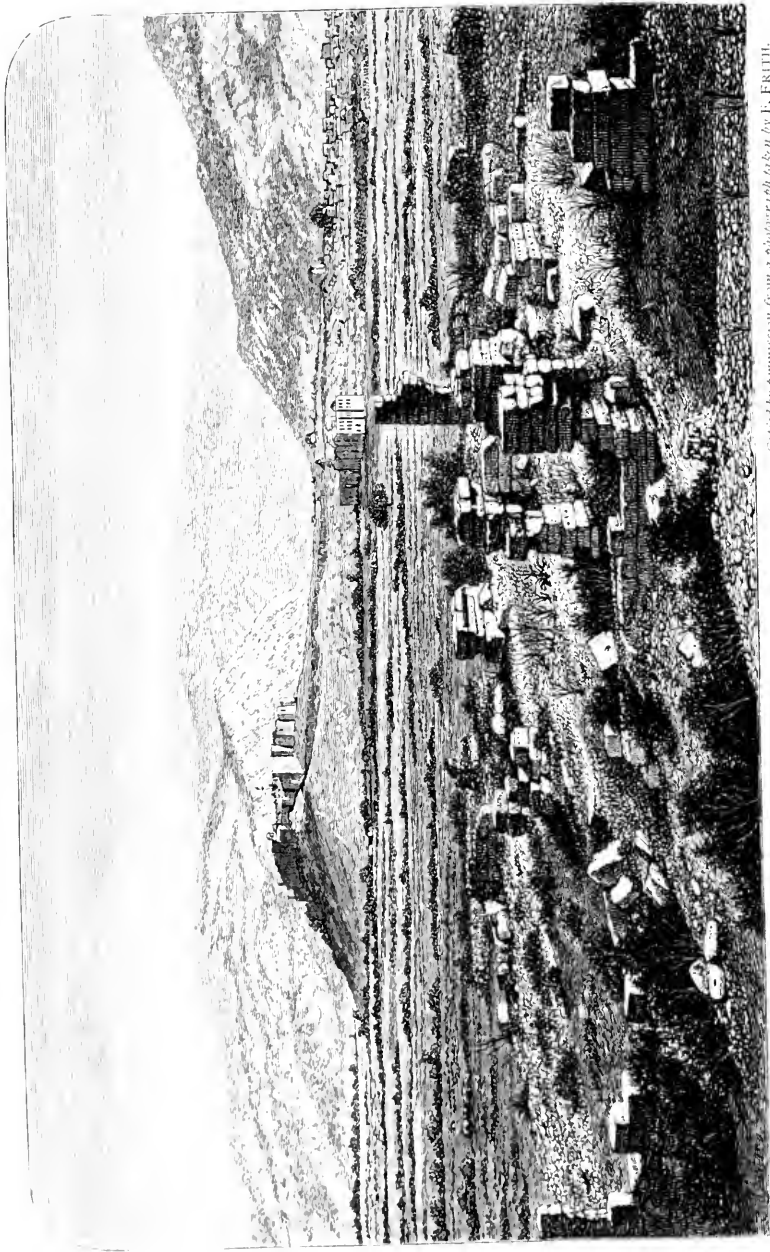
The apostle was now in "Asia," Ionic Asia, the Asia of the New Testament, which means, not the great continent under this name, but merely the western portion of that peninsula, known to us under the name of Asia Minor. Two large rivers, Hermus and Mæander, flow from the interior westward into the Ægean. Between the valleys drained by these two rivers was the smaller basin of the Cayster, at the mouth of which Ephesus was situated, between Smyrna and Miletus, about midway of the western coast of the peninsula, opposite the island of Samos. None of the cities of Ionia had been more favourably situated for commercial prosperity than Ephesus. With an excellent climate, and surrounded with a fertile country, it was, until its harbour was destroyed, most conveniently located for traffic with neighbouring parts of the Levant; and, as late as the time of Augustus Cæsar, was "the great emporium of all the regions of Asia within the Taurus." The hills on which a large portion of the city was built were Prion and Coressus. It was the most ancient, wealthy, prosperous, and magnificent of the Greek cities in Asia Minor, the centre of Greek culture in science and art; and while, about the period of the introduction of Christianity, the other cities began to decline, this, as it was the capital of the province, where the Roman governor held his court, fully maintained its importance.<sup>2</sup>

In this same region we find the sites of the other Apocalyptic churches. Laodicea is in the basin of the Mæander; Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia, in that of the Hermus. Pergamos is farther to the north, on the Cæsius. Travellers to the site of Ephesus see piles of ruins of edifices on the rocky sides, and among the thickets of Prion and Coressus. The sea has retired on the main coast, about

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 1 (24); Tacitus, Ann., xvi. 23.

<sup>2</sup> As the centre from which the last survivor of the apostles was to make his influence felt far and wide for nearly fifty years, Ephesus possessed local advantages of the highest order. As to the fitness and importance of the place for such a purpose, the Magdeburg Centuriators have expressed themselves in a passage noted for the classic elegance of its Latin: "Considera mirabile Dei consilium. Joannes in Ephesum ad litus maris Ægei collocatus est: ut inde, quasi e specula, retro suam Asiam videret, suaque fragrantia replet: ante se vero Græciam, totamque Europam haberet; ut inde, tanquam tuba Domini sonora, etiam ultramarinos populos suis concionibus ac scriptis inclamaret et invitaret ad Christum; presertim, cum ibi fuerit admodum commodus portus, plurimique mercatores ac homines peregrini ea loca adierint" (Mag. Ecc. Hist. Cent., ii. 2).





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EPHESUS.

three miles distant from the last range of ruins in the plain. There is no gulf and no harbour; but instead, at the mouth of the Cayster a delta is formed, and the whole plain is a marsh, full of reeds, through which the river flows in a continually changing course.<sup>1</sup> The theatre, the odeon, the gymnasium, the stadium, on the different slopes of Mount Prion, are all in the same state of ruin. In the "dripping marble quarries," on its eastern side, are still visible the marks of the tools.

The one building at Ephesus which surpassed all others in magnificence and fame, and was counted by the ancients as one of the wonders of the world, was the temple of Diana. After it had been slowly rising, during a long course of years, having been commenced before the Persian war, it was set on fire by the fanatic Herostratus, on the same night on which Alexander the Great was born. It was rebuilt with more sumptuous magnificence, even the ladies of Ephesus contributing their jewels to the expense of the restoration. And the Ephesians never ceased to embellish it, adding new decorations and subsidiary buildings and colonnades. The decay of this temple began in the third century, when, shattered by an earthquake, its gates were sent to Constantinople, and it became a quarry for the architects of the Byzantine cities built in Asia Minor. What remained of its ruins was allowed to be buried by the slow but sure action of alluvial deposit, until its very site was obliterated and became a matter of dispute.

It has just now (near the beginning of 1871), by the sagacity and energy of an English archæologist, Mr. Wood, been discovered. He had been searching for it since 1863. A large area of the temple has been cleared to the pavement, and various architectural marbles have been found, more or less mutilated, lying as they had been left in the Byzantine times. The scale of the architecture is of course colossal, the diameter of the columns being six feet, exceeding, it is believed in proportions, the celebrated temple of Jupiter Olympius at Athens, and all extant examples of Greek architecture.<sup>2</sup> These beyond question are relics of the column on which St. John must have often gazed.

<sup>3</sup> This was the proud, busy, superstitious city, at which our apostle had now arrived. He found a Christian community there under the very shadow of this great heathen temple. Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, and the great apostle of the Gentiles, had been there before him. Paul appears to have devoted three entire years of his apostolic labours to that city.<sup>3</sup> In this great centre of trade and false worship, of science and art, there can be no doubt that St. John entered, with

<sup>1</sup> See Tristram's *Seven Churches*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Smyrna Correspondence, January, 1871, *London Times*.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xix. 10, xx. 31.

his characteristic ardour, on his great work. But scarcely could he have entered on it before the bloody persecution of Nero, which swept to the remotest provinces,<sup>1</sup> reached him. It commenced A.D. 64, and continued until the death of the persecutor in 68. From his conspicuous station and office, St. John was no doubt one of the earliest on whom the agents and minions of the persecutor would seize. He was banished to Patmos, an obscure island, some fifteen miles in circumference, situated not far from the coast, south of Ephesus, a short distance beyond Samos. It is little more than one huge rock, rising out of the sea. In this desolate place, at some time during the four years of this persecution, the visions of the Apocalypse were seen and recorded. If we suppose he left Judæa as Cestius Gallus was approaching with his army from Antioch, A.D. 65, and that he was banished to Patmos soon after his arrival at Ephesus, it only serves to bring the catastrophe, to which a considerable portion of the prophecy manifestly relates, so much nearer the time when the prophecy itself was given. The 1260 days were very soon to commence, and on his lonely rock in the Ægean the banished apostle could see the lightnings flash, and hear the thunders roll, and the trumpets of the armies resound, gathering for the overthrow of the devoted city he loved so well.

<sup>1</sup> Orosius, *Histor.*, viii. 7: "per omnes provincias."

Volat avis sine meta,  
Quo nec vates, nec propheta,  
    Evolavit altius.  
Tam implenda, quam impleta,  
Nunquam vidit tot secreta  
    Purus homo purius.

Cælum transit, veri rotam  
Solis vidit, ibi totam  
    Mentis figens aciem;  
Speculator spiritalis  
Quasi Seraphim sub alis,  
    Dei vidit faciem.

ADAM OF ST. VICTOR:

*Apud Daniel, Thes. Hymnol., ii. 166.*

Transcendit nubes, et transcendit sidera, transcendit angelos, transcendit omnem creaturam, pervenit ad Verbum, per quod facta sunt omnia.

ST. AUGUSTIN: *Serm. in Diebus Paschal., 253.*









ST. JOHN.

“WHAT THOU SEEST, WRITE IN A BOOK.” *Rev.* i. 11.

FROM THE THORWALDSEN MARBLES.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE APOCALYPSE: ITS DATE AND DESIGN.

I. DATE.—FROM INTERNAL EVIDENCE.—PECULIAR IDIOM.—SEVEN CHURCHES AS YET ONLY IN ASIA.—JUDAIZING HERETICS ACTIVE.—THE JEWS STILL OCCUPYING AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE THEIR LAND.—JERUSALEM NOT YET DESTROYED.—THE SIXTH ROMAN EMPEROR ON THE THRONE.—NO INTERNAL EVIDENCE FAVOURING LATER DATE.—THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE ESTIMATED.—II. DESIGN.—THEME, COMING OF CHRIST.—HIS COMING PARTLY VISIBLE, PARTLY INVISIBLE.—BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS, SYMBOL OF THE ENTIRE PROPHECY.—OVERTHROW OF THE JEWISH AND PAGAN PERSECUTING POWERS.—OF THE LATER OPPOSING POWERS.—MILLENNIAL AND HEAVENLY GLORY.

#### I. DATE DETERMINED FROM INTERNAL EVIDENCE.<sup>1</sup>

THE question whether the Apocalypse was written at an early or in the very closing period of the apostolic ministration has importance as bearing on the interpretation of the book. A true exposition depends, in no small degree, upon a knowledge of the existing condition of things at the time it was written; *i.e.*, of the true point in history occupied by the writer, and those whom he originally addressed. The same is manifestly true of the prophecies in general; eminently so of those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. If the book were an epistle, like that to the Romans or to the Hebrews, it might be of comparatively little importance, in ascertaining its meaning, to be able to determine

<sup>1</sup> The question whether John was the author of the Apocalypse is not considered in this book. There is an exhaustive discussion of this question in the first volume of Stuart's Commentary on the Apocalypse, filling nearly 200 pages, in which the author appears to give the fairest consideration and the fullest weight to the objections made to the Johannean authorship, but is compelled to believe, in the end, that the book was written by the apostle John. [The latest work on this subject, Luthardt's "St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel," had not come to hand when the former part of this note was written. In it the gifted professor is said to discuss this question with learning, thoroughness, and the most admirable spirit; and on a more careful examination one comes to estimate still more highly the reverential spirit, together with the candour and research and mastery of his materials with which he has examined the evidence and vindicated the apostolic authorship of this Gospel. A translation by Caspar René Gregory has been published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh; and Scribner, Welford & Armstrong, New York.]

whether it was written at the commencement of the apostolic era or at its very close.

It is obvious that if the book itself throws any distinct light on this subject, this internal evidence, especially in the absence of reliable historical testimony, ought to be decisive. Instead of appealing to tradition or to some doubtful passage in an ancient father, we interrogate the book itself, or we listen to what the Spirit saith that was in him who testified of these things. It will be found that no book of the New Testament more abounds in passages which clearly have respect to the time when it was written.

It is necessary only to premise that the question in regard to the authorship of the Apocalypse will be considered as settled; that is, it will be taken for granted that it was written by the apostle John, the same who wrote the fourth Gospel and the Epistles that bear his name.

### 1. *Evidence from Peculiar Idiom.*

The peculiar idiom, so thoroughly Hebraistic, in which it is written, proves that it was the first of the books written by John, and one of the earliest of the New Testament.

The entire New Testament, it is true, is written in this Greek of the synagogue, or Hebrew Greek. It records doctrines and precepts originally delivered in Hebrew, or in a dialect of that language, and events many of which had been predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Moreover, the Hebrew, or this dialect, was the vernacular of the principal actors and speakers mentioned in the narrative parts. It was unavoidable that the writers of the New Testament, themselves Hebrews, in expressing these new and peculiar ideas in a foreign language, should attach new shades of meaning to many words, coin new ones, and imitate Hebrew phrases and constructions. This language or idiom had already been prepared for them, as to a considerable portion of the terms, by the Septuagint translation of the Scriptures. Some of the words in this Hellenistic Greek are used in senses which, as remarked by Dr. Campbell,<sup>1</sup> "can be learned only from the extent of signification given to some Hebrew or Chaldaic word, corresponding to the Greek in its primitive and most ordinary sense," as found in classic authors.

Now what is true of the Greek of the entire New Testament and of the Septuagint is very especially true of that of the Apocalypse. We find here far more numerous instances of these changes or this extension in the meaning of words, imitations of whole phrases, analogous forma-

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary Dissertation, p. 23.

tions of new words, and examples of the combination of Hebrew inflections and constructions, and a predilection for the preposition where the Greeks use only the cases. It is especially deserving of notice how the writer of the Apocalypse, when expressing in Greek a Hebrew epithet, for which no proper representative is found in the Greek language, puts it in the nominative case where the syntax would require a genitive or a dative or an accusative, thus conforming to the Hebrew nouns he is representing, which do not admit of inflection in the oblique cases. The following are examples: chap. i. 4; ἀπὸ ὁ ὦν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος. These words are a rendering in Greek of the word "Jehovah," which is indeclinable. The ἀπὸ requires the genitive; but the writer, governed by the Hebrew, recognises no oblique cases. He sees no room for flexion in translating that name which expresses attributes belonging only to Him who is the same present, past, and future. In the original it is literally "from who is, and who was, and who comes." And so in the next verse, ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς, κ.τ.λ. We learn from chap. iii. 14 that these words define the meaning of the indeclinable Hebrew noun "Amen"; hence the *casus rectus* again.

We sometimes have in a single word an example of the manner in which John weds the Hebrew and the Greek. Thus in chap. i. 15, in the description of the appearance of the Son of man, it is said His feet were "like unto *fine brass*," χαλκολιβάνω, a word which has greatly perplexed students. It is found only in this book, and was probably a word of John's own composition. The explanation which commends itself above any other is as follows: it is composed of a Greek word and a Hebrew, χαλκός, *brass*, and לבן, *to make white*; so χαλκολιβάνον means brass brought to a white heat, in an incandescent state, of a glittering whiteness. This explanation was first proposed by Bochart.<sup>1</sup> It has been adopted by Vitranga, Hengstenberg, and Trench. Hengstenberg says: "in the formation of this word we are presented with a small image of the innermost nature of the Apocalypse, the singular manner in which the Hebrew and the Hellenic are fused together in it."<sup>2</sup> We have perhaps another somewhat similar example in the word Νικολαίτων, chap. ii. 6, the best interpretation of which is that it is derived from the Greek words νικᾶν τὸν λαόν, which would express in a name, Nicolaus or Nicolas, what Balaam expresses in Hebrew, "destroyer of the people," and is therefore equivalent to Balaamites. As the other names in this book are predominantly mystical and symbolic, in all probability this is so as well.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Animalibus Sacr. Script., ii. 16, p. 883.

<sup>2</sup> Comm. on Rev., Edin. Ed., i., p. 101, note.

<sup>3</sup> See Archbishop Trench on Epistles to the Seven Churches: Amer. Ed., p. 58.

But so conspicuous is this Hebrew idiom in the Apocalypse that it is unnecessary to multiply examples. While it is Greek in language, it is Hebrew in form and spirit. This lies upon the very surface, and is patent to the most cursory examination. It is admitted by all who have bestowed any attention on the subject that it is more prominent here than in any other part of the New Testament, not excepting the other writings of John. It causes the book to bear somewhat the aspect of an elementary, initiatory work, as if it might be the fountal source of those further idiomatic changes required in the Greek of the synagogue, to adapt it to the expression of the truths of the gospel of Christ. Now what are we authorized to infer from this? Clearly that it was one of the earliest written books of the New Testament. Beyond all question, as the New Testament contains other books written by John, this Hebrew complexion, so marked in the style of the Apocalypse, proves that the writer of it was but recently arrived among a Greek population, and that this was his first attempt at composition in Greek. At this result we have certainly arrived, that the Apocalypse, in its verbal language, bears evidence of having been written long before the Gospel and Epistles of John. Tholuck says: "when we compare it [the style of the Gospel of John] with the style of the Apocalypse, the Gospel, to all appearance, must have been written at a considerably later period."<sup>1</sup> He thinks that the interval of twenty or twenty-five years would not be too great to require to account for the great diversity in their language. Of all the arguments adduced by Sir Isaac Newton, none appears more cogent to Michaelis than that which is drawn from the Hebrew style of the Revelation, from which Sir Isaac had drawn the conclusion that John must have written the book shortly after his departure from Palestine, and before the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. *Seven Churches only in Asia at the time it was written.*

There appear to have been but seven churches in Asia, that is to say, in Proconsular Asia, or that part of Asia Minor lying along the western seaboard, when this book was written. It is dedicated to these seven alone, by the careful mention of them one by one by name, as if there were no others (i. 4, 11); *ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ*, "to the seven churches in Asia." The expression "the seven churches" seems to imply that this constituted the whole number, and hence affords one of the most striking incidental proofs in favour of an early date. "There were but seven churches," says Dr. Tilloch, "in Asia when the Revela-

<sup>1</sup> Comm. on Gospel, Introd., § 3. Also Olshausen's Introd. to John, § 4.

<sup>2</sup> Introductory Lecture, Marsh's Translation, 1793. Vol. iv.

tion was given.”<sup>1</sup> An earthquake, in the ninth year of Nero’s reign, overwhelmed both Laodicea and Colossæ,<sup>2</sup> and the church at the latter place does not appear to have been restored. As the two places were in close proximity, what remained of the church at Colossæ probably became identified with the one at Laodicea. The churches at Tralles and Magnesia could not have been established until a considerable time after the Apocalypse was written. Those who contend for the later date, when there must have been a greater number of churches than seven in the region designated by the apostle, fail to give any sufficient reason for his mentioning no more. That they mystically or symbolically represent others is surely not such a reason.

### 3. *Judaizing Heretics and Enemies Active.*

The epistles to the seven churches disclose that Judaizing heretics were exerting a great influence, and that there was vigorous activity on the part of Jewish enemies, such as could not have belonged to these people subsequent to the catastrophe which befel their nation. The angel of the church of Ephesus is commended (ii. 2) for having “tried them which say they are apostles, and are not.” “Among the properties belonging to an apostle,” says Bengel, “it was one that he should have seen the Lord Jesus Christ. So that false apostles were persons who not only broached false doctrine, but also set this forth with an apostolic air, as if they had seen Christ, or falsely pretended to have done so.” It would have been too late in the reign of Domitian, when John, who was the youngest of the apostles and the only survivor, was nearly a hundred years old, for such a claim as this to be set up with any degree of plausibility. Those to whom John refers must be regarded as identical in character, if not in person, with those of whom Paul complained in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and whom he thus describes: “for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ,” etc. (xi. 13.)

Again, the church of the Ephesians is commended for hating “the deeds of the Nicolaitans” (ii. 6). The best explanation of the term “Nicolaitans” makes it symbolical, like Balaam (ii. 14) and Jezebel (ii. 20), and makes all these names apply to the false apostles or apostates before named, or the Judaizing heretics that infested the Church. There are insuperable objections to the derivation of the name from a sectarian called Nicolaus, that is, to a historical explanation. Balaam, according to its etymology, signifies “destroyer of the people”; and

<sup>1</sup> Dissertations, etc., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, Hist. Nat., v. 41.

Nicolaitans, according to its etymology, is simply Balaamites in Greek. The Nicolaitans, and those mentioned afterwards as Balaamites, and the followers of the woman Jezebel, were those precisely who repeated the sins of Balaam and Jezebel by becoming tempters of the people of God. They were the same troublers to whom Paul refers (2 Cor. ii. 17, xi. 4, 5, 13; Gal. i. 7, ii. 4), and who were represented at a very early period in the apostolic history as going down from Judæa (Acts xv. 1), and causing no small dissension in the churches among the Gentiles, by teaching that circumcision was still essential to salvation. It became necessary for Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem and lay this matter before the apostles and elders. The council that was convened sent a written answer to Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, that no greater burden was laid upon them than these necessary things, to "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts xv. 28, 29). Paul had warned the elders of Ephesus, when taking his leave of them (Acts xx. 29, 30), that he knew after his departure "grievous wolves" should enter in among them "not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." These words, in respect to Ephesus and several of those churches addressed in the Apocalypse, were now fulfilled; the "grievous wolves" had come; these "perverse men" had arisen.

To the church of Pergamos it is said: "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." And to the church at Thyatira: "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." The woman Jezebel, although the name is symbolical, points also, it may be, to some busy influential female Judaizer and heretic among these disturbers of the peace and purity of the early Church.

It would seem from the answer of the council at Jerusalem that the same class of false teachers who insisted on circumcision were disposed to encourage a dangerous licence in respect to idolatrous feasts and indulgence of lascivious passions; for the same decree that declared circumcision to be unnecessary condemned such licence in express terms. There can certainly be in such expressions as these no allusion whatever to the doctrines of those ethnicising seducers, who, at a subsequent period in the Christian Church, exercised so pernicious an influence. They clearly point to an earlier period, when the assault came from quite a different quarter. In the epistle to Philadelphia the



claims of the Judaizing heretics, who are distinctly described as "the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not," are annihilated as by a single stroke; "I, Christ your Saviour, have the key of David, and open, and no man shutteth." Again, in the epistle to Smyrna it is said: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days," etc. They called themselves Jews, and no doubt were by natural descent the children of Abraham. But they had a spirit so malignant that the synagogue to which they belonged might be called the synagogue of Satan. The source of this persecution, or rather the fact that the Jews were its zealous agents, points clearly to a date anterior to the great disaster which came upon the Jewish nation, certainly long anterior to the time of Domitian. The Jews, it is true, even after this catastrophe, exhibited great bitterness of spirit against Christianity; but there is greater power attributed to them here than they can be supposed to have possessed after their dispersion and extreme humiliation by reason of the overthrow of their city and temple. They were never a persecuting power subsequent to this disastrous period in their history.

4. *The Jews still occupying, as a distinct People, their own Land.*

In chap. vii. we have what has been styled "the vision of sealing," but which is evidently a continuation of what was disclosed in the sixth seal, of which we have the opening in chap. vi. The tornado of judgments is stayed until a process of sealing the servants of God in their foreheads could be accomplished. "And I heard," says John (vii. 4), "the number of them which were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." And then the tribes are named one by one, and twelve thousand of each are sealed. The language and the manner in which the whole thing is stated could hardly more distinctly imply that the Jewish nation was still existing, and occupying its own land,—a land exposed to some impending desolation, from which the sealed, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, were to be exempt. The twelve tribes are named, notwithstanding so many of them had been lost, because the destruction revealed in connection with the sealing was to overtake the whole land of Judæa, once the inheritance of and partitioned among these twelve tribes. It was a destruction that was to overtake Judæa; therefore Jewish Christians are alone selected. Bengel held very strongly that Israel is here spoken of in the natural sense and not in

the figurative. "As certainly," says he, "as the tribe of Judah is that from which the victorious Lion, the Lamb, sprung (Apoc. v. 5), so certainly are all the tribes to be literally understood." Many thousands, we know, had been converted from the Jewish to the Christian faith (see Acts ii. 41, vi. 7, xii. 24, xix. 20). According to the Saviour's own words (Matt. xxiv. 22), "the elect" were to be secured or cared for in that day of calamity. He gave them a sign, and when it should be seen they were to seek places of security.<sup>1</sup> These one hundred and forty-four thousand represent either symbolically or literally the number of those gathered out from among the Israelites, of whom God would never for a moment lose sight as His own, in the things that were coming on the earth, and to whom His special grace and providence would be extended. These sealed ones appear again in this prophecy (xiv. 1-5) on Mount Zion, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and are there expressly recognised as "the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Hengstenberg maintains that the "tribes of the children of Israel" are here mentioned in the sense that "the whole Christian Church, however composed, is what is meant by them as being the legitimate continuation of ancient Israel." But it seems strange that Jewish Christians alone should be selected as representing the whole Church in a writing originally addressed to churches so remote from Judæa, and composed largely, if not mainly, of Gentile converts. And such a designation would only seem the more strange in a writing the date of which is referred to a period some twenty-five or thirty years subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. But the view of Hengstenberg is further shown to be wholly inadmissible, inasmuch as immediately upon the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel we have the numberless multitude<sup>2</sup> out of all nations set over against these sealed ones as the complete harvest, of which the sealed ones are but "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." The multitude which could not be numbered are put in contrast with the firstfruits, the one hundred and forty-four thousand; and the "all nations and kindreds and people and tongues," with the twelve tribes of Israel.

*5. The city of Jerusalem not yet destroyed, and the Temple still standing.*

When the Apocalypse was written, as the book itself intimates, if it does not distinctly state, the temple was still standing undisturbed, and the city of which it was the glory undesolated (see chap. xi. 1-13).

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv. 15-22.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. vii. 9.

John says there was given to him a reed, and he was directed to measure "the temple of God, and the altar"; but "the court which is without the temple" he was not to measure; "for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot, forty and two months." Power was to be given to "two witnesses," who should "prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days." They should then be killed, and their dead bodies "lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." But their lives should be marvellously preserved while they were working miracles, and till their prophecy was ended. Their bodies, unburied, after three days and a half should come to life, and they should "ascend to heaven in a cloud."

It is difficult to see how language could more clearly point to Jerusalem, and to Jerusalem as it was before its overthrow; where were the temple of God and the altar, where also our Lord was crucified. The prophecy in the most striking manner seems to adopt the very expression of our Lord, as recorded by Luke xxi. 24, in which the destruction of Jerusalem is universally allowed to be foretold: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." Regarding the literal Jerusalem and the external temple and altar as named, and this particular prediction as having reference to their desolation, it follows of course that this book must have been written prior to that event. On the other hand, if we regard the whole (the city, the temple, the altar, as well as the measuring) to be symbolical, as we must if we adopt the later date, it seems very strange and altogether unnatural that the apostle, in writing to churches so remote from Judæa, gathered on Gentile soil, should make use of such symbols; and still more so if nearly or quite a generation had passed since that city with its temple had been destroyed. This interpretation indeed seems too unnatural to be admitted, especially where we have so much ground from other parts of the prophecy for the assumption that the temple and Jerusalem were still standing.

The parts symbolical in the passage are the measuring reed and the measuring, the two olive trees, the two candlesticks, and the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit to make war against the witnesses. The parts that are literal are the temple, the altar, the court without the temple, the holy city trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the witnesses prophesying forty and two months, and the equivalent period, a thousand two hundred and threescore days; and that there might be no doubt as to the city intended, it is described as the city "where our Lord was crucified."

The measuring reed and the measuring are here symbolical of destruction. In previous visitations or threatenings of evil on the

holy city we find analogous figures employed. "I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab" (2 Kings xxi. 12, 13). "Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of My people Israel, . . . and the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste," etc. (Amos vii. 8, 9; see also Isa. xxxiv. 11, Lam. ii. 8.) In such passages as these, in which the very implements made use of in construction are employed as symbols of demolition, we have ample authority for the meaning attached here to the measuring reed and the measuring. It was to be applied to the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein; that is, these holy places were to be overthrown, and the worship connected with them brought to an end. The direction to leave out and not to measure the court without the temple may denote that this court and all that lay outside of the temple proper was not in the same sense holy; it was the court of the Gentiles, to which they already had access. The consecrated temple and altar were not to be permitted to fall into the hands of the uncircumcised. God would save them from such dishonour by their destruction; and the worship peculiar to the temple would pass away, never more to be reinstated. Hence we see perhaps the propriety of employing the implements of construction here as symbols. The destruction was in order to save consecrated things. The Roman general found it impossible, although he made the most strenuous efforts, to rescue the temple.<sup>1</sup> Titus gave orders to demolish the whole city, except three towers and that portion of the wall which inclosed the city on the west side. The towers were preserved, to prove to posterity how strongly fortified a city had been subdued; and the wall to afford a camp for the garrison he was to leave behind. The rest of the wall "was so thoroughly laid even with the ground [to use the language of Josephus, as if he had written with the very words of our Lord's prediction, Luke xix. 44, present to his mind] by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe that it had ever been inhabited."<sup>2</sup> The worship peculiar to the temple, the great national religious observances to which the whole people went up, passed away, never more to be celebrated on Mount Zion.

As to the times or periods specified in the passage, there is no difficulty in making out, in accordance with the application or interpretation suggested, a literal fulfilment. Vespasian appears to have received his commission from Nero, *i.e.* the war was declared,<sup>3</sup> in the early part of February, A.D. 67; three years and six months after, namely the tenth of August, A.D. 70, Jerusalem was destroyed. Here then we

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, Wars, vi. 4 (6, 7).

<sup>2</sup> Wars, vii. 1 (1).

<sup>3</sup> See Lardner, Jew. Test., § viii.

have the "forty and two months," or the equivalent period, "twelve hundred and sixty days," during which, understanding "the holy city" by a common figure of speech as representing the entire Holy Land, that land was to be laid waste by the Gentiles. It is a striking confirmation of the literal interpretation which has been given to the temple and altar in this passage, and from which we necessarily infer the earlier date of the book, that from this point in the prophecy they entirely disappear, and no more recur in the book. Immediately upon the overthrow of the city where our Lord was crucified, the temple, in the remaining part of the prophecy, in the visions and pictures by which it is unfolded before the apostle's mind, is treated as if it had already passed away, had been transferred from earth to heaven;<sup>1</sup> until in the final vision, that of New Jerusalem, it disappears even there. "I saw no temple therein."<sup>2</sup> This vision of the New Jerusalem very significantly forms the bright and cheering close to a prophecy of which the earlier part relates to the destruction of the old, the earthly Jerusalem.

As to the witnesses, it is in this interpretation supposed that there were precisely two. The two were enough to perform the work to which God had called them. If we had a Christian history extant, as we have a pagan one by Tacitus, and a Jewish one by Josephus, giving an account of what occurred within that devoted city during that awful period of its history, then we might trace out more distinctly the prophesying of the two witnesses. The great body of Christians, warned by the signs given them by their Lord, according to ancient testimony, appear to have left Palestine on its invasion by the Romans. After the retreat of Gallus from Jerusalem, and the disasters he suffered at the hands of the Jews, "many of the most eminent Jews," to use the words of Josephus, "swam away from the city as from a ship when it was going to sink."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps John, the writer of the Apocalypse, took his departure at this time. But it was the will of God that a competent number of witnesses for Christ should remain to preach the gospel to the very last moment to their deluded, miserable countrymen. It may have been part of their work to reiterate the prophecies respecting the destruction of the city, the temple, and commonwealth.<sup>4</sup> During the time the Romans were to tread down the Holy Land and the city, they were to prophesy. Their being clothed in sackcloth intimates the mournful character of their mission. In their designation as the two olive trees and the two candlesticks or lamps standing before God, there is an allusion to Zechariah iv., where these

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xi. 19 ; xiv. 17 ; xv. 5, 6, 8 ; xiv. 1, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxi. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Wars, ii. 20 (1).

<sup>4</sup> Commentaries of Daubuz, Lowman, Wetstein, and Stuart.

symbols are interpreted of the two anointed ones, Joshua the high-priest, and Zerubbabel the prince, founder of the second temple. The olive trees, fresh and vigorous, keep the lamps constantly supplied with oil. These witnesses, amidst the darkness which has settled round Jerusalem, give a steady and unfailing light. They possessed the power of working miracles as wonderful as any of those performed by Moses and Elijah. What is here predicted must have been fulfilled before the close of the miraculous or apostolic age. All who find here a prediction of the state of the Church during the ascendancy of the papacy, or at any period subsequent to the age of the apostles, are of course under the necessity of explaining away all this language which attributes miraculous powers to the witnesses. They were at length to fall victims to the war, or to the same power that waged the war, and their bodies were to lie unburied three days and a half in the streets of the city where Christ was crucified. Their resurrection and ascension to heaven, like their death and lying without burial, must be interpreted literally; although, as in the case of the miracles they performed, there is no historical record of the events themselves. If these two prophets were the only Christians in Jerusalem, as both were killed there was no one to make a record or report in the case, and we have here therefore an example of a prophecy which contains at the same time the only history or notice of the events by which it was fulfilled. The wave of ruin which swept over Jerusalem, and wafted them up to heaven, erased or prevented every human memento of their work of faith, their patience of hope, and labour of love. The prophecy that foretold them is their only history, or the only history of the part they were to take in the closing scenes of Jerusalem. We conclude then that these witnesses were two of those apostles who seem to be so strangely lost to history, or of whom no authentic traces can be discovered subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem. May not James the less or the second James (in distinction from the brother of John), commonly styled the bishop of Jerusalem, have been one of them? Why should he not remain faithful at his post to the last? According to Hegesippus, a Jewish Christian historian, who wrote about the middle of the second century, his monument was still pointed out near the ruins of the temple. Hegesippus says that he was killed in the year 69, and represents the apostle as bearing powerful testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, and pointing to His second coming in the clouds of heaven, up to the very moment of his death. There seems to be a peculiar fitness in these witnesses for Christ, men endowed with the highest supernatural gifts, standing to the last in that forsaken city, prophesying its doom, and lamenting over what was once so dear to God.

The main, if not the only argument of Hengstenberg, against the view here presented of the passage in the eleventh chapter, in support of the later date which he advocates, is founded on what appears to be a very singular interpretation. He makes the import of the measuring to be preservation: "where the measuring ceases, there," he says, "the line of abandoning begins." In other words, what was measured (the temple, the altar, etc.) were to be preserved; and what was not measured was to be destroyed. It is on the ground of an interpretation such as this that he objects to that view of the passage which finds in it proof that the book was composed before the taking of Jerusalem. He devotes several pages to a protest which it will be seen was labour lost, when it is understood that John, by the symbol of measuring, meant destruction and not preservation. Hengstenberg, making the measuring a symbol of preservation, considers the temple as a symbol of the Church, and the altar a symbol of that free-will sacrifice by which believers present themselves to Him who redeemed them with His blood, and the outer court as denoting those who have not been reached, or are only superficially affected, by the spirit of the Church. He makes everything symbolical. "Spiritually," he says, is to be applied, not only to Egypt and Sodom, but to the expression "where also our Lord was crucified"; and that Jerusalem is here intended to denote the Church as degenerate on account of the ascendancy of the world, and filled with offences, thus crucifying the Lord afresh. He makes the whole prophecy here, if not "to swim in the air," to use one of his own favourite expressions, to sink out of sight; for he makes it to mean simply the preservation of the Church and its worship. No events are foretold; it is nothing more than a re-affirmation, in highly figurative language, of the promise that God will ever have a seed to serve Him.

Another interpretation makes this prediction relate to what will befall the restored temple and the rebuilt Jerusalem, for which those who adopt it are looking in the future. They hold that the Jerusalem of Palestine is yet to know a splendour and magnificence becoming the metropolis of the Christian world; and that a third temple, surpassing the first and second, is to be erected, and the Jews are to form a sort of spiritual nobility in the Church. Mr. D. N. Lord, one of the ablest of the millenarian writers, however, adopts a view more nearly resembling that of Hengstenberg. He makes the great and peculiar truths of the Scriptures proclaimed by the Reformers to be symbolised by the temple, the altar, and the offerers of worship; and the outer court generally to be occupied by apostates. Dr. Croly and Mr. Barnes present a very similar view.

6. *The Sixth of the Roman Emperors on the Throne.*

The book of Revelation, according to its own representation, was written or its visions seen during the reign of the sixth of the kings or emperors of Rome. In chap. xvii. is a passage which professedly explains the mystery of the beast having seven heads and ten horns, on which sat the woman who was arrayed in purple and scarlet. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." But see the entire passage, verses 7-12.

That Rome is here intended there can be no mistake. It is distinctly said that the seven heads of the beast symbolise "the seven mountains on which the woman sitteth"; that is, the seven hills on which Rome was built. And as little room is there for mistake in the words, "And there are seven kings; five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come." That the line or succession of emperors is here meant, and not the primitive kings of Rome, is certain from the connection of the "five" who have "fallen" with the one "who is," the one then reigning, and with the one who is to "come," that is, his successor. We have then only to reckon the succession of emperors, and we must arrive with certainty at the reign under which the Apocalypse was written or was seen. If we begin with Julius Cæsar, it stands thus: Cæsar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius; these make up the five who have fallen. "One is;" Nero. The ancients, although the empire was not fully established till the time of Augustus, reckoned from Julius Cæsar. He had been declared perpetual dictator, and had concentrated sovereign power in his hands. Josephus calls Augustus the second emperor of Rome, and Tiberius the third.<sup>1</sup> "And the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space." Galba, who reigned seven months, makes the seventh. The context, "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (ver. 8), strikingly describes Nero by alluding to the popular belief that, after disappearing for a time, that emperor would reappear, as if he had risen from the dead. And again in the words, "and the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Had the expectation in regard to Nero, that after disappearing for a time he would come again, been fulfilled, he would have been the eighth; and he might also be said to be the seventh, as his successor Galba is generally reckoned as one of the

<sup>1</sup> Antiq. xviii. 2 (2).



mock emperors. This popular belief in regard to Nero was founded on a prediction of the soothsayers in the early part of his reign. Accordingly, after his death several impostors appeared, professing to be Nero; and there were not wanting those who, in full expectation of his return and recovery of power, "adorned his tomb with spring and summer flowers,"<sup>1</sup> with the hope doubtless of thus ingratiating themselves into his favour. It appears from numerous sources, Jewish as well as pagan, that there was a widespread expectation of Nero's return.<sup>2</sup>

To harmonize this passage with the theory which refers the time of the Apocalypse to the reign of Domitian, it has been maintained that the seven kings represent the seven hills of Rome, merely to characterize them as kingly or princely hills. The ten horns are said to represent the number of sovereigns that had ruled in Rome. That five of her seven kings (which are so many magnificent hills) are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, etc., merely represents the condition of Rome as "not having reached its acme in external greatness, but nevertheless wasting away in its internal strength." Others, who for the most part have held to the same interpretation, have departed from it in some particulars, understanding by "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is," the Roman empire, idolatrous under the heathen emperors, then ceasing to be for some time under the Christian emperors, and then becoming idolatrous again under the Roman pontiffs; and by the ten horns the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire is represented as divided after it became Christian.

"The seven hills of Rome," says Hengstenberg, "could only be pointed to as a symbol of the seven-formed worldly power." "Of the seven kings mentioned, five belong to the period already past; and of the two others one appeared at the time then present on the stage of history, and the other had still not entered on it. The five kings, or worldly kingdoms, that had already fallen at the time of the seer, are the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece. The one that is, accordingly, must be the sixth great monarchy, the Roman, for it was this that was in existence at the time of the seer. With the seventh phase of the ungodly power of the world, the beast goes also into perdition, the heathen state generally comes to an end."

"The scene," says Mr. Lord, "was the site of Rome. The seven heights were the seven hills of the city, and they were symbols of the seven kinds of rulers who exercised the government of the ancient empire." All seem to agree that Rome is meant. But those who understand the prophecy to mean kingdoms or dynasties, when it says

<sup>1</sup> "Vernis æstivisque floribus tumulum ejus ornarent."—Suet., § 57.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Stuart's Commentary, ii., pp. 434 *seq.*

“kings,” assign no good reason for an interpretation by which they give scope to the utmost latitude of speculation in the application of the prophecy. The comparison of these interpretations with that which makes the sixth ruler, then ruling, the emperor Nero, leaves no room for choice to a mind uncommitted to some favourite theory requiring a later date.

We therefore conclude that a reader of the Apocalypse, without prepossessions as to the date, consulting the book itself as a witness on this point, cannot fail to come to the conclusion that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, in the reign of Nero, the sixth in succession to Julius Cæsar in the empire of Rome.

The precise year of our Lord, probably, cannot be ascertained. It is not easy to determine the exact time when John left Judæa and took up his abode in Ephesus. We infer that he was not yet in that city when Paul was there (A.D. 58 or 59), as there is no allusion to him in the scene recorded in Acts xx. 17, and an allusion could not have been avoided had he been there. And yet afterwards, when Paul reached Jerusalem, as would appear from Acts xxi. and Galatians i. 19, he did not find John there. This may have been but a temporary absence; we, however, infer from all the facts that can be gathered in the case, that not long after Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus John arrived, and took up his abode in that city. He was probably one of the earliest, being one of the most eminent of the disciples and apostles of the Lord, who felt the persecution which commenced under Nero (A.D. 64), when it reached Ephesus. If we fix upon A.D. 64 or A.D. 68, or one of the intermediate years, as the date of the Apocalypse, it makes little or no difference, as the destruction to which so considerable a portion of the prophecy relates would still be at hand, even at the doors. Or if we suppose that John did not leave Judæa till after the war was declared, A.D. 67, and that he was sent to Patmos almost immediately on his arrival at Ephesus, it only brings the catastrophe he predicts still nearer. In its very title his prophecy professes to be a revelation of “things which must shortly come to pass.” The fulfilment was in the immediate futuro. This is repeated again and again (ii. 15, 16; iii. 11; xi. 14; xvi. 15; xxii. 7, 12, 20). A very large part of the book was to be speedily fulfilled; and although a part of it related to the distant future, and some of it to scenes and events following the end of the world, yet the “shortly” and “I come quickly” never lose their appropriateness and significance as the very key of this book. The complete argument for the early date, from internal evidence, can only be found in the full exposition of the book, showing that while it has its starting point in the state of things existing at the time it was written, it progresses in the order of history from that





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THIVATHIRA.

point until every antichristian power is overthrown, and the consummation is reached in the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, and the new heaven and the new earth. Such an exposition will show, for example, a most remarkable coincidence between the first six seals, viewed as premonitions of the great catastrophe, and the signs of this catastrophe as foretold by our Saviour (Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi.). And so striking an instance of Scripture interpreting Scripture ought not perhaps to have been omitted in that cumulative proof involved in the very nature of the question under consideration.

#### NO INTERNAL EVIDENCE FAVOURING THE LATER DATE.

So clear is the internal evidence in favour of the earlier date of the Apocalypse. And no evidence can be drawn from any part of the book favouring the later date so commonly assigned to it. Some, it is true, have thought they had found internal marks inconsistent with the earlier date in the state of the seven churches in Asia, as inferred from the special epistles addressed to them contained in the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> With a considerable degree of certainty, considering the inherent difficulty which belongs to the chronology of the Acts, taking the Claudian decree<sup>2</sup> in A.D. 51 (requiring Jews to leave Rome) as the starting point, we learn that Christianity was first introduced at Ephesus in A.D. 53 or 54, and that near the close of the last named year there had been gathered there, under the labours of Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos, a church, "the men," or male members, of which numbered twelve.<sup>3</sup> If we suppose that John wrote the Apocalypse somewhere between A.D. 64 and A.D. 68, these churches had been in existence at least some ten or twelve years, a sufficient length of time, considering that most of them no doubt were converts from heathenism, for them to have undergone all the changes to be inferred from these epistles. The church of Smyrna is represented as troubled with false apostles. The church of Pergamos had such as held the doctrine of Balaam. The church of Thyatira had some who suffered the woman Jezebel to teach and seduce the people. And so on. Only the church of Philadelphia had nothing laid to her charge. But we find in the Epistles of the other apostles the churches in general, which were no older, troubled with precisely the same evils. See Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, *passim*, and his Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he sorely complains of some who were called Christians, and mentions several who were of the churches of Asia: Demas, Alexander,

<sup>1</sup> See Dissertation in Woodhouse's Apocalypse Translated.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xviii., xix.

Hermogenes, and Philetus. Peter wrote against those who held the doctrine of Balaam. Jude did the same. Lardner assigns Jude's Epistle to A.D. 64 or 65. But the exhortations of Paul in his Epistle to one of these seven churches, that of Ephesus,<sup>1</sup> to put away from them bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice, and even stealing, as much imply a departure from their first love as the exhortations in the epistle to them in the Apocalypse imply such a departure. And Paul, in writing to Timothy in his First Epistle, beseeches him to abide at Ephesus. And for what purpose? That he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine; and he speaks of some as having swerved from sound doctrine, and turned aside to vain jangling (1 Tim. i. 6). There is nothing in any of the epistles to the seven churches which indicates a more serious charge. Instead of these epistles affording any internal evidence unfavourable to the earlier date claimed for the Apocalypse, it has already been shown that there are features about them wholly inconsistent with referring the book to a date so late as the time of Domitian.

#### MAIN GROUND IN SUPPORT OF THE LATER DATE.

With all this clear evidence from the book itself in favour of an early date, it may be asked how it has happened that so many have accepted, or seemed to take for granted, the later date. It has been supposed the external testimony required it. Irenæus, who lived so near the apostolic age, has been interpreted as declaring that the Apocalypse was seen by John near the end of the reign of Domitian. The passage occurs in a chapter of his work against heresies,<sup>2</sup> the object of which is to show that nothing should be affirmed rashly in interpreting the number 666, in the passage Rev. xiii. 18, inasmuch as it may be made to agree with so many names. He has been understood in this connection as recording his opinion that the Revelation was seen near the end of Domitian's reign. The passage is as follows: *Ἡμεῖς οὖν οὐκ ἀποκαυδενεύομεν περὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Ἀντιχριστοῦ ἀποφαινόμενοι βεβαιοτικῶς, εἰ γὰρ ἔδει ἀναφανδὸν τῷ νῦν κυρῷ κηρύττεσθαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, δι' ἐκείνου ἂν ἰρρήθη τοῦ καὶ τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν ἰωρακότος· οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἑώραθή, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Δομετιάνου ἀρχῆς.* "In regard to the name of Antichrist, we do not therefore run the risk of speaking positively; for, if it were necessary at present to proclaim distinctly his name, it would have been done by him who also saw the Apocalypse; for it is not a long time ago [he, or John himself] was seen, but almost in our generation near the end of the reign of Domitian."

<sup>1</sup> Written, according to Wieseler, A. D. 61 or 62, Chronol., p. 455.

<sup>2</sup> Adv. Heres., v. 30.

It will be observed that *ἐωράθη* has no nominative expressed. If *Ἀποκάλυψις* is to be supplied, then it is evident that the testimony of Irenæus is that the Revelation was seen near the end of the reign of Domitian. But if *Ἰωάννης* is taken as the subject, then Irenæus simply says: "For it was not a long time ago he was seen, but almost in our day, near the end of the reign of Domitian." And of course his authority cannot be adduced in support of the later date, as the assertion that John was seen, that is, was alive, near the close of Domitian's reign, does not by any means prove that this book was written at that time. It is admitted that the application of this verb to the man who had seen the vision appears somewhat unusual; and that it is used just above in the active voice, of the vision itself, which makes the transition to the seer somewhat sudden. But in the beginning of the chapter Irenæus, beyond all doubt, applies the same verb to John himself. His words are: *Ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς σπουδαίοις καὶ ἀρχαίοις ἀντιγράφοις τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τούτου κειμένου, καὶ μαρτυρούντων αὐτῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κατ' ὄψιν τὸν Ἰωάννην ἐωρακότων, κ.τ.λ.* "In all the best and oldest manuscripts this number is found, and those themselves seeing John in the face bear testimony," etc.; that is, in favour of the reading 666, in opposition to the other reading 616.

Again, the scope of the entire passage is to assign a reason why it was not necessary, at the time Irenæus wrote, for it certainly to be known who was pointed out by the number "Six hundred threescore and six." He argues that if this knowledge had been important at that time it would have been communicated by the writer of the Apocalypse, who lived so near their own time that he might almost be said to be of their generation. There was therefore really no ambiguity to be avoided, requiring him to use the name of John or the personal pronoun as the subject of *ἐωράθη*, the verb of sight. The scope requires this nominative and no other.

There was, moreover, something about John, considering his great age, and the deep interest which the Church had in him as surviving apostle, which makes the verb *ἐωράθη* peculiarly appropriate. To say of one "he was seen," meaning thereby he was alive at a certain time, might seem unusual, whether in Greek or English, as applied to an ordinary man. When we consider, however, how much would be thought of seeing this most aged apostle who had seen the Lord, there is nothing unnatural in the use of such an expression. In fact this verb is applied to him in precisely the same sense in the beginning of the chapter.

Wetstein understood John to be the nominative of *ἐωράθη*. The ancient translator of Irenæus renders it *visum est*; i.e., *τὸ θῆριον* the beast was seen; so also Storr. Guericke, in his "Introduction to the

New Testament" (1843) retracts his former opinion in favour of the later date, and although he understands Ἀποκάλυψις as the subject of ἐωράθη, suggests that Δομετιάνου, being without the article, is not a proper name, but an adjective, belonging, in accordance with the Greek formation, not to Domitian (which would make an adjective of the form Δομιτιανικός), but to Domitius, which was Nero's name, Domitius Nero. This would make Irenæus testify to the fact that the Apocalypse was written near the end of the reign of Nero. But as Irenæus was merely assigning a reason why it was not necessary for it to be known at the time he wrote what name was pointed out by the number in question, (or it would have been communicated by John himself,) it seems utterly foreign to his design to say anything respecting the time when the Apocalypse was seen or written, whether under Nero or Domitian; and entirely in furtherance of it to state that John was alive at a period so near his own time, and that of his original readers. Besides, Domitius is a very unusual appellation for Nero, and several of the Greek fathers do not appear to have thought of any one here other than Domitian, the last of the Cæsars.

Eusebius, who flourished in the early part of the fourth century, and not Irenæus, was the first who expressly asserted that John was an exile in Patmos during the reign of Domitian; but it is to be observed that he does not ascribe the Revelation to this apostle at all, for he expressly says: "It is likely the Revelation was seen by John the elder." Lardner thinks that the argument of Dionysius of Alexandria, who wrote against the Chiliasts or Millenarians, had great weight with Eusebius. Dionysius held that the Apocalypse was written by an elder of Ephesus, whose name was John, "a holy and inspired man." He endeavoured to prove from the book itself (and it was this argument which evidently influenced Eusebius), from its style, especially its alleged solecisms, *ιδιώμασι μὲν βαρβαρικοῖς*,<sup>1</sup> which so strikingly distinguish it from the Gospel and Epistles of the apostle, that he could not have been the author. It is doubtless on the authority of Eusebius that the theory which assigns the Apocalypse to the time of Domitian mainly rests. But as he does not recognise John the apostle as the author of the Apocalypse, his opinion as to the time of his imprisonment is of little account in determining the date of this book. Jerome, and most of the other ancient authorities commonly adduced in favour of the later date, plainly depend on him. But what is stated by Jerome as true of John in the year 96, that he was so weak and infirm that he was with difficulty carried to the church, and could speak only a few words to the people,<sup>2</sup> is wholly inconsistent with this opinion. The

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Hist. Eccl., vii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. ad Galat., Oper. 4, c. 6.



interesting anecdote related by Eusebius as founded on what occurred after his return from exile, in his pursuit of a young robber in the fastnesses of the mountains, is equally inconsistent with fixing the time of this exile in the reign of Domitian, when the apostle was nearly one hundred years old.

#### OTHER ANCIENT TESTIMONIES.

The name of "the tyrant," upon whose death Clement of Alexandria represents John as returning to Ephesus, is not given by him.<sup>1</sup> But Nero, above all other Roman emperors, bore the name of "tyrant" among the early Christians. Neither does Origen, who, in commenting on Matthew xx. 22, 23, speaks of a tradition which assigns the condemnation of John to Patmos to "a king of the Romans," give the name of that king.<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius (fl. A.D. 366) dated the Apocalypse in the reign preceding that of Nero. He is, however, admitted to have been an inaccurate writer. Andreas, a bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, near the close of the fifth century, in a commentary on the Apocalypse, says it was understood to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Arethas, one of his successors in the next century, assigns to it the same date. In the Syriac version this book is entitled: "The Revelation which was made by God to Johu the evangelist in the island Patmos, into which he was thrown by Nero Cæsar." And Theophylact, in the eleventh century, places the origin of the Apocalypse during the reign of Nero.

#### COMPARATIVE VALUE OF THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ARGUMENT.

The external evidence seems, on the whole, to be of comparatively little value in deciding the true date of the Apocalypse. The main reliance, it is clear, must be upon the argument from internal evidence. When it has been made to appear that Irenæus says nothing respecting the time when the book of Revelation was written, and that Eusebius ascribes its authorship to another John than the apostle, it is sufficiently evident that the remaining testimony of antiquity, conflicting as it is, or about evenly balanced between the earlier and later date, is of little account in deciding the question. And when we open the book itself, and find inscribed on its very pages evidence that at the time it was written Jewish enemies were still arrogant and active, and the city

<sup>1</sup> Quis Salvus Dives, 42, and Euseb., Hist. Eccl., iii. 23. τοῦ τυράννου τελευτήσαντος, κ.τ.λ. Although it is clear that Eusebius understood Domitian to be referred to, there is nothing in his quotation from Clement to show this.

<sup>2</sup> Oper., Ed. de la Rue, iii., p. 720. ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλεὺς.

in which our Lord was crucified, and the temple and altar in it were still standing, we need no date from early antiquity, nor even from the hand of the author himself, to inform us that he wrote before that great historical event and prophetic epoch, the destruction of Jerusalem.

## II. DESIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE.

It is a book full of wonders. The blood of the ministers and disciples of Christ was flowing, at the command of one of the most infamous tyrants that ever wielded a sceptre; a persecution one of the last victims of which was the great apostle of the Gentiles, into whose labours John had now entered. Nero himself came to his wretched end, probably the same month Paul was executed. This truly was a fit occasion for HIM who walketh amid the golden candlesticks to make known to His servants the issue of events in which they had so deep a personal concern. Moreover the predictions of our Saviour in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem were on the eve of being accomplished. It was under these circumstances that the apostle addressed his companions "in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," and said, "*Blessed* is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein; *for the time is at hand.*" The great design of this book then was to support the faith of God's persecuted people. As if the writer of it had said: "Fear not; the persecuting powers under which you now suffer, the Jewish and the pagan, will soon be destroyed. Hold fast that (precious faith) which thou hast received, that no man take thy crown. Behold I come quickly. And although other enemies may arise in future times, let the Christians of those times find consolation in this, that all foes are destined to the same overthrow, and that Christ shall reign in glory for evermore."

"The prophecy of the Revelation," says Danbuz, "was designed that when men should suffer for the name of Christ they might here find some consolation, both for themselves and the Church; for themselves, by the prospect and certainty of a reward; for the Church, by the testimony that Christ never forsakes it but will conquer at last." "The book of the Apocalypse," remarks Dr. Adam Clarke, "may be considered as a PROPHECY, continued in the Church of God, uttering predictions relative to all times, which have their successive fulfilment as ages roll on; and thus it stands in the Christian Church in the place of the succession of prophets in the Jewish Church; and by this special economy PROPHECY is still continued, is ALWAYS SPEAKING, and yet a succession of prophets rendered unnecessary."

In the first part of the Apocalypse it is repeatedly declared that the time was at hand for the series of predictions it contained to be fulfilled. And in the conclusion, or what has been called the epilogue of the book, this is again asserted. Three times we have these words, “I come quickly.” Accordingly this prophecy reveals the power of Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth, as about to be employed to bring to a speedy end the persecutions by which Christians were then oppressed. But it not only reveals the destruction of these particular persecuting powers, but of every other that might arise in future times, till the day of complete and final victory. Hence the great theme of the Apocalypse is the coming of Jesus Christ to this world, in compassion to His people, and judgment on His foes, and, after the destruction of all the antichristian powers that may arise in different ages of the world, and the Church has enjoyed a long season of unexampled prosperity, His final coming to raise the dead and judge the righteous and the wicked; so that this book might be entitled, not inappropriately, *THE BOOK OF THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST*. The New Testament informs us of a twofold appearance or coming of Christ. One, His appearing in the flesh, was visible. The other, or second, relates to the preservation, propagation, and consummation of His kingdom. The second coming is partly *invisible*, as in the instance of the destruction of Jerusalem, or as when He interposes for His sincere followers and grants them the light and comfort of His presence. And it is partly *visible*; that is, Christ at the end of the world will thus appear, to raise the dead and pass the irreversible sentence of judgment on every man. Now it is this second, partly visible and partly invisible, coming of Christ, which this book reveals, and which should never be lost sight of if we would have the blessedness it promises: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written in this book.”

In the particular messages to the seven churches, the Lord, speaking by the writer of this book, has two objects in view: their rebuke, and their consolation or encouragement. They were exhorted to fear none of those things which they were to suffer: “Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast.” “That which ye have already, hold fast till I come.” “I will come unto thee quickly.” “I will come on thee as a thief.” “Behold I stand at the door and knock.” While He thus endeavours to fortify the minds of the faithful under their tribulations, by the assurance that He would speedily come, He warns such as had fallen into a state of spiritual declension to prepare for His coming by repenting, returning to their first love, and doing their first works.

The book with seven seals is a symbolical representation of the whole prophecy contained in the Apocalypse. In the first six seals we have a prediction of the signs and calamities that were to precede the coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, in striking correspondence with those foretold by the Saviour. This was that coming to which the persecuted Christians, whose "brother and companion in tribulation" John was, were directed then immediately to look forward. John was commissioned to show unto God's servants things which were shortly to come to pass. Persecution succeeded persecution at the hands of the Jews; and all who acknowledged themselves Christians were cast out of the synagogue, and treated with all the cruelty the Jews could inflict, or could stimulate, by false witness, their pagan rulers to inflict. The promise, "Behold I come quickly," encouraged the prayer, "Even so come, Lord Jesus"; "come for the deliverance of Thy persecuted people." This entreaty was now entering into the ears of the Lord; and He who was crucified was about to come, whilst some who pierced Him were alive, and might see Him, and feel His avenging power.

The prophet next proceeds to predict the destruction of the pagan persecuting power, under the symbol of a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. He is represented as standing before "the woman," *i.e.* the Church; as "wroth" with her, as persecuting her, and going to make war with the remnant of her seed. These expressions must be understood as referring to the bloody persecutions of Christians under Nero and Domitian. The reigns of successive emperors were signalized by similar persecutions, though none of them perhaps were equally sanguinary. But the promise, "Behold I come," sustained the faith of God's people. At the very period of the Diocletian persecution Christianity was advancing more rapidly than ever to the overthrow of paganism. The prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," pierced the heavens; and those pagan foes that had led the people of God into captivity were made captives, and those who had killed them with the sword fell by the same weapon,—if not literally, by that word which is the sword of the Spirit. The decline and fall of the Roman empire was a part of that revelation which John was commissioned to make to those who were his companions in tribulation. Such was their consolation, and the consolation of their brethren who came after, during the general persecutions carried on by the Roman emperors; and such at length was the reward of the faith and patience of the saints.

The prophet having completed his description of the advent of Christ to destroy the Jewish and pagan persecuting powers, proceeds next to predict His coming to destroy a persecuting power, which

should not arise (although this "mystery of iniquity" had begun to "work" at the date of the earliest Epistles of Paul, see 2 Thess. ii. 7-10) until long after the Christians, for whose consolation he immediately wrote, had been called from the present scene. But this too nevertheless would serve to fortify their minds, because the assurance that God would remove out of the way future enemies would be a proof of His unchanging love to His Church. And it has actually served to support the faith of a great multitude, in different ages, to the present hour. That same Saviour, who has come once and again for the destruction of error and of enemies, will fulfil all His word in due time, and great Babylon shall come into remembrance before God; and a great voice of much people shall be heard in heaven, rejoicing over her, worshipping God, saying AMEN, ALLELUIA. He that is "called Faithful and True," whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and on whose head are many crowns, will ride forth, leading His redeemed to victory. The papal temporal power will be broken, and the errors which have grown up in the Christian Church in connection with the papacy be destroyed; and then those, or many of them, who have received the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image, shall be slain by the sword of Him whose name is the WORD OF GOD, which sword proceedeth out of His mouth. That is, they shall be converted, by the Holy Spirit accompanying the truth of the gospel, to be the true and humble disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of the Apocalypse, which we are to consider as a PROPHECY always speaking in the Church of God, at length foretells the appearing of Christ to bind Satan, and cast him into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. There is to be a long arrest of Satanic influence, following upon the destruction of antichristian powers, including the diversified forms of modern paganism. This will be the noonday of the latter-day glory, foretold by ancient prophets. At the expiration of the thousand years Satan is to be liberated for a short period, and will go forth to deceive the nations. Gog and Magog denote the multitude that will be deceived by him. He shall gather them together for battle. Their defeat and destruction are then foretold, together with the finishing stroke to the agency of Satan, as a power for evil, in the world. He shall be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented for ever. The great Being, from whose face the earth and the heaven shall flee away, will sit on His great white throne, *visible* in this His final coming to all the dead and the quick, small and great. The books will be opened, and every one judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works. The righteous will be received up into glory; and whosoever is not found written in the book of life will be cast out with Satan and his angels.

In the close of the book the Son of God, the Divine Revealer, repeats the solemn assurance, "Behold, I come quickly." He personates the Spirit and the bride; or He ceases, for a moment, to be the speaker, and in the pause, the Spirit and the bride, and all that love His appearing and wait with longing desire for the advent of the Lord, take up His oft repeated word, COME, and echo it back to His throne. First the Holy Spirit speaks, and says to the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star, *Come*. The bride, the ransomed Church, purified by her trials, now ready for her espousals, speaks out with the Spirit dwelling in her, "Come, my Lord; make haste, my Beloved." And while she is yet speaking the opening gates of heaven shall reveal her Fair One, the heavenly Lamb, coming with ten thousand of His saints. Everything, from beginning to end, seems to be in rapid motion, and hastens and urges on to this triumphant goal. One seal is broken after another; there is a sound of trumpets, a pouring out of vials, swift messengers are flying through the air. At one time the image is that of a throne in heaven, supported by living creatures, one of them having the wings of an eagle, and lightnings and thunders and voices proceeded out of it; at another, it is that of a conqueror on His snow-white steed, or a glittering two-edged sword. But there is one voice in all its epistles, seals, trumpets, vials, plagues, and visions of glory and joy, THE LORD COMETH. That voice has been sounding along the ages for more than eighteen hundred years; and He has come again and again to the overthrow of one enemy after another, Jew and pagan, priest and emperor; and still it sounds, and still He is coming to the overthrow of superstition, idolatry, and bigotry, wherever found, in whatever form practised, and by whatever sacred names baptized. Scripture would lead us to be always expecting Christ; and there has always been something present in the world to warrant the expectation. While some who have thought they saw symptoms of His coming to judgment, or of His millennial reign, have been disappointed; others, who have desired His spiritual presence, and have interpreted the providential events of their own times by the light of Divine truth, have felt that their prayers for His advent were not unanswered. Nor will they, who wait for His coming now, to make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose, look in vain. "Signs of the white horses" are even now appearing; bright signals herald His approach.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit and the bride still supplicate; the bride, the ransomed Church, as with uplifted hands and outstretched neck, cries, "Come, oh hasten Thy coming." Then let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that

<sup>1</sup> Parochial Sermons, by John Henry Newman, D.D.

is athirst come, hasten to meet the Coming One. “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

That the Apocalypse was written in accordance with this general design, and at this period of the apostle's history, will more fully appear from the book itself.

## CHAPTER X.

### ANALYSIS OF THE APOCALYPSE, WITH BRIEF EXPLANATORY NOTES.

- I. BY WHOM AND TO WHOM THE REVELATION WAS MADE.—THE TITLE.—THE DEDICATION.—THE REVEALER SPEAKS.—II. EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.—TO EPHESUS.—TO SMYRNA.—PERGAMOS.—THYATIRA.—SARDIS.—PHILADELPHIA.—LAODICEA.—III. SUBLIME VISIONS, INTRODUCTORY.—THRONE IN HEAVEN.—LAMB IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE.—HONOUR PAID TO THE LAMB.—IV. OVERTHROW OF THE JEWISH PERSECUTING POWER.—FIRST FIVE SEALS, SIGNS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.—THE SIXTH SEAL.—SEVENTH SEAL.—SEVEN ANGELS PREPARE TO SOUND.—FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS.—FIRST TRUMPET, PAGAN POWER OF ROME APPEARS.—SECOND TRUMPET, DESTRUCTION OF NATIONS, OR THEIR ABSORPTION INTO THE EMPIRE.—THIRD TRUMPET, JULIUS CÆSAR, FOUNDER OF THE EMPIRE.—FOURTH TRUMPET, EMPIRE ESTABLISHED UNDER AUGUSTUS.—FIFTH TRUMPET, FIRST WOE, OR NERO AND THE RAVAGES OF THE JEWISH WAR.—SIXTH TRUMPET, SECOND WOE, OR SIEGE AND DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM UNDER TITUS.—V. OVERTHROW OF THE PAGAN PERSECUTING POWER.—THE SEVENTH TRUMPET BEGINS TO SOUND.—COMPENDIUM OF THE LITTLE BOOK.—PAGAN ROME PERSECUTING THE CHURCH.—SPIRITUAL AGENTS IN THE CONFLICT, AND ANTICIPATED VICTORY.—PERSECUTIONS CONTINUED.—THE IMPERIAL MAGISTRACY OF ROME THE AGENCY.—VI. CORRUPTIONS, TEMPORAL POWER, ETC., OF NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—SYMBOL, DOMINION AND NAME OF NEW PERSECUTING POWER.—GLOOMY PICTURE RELIEVED BY VISION.—JUDGMENT ON THE PAPACY.—THE SEVEN VIALS OR PLAGUES.—FIRST VIAL, PRIEST-CRAFT AND DEGENERACY OF THE CLERGY.—THE SECOND AND THIRD, MOHAMMEDAN POWER IN THE SEVENTH AND OTTOMAN IN THIRTEENTH CENTURY.—FOURTH VIAL, THE INQUISITION.—FIFTH, REFORMATION.—THE SIXTH VIAL, FRENCH REVOLUTION.—THE SEVENTH VIAL, SYMBOLS OF DESTRUCTION.—SEVENTH VIAL CONTINUED, WOMAN ON A SCARLET COLOURED BEAST.—FALL OF SPIRITUAL BABYLON.—LAMENTATIONS OVER HER FALL.—REJOICINGS IN HEAVEN.—FINAL CONFLICT AND VICTORY.—VII. MILLENNIUM.—FINAL DESTRUCTION OF SATAN'S POWER.—RESURRECTION AND LAST JUDGMENT.—PRELUDE TO DESCRIPTION OF NEW JERUSALEM.—THE CITY DESCRIBED.—DESCRIBED IN RESPECT TO ITS MORE SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS.—THE EPILOGUE.



## THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

## 1. BY WHOM AND TO WHOM THE REVELATION WAS MADE. CHAP. I.

*The Title and Introduction.*

1.] [Ver. 1-3.]  
 1 THE Revelation<sup>1</sup> of Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly<sup>3</sup> come to pass; and He sent and signified *it* by His angel unto His servant John:<sup>4</sup> who bare record of the word of God,<sup>5</sup> and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.  
 2  
 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear<sup>6</sup> the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time<sup>7</sup> is at hand.

*The Dedication, with an Anthem to the Divine Revealer.*

[Ver. 4-7.]

4 John<sup>8</sup> to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be

<sup>1</sup> ἈΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ἸΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, means both that the revelation is *from* Him, or He is the Discloser of it, and is *of* Him, or that He is the subject of it. Ἀποκάλυψις means, in the LXX. and the N. T., a discovery of things hidden, as in 1 Sam. xx. 30, Rom. xvi. 25, 2 Cor. xiii. 1, Eph. iii. 3,—or the manifestation of a person, as of Christ, Luke ii. 32, 1 Cor. i. 7, etc. Wiclif, in his translation, A.D. 1380, used the word “Apocalips.”

<sup>2</sup> That it was *given* to Jesus Christ accords, doctrinally, with the teaching found in the Gospel written by John: John v. 19, 20; vii. 16; viii. 28; xvi. 15, etc. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

<sup>3</sup> Ἐν τάχει, in swiftmess, or in a very short time. This is repeated very often, e.g. chap. ii. 5 and 16, “I come quickly,” ταχὺ; iii. 11; xi. 14; xxii. 7, 12, 20. A large part of the book was to be speedily fulfilled. At every period to which the prophecy relates, the “shortly” and “I come quickly” have a peculiar significance.

<sup>4</sup> The order is, God gave it to Christ; Christ sent an angel to communicate it to John; and John delivered it to the churches.

<sup>5</sup> There can be no allusion to the other writings of this apostle, the Gospel and Epistles, which were written subsequently to the Apocalypse. Even Hengstenberg, who holds that the Gospel and Epistles have priority of date, expresses surprise that the reference to these writings should still have its defenders.

<sup>6</sup> The reference plainly is to the public reading and hearing,—the singular, *he*, pointing to the reader, and the plural, *they*, to the company listening, in an age anterior to the printing of books.

<sup>7</sup> Ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς, another expression pointing to the immediate future. Some of the events were so near that, even while St. John was writing, they might be said to be commencing. And, in every generation, the time of some of the events of this wonderful book has been at hand.

<sup>8</sup> The writer does not style himself an apostle. It was not necessary. He was about to address them rather as a prophet; and those whom he addressed would know that none other but the apostle of this name would or could address them in the manner he does in this book. The entire book is inscribed to the

unto you, and peace,<sup>1</sup> from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come;<sup>2</sup> and from the seven spirits<sup>3</sup> which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness,<sup>4</sup> and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him<sup>5</sup> that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings<sup>6</sup> and priests unto God and His Father; to Him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, He cometh with clouds;<sup>7</sup> and every eye shall see Him, and they *also* which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

*The Revealer speaks. John's First Vision that of the Revealer.*

[Ver. 8-20.]

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord,<sup>8</sup> which is, and which was, and which is to come, the

seven churches. The reason why he addresses no more than seven churches is found in the fact that at this early period in the apostolic history these were all that existed in the region designated. Colossæ had been destroyed by an earthquake not long after the church there had been addressed by Paul in his Epistle. This according to Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, v. 41, took place in the ninth year of Nero.

<sup>1</sup> *Χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη*, a form of salutation which was a very favourite one with the apostles. Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "From Him," etc., *ἀπὸ ὃ ὄν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος* is one of the more striking instances in this book in which there is a manifest departure from the ordinary Greek construction. It is simply a translation of that great and awful name, Jehovah (which is indeclinable, and admits of no variation), into the heathen language in which John was writing.

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Spirit, according to the ancient interpretation (see Poole's Synopsis) is undoubtedly designated by this expression. The reference is to His divers operations, or manifold manifestations (1 Cor. xii. 4-7), in all which He is "one and the selfsame spirit." The number *seven* is frequently used symbolically in this book. In oriental usage it is the number of completeness; Philo styles it *τελεσφόρος*, the completing number.

<sup>4</sup> In the original we have here another of those apparent solecisms, *ὁ μάρτυς, κ.τ.λ.*, instead of *τοῦ μάρτυρος, κ.τ.λ.* In chap. iii. 14 these titles are made equivalent to the indeclinable Hebrew Amen, used as a name of Deity, hence no oblique cases are recognised.

<sup>5</sup> The opening strains of a sublime anthem.

<sup>6</sup> The original has *kingdom* instead of kings, and is sustained by the Sinaitic and Alexandrine MSS.; but the idea of the *Textus Receptus* may be retained, as it is a kingdom in which the subjects share the reign.

<sup>7</sup> The anthem concludes in these exalted strains. It is as if the last great day had dawned on the vision of the inspired seer, and he saw the clouds which Christ will then make His chariot, rolling beneath his feet.

<sup>8</sup> To the anthem there seemed to come a response as from heaven itself. The narrative in its onward flow is arrested, and without any intimation of change in

<sup>9</sup> Almighty. (I John,<sup>1</sup> who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> was in the isle that is called Patmos,<sup>3</sup> for the word of God, and <sup>10</sup>for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day,<sup>4</sup> and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,<sup>5</sup>

actor or speaker, the voice of a Being is heard, as if echoed back from the invisible world, as the last cadences of the anthem die away: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord." The Sinaitic and Alexandrine Texts both have *Lord God*. Alpha is the first, and Omega the last, letter in the Greek alphabet. The meaning of the initial and final letter, as used in this title, is doubtless as defined, *the beginning and the ending*, for which we find no corresponding words in several of the most ancient MSS., the Alexandrine for example. He is the All-in-all. These two letters, A and Ω, represent and include all the others, or the entire alphabet; which also may be said to include all knowledge, as disseminated and perpetuated by letters. He was committing to His servant a written revelation, and He appropriates a title peculiarly suited to Himself in this character, as the Inspirer of every one employed in putting it in writing, as the great fountain of Divine and saving knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> John now began to realize the solemnity and dignity of his position, as one selected to show to the servants of God the things of the future, as he had not and could not have done before. He saw as with a prophet's ken how what he was writing would be intently perused and pondered in the distant places and ages of the world. He arrests himself in the record he had begun to make of the words of the voice, and which he had caught at once as an amanuensis, in order that he might more fully state who he himself was, and how he came to be in so strange and out-of-the-way a place when the revelation was made.

<sup>2</sup> Ἐν τῇ θλίψει, κ.τ.λ., is language that points to something beyond the ordinary troubles of life, to persecution, the persecution which had made St. John a prisoner.

<sup>3</sup> The preterite *was*, ἐγενόμην, is not to be understood as meaning that St. John was not still on the island when he wrote this book. It *was* the scene of the vision he is about to record; he may have had his future readers in view. That the process of writing was going on while the visions recorded were yet passing before him appears from chap. x. 4. Patmos, now called Patino and Patmosa, is a rocky island in the Ægean Sea, situated not far from the coast, to the south of Ephesus, a short distance from Samos. It is little more than one huge rock projecting out of the sea, and at the time of the apostle's exile was probably without inhabitants, unless it might be other prisoners, and those who had charge of the place as a prison. It was in this stern and desolate place that St. John was favoured with the visions of God. It was among the caves, or from the peaks of its rocky eminences, that he heard sounding the words of that awful voice which he had commenced, and was about to resume, recording.

<sup>4</sup> He was in the spirit, *i.e.* in a *theopneustic* state, on the Lord's day. This is the only instance in which this appellation is given to the first day of the week in the New Testament. It is called ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα, the dominical day, because on it our Lord arose from the dead, and became the firstfruits of them that slept; and it became consecrated to public worship.

<sup>5</sup> He heard *behind* him a great voice of a trumpet. Whether he stood within or in front of some grotto (one is still pointed out as the scene of his visions) we know not; the voice sounded behind him. It was a voice of strength and majesty, which seemed to fill all the air for a wide distance.

11 Saying,) I am Alpha and Omega,<sup>1</sup> the first and the last: and  
 What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven  
 churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna,  
 and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and  
 12 unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned<sup>2</sup> to see  
 the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven  
 13 golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks  
*one* like unto the Son of man,<sup>3</sup> clothed with a garment down to  
 14 the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His  
 head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow;<sup>4</sup>  
 15 and His eyes *were* as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto  
 fine brass,<sup>5</sup> as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as  
 16 the sound of many waters.<sup>6</sup> And He had in His right hand  
 seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword:  
 and His countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.<sup>7</sup>  
 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid  
 His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the  
 18 first and the last: I *am* He that liveth, and was dead;<sup>8</sup> and,  
 behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys<sup>9</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> I am Alpha and Omega. John here resumes the record which he had commenced, ver. 8. He is told what to do: to write what he saw in a book, and *send it* to the churches named. He was to send it to them, *i.e.*, from Patmos. The Sin. and Alex. Texts omit "which are in Asia."

<sup>2</sup> If it was within a cave or excavation where the apostle stood on that dominical day, worshipping, as he looked towards the light, and listened to the murmurs of the sea, Him whose resurrection the day commemorated, he saw its gloomy recesses lighted up, and a glory such as no mortal eye, not excepting Moses' or Isaiah's, ever rested on before.

<sup>3</sup> Amidst seven distinct and separate lamps he saw One like unto the Son of man. This is a title which Christ applied to Himself on many occasions during His earthly ministry, but which does not appear to have been used in addressing Him, or in application to Him, by any except Himself, until after His resurrection.

<sup>4</sup> The whiteness here is not that of hoary age, neither does it denote merely the purity of Christ, but His majesty as a king; kings and other persons of official standing often resorting to artificial means to produce precisely this effect.

<sup>5</sup> Χαλκοίβανω, brass in an incandescence state. See the probable origin of this word explained in chapter on date of Apocalypse, p. 153.

<sup>6</sup> His voice, before likened to a trumpet, is now likened to the majestic, far reaching sound of the ocean breaking on the shore.

<sup>7</sup> Any attempt to give outward form or an embodiment to this sublime description would only be to degrade it. The symbols employed were not given to be used in making pictures. See Dan. x. 4-9; cf. Ezek. i. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Two distinct classes of titles and attributes applied interchangeably to Christ. He is the ΘΕΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ.

<sup>9</sup> To have the keys is an oriental symbol of authority and government: Isa. xxii. 22, Rev. iii. 7. By *hell*, or *hades*, is not meant the mere prison of the wicked, any

19 hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;<sup>1</sup> 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches:<sup>2</sup> and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

## 2. THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES. CHAPS. II. AND III.

### To *Ephesus*.

II.]

[Ver. 1-7.

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus<sup>3</sup> write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, 2 who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works,<sup>4</sup> and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles,<sup>5</sup> and are not, and hast found 3 them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's 4 sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent,

more than that he who is exalted to the supreme dominion in an earthly kingdom has authority only over its dungeons and prison houses. But by it is meant the invisible world, to which all the dead, whether good or bad, have departed.

<sup>1</sup> We have in ver. 19 a plan or very general outline of the book or prophecy. 1. He was to record the things already seen; to wit, the glowing vision of the Son of man, investing him with authority. 2. The prophecy was to have reference to the existing state of the Church, as affected by the hostile Jewish and pagan powers. 3. It was to relate to the destruction of all antichristian powers, and to the Church in its final and complete glory.

<sup>2</sup> He expressly declares, before proceeding, that the stars were symbols of the angels of the seven churches, and the lamps symbols of the churches.

<sup>3</sup> The Ephesians styled their city *πρώτη τῆς Ἀσίας*, and it was the most ancient and chief city of Ionia. Its foundation dates from the era of the ante-Hellenic tribes. Under the Persian rule it was sunk in luxury and voluptuousness. Lysander set on foot commerce, industry, and the arts, and succeeded in raising Ephesus to be the most magnificent city of Asia. See Plutarch. For a fuller notice of Ephesus, see Chap. VIII., p. 145. By the *angels* addressed in these epistles we are to understand the official directorship of these churches. There appears to have been one pastor, or bishop, who presided, with independent authority, in each of these churches.

<sup>4</sup> *Οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου*, "I know thy works," is a formula with which all the seven epistles commence.

<sup>5</sup> The false apostles whom Paul had to contend with: 2 Cor. ii. 17; xi. 4, 5, 13; Gal. i. 7; ii. 4; Phil. iii. 2, 3. The Sin. and Alex. Codices have, "which call themselves apostles." This book must therefore have been written when a claim to the apostleship, with some plausibility, could be set up.

and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove<sup>1</sup> thy candlestick out of his place, except thou<sup>6</sup> repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the<sup>7</sup> Nicolaitans,<sup>2</sup> which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear<sup>3</sup> what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life,<sup>4</sup> which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

*To Smyrna.*

[Ver. 8-11.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna<sup>5</sup> write ; These

<sup>1</sup> It is not a destruction but a removal that is threatened. "If the light of the gospel goes out," says Bossuet, "in one region, it is not therefore extinguished, but is only removed elsewhere and transferred to another people." The very site of the ancient city is a desolation, and scarcely can one be found there who ever heard the name of Paul or of John. Goats find shelter in its streets, among its ruins, from the sun at noon ; noisy crows seem to insult its silence ; and the partridge calls in the area of the theatre and the stadium. The historian Gibbon thus writes of the fall of Ephesus : "In the loss of Ephesus, A.D. 1311, the Christians deplored the loss of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation. The desolation is complete ; and the temple of Diana, or the church of Mary, will equally elude the search of the curious traveller."

<sup>2</sup> The best explanation of the term Nicolaitans makes it symbolical, like Balaam, ver. 14, and Jezebel, ver. 20, and makes all these names apply to the Judaizers with whom the early churches were infested. There are insuperable objections to a historical explanation, or the derivation of the name from a sectarian called Nicolaus. Balaam, according to its etymology, signifies "destroyer of the people" ; and Nicolaus seems to be the same name Grecized, meaning, according to its etymology, the same. It is simply Balaam in Greek.

<sup>3</sup> The formula, "he that hath an ear," etc., is similar to the one Jesus was accustomed to use during His visible ministry on earth. Matt. xi. 15, xiii. 9 ; Luke viii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> The promise to the conqueror is that he should be admitted to the privilege from which the sin of our first parents debarred them. The forfeitures in Adam should be more than regained. The tree of life from which Adam was excluded was in Eden, a transitory probationary state ; but this is in the midst of the paradise of God. That was a mere sign and seal of immortality ; this represents eternal life itself, through the infinite and unmerited grace of Christ the Redeemer.

The most striking of all the lessons to be derived from the first of the seven epistles appears to be this : that it is possible for Christians to be firm in maintaining the doctrines, and to avoid open scandal, whilst the ardour of love greatly declines.

<sup>5</sup> Smyrna is the central emporium of the trade of the Levant, and maintains its rank as a considerable city, having a population computed at 130,000. It is situated at about forty-eight miles north of Ephesus. The ancients called it "the crown of Ionia." The unusually large number of Christians that have found their home in the town renders it peculiarly unclean in the eyes of the strict Moslems who have possession of it, and among them it has acquired the name of infidel Izmir, or Smyrna. The Greek Christians have a bishop and two churches.

It was here that Polycarp, a personal friend and disciple of the apostle John, and

things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive ;  
 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art  
 rich,) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are  
 10 Jews,<sup>1</sup> and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan. Fear none  
 of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall  
 cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall  
 have tribulation ten<sup>2</sup> days : be thou faithful unto death, and I  
 11 will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him  
 hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; He that over-  
 cometh shall not be hurt of the second death.<sup>3</sup>

*To Pergamos.*

[Ver. 12-17.]

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos<sup>4</sup> write ; These  
 things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges ;  
 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's  
 seat<sup>5</sup> is : and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied  
 My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas<sup>6</sup> *was* My faithful

minister of the church of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom under Marcus Aurelius. The Christians of Smyrna hold the memory of this venerable man in the highest honour, and go annually in procession to his supposed tomb.

<sup>1</sup> That the Jews were the fomenters and willing agents in this persecution, points clearly to the earlier date which is claimed for this book.

<sup>2</sup> There is no proof that this number *ten* is to be understood as symbolical of a long period ; it is probably to be taken literally.

<sup>3</sup> The expression " second death " is found in no other book of Scripture. It is the equivalent of the Gehenna of Matt. v. 29 and Luke xii. 5. The penalty of disobedience was not merely exclusion from the tree of life, *i.e.*, it was not merely negative but positive in its character ; it was death reaching beyond the grave. The promise here is of deliverance from this most dreadful of future evils.

<sup>4</sup> Pergamos is in the southern part of Mysia, sixty-four miles north of Smyrna, and more than a hundred north of Ephesus, some eighteen or twenty miles from the sea, on the banks of the river Cetus. It was eminent as a seat of literature and science, and had possessed a library of about 200,000 volumes or manuscripts. The art of preparing the sheep or goat skins for manuscripts had been carried to such perfection at Pergamos, that from this circumstance they obtained the name of *pergamina chartæ*, or parchment. As a heathen city, it was devoted to the worship of Æsculapius ; he was worshipped in the form of a living serpent. The ancient church of St. John, which still exists there, is supposed to have been transformed into a church by the early Christians from a heathen temple ; and the common opinion is that it was the temple of Æsculapius.

<sup>5</sup> The metropolis where Satan sits enthroned. It may have had this bad pre-eminence because it was given to idolatry in its grossest form,—the worship of Æsculapius in the form of a living serpent, the serpent being with John the symbol of Satan himself.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastical history is silent respecting any martyr of the name of Antipas. But singled out as he is here by Christ, his name stands with perpetual honour ;

martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.  
 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there  
 them that hold the doctrine of Balaam,<sup>1</sup> who taught Balak to  
 cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat  
 15 things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So  
 hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,<sup>2</sup>  
 16 which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee  
 quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My  
 17 mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit  
 saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give  
 to eat of the hidden manna,<sup>3</sup> and will give him a white stone,  
 and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth  
 saving he that receiveth it.

no one could aspire to a grander record. Hengstenberg adopts the explanation that the name is symbolical, and is formed of two Greek words, in imitation of anti-Christ, meaning one who stands firm in the faith *against all*, ἀντί πᾶς, trials and enemies.

<sup>1</sup> The Judaizers are likened as to their doctrine, or the influence of their teaching, to Balaam, because they placed a most dangerous trap or snare in the path of the Lord's people. Num. xxv. 1-9, and xxxi. 15, 16. The apostle Peter, in his Second Epistle, ii. 10-16, describes the same evil workers under the same name; so also Jude 4-16. The tendency of their doctrine was to lead those who adopted it into the grossest licentiousness.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning is not that this was a second and distinct class of seducers, but "so also hast thou them who seek to do the same evil work among you Balaam did of old, the Nicolaitans." In the oldest and best manuscripts and versions, such *e.g.* as the Sinaitic and Alexandrine, the adverb ὁμοίως, meaning "likewise," is adopted, in place of the relative and verb ὅ μωσῶ, rendered "which thing I hate."

<sup>3</sup> The promises to the conqueror admit him, in the two preceding epistles, to the tree of life in the paradise of God, and secure him for ever from the approach of death. We have here the reward more fully described; for these promises at the close of the epistles are not to be understood as describing separate and distinct rewards, but rather as cumulative, and designed to set forth, in particulars, what that one great final reward consists in. The expression "hidden manna" alludes, it is clear, to the manna which was laid up by Moses in the ark of the testimony. As Christ now is the Bread of Life (John vi. 32, 33, 48-50; 1 Cor. x. 3, 4) to them that believe in Him, He will, in some such sense, be as manna to their souls in heaven. No veil will be permitted to remain between the redeemed and their Lord, hiding His glory, making Him as now the hidden manna. The white stone with the new name written points to the high-priestly honours which the Lord shall confer on the victors in the Christian struggle. Archbishop Trench supposes that there may be in this stone and its unknown name an allusion to the Urim and Thummim, which the high-priest bore in the breastplate of judgment (see on Seven Epistles). No one but the high-priest knew what was written on the Urim. No one but the saved sinner himself can know what it will be to find himself in heaven, having the same personal identity, but so different; as if a new name had been impressed upon him, making him a priest unto God for ever.



*To Thyatira.*

[Ver. 18-29.]

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira<sup>1</sup> write; These things saith the Son of God,<sup>2</sup> who hath His eyes like unto a  
 19 flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and  
 20 thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,<sup>4</sup> which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to  
 21 eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to  
 22 repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.  
 23 And I will kill her children with death;<sup>5</sup> and all the churches

<sup>1</sup> Thyatira is situated on the borders of Mysia and Lydia, a little to the north-east of the Roman road from Pergamos to Sardis, between forty and fifty miles south-east from the former, and about twenty-seven miles from the latter. Its modern or Turkish name is Ak-his-sar, or White Castle, derived from the white rocky hill overhanging it, where a fortress once stood. The position of the town is picturesque, extending far into the plain, and surrounded by large and well cultivated gardens. It was here that Antiochus made the head-quarters of his army, before the battle with the Romans, under the command of the two Scipios, in which he was defeated. Thyatira has always borne the reputation of being an industrious, thriving city, and still possesses a good market for the products of the interior. The bazaars are large and well supplied. Large quantities of scarlet cloth are sent weekly to Smyrna; for it still maintains its reputation for the dyeing trade, for which it has been famous from time immemorial (Homer, *Il.*, iv., 141). The first person baptized on the continent of Europe (at Philippi) was a native of this city, a seller of purple: Acts xvi. 14. The ancient church, still traditionally called by the Christian inhabitants the church of St. John the Theologian (*ὁ ἅγιος θεολόγος*), which has been changed into a mosque, stands in the middle of the town. The population numbers about 15,000, of whom two thirds are Mohammedans and the remaining third nominal Christians. The whole trade here is in the hands of the Christian population, as it generally is throughout the East; the Christians comprising the most intelligent and industrious portion of the population. (See Tristram's *Seven Churches*, with Photographs by M. A. Svobodu, p. 49.)

<sup>2</sup> In the vision from which the titles and attributes with which these epistles are introduced are drawn (chap. i. 13-15), the Being who directs them to be written is called "the Son of man;" here He is called "the Son of God."

<sup>3</sup> The comparison is not between the "works" and the "charity and service," etc., but between the works as at first performed and those of their later Christian life.

<sup>4</sup> The activity and influence of some female Judaizer and corrupter may have suggested the name of Jezebel, as another symbolical appellation of the class of heretics pointed out in the epistle to Pergamos as Balaamites and Nicolaitans, and in that to Ephesus by the latter name; as these churches all lying in proximity, in the same country, would probably be exposed to the same class.

<sup>5</sup> There is an intensity of meaning in this Hebraistic pleonasm.

shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts :<sup>1</sup> and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But unto you I say, and unto the rest<sup>2</sup> in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ;<sup>3</sup> I will put upon you none other <sup>25</sup> burden. But that which ye have *already*, hold<sup>4</sup> fast till I come. <sup>26</sup> And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to <sup>27</sup> him will I give power over the nations :<sup>5</sup> and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be <sup>28</sup> broken to shivers : even as I received of My Father. And I <sup>29</sup> will give him the morning star.<sup>6</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

*To Sardis.*

III.]

[Ver. 1-6.

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis<sup>7</sup> write ; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the

<sup>1</sup> A claim of the highest omniscience.

<sup>2</sup> The *kai* at the beginning of ver. 24 is not in the original in the best copies, the Sinaitic and Alexandrine among them ; and if left out the sense is, " But unto you, I say, the rest in Thyatira," *i.e.*, those who had not been led astray by the false doctrine.

<sup>3</sup> As men are in the habit of saying, or as the professors of these doctrines, *τὰ βαθιά τοῦ Σατανᾶ*, say.

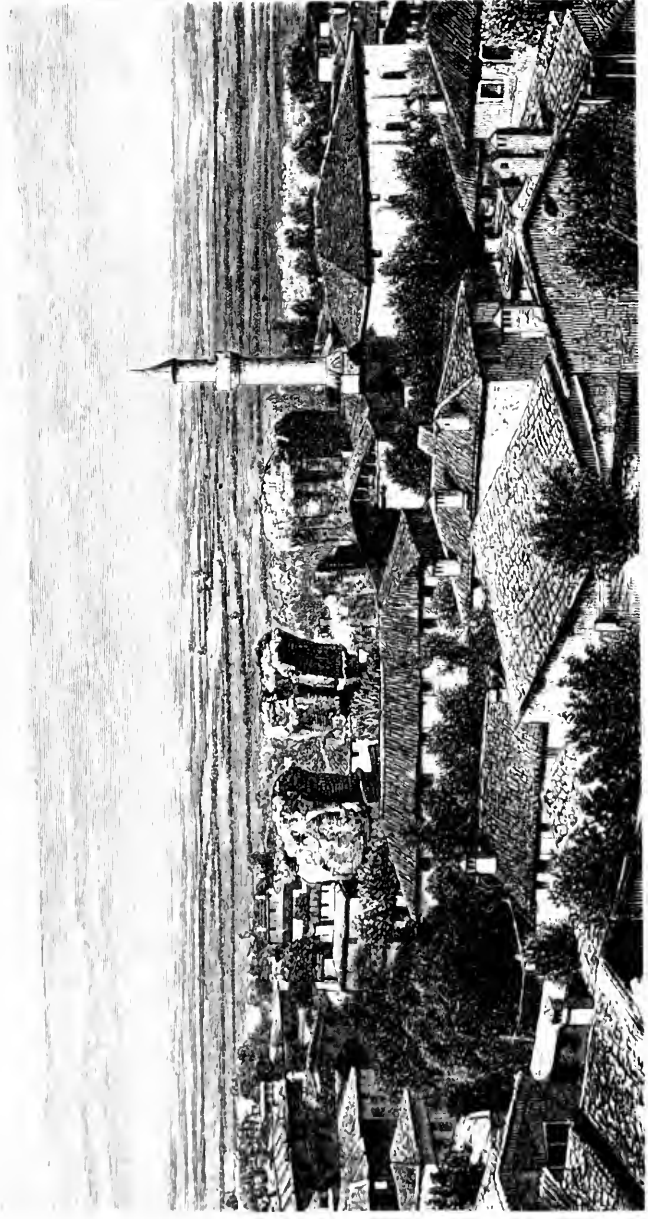
<sup>4</sup> Although their faith and love were active, they had an insufficient zeal for the maintenance of godly discipline and doctrine. The condition of things was exactly the reverse of what it was at Ephesus.

<sup>5</sup> As all the other promises with which these epistles conclude refer to heaven, " it would seem," as Albert Barnes well remarks (see Notes on Revelation, *in loco*), " that this should have a similar reference ; for there is no reason why to him that overcame in Thyatira a temporal reward and triumph should be promised more than in the cases of others. If so, then this passage should not be adduced as having any reference to an imaginary personal reign of the Saviour, and of the saints on earth." As the promise in the preceding epistle (to Pergamos) referred to *priestly*, this clearly refers to the *royal*, honours which will be bestowed on the overcomers. As in Christ they are made priests, in Christ they are made kings unto God. Because He reigns, they shall reign also. It is just their participation in the glories and exaltation of the Redeemer, when He shall have put all enemies under His feet. The same grace that gives them the victory freely gives them all things, and even reflects on them the dignity and royalty of Him through whom they are made conquerors.

<sup>6</sup> He will make him to shine with somewhat of His own radiance as becometh a king unto God ; the morning star here being the symbol of royalty (xxii. 16).

<sup>7</sup> Sardis was once the proud capital of Lydia, the royal city of Cresus, the wealthiest monarch of his age. The site is now a scene of stupendous desolation. It is strewn with fragments of rubbish, as if all had been literally ground to powder, excepting a few remains of buildings (see Tristram's Seven Churches). It lies on the side of Mount Tmolus, from which flows the river Pactolus, which was said to wash





*Copied by permission from a photograph taken by F. FRIED.*

PHILADELPHIA.

seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that  
 2 thou livest, and art dead.<sup>1</sup> Be watchful, and strengthen the  
 things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not  
 3 found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how  
 thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If  
 therefore thou shalt not watch,<sup>2</sup> I will come on thee as a thief,  
 and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.  
 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled  
 their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they  
 5 are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in  
 white raiment;<sup>3</sup> and I will not blot out his name out of the  
 book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and  
 6 before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the  
 Spirit saith unto the churches.

*To Philadelphia.*

[Ver. 7-13.]

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia<sup>4</sup> write; These  
 things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the

down golden sand. It was here that Xerxes assembled his army for the expedition against Greece, whence he marched to the Hellespont. After the defeat of Antiochus, by the two Scipios, Sardis was included in the Roman province of Asia and became the seat of the prefect.

<sup>1</sup> Sardis had the name of a living church, while it was really dead. But there were sparks or embers of life that might be rekindled.

<sup>2</sup> The Sin. and Alex. Codd. have *repent*. "It is very remarkable that precisely the two churches which are represented as the most debased, the most complete contrasts to faithful Smyrna and Philadelphia, Sardis and Laodicea, had no Nicolaitans in them. A warning is concealed here, that amid the dangers arising from speculative errors we should not overlook those that are still greater" (Hengstenberg).

<sup>3</sup> The white vesture expresses purity and joy. The main import of the promise is that Christ will make a public recognition before His Father, in the presence of the angels (Matt. x. 32, 33; Luke xii. 8, 9), of His followers.

<sup>4</sup> To the south-east of Sardis, about thirty miles distant, lies Philadelphia, on the north-eastern slope of the range of Mount Tmolus. The site was selected as commanding the entrance of the valley of the Mæander on the one side, and that of the Hermus on the other. It has been more subject to frequent earthquakes than any other city of Asia Minor; yet its central position, and the fertility of the surrounding soil, have made it an important place of traffic, as it is to this day. Strabo expresses surprise that anybody should be found willing to make a home where dwellings are so insecure (xiii. 4, 10). But it should be remembered that he was writing in the time of Tiberius, when nearly the whole of Asia Minor had suffered very severely from tremendous earthquakes, and Philadelphia was nearly destroyed (Tac. Ann., ii. 47). Though it never was a city to be compared with Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, it has survived them, and is still inhabited, surrounded by the same walls, and covering the same ground as of old. It is remarkable that at

key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and  
 8 shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I  
 have set before thee an open door,<sup>1</sup> and no man can shut it:  
 for thou hast a little strength,<sup>2</sup> and hast kept My word, and  
 9 hast not denied My name. Behold, I will make<sup>3</sup> them of the  
 synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but  
 do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before  
 10 thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou  
 hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from  
 the hour of temptation,<sup>4</sup> which shall come upon all the world,  
 11 to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly:  
 hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.  
 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar<sup>5</sup> in the temple of My  
 God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him  
 the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God,  
*which is new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from  
 13 My God: and *I will write upon him My new name*. He that  
 hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the  
 churches.

the present day, the whole population being nearly 15,000, it has some fifteen churches and a bishop, and retains the free exercise of its Christian rites and ceremonies, and the use of church bells, which are not allowed in any other town in the interior of Asia Minor, under Turkish rule. For more than 300 years, from the eleventh century, Philadelphia was continually exposed to the ravages of war; but it bravely resisted the furious attacks of the Mussulman hordes, and in the year 1391 it was the only Byzantine city in Asia Minor which had not been taken by the Turks, and when at length it surrendered it was with due honours and rights, and the free exercise of its religion, not granted to any of its sister cities.

<sup>1</sup> It does not mean an open door of usefulness and privileges, as sometimes interpreted, except as these are involved in the duties and immunities of citizenship in the Divine kingdom. The power of the keys for the exclusion of men from the kingdom has not been left in the hands of their fellows.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the smallness of their number.

<sup>3</sup> In the Sinaitic Codex it is, "I have made."

<sup>4</sup> Their trials would prove chastisements, promoting their growth in grace.

<sup>5</sup> This, like the other promises to the conqueror, is a promise of future blessedness. The figure of a pillar in a temple ("to a temple," Sin.) is designed to represent what is expressed more plainly in the words, "shall go no more out." He shall become a permanent element in the heavenly society. It is a privilege he enjoys in common with others, framed together into an holy temple (Eph. ii. 21). Nothing can interrupt their vision of God; nothing can impair their perfect communion with one another.

"Non est ibi corruptela,  
 Non defectus, non querela;  
 Non minuti, non deformes,  
 Omnes Christo sunt conformes."

*To the Laodiceans.*

[Ver. 14-22.]

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans<sup>1</sup> write ;  
 These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness  
 15 the beginning of the creation of God ; I know thy works, that  
 thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold<sup>2</sup> or hot,  
 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot.  
 17 I will spew<sup>3</sup> thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I  
 am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ;  
 and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and  
 18 poor, and blind, and naked :<sup>4</sup> I counsel thee to buy<sup>5</sup> of Me  
 gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white  
 raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of  
 thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-  
 19 salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and  
 20 chasten : be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at  
 the door, and knock : if any man hear<sup>6</sup> My voice, and open the

<sup>1</sup> The whole rising ground on which Laodicea once stood is one vast tumulus of ruins. Nothing is left to testify of its grandeur but the silent stones of the stadium, theatres, and gymnasium. It was in this city that the great Church council, at which the canon of Scripture was declared, A.D. 361, was held. All is vanished now ; no human being has his abode there, excepting that a few gipsies pitch their tents on the plain during the spring, while pasturing their flocks. It is a quarry for the inhabitants of a Turkish village near by, and in a few years will be stripped of every fragment that now attests its former greatness. In summer the whole area of the ancient city, once so gay and populous, swarms with myriads of snakes, which make it dangerous for any person to ramble about the ruins ; and at other seasons with wolves and foxes. (See Tristram's Seven Churches.) The Sin. and Alex. Texts have "the church in Laodicea."

<sup>2</sup> Lukewarmness is associated with self sufficiency and pride, but a painful consciousness that one is cold may be the beginning of better things. Or the *cold* may be regarded as referring to those who have never been brought under the influence of grace, on whom the experiment of the gospel has never been tried and failed. It would be better to be like these than like those who under the gospel are puffed up with spiritual pride, and feel that they have need of nothing.

<sup>3</sup> The Sinaitic has, "refrain thy mouth."

<sup>4</sup> This verse is not to be taken as the ground of the exhortation that follows, "I counsel thee," etc., so much as the conclusion or the carrying out of that which precedes it : "Because thou art lukewarm and sayest these things," etc.

<sup>5</sup> He addresses the merchant princes in their own dialect. It was a purchase that could be made by the most penniless.

<sup>6</sup> The voice probably refers to a custom among the ancients of accompanying their knocking with speaking, to let it be known who was seeking admittance. The passage recognises in a striking manner man's perfect liberty or free agency in receiving or rejecting the overtures of Divine mercy. The attempt at reconciliation begins with the Saviour : He must come to the door, but He does not force an entrance.

door, I will come in to him, and will sup<sup>1</sup> with him, and he  
 21 with Me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me  
 in My throne,<sup>2</sup> even as I also overcame, and am set down with  
 22 My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear  
 what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

3. SUBLIME VISIONS INTRODUCTORY TO THE MAIN PROPHECY.  
 CHAPS. IV. AND V.

*The Throne in Heaven.*

IV.] [Ver. 1-11.]

1 After this<sup>3</sup> I looked, and, behold, a door<sup>4</sup> was opened in heaven:  
 and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet  
 talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show  
 2 thee things which must be hereafter.<sup>5</sup> And immediately I was  
 in the spirit:<sup>6</sup> and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and  
 3 One sat on the throne.<sup>7</sup> And He that sat was to look upon like  
 a jasper and a sardine stone:<sup>8</sup> and there was a rainbow round  
 4 about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.<sup>9</sup> And round  
 about the throne were four and twenty seats:<sup>10</sup> and upon the

<sup>1</sup> This refers to what may be enjoyed of spiritual communion in this life.

<sup>2</sup> The Redeemer was exalted and enthroned in our nature; and His enthronization secures the exaltation of all who are His. This promise, attached to the last of the series of these seven epistles, seems but "a magnificent variation of Christ's words spoken in the days of His flesh; 'The glory which Thou gavest Me,' etc., John xvii. 22, 24; as also of the words of Paul, 'If we suffer with Him,' etc., 2 Tim. ii. 12. Wonderful indeed is this promise, which, as the last and the crowning, is also the highest and most glorious of all" (Trench, on Seven Epistles).

<sup>3</sup> After these things, ταῦτα, recorded in the preceding chapters.

<sup>4</sup> John has a vision as through an open door, or vista, in the expanse or firmament above him, into heaven.

<sup>5</sup> He is summoned up to heaven, that the things of the future might be revealed to him.

<sup>6</sup> Immediately he was lifted spiritually above all sublunary, and placed amidst heavenly things; as if he had been brought into the very presence chamber of the Divine Revealer.

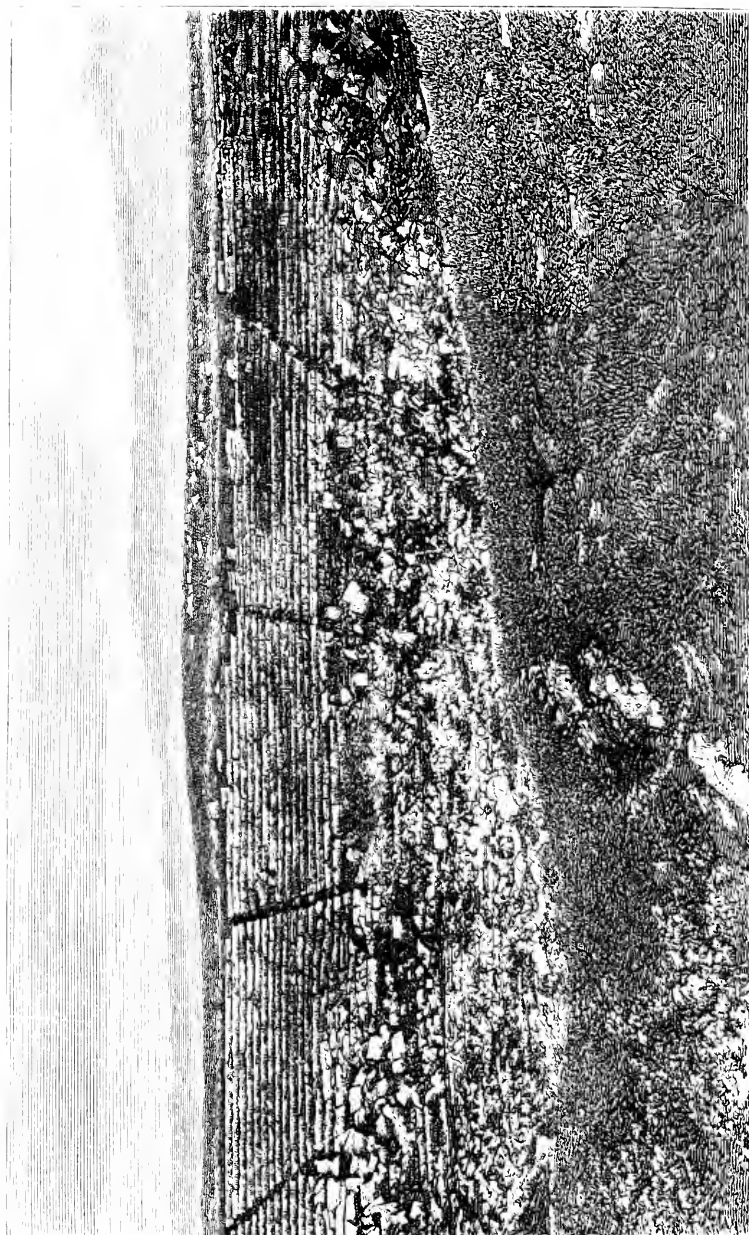
<sup>7</sup> In the A.V. the word "One" has the usual indication of not being in the original; no name or pronoun is given; the PERSON implied is left to be supplied from His attributes, which are mentioned.

<sup>8</sup> There is in this no attempt to represent His form, only His splendour, the majesty and glory of the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> Σμαραγδίνῳ, Wiclif has "smaragdyn." The emerald or green rays predominated in the bow; which, it is said, has been observed, when the storm was at a distance too remote to reach us with its fury.

<sup>10</sup> Θρόνοι, thrones, not seats. They may be supposed to have been smaller than THE THRONE.





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LAODICEA.



seats I saw four and twenty elders<sup>1</sup> sitting, clothed in white  
 5 raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out  
 of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices:  
 and *there were* seven lamps<sup>2</sup> of fire burning before the throne,  
 6 which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne  
*there was* a sea of glass<sup>3</sup> like unto crystal: and in the midst of  
 the throne and round about the throne, *were* four beasts<sup>4</sup> full of  
 7 eyes before and behind. And the first beast *was* like a lion, and  
 the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as  
 8 a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.<sup>5</sup> And the  
 four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they*  
*were* full of eyes<sup>6</sup> within: and they rest<sup>7</sup> not day and night,  
 saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and  
 9 is, and is to come. And when<sup>8</sup> those beasts give glory and

<sup>1</sup> That the four-and-twenty elders clad in white, with crowns of gold, sitting on the thrones which are ranged about the chief or central throne, represent the human element in the Church triumphant, appears from chap. v. 8-10, where they are described as singing the new song, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." "It is the totality of the saints of the Old and New Testaments, who are here represented by their chiefs or leaders," says Bossuet. "Those of the Old appeared in the twelve patriarchs; and those of the New in the twelve apostles." He discovers the same totality indicated in the twelve gates, and the twelve foundations of the holy city, bearing the names of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles: Rev. xxi. 12, 14.

<sup>2</sup> These lamps, said to be the seven spirits of God, refer (see chap. i. 4) to the diverse operations of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>3</sup> The pavement, or floor, on which the whole stood, was clear, transparent, like crystal or glass, and spread out in all directions like a sea. Exod. xxiv. 10.

<sup>4</sup> The translation *four beasts*, found in Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, the Geneva, and the Rheims, as well as in the A.V., is an unhappy one. The original, ζῶον, is very different from that translated beast, θηρίον, elsewhere in this book, and means a creature having life, an animal. In the LXX. it is used for חַיָּוִי (Ezek. i. 5), and in our version is rendered *living creature*. Here, as in Ezekiel, they are symbolical, and designed to represent the providential government of God in its great leading aspects.

<sup>5</sup> This providence, like the lion in the forest, is of irresistible sway; like the ox under the yoke, is patient and strong, however slow; like the face of a man, which bespeaks reason and intelligence, is possessed of all the features of wisdom; like the eagle, it is penetrating in its vision, and rapid in the execution of its purposes. See Mr. Layard's comments on the symbolism of certain images found in the ruins of Nineveh; Nineveh and its Environs, i. 75, 76.

<sup>6</sup> A further carrying out of the idea of that universal survey, or knowledge of affairs, which pertains to the providence of God.

<sup>7</sup> There is no interruption or cessation in the honour God receives from the various dispensations and acts of His providence.

<sup>8</sup> There is a response to the cry or doxology of the four living creatures, from the elders who represent the redeemed in heaven. They fall down before Him that

honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth  
 10 for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before  
 Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for  
 ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,  
 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and  
 power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure  
 they are and were created.

*The slain Lamb in the midst of the Throne.*

V.] [Ver. 1-7.

1 And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne  
 a book<sup>1</sup> written within and on the back side, sealed with seven  
 2 seals.<sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud  
 voice, Who is worthy<sup>3</sup> to open the book, and to loose the seals  
 3 thereof? And no man<sup>4</sup> in heaven, nor in earth, neither under  
 the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.  
 4 And I wept<sup>5</sup> much, because no man was found worthy to open  
 liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, crying, "Thou art  
 worthy," etc.

The impressive nature of the whole scene, as presented to the banished apostle, is calculated to strike every intelligent mind. Heaven is opened. The throne of God is seen; and there is a vision of Him who sits upon it. Thunders and voices are heard about the throne. The lightnings play; but the bow, symbol of peace, enircles all. A vast crystal pavement, supporting all, is spread out like a sea. The representatives of the redeemed Church, in robes of victory, occupy subordinate thrones. Embodiments of the power, the patient endurance, the slow but sure unfoldings, the wisdom and the benevolence, and the activity of the Divine administration, praise God. They are answered in a sublime anthem by the representatives of the redeemed Church. All this, however, was but introductory to the next vision.

<sup>1</sup> A sealed book is a fitting emblem of the future. Its opening by a Divine hand was symbolical of the making known of future events. In this sealed book was the whole prophecy revealed to John, as recorded from the sixth chapter to the end. As stated in the first verse of the first chapter of the Apocalypse, many of the things recorded were presented to John by symbols, probably pictures of some kind, as the book was unsealed and unrolled; "He sent and (*εἰσήμαρκεν*) symbolised it by His angel to His servant John." "Many of the sudden changes in moods and tenses which occur, and which hasty critics have presumed to stigmatize," would have been seen to be required by the nature of the detail, if they had considered that the writer, besides describing other circumstances of the visions, gives an account of things, circumstances, and actions seen by him in pictorial representations in the book, as it was unrolled. See Tilloch's Dissertations, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> These seals were so affixed that whenever one was broken only that part of the roll to which it applied was opened.

<sup>3</sup> Who is of sufficient dignity or able?

<sup>4</sup> No one came forward at the call of the angel out of all those wide realms through which his voice reverberated.

<sup>5</sup> "It seemed as if matters were coming to an end with the kingdom of Christ.

5 and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not : behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda,<sup>1</sup> the Root<sup>2</sup> of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb<sup>3</sup> as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took<sup>4</sup> the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

*The Honour paid to the Lamb.*

[Ver. 8-14.]

8 And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down<sup>5</sup> before the Lamb, having every one of them harps,<sup>6</sup> and golden vials<sup>7</sup> full of odours, which are

The present was despaired of; the future was dark; no answer could be found to the anxious question, "What shall be the end thereof?" (Hengstenberg.)

<sup>1</sup> See the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, and Heb. vii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The product of the root, its shoot, the root-shoot of David.

<sup>3</sup> The elder had spoken of a lion, and John beholds only a little lamb (the original here is *ἀρνίον*, lambkin), as it had been slain. This was He foretold by the prophet (Isa. liii. 7), who should be brought as a lamb to the slaughter, who was pointed out by John the Baptist, as the Lamb of God, that should bear the sin of the world (John i. 29).

<sup>4</sup> It is not necessary to suppose that John saw literally a lamb, which is to be taken symbolically like the living creatures; for the Lamb is described as coming and taking the book, which would be an incongruity not easily reconciled, even in a book abounding with such remarkable symbols. St. John, in this instance, uses language precisely as the prophet Isaiah and John the Baptist did, and does not mean to present so incongruous a picture as that of a lamb approaching the throne, and taking a book. He refers to the exalted Saviour's appearance of meekness and innocence, and the atoning work He had accomplished by His death, of which He still bore some visible signs. There, in the midst of the throne, was the crucified Jesus, bearing in His glorified body some monuments of His passion. "These signs of death are the emblems of victory, worn by the conqueror; the banner which floats over Him is emblazoned with his enterprise," etc., etc. (See an excellent sermon on this subject by the late Dr. Erskine Mason : Sermons, p. 47).

<sup>5</sup> From this it is plain that the four living creatures have not their proper place assigned them by Stuart, Hengstenberg, Barnes, and others, who represent them as supporting the throne, or under it, as to their bodies. The Lamb is honoured both by providence and redemption, in a solemn act of adoration.

<sup>6</sup> It is the elders alone who have the harps. This the construction, no less than the propriety, of the case seems to demand. The words in the song, "Thou hast redeemed us," ver. 9, also make this evident.

<sup>7</sup> Censers rather, a plate or dish of flat expanded form (*φύλλα*, *patera*), is meant, yet all the six versions in Bagster's English Hexapla have vials. Now the elders struck their harps, and now they wafted incense, which represented the prayers of saints. They are not mediators or intercessors, as there is but one Mediator, the glorious MAN before whom these censers are waved. The prayers of saints rise as a

9 the prayers of saints. And they sung a new<sup>1</sup> song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: <sup>2</sup> and we shall 11 reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten 12 thousand, and thousands of thousands; <sup>3</sup> saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and 13 blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, <sup>4</sup> and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto 14 the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen.<sup>5</sup> And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.

#### 4. OVERTHROW OF THE JEWISH PERSECUTING POWER.

##### CHAP. VI. TO XI. 1-14.

*The first Five Seals, or Signs of the Destruction of Jerusalem.*

VI.]

[Ver. 1-11.]

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I

sweet savour before God. What more delightful emblem could there be of the acceptableness of prayers offered in the name of Christ, than to call them sweet odours in the censers of the representatives of the church before the throne?

<sup>1</sup> *New* because it struck notes which never would have been heard in the songs of heaven if Jesus had not died. The language is such as could be used only if Christ was truly an atoning sacrifice.

<sup>2</sup> The Sinaitic MS. has it, *a kingdom and priesthood.*

<sup>3</sup> A great throng of angels are represented as standing in a circle, enclosing the area occupied by the throne, the living creatures, and the elders, and uniting in ascribing honour to the Lamb. They can sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," but cannot add, "and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

<sup>4</sup> The word "blessing," with which the angels closed their song, was taken up by the whole creation, and with it, "honour, glory, and power," were made to echo and re-echo through heaven and earth, over the sea as well as the dry land. We have had in these two chapters two songs in honour of Jehovah (chap. iv.), and two in honour of the Lamb (chap. v.); and this concluding song of all creatures has respect to both Jehovah and the Lamb, and therefore combines both adorations into one.

<sup>5</sup> AMEN, cried the living creatures. The praise, having made the circuit of the universe, centres back again to those who began it, and dies away as the elders fall in lowly homage before the throne of "Him that liveth for ever and ever."

heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts<sup>1</sup> saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse :<sup>2</sup> and He that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given unto Him : and He went forth conquering, and to conquer.<sup>3</sup> And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see; and there went out another horse *that was red* :<sup>4</sup> and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another : and there was given unto him a great sword. And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and

#### *The First Seal.*

<sup>1</sup> In each of the first four seals, one of the four living creatures says, " Come and see ; " and a horse of a different colour in each also appears. In the last three the living creatures are not mentioned, neither is there any horse. These living creatures are symbols of the Divine providential government (chap. iv. 6), hence the fitness of their prominence here.

<sup>2</sup> The white horse, ἵππος λευκός, the bow, and the crown, are emblems of triumph and royalty. The imagery is largely derived from the Messianic psalm, xlv. 3-5. See also Rev. xix. 11. Christ leads in the procession that passes before the prophet's eye, and the victories He achieves are in the interest of His gospel of peace and salvation. White horses were not chosen for war, but for occasions of celebrating victories, when the conqueror was received at his capital. This prophecy is intended to bring consolation to the Church ; and hence the image of her heavenly King, at its very opening, is placed before her eyes, as He goes forth with invincible might, to win a sure and glorious victory. The emblem is adapted to the mild and beneficent victories of Christ, by His word and Spirit, in the conversion of sinners.

<sup>3</sup> It was foretold by our Lord as one of the signs of the near approach of the destruction of Jerusalem, that the gospel should " be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come " (Matt. xxiv. 14) ; *i. e.*, the end of the Jewish polity. And before the time of the end it had been preached in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, those great centres of action, and was propagated as far to the north as Scythia, as far south as Ethiopia, as far east as Parthia and India, and as far west as Spain and Britain. Christians had become *ingens multitudo*, scattered over the Roman empire. See Tacitus, Ann., xv.

#### *The Second Seal.*

<sup>4</sup> Flame coloured, πυρρόος, or fiery red. It is not war so much as discord and persecution which it is the object of the symbols here to set before us ; variance and strife, the effect of a fiery zeal, without charity, were to prevail. See what Christ Himself had said, Matt. x. 34-36. And here we have another of those signs which our Lord foretold as indicating that the destruction of Jerusalem was at hand : Matt. xxiv. 10 ; Luke xxi. 12, 16. The Acts of the Apostles proves how the spirit of persecution on the part of the Jews raged against any of their kinsmen according to the flesh who professed their faith in Christ. See also 2 Tim. iv. 10, 16 ; Phil. i. 15, 16. Tacitus says that some " that were seized confessed their sect, and that by their indication a great multitude were convicted. " (Ann. xv. 44.) The apostates and informers spoken of by Tacitus were no doubt employed by Nero to accomplish his cruel purposes.

sec. And I beheld, and lo a black horse ;<sup>1</sup> and he that sat on  
 6 him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in  
 the midst of the four beasts say, A measure<sup>2</sup> of wheat for a  
 penny, and three measures of barley for a penny ; and see thou  
 7 hurt not the oil and the wine. And when He had opened the  
 fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and  
 8 see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse :<sup>3</sup> and his name that  
 sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power  
 was given unto them over the fourth<sup>4</sup> part of the earth, to kill  
 with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the  
 9 beasts of the earth. And when He had opened the fifth seal, I

### *The Third Seal.*

<sup>1</sup> Ἴππος μέλας. The colour of the horse denotes merely mourning or distress. The balances (or beam of a pair of scales, ζυγόν,) are a symbol of scarcity. See Ezek. iv. 10, 16 ; Lev. xxvi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Χοῖνιξ, a name for a species of dry measure, equal to about a quart. Wetstein has shown that it was the ordinary daily allowance for the sustenance of a man, from Homer and others. See *Odys.*, xix. 27, 28 ; *Herod.*, vii. 231 ; *Xen. Anab.*, i. 5, 6. Taking the *denarius*, or penny, as the usual price of a day's labour, it would require all that the labourer could earn for his own sustenance. If barley, the common food of the poor, were used, there would be a small allowance for his family left over. It is not therefore absolute famine, but scarcity, which is pointed out by these symbols. Famines were among the signs, pointed out by the Saviour, of the speedy destruction of Jerusalem : *Matt.* xxiv. 7. The famine foretold *Acts* xi. 27-30, which was to come to pass in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, extended over Judæa, and lasted with severity several years. Josephus gives a particular account of it : *Antiq.*, xx. 2 (5). There was another mentioned by Tacitus, *Ann.* xii. 43 ; and by Suetonius, *Claud.*, 18.

### *The Fourth Seal.*

<sup>3</sup> The word translated *pale* is used by Homer, *Il.*, vii. 479, in the same sense. A hue suggesting the cadaverous is here intended. The rider of this horse, Death, has the article in the Greek, *the* death. Hell, or hades, here has commonly been understood as having the same sense as sheol in the O. T., e.g. *Isa.* xiv. 9, where sheol, or hell, is represented as stirring up all its dead to advance and taunt the fallen king of Babylon, as he arrives among them. Here it is hades and not gehenna that is employed. Death appears, followed by the subjects of his pale kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> In respect to "the fourth part," Hengstenberg and Stuart suggest that the design here is to predict only "the beginning of sorrows," *Matt.* xxiv. 8. To "kill with the sword" means of course war. Death never appears in more awful majesty as the king of terrors, with hell following, than when, in fiercely fought battles, men by hundreds and thousands are scattered as ghastly corpses over the ground. As many perhaps perish by hunger, pestilence, etc., as in battle itself. The Hebrew word meaning pestilence is rendered by the Greek word meaning death more than thirty times in the Septuagint. "Death," says Bengel, "properly means pestilence ; and yet we can understand by it earthquakes, destruction by fire," etc. And in the prophecy of our Saviour, *Matt.* xxiv. 6-8, we find earthquakes added to this catalogue of judgments.



saw<sup>1</sup> under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the  
 10 word of God, and for the testimony which they held : and they  
 cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and  
 true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that  
 11 dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one  
 of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet  
 for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their  
 brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be ful-  
 filled.

*The Sixth Seal.*

[Ver. 12-17.]

12 And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal,<sup>2</sup> and, lo,  
 there was a great earthquake ;<sup>3</sup> and the sun became black as  
 13 sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and the  
 stars<sup>4</sup> of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth  
 14 her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And

*The Fifth Seal.*

<sup>1</sup> We are not to forget that the scene is laid in heaven, and that what John sees are symbols, as the Lord Jesus Christ opens the book. Allusion is doubtless had to the victims of the persecutions referred to under the second seal, and those of the persecution then raging under Nero, from which he himself was suffering. The cry of these martyrs fitly comes in here after the preparation for or signs of approaching judgments in the preceding seals. John sees them clothed in white robes. The action or representation under this seal clearly reveals persecution as then in progress. The edicts of Nero were being "carried into effect throughout all the provinces." Tertullian in *Apologet.*, c. iv., p. 46, edit. Haverc. See Mosheim's *Hist.*, Cent. I., p. 34.

*The Sixth Seal.*

<sup>2</sup> The relative importance of this seal may be inferred from the larger space devoted to it in the prophecy. The preceding pointed to mere signs, or premonitions ; this brings us nearer to the catastrophe, and enters upon it ; which however is suspended, and not really consummated, until six of the seven trumpets under the seventh seal are blown. For the use of the imagery in this seal in the Old Testament, when calamitous events are for the most part referred to, see Isa. xiii. 10, concerning the judgments on Babylon ; Jer. iv. 23, 24, with reference to Judaea ; Ezek. xxxii. 7, to Egypt ; Joel ii. 10, 31, Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> Earthquakes denote revolutions in nations, brought about by bloody wars. The darkening of the heavenly bodies may denote the obscuration produced by the smoke and gloomy vapour which usually attend earthquakes in volcanic countries ; or it may refer to eclipses, regarded with great terror by the common people. In the Greek the expression is the *whole* or *full* moon, ἡ σελήνη ὅλη. The Sin. and Alex. Codd. both have "the whole moon." For the correspondence between the things here disclosed and the predictions of our Saviour, see Matt. xxiv. 29, Luke xxi. 25, 26. We have in this seal a prediction of the convulsions and revolutions immediately preceding the destruction of the Jewish ecclesiastical and civil polity.

<sup>4</sup> Jewish rulers, elders, and priests.

the heaven<sup>1</sup> departed as a scroll<sup>2</sup> when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings<sup>3</sup> of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and 16 in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on 17 the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day<sup>4</sup> of His wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?

VII.]

[Ver. 1-17.

1 And after these things<sup>5</sup> I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds<sup>6</sup> of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on 2 any tree. And I saw another angel<sup>7</sup> ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and 3 the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed<sup>8</sup> the servants of our God in their fore- 4 heads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed :

<sup>1</sup> The heaven out of which the stars fell, the entire ecclesiastical system, rites, and worship of the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> Sheets on which books were written were parchment. Having once been rolled up, when left to themselves they would tend to fly back, and resume the form of a roll. The common conception of the heavens in Hebrew poetry was that of a tent or curtain stretched over the earth : Ps. civ. 2, Isa. xl. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Doubtless used in a wide sense, to designate the governors and viceroys who ruled over Judea. The words to these kings and high officials are not those which, with any verisimilitude, could be put into the mouths of heathen Gentiles.

<sup>4</sup> The destruction of Jerusalem with the Jewish commonwealth, in the Scriptures, and especially by our Saviour, is set as a type of an unspeakably more momentous event, the end and judgment of the world : Matt. xxiv. 30, 31.

<sup>5</sup> This seventh chapter is a continuation of the sixth seal. The tornado of judgments just ready to smite is arrested. If any should prefer to regard verses 9-17 as an episode, it is an episode to relieve the scenes of woe, and bring into vivid contrast the kingdom in its fulness with that kingdom, when only "the first fruits unto God and the Lamb" (Rev. xiv. 4) had been gathered into it.

<sup>6</sup> Winds are symbols of Divine judgments : 1 Kings xix. 11, Job ix. 17, but especially Jer. xlix. 36, Dan. vii. 2, Zech. vi. 1-5. The four winds are here represented as spirits impudent to be let loose, and just ready to be let loose, when suddenly there is an arrest.

<sup>7</sup> Hengstenberg supposes that we must understand Christ sent by God the Father, the epithet *angel* denoting not the nature but the mission.

<sup>8</sup> The sealing is analogous to the marks placed on the dwellings of the Hebrews that night when the destroying angel passed over Egypt. It was symbolical of the truth that, in the midst of the impending judgments, God's grace would be upon them, and His protecting hand deliver them.

and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand<sup>1</sup> of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda<sup>2</sup> were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne,<sup>3</sup> and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud

<sup>1</sup> This represented either symbolically or literally those of whom God would never lose sight, and to whom His special providence and grace would be extended. They were to be selected out of the tribes of Israel. The language could hardly more distinctly imply that the Jewish nation was still occupying its own land, a land exposed to some impending desolation. The twelve tribes are named notwithstanding so many of them had been lost, because the destruction was to overtake the whole land of Judæa. The first churches were composed almost exclusively of Jewish converts: Acts ii. 41, vi. 7, xii. 24, xix. 20. These 144,000 sealed ones appear again in this prophecy, chap. xiv. 1-5, and are there recognised as "the first fruits unto God and the Lamb."

<sup>2</sup> The tribes are not named in the order of birth, and there are other peculiarities in the list here given; but we find the same precision which distinguishes the Apocalypse elsewhere. There is a real and significant order in the transpositions and apparent want of order, in the omissions and substitutions.

#### *The Episode.*

<sup>3</sup> This vision of heaven is introduced here with fine effect, in the midst of the scenes of disaster and woe unfolded by the prophecy. The expression *after this*, or *after these things*, *μετὰ ταῦτα*, does not mean that what John now saw, as to its fulfilment, is here in its chronological order, or that it was to take place in immediate succession to the events just foretold. The throng John saw was so great as to make the numbering impossible or impracticable. The repetition or minuteness of enumeration is intended to include all kinds of people, however distinguished by social organization, type of race, or language. The white robes are emblematic of purity and righteousness; the palms are emblems of rejoicing (Lev. xxiii. 40). This anticipatory vision of the final consummation is introduced here, before the opening of the seventh seal, because it is so well suited to support the hearts of the pious under the coming trials. It is clearly a vision laid in eternity, after the restitution of all things, and of course after the gospel has been preached to all nations, and God's elect have been gathered out of the generations of men from the four quarters of the globe.

voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne,  
 11 and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the  
 throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before  
 12 the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen :  
 Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour,  
 and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever.  
 13 Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What  
 are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came  
 14 they ? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said  
 to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and  
 have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of  
 15 the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and  
 serve Him day and night in His temple : and He that sitteth on  
 16 the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no  
 more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on  
 17 them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of  
 the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living  
 fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears<sup>1</sup> from  
 their eyes.

#### THE SEVENTH SEAL. CHAPS. VIII. TO XXII.

*The Seven Angels prepare to sound ; or, the great Event awaited  
 with solemn Ceremonies.*

VIII.]

[Ver. 1-6.

1 And when He had opened the seventh seal,<sup>2</sup> there was silence  
 2 in heaven about the space of half an hour.<sup>3</sup> And I saw the seven

<sup>1</sup> The Greek is *πᾶν δάκρυον*, "every tear."

<sup>2</sup> In this seal is comprised the remainder of the prophecy revealed to John. It differs from the six preceding in its vastly greater extent ; it is as if a volume consisted of seven parts, in which the seventh, the principal, is subdivided into chapters and sections. In this seal we first have seven trumpets, which may be regarded as so many distinct chapters, which, like the seven seals or parts of the whole, are some of them of less and others of wider scope. Again, the last trumpet, represented as a chapter of this finishing seventh part, is subdivided into seven vials, which may be represented as so many sections in the final chapter, and like the seals and trumpets, or the parts and chapters, are some of them of more and others of less importance. Such is the admirable method of this book. It is not a mere medley of disconnected nor a series of repetitions visions.

<sup>3</sup> The time of the symbolical silence, and not a prophetic time. That it is intended to indicate millennial rest and peace is a mere fanciful interpretation ; if the period occupied in receiving the entire revelation was confined to a single day, as has been supposed, the pause and silence were comparatively long, and their significance only the more impressive.

angels which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets.<sup>1</sup> And another angel came and stood at the altar,<sup>2</sup> having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upou the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth ; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets<sup>3</sup> prepared themselves to sound.

*The First Four Trumpets.*

[Ver. 7-12.]

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood,<sup>4</sup> and they were cast upon the earth : and the third part<sup>5</sup> of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was

<sup>1</sup> As the movement of armies is guided by the sound of trumpets, by the trumpets here may be understood that God is about to lead on His hosts to the accomplishment of His designs. They are committed to angels of the highest rank or order. The original, like our English version, has it " *the seven angels which stood before God.*" That there are different ranks in the angelic world, see Isa. vi. 2, Dan. x. 13, Matt. xviii. 10, Col. i. 16, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The representation supposes an altar in heaven, like that in the earthly temple at Jerusalem. The agency of the angel is merely a part of the symbolical action in the case, and is not to be interpreted as meaning that angelic intercession is necessary to the acceptableness of prayer.

<sup>3</sup> The trumpets were in two classes or categories. The first four compose one, and seem to be specially related to one another ; the last three the other, and are distinguished by way of eminence as woe trumpets.

*The First Trumpet. The Pagan Power of Rome appears.*

<sup>4</sup> The imagery is of the most terrific character, and here the pagan power of Rome is first brought upon the theatre of action. This was necessary in order to depict the catastrophe that yet awaited the Jewish nation, inasmuch as it was by the sword of the Romans that this was to be accomplished. Moreover, the strict method that runs through this book required this, because Rome began to persecute before the overthrow of the Jewish nation. The martyrdom of Paul and Nero's persecution preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. By the terrific imagery, " hail and fire mingled with blood," we may understand the warfare of the barbarous tribes and nations, out of which grew the Roman commonwealth.

<sup>5</sup> The expression *the third part* elsewhere in this prophecy will be found to refer to the Roman nation, and its conquests in the earth ; see verses 8-12, ix. 18, xii. 4. Accordingly this part of the prophecy, together with the three next trumpets, like the first five seals, are to be viewed as preliminary to what is revealed under the three woe trumpets. Instead of mentioning the Roman power by name, a power which was then at the zenith of its greatness, John describes it ; just as in a

8 burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a  
 great mountain<sup>1</sup> burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the  
 9 third part of the sea<sup>2</sup> became blood; and the third part of the  
 creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the  
 10 third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel  
 sounded, and there fell a great star<sup>3</sup> from heaven, burning as it  
 were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and  
 11 upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called  
 Wormwood:<sup>4</sup> and the third part of the waters became worm-  
 wood; and many men died of the waters, because they were  
 12 made bitter. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part  
 of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the

former part of the prophecy, when he would have us identify the Jewish persecuting power as aimed at, he repeats with singular exactness the very signs of its destruction, as given by our Lord Himself.

*The Second Trumpet. The Destruction of Nations for the Building up of the Empire.*

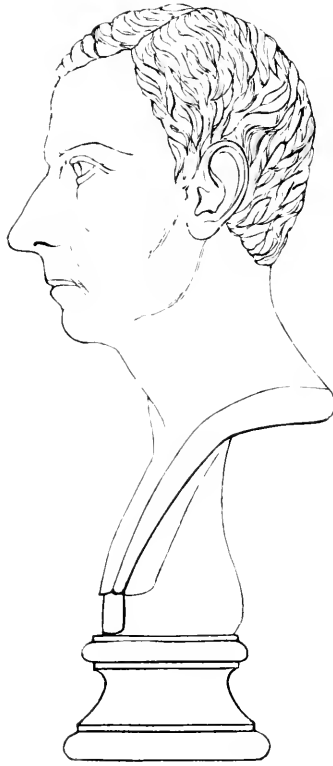
<sup>1</sup> A great mountain is symbolical of a powerful kingdom, as of the Persian, in Zech. iv. 7; here of the Roman monarchy, now fully established. Its burning with fire is the lust of war and conquest.

<sup>2</sup> The sea in this book, as in Scripture generally, is the common symbol of the world, as made up of many distinct nations and peoples: Rev. xvii. 15. By the casting of the burning mountain into the sea, and its becoming blood, is to be understood the destruction of nations and empires in the days of the Roman kings.

*The Third Trumpet. Julius Caesar the Founder of the Empire.*

<sup>3</sup> The star, throughout the Apocalypse, is the symbol of a ruler: i. 16, vi. 13, ix. 1, xii. 1 and 4. The falling here (compare vi. 13) is both the accession to power and the falling from it. As the sea is the image of people in masses, rivers and fountains are the images of the resources of a people.

<sup>4</sup> By the great star burning like a torch, named ὁ ἄψινθος, Apsinthus, or Wormwood, we are then to understand some distinguished ruler or commander of the Roman people. What great name in Roman history can be referred to? What other than that of the greatest man of antiquity, the first of the Caesars? It was imperialism in the person of the first Caesar; and well might it be called Wormwood, for it was the signal of civil dissensions, the most bitter personal animosities and sanguinary contests, which lasted for many years, in which some of the best blood of the commonwealth was shed. He appeared like a blazing meteor in the heavens, his course being singularly brilliant; and he disappeared like such a meteor. In striking accordance with the symbols of this and the succeeding trumpet, Plutarch in commenting on the death of Caesar speaks of "a great comet, which shone very bright for seven nights after Caesar's death, and then disappeared," to which we may add the fading of the sun's lustre; for his orb looked pale all that year, etc. Pliny, in his chapter on eclipses, describes the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Caesar; when, during the greater part of the year, the orb of the sun appeared pale and without splendour. Hist. Nat., ii. 30.



JULIUS CÆSAR.





third part of the stars ; so as the third part<sup>1</sup> of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

*The Fifth Trumpet, or First Woe ; Nero, and the Ravages and Horrors of the Jewish War.*

[Ver. 13.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel<sup>2</sup> flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe,<sup>3</sup> to the

*The Fourth Trumpet. The Empire established under Augustus.*

<sup>1</sup> We have in this verse a continuation of those usurpations which subverted the Roman republic, and the consequences with which they were immediately attended. The struggles of the patriots to save it proved unsuccessful, until at the battle of Actium it was completely overthrown ; and shortly after, Augustus Cæsar, without opposition, exercised the power of an absolute sovereign. The stars are symbols of great rulers, in prophetic language ; the sun and moon may be taken as symbolical of the polity in which they exercised their functions. See notes, chap. vi. 12-14. In "the third part," as noticed before, we have allusion to the Roman dominion in its extent. This "third part" appears under each of these four trumpets, and has a similar significance in all. Perhaps we are to look farther in this "third part" for an intimation that some of the forms of the ancient order of things were observed. After the accession of Augustus to autocratic power the senate of Rome continued to assemble as before, and went through the forms of sharing the administration of the government. Even the popular assemblies and elections were continued.

It was thus that the colossal power was raised up which had just become firmly established when Jesus Christ appeared on earth ; which was to fall with its whole weight like a millstone, for the destruction of the religion of Christ ; which, in its action for the destruction of the Jewish persecuting power, and then as a persecuting power itself, first in its pagan, and then as reproduced in its papal form, occupies so large a portion of this prophecy ; but which, instead of effecting this destruction, should itself, as this prophecy also makes clear, in conformity with another prediction (Dan. ii. 34, 35), be ground to powder by the falling upon it of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands.

<sup>2</sup> In the original it is *ἀερόν*, an eagle ; Rec. ἀγγέλου. The Sin. and Alex. Codd. both have *eagle* ; Luther has *angel* ; the Wiclif and Rheims versions have *eagle*. Tyn-dale, Cranmer, and the Geneva agree with the A. V. We are probably to understand the meaning to be an angel with the wings, or flying with the swiftness, of an eagle. That it is an angel is evident, as it is immediately added, "saying with a loud voice."

<sup>3</sup> The design of this cry is to awaken attention to the "voices" or predictions of the following trumpets, especially as distinguished from the preceding, which we have seen were not designed to foretell judgments or persecutions, but were merely descriptive, and *retrogressive* as related to the prophecy itself, for the purpose of identification of the rise and progress of the great world-power, which, after destroying the Jewish nation, itself eventually became most inimical to the cause of Christ. The three remaining may be appropriately called woe trumpets, because under them the catastrophe which awaited the Jews is completed, and they predict persecutions against Christians by the pagan empire of Rome, and the persecutions of the false prophets or the papal antichrist ; and the judgments which should be inflicted on these persecuting powers.

inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound !

IX.]

[Ver. 1-12.

- 1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star<sup>1</sup> fall from heaven unto the earth : and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.
- 2 And he opened<sup>2</sup> the bottomless pit ; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace ; and the sun and the
- 3 air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts<sup>3</sup> upon the earth : and unto them was given power, as the scorpions<sup>4</sup> of the earth have power.
- 4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the

<sup>1</sup> Denotes here, as at viii. 10 *et passim* in Apocalypse, a prince or ruler. Who is the historical person represented ? We are evidently to look for this ruler among the emperors of Rome ; and that Nero is intended will be made evident at every step as we advance.

<sup>2</sup> The opening of the bottomless pit, and the smoke that arose out of it, darkening the sun and air, refer to the atrocities perpetrated by that infamous tyrant. See further, p. 208. Under him commenced the fearful persecution which was raging at the time this book was written. The smoke ascends as from the very fires of hell, and denotes that spirit of hatred and murder which disregarded all ties of kindred, let loose by Nero among men, and which was incarnated in himself. If we discover an allusion in this smoke to that which ascended from burning Rome, it is but an allusion.

<sup>3</sup> They are symbolical, and, as elsewhere in Scripture, denote devastation. See one of the most graphic and instructive accounts of the locusts in the East in *The Land and Book*, by Rev. W. M. Thomson, D.D., vol. ii., pp. 102-105. See also Joel i. 7-18, ii. 3-9. The locusts here point to a particular development of the spirit of hatred and murder, and are connected with the catastrophe impending,—the destruction of Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> But as if the image of the locusts did not sufficiently mark or express the idea of malice, that of scorpions is added to it. The Syrian locust has no sting. This symbolical locust is represented as armed with the sting of the scorpion. Of this dangerous reptile we find in Dr. Thomson's work an account, also derived from his personal observation. "I have tried the experiment," he says, "of surrounding one with a ring of fire, and when it despaired of escape it repeatedly struck its own head fiercely, and soon died ; either from the poison its Satanic rage, or from the heat, I could not be certain which, perhaps from all combined" (*Land and Book*, vol. i., pp. 378-380).

What now in this prophecy are we to understand by these locusts and their scorpion power ? As the smoke that came out of the pit (*τοῦ φηλάτος τῆς ἀβύσσου*, *the pit of the abyss*) represents that spirit of murderous and hellish hate which characterized the reign of Nero, or of the empire under the other emperors scarcely better than he, the locusts that came out of the smoke admit of a striking application to the Roman governors, generals, and armies, which, under Nero, were sent to afflict Palestine. Prophets, when they use symbolical language to denote events, commonly use that which has a local or geographical reference. Elliott's *Horæ Apoc.*, i. 391-406. In the atrocities of Gessius Florus and the armies under Cestius and Vespasian we have the locusts. *Jos., Antiq.*, xviii. 1 (6) ; xx. 11,

grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree ; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their fore-  
 5 heads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months :<sup>1</sup> and their torment<sup>2</sup> was as the torment of a scorpion, when he  
 6 striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death,<sup>3</sup> and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee  
 7 from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle ; and on their heads were as it were crowns  
 8 like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair<sup>4</sup> of women, and their teeth were as the teeth

(1) ; Wars, ii. 14 ; Tacitus, Hist., v. 10. The scorpion power admits of an equally striking application to the banditti that infested Judæa and Jerusalem. When the robbers, who had taken advantage of the convulsed state of the country, and had banded together in the mountains of Judæa for rapine and murder, beheld the advance of the Roman army under Vespasian, they betook themselves to Jerusalem, and, being joined by the Zealots and lawless mob, ruled over it. Famine preyed upon all. Josephus relates the affecting story of a Jewish lady who slew her own child, and served his body up for food. Wars, vi. 3 (4) ; v. 10 (3).

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Stuart says, the usual time of locusts is from May to September, inclusive,—five months. Hengstenberg says, these five months have no place in natural history. But however this question may be settled, the five months correspond exactly with the period during which Titus besieged Jerusalem, and the Zealots and robbers held undisputed sway within the walls. It was about the first of March (Jos., Wars, v. 3 (1) *seq.*) when Titus laid siege to Jerusalem ; just five months after, viz. the 10th of August (Wars, vi. 8 (4)), the city was destroyed, and the scorpion torment ceased. It is an insuperable difficulty in the way of interpreting these locusts as representing the Saracens (which is done by those who understand Mohammed as foretold by “the great star”), that it is impossible to explain the five months, either literally or figuratively ; *i.e.*, either as five natural months or as one hundred and fifty years. The Saracenic caliphs reigned at Bagdad and Damascus three hundred years.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Goldsmith states that the naturalist, Manpertuis, confined a hundred of these dreadful insects together, when they began to exert all their rage for mutual destruction. In a few days there remained but fourteen, which had killed and devoured all the rest. The female scorpion, it is said, will even devour its own young. What could more vividly represent the mad and infatuated fury which tormented and destroyed unhappy Jerusalem ? Jos., Pref. to Wars, 4.

<sup>3</sup> There could be no stronger expression of intense misery. Josephus (Wars, v. 12 (3)) represents the people as beseeching the robbers to despatch them with their swords. Influenced by the malice of delighting to see their miseries protracted, they refused to heed the request. It was not given them to kill, but to torment : ver. 5.

<sup>4</sup> In verses 7-10, from the minute description of these locusts, it appears that the natural locust was the mere εἰδωλον for the symbolic one. Niebuhr, the oriental traveller, was told by an Arab from the desert, and another at Bagdad, that the head of the locust might be compared to that of the horse ; its breast to that of the lion ; its feet to those of the camel ; its body to that of the serpent ; its tail to that of the scorpion ; its horns (*antennæ*) to the locks of hair of a woman. They are called by the Italians *cavallette*, little horses. But that part of the description of the

9 of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron ; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots  
 10 of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails : and their power  
 11 *was* to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel<sup>1</sup> of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his*  
 12 name Apollyon. One woe is past ; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

*The Sixth Trumpet, or Second Woe. Continued Invasion ; the Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem under Titus.*

[Ver. 13-21.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the  
 14 four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels  
 15 which are bound in the great river Euphrates.<sup>2</sup> And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour,<sup>3</sup> and a

locusts which represents them as having hair like the hair of women has occasioned no small perplexity to critics, as exhibiting a disregard of natural verisimilitude. Josephus (Wars, iv. 9 (10)) describes the Zealots as decking their hair after the manner of women, and affecting an effeminate gait that they might more successfully accomplish their fiendish purposes.

<sup>1</sup> In the Greek it is *angel of the abyss*. There can be no doubt, Hengstenberg thinks, as to the identity of the star (ver. 1), and this king, the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, אַבְדֹן; in Greek Apollyon, Ἀπολλύων. Nero, whose character fills us with greater disgust and horror than that of any other person famous in history, is undoubtedly intended. He passed his days in fiddling and murdering ; he banished men who would not praise his skill in music ; and killed women who would not receive his addresses, or kicked them to death after they married him. His cruelties as a persecutor of Christians have never been exceeded.

<sup>2</sup> The Euphrates was the region which, from time immemorial, had sent its desolating hordes down upon Palestine. See Isa. vii. 20. Whilst it was the Roman power which was to lay waste Judæa, and which had begun its ravages when this book was written, it was nevertheless to be expected, and was a matter of actual occurrence, as we are distinctly informed by Josephus, that the Romans " would draw their supplies of troops from the neighbouring oriental countries under their sway " (Wars, iii. 1 (3) ; 4 (2)). In the four angels we may perhaps find a reference to the four generals, Vespasian, Titus, Agrippa, and Trajan, who commanded the invading armies. In that they are called *angels*, we have the truth, that the hosts they lead do but fulfil a Divine commission.

<sup>3</sup> The definite period at which the angels were to be loosed is meant. They had been prepared in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God for this exact time or epoch in history. Not merely the year and month, but the very day and hour, were determined.

day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third<sup>1</sup> part of  
 16 men. And the number<sup>2</sup> of the army of the horsemen *were* two  
 hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.  
 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision,<sup>3</sup> and them that sat on  
 them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone:  
 and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out  
 18 of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By  
 these three was the third<sup>4</sup> part of men killed, by the fire, and  
 by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their  
 19 mouths. For their power is in their month, and in their tails:<sup>5</sup>  
 for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with  
 20 them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not  
 killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their  
 hands, that they should not worship devils,<sup>6</sup> and idols of gold,

<sup>1</sup> The number of the Jewish people who perished during the invasion of Judæa and the siege of Jerusalem, by the sword, famine, and pestilence, is summed up by Archbishop Usher, from Lipsius, out of Josephus, and amounts to 1,337,490. Taking this as one third, the entire nation would number at the time not far from 4,000,000. It was never estimated at the most prosperous period to number more than 5,000,000.

<sup>2</sup> A mighty force, sufficient to overrun and devastate Palestine, is represented by this innumerable host in the vision. The army of invasion numbered less than 100,000 men. Titus brought from Alexandria the famous fifth and tenth legions, and united them with the fifteenth, already with his father Vespasian. Troops of horsemen came from Syria. Auxiliaries came from the kings Antiochus, Agrippa, and Sohemus. The king of Arabia sent horsemen, and footmen who were archers. The whole army, says Josephus, "amounted to 60,000, besides the slaves, who, as they followed in vast numbers, so because they had been trained up in war with the rest, ought not to be distinguished from the fighting men." (Wars, iii. 4 (2).)

<sup>3</sup> The orientals delighted in imagery like this, of horses breathing out fire and smoke. We are not to forget that we have here merely the symbols of a vision. We have a kind of *nota bene*, says Hengstenberg, in the expression "in the vision." It is a description of the Roman legions and of those wild bands of oriental cavalry which constituted the main body of the invading force.

<sup>4</sup> The number killed is referred to, as in ver. 15. For the third part of a nation composed of several millions to perish in war is a ratio almost without parallel in history. (Jos. Wars, vi. 9 (4).)

<sup>5</sup> Their tails resembled serpents with the head at the extremity. As in the scorpions we found the symbol of the terrible factions among the Jews, that did more to precipitate the destruction of Jerusalem than the Romans, so perhaps we are to find a corresponding symbol here in these serpent tails.

<sup>6</sup> John has already, in this book, once referred to the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan: chaps. ii. 9 and iii. 9. What could the worship of the Zealots of Jerusalem, the Sicarii of Galilee, and the Idumeans, who were half heathen, have been but the worshipping of devils? Even if there were no ground for the charge of actual idolatry against the Jews, the language we are considering, like similar language elsewhere, might naturally receive a figurative interpretation. 1 Sam. xv. 23.

and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither  
 21 can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented<sup>1</sup> they of their  
 murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor  
 of their thefts.

X.

[Ver. 1-11.

1 And I saw another mighty angel<sup>2</sup> come down from heaven,  
 clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head,  
 and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars  
 2 of fire: and he had in his hand a little book<sup>3</sup> open: and  
 he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the  
 3 earth, and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and  
 4 when he had cried, seven thunders<sup>4</sup> uttered their voices. And  
 when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about  
 to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal  
 up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write  
 5 them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and  
 6 upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by  
 Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven,  
 and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things  
 that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are there-  
 7 in, that there should be time<sup>5</sup> no longer: but in the days  
 of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound,  
 the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, in the closing chapters of the Jewish War, relates the continued hostility of the Sicarii, and their assembling to the number of nearly a thousand in the fortress Masada, where, after making a desperate resistance, when they were convinced the Romans would soon effect an entrance, rather than fall into their hands, they agreed to destroy their wives and children, and then one another, the last survivor to kill himself. The plan was executed, and but two women and five children, who had concealed themselves, escaped.

<sup>2</sup> Everything that is said of this angel points to Christ, as well as what is said of Him in the verses following. The description is quite parallel with that of "one like unto the Son of man," in chap. i. 13-15. Bloomfield quotes Sir Wm. Jones, as having pronounced this description "superior to anything ever produced by an uninspired writer."

<sup>3</sup> What was symbolised by this book will appear when we come to verses 8-11.

<sup>4</sup> They relate to future things, not revealed in these trumpets and vials. All the seals of the book may be broken, and much remain not unfolded. Prophecy is not designed to give us a perfect knowledge of the future.

<sup>5</sup> This does not refer to the end of time. It means that no time was to intervene, *i. e.*, that there was to be no longer delay, *ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται*, but that the catastrophe should come immediately upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet. There had seemed to be delay; seal after seal had been broken, trumpet after trumpet blown, and not even the overthrow of the first persecuting power had been reached. The oath meets the fear, or the temptation to conclude, that it will always be so.

8 His servants the prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth  
 9 upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book.<sup>1</sup> And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter,  
 10 but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my  
 11 belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before<sup>2</sup> many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.  
 XI.] [Ver. 1-14.]

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod:<sup>3</sup> and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, 2 and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread

<sup>1</sup> The prophet Ezekiel was directed to eat the roll, or scroll, which he found; and it was in his mouth as honey for sweetness: Ezek. iii. 1-3. To devour a book and digest its matter is figurative language, still in common use. The meaning here is that John was to let the contents of this book sink deep into his mind. It would be the occasion partly of joy and partly of sorrow. It represents a portion distinct and separate of the seven-sealed book. What remained of the seventh seal under the seventh trumpet was so important, it was to have reference to so many different and widely distant events, that that residue is now presented under the symbol of a distinct volume. It exactly synchronizes with the seventh trumpet.

<sup>2</sup> Ἐπι λαοῖς, κ.τ.λ. The preposition here with the dative plural of persons, as in the A.V., means *among*, or *in the presence of*: Acts xxviii. 14; 2 Cor. vii. 7; Eurip., Iph. in Aul., 660; Xen., Mem., ii. 1 (27). We are not therefore, with many critics, to substitute *respecting* for the preposition *before*. The meaning is that John was not to perish in the persecution then raging, nor end his ministry in imprisonment at Patmos, but was to appear as a witness for Christ before many peoples, nations, and kings. So that this is another of the proofs found in the Apocalypse itself, that his imprisonment could not have taken place under Domitian, for he would then be too old for the extensive work here marked out.

<sup>3</sup> The measuring rod and the measuring are here symbolical of destruction. In previous visitations or threatenings of evil on the holy city, we find analogous figures employed: 2 Kings xxi. 12, 13; Amos vii. 8, 9; comp. Isa. xxxiv. 11; Lam. ii. 8. The measuring was to be applied to the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein; *i.e.*, these holy places were to be overthrown, and the worship connected with them brought to an end. The direction not to measure the court denotes that all that lay outside of the temple proper, or fane itself, was not in the same sense holy. The consecrated temple and altar were not to be permitted to fall into the hands of the unrenewed. God would save these from such dishonour by their destruction. Hence the propriety of employing the implements of construction here as symbols; the destruction was in order to save from desecration consecrated things. The Roman general found it impossible, although he made the most strenuous efforts, to save the temple. (Jos., Wars, vi. 4 (6. 7).)

3 under foot forty *and* two months.<sup>1</sup> And I will give *power*  
 unto My two witnesses,<sup>2</sup> and they shall prophesy a thousand  
 4 two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These  
 are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks<sup>3</sup> standing  
 5 before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them,  
 fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies:  
 and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be  
 6 killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in  
 the days of their prophecy: and have power<sup>4</sup> over waters to  
 turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as  
 7 often as they will. And when they shall have finished their  
 testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit  
 shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and  
 8 kill<sup>5</sup> them. And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the  
 great city,<sup>6</sup> which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where

<sup>1</sup> There is no difficulty in discovering proximately a literal fulfilment as to the time here given. Vespasian received his commission from Nero, *i.e.*, the war was declared (see Lard., *Jewish Test.*, viii.), the first part of Feb., A.D. 67; three years and six months after = forty-two months, *viz.* August 10th, A.D. 70, Jerusalem was destroyed. Here we have the equivalent period of the next verse, 1260 days. The language of the prophecy here, "tread under foot," in a striking manner adopts the very expression of our Lord, Luke xxi. 24. *Comp.* Luke xix. 44; *Joseph.*, Wars, vii. 1 (1).

<sup>2</sup> Faithful Christians who remained in Jerusalem during the siege, as witnesses for Christ. If we had a Christian history extant, as we have a pagan one by Tacitus, and a Jewish by Josephus, giving an account of what occurred within the walls of that devoted city during that awful period of its history, then we might trace out more distinctly the fulfilment of the prophesying of the witnesses. During the three and one half years the Romans were to tread down the holy land and city, they were to prophesy. Sackcloth intimates the mournful character of their mission.

<sup>3</sup> An allusion to Zech. iv. The olive trees keep the lamps constantly supplied with oil. These Christian witnesses give a steady and unflinching light.

<sup>4</sup> It would be impossible for language to make it more plain that the two witnesses were to possess the power of working miracles, than in verses 5 and 6. Hence it follows, this prophecy must have been fulfilled before the expiration of the apostolic age, since miracles ceased with that age.

<sup>5</sup> In chap. ix. 11 we have the angel of the bottomless pit, or abyss, Abaddon, or Apollyon, the king of the scorpion-tailed locusts, which is interpreted to mean the Roman imperial magistracy as embodied in the monster Nero. In chap. xiii. 1 we have a beast rising up out of the sea, representing, as we shall see, the same imperial magistracy. Here we have *the place* in the one and *the name* in the other, brought together, the beast of the bottomless pit or abyss representing the same magistracy and the same person, Nero. The meaning therefore is, the witnesses were to fall victims of the war by the hands of the Romans. The Romans would make no distinction between them and the seditious Jews.

<sup>6</sup> It is impossible to doubt that Jerusalem is the city intended. The word translated *spiritually* might have been rendered *allegorically*. (See Robinson's *Lex.*)



9 also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people<sup>1</sup> and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half,<sup>2</sup> and shall not suffer their dead bodies to  
 10 be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that  
 11 dwelt on the earth. And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their  
 12 feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended<sup>3</sup> up to heaven in a cloud; and  
 13 their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant  
 14 were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past;<sup>4</sup> and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

<sup>1</sup> Foreign armies assembled under the four angels at the sound of the sixth trumpet.

<sup>2</sup> The period during which the bodies of the witnesses lay unburied in the streets of Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> As in the case of the miracles the witnesses performed, so there is no historical record of their resurrection and ascension. The two prophets were the only Christians in Jerusalem. As both were killed there was no one to make a record in the case; and we have therefore before us an example of a prophecy which contains, at the same time, the only history or notice of the events by which it was fulfilled. May not these witnesses have been two of those apostles, who seem to have been so strangely lost to history, of some of whom no authentic traces can be discovered, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem? May not James the Just, commonly styled the Bishop of Jerusalem, have been one of them? According to Hegesippus, a Jewish Christian historian, who wrote about fifty years after the death of the apostle John, his monument was still pointed out near the ruins of the temple. Hegesippus says, he was killed in the year 69; but it is easy to see how he might have erred in this date a single year. He represents the apostle James as bearing powerful testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, and pointing to His second coming in the clouds of heaven, up to the very moment of his death, and dying with the prayer of the crucified Saviour on his lips, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." See Fragments of Memorials, by Hegesippus, as collected out of Eusebius, in Routh's *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, i. 205-219.

<sup>4</sup> The city and commonwealth of the Jews are no more. It is not necessary to suppose that just 7000 would be killed; the number might be much larger, and as great as if a tenth part of all that were represented by the city should be swept away. See Barnes's Notes, *in loco*. If the city represented 4,500,000 of Jews, then, according to this reckoning, there perished of them during the invasion and in the final onset with the Romans 450,000. "The remnant," this refers to men like Josephus, on whose minds a deep impression was made that the hand of God was in their calamities. In some instances, the effect of these terrible judgments and

5. OVERTHROW OF THE PAGAN PERSECUTING POWER. THE SEVENTH  
ANGEL BEGINS TO SOUND. CHAP. XI. 15 TO XIII. 10.

*Compendium or Summary of the Little Book.*

XI.] [Ver. 15-19.  
15 And the seventh<sup>1</sup> angel sounded; and there were great voices  
in heaven, saying, The kingdoms<sup>2</sup> of this world are become *the*  
*kingdoms* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign  
16 for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders,<sup>3</sup> which sat  
before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped  
17 God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which  
art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to  
18 Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations  
were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead,  
that they should be judged,<sup>4</sup> and that Thou shouldest give  
reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and  
them that fear Thy name, small<sup>5</sup> and great; and shouldest destroy  
19 them which destroy the earth. And the temple<sup>6</sup> of God was

of the preaching of the witnesses may have been to open the eyes of men and lead them to repentance. Here endeth the second woe, THE FOURTH PART in the division of this book and the sixth trumpet.

<sup>1</sup> As the seventh seal contains more than all the other seals, *i.e.*, refers to a greater number of and more widely distant events; so also the seventh trumpet, which is one of the divisions of the seventh seal, contains more than all the other trumpets. We now enter on that portion of the seventh part of the concluding seal, which relates to pagan persecutions, and their end. It exactly synchronizes with the little, or smaller book. In what remains of chap. xi. we have a sort of compendium, or condensed summary of the smaller book, the particulars of which are dilated and enlarged upon in the remainder of the Apocalypse.

<sup>2</sup> This future dominion of Christ is the grand consummation to which all prophecy looks. It has been the consolation of the Church in ages past; it animates and consoles it now. Ps. ii.; Isa. ix. 6, 7; Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44; Obad. 21; Zech. xiv. 9, etc. First will come the latter day glory, the blessed millennium. And after the final apostasy and day of judgment Christ will enter upon His everlasting kingdom in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> In respect to the elders on their thrones, and their worship, see chap. iv, 4, 10. In the words ascribed to these elders, the best authorities, such as the Sim. and Alex. Codd., omit *art to come*. The discourse here is not of a coming Lord, but of One who has come.

<sup>4</sup> In this verse we have in brief what is more fully presented in chaps. xx. 7 to xxii. 21. Comp. Matt. xxv. 31-40.

<sup>5</sup> This refers not merely to those who die in infancy, but to those who are so lowly in their own estimation, they scarcely venture to appropriate any share in the reward. The timid trembling ones, who have truly feared God's name, as well as those who have been strong in the assurance of hope, will hear the welcome, "Come, ye blessed."

<sup>6</sup> This chapter opened with the measuring of the temple and altar at Jerusalem for destruction. That destruction having been accomplished, it closes, properly

opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

XII.] *Pagan Rome persecuting the Church.* [Ver. 1-6.]

<sup>1</sup> And there appeared a great wonder<sup>1</sup> in heaven: a woman<sup>2</sup> clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon <sup>2</sup> her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child<sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder<sup>4</sup> in heaven; and behold a great red dragon,<sup>5</sup> having seven heads and ten horns, and seven <sup>4</sup> crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, <sup>5</sup> for to devour<sup>6</sup> her child as soon as it was born. And she

enough (contrary to the opinion of those who think this last verse should have been the commencement of chap. xii.), with the opening of the temple and the setting up of the altar in heaven. The earthly temple appears no more in this book.

<sup>1</sup> The word rendered *wonder*, *σημείον*, is rendered "sign" by Wiclif, and in the Rheims, and also in the margin of the A.V., which is of the same authority as the text, which rendering is to be preferred. Everything is seen by John in signs or symbols.

<sup>2</sup> In the O. T., Zion, or the Church, is often represented under the figure of a woman. Here we are to understand the Church, the people of God, as one body, one indivisible community. The splendour of the sun is a symbol of the glory of the Lord. The moon is beneath her feet as she stands in the direct rays of the Sun of Righteousness. The "crown of twelve stars" finds the key for its interpretation in the twelve tribes of Israel, or the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Comp. xxi. 12 and 14.

<sup>3</sup> The imagery in the second verse expresses the promise of a Redeemer. Christ came according to the flesh, and He is the child.

<sup>4</sup> Should be rendered *sign* as see note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Must mean the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the old serpent, actuating wicked rulers among men, and using them as his instruments. The seven heads are to be interpreted as referring to the seven hills on which Rome was situated; the ten horns to the divisions of the Roman empire; the seven crowns are seven successive rulers of this empire, the same as the "seven kings," chap. xvii. 10. In respect to his drawing by his tail "the third part of the stars," etc., see similar language explained under the fourth trumpet. The prophet designed particularly to describe the despotic government of Rome, which, after having despoiled the people of many of their civil rights, and overthrown institutions which, if they had been permitted to remain, would probably have afforded some security to Roman citizens professing the Christian faith, at length directed its energies to exterminate that faith.

<sup>6</sup> "Herod, the servant of the dragon (the representative and vicegerent of the emperor of Rome), as soon as he heard of the birth of Jesus, takes measures to have the new born Child despatched, and kills the children in Bethlehem under two years old (well might the dragon in this wholesale infanticide be called red, or bloody), that he might make sure of destroying the one hated CHILD" (Hengstenberg's Revelation of St. John, *in loco*).

brought forth a man Child,<sup>1</sup> who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught<sup>2</sup> up unto God, and to  
6 His throne. And the woman fled<sup>3</sup> into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

*The Spiritual Agents in the Conflict, and the Anticipated  
Victory.* [Ver. 7-12.

7 And there was war<sup>4</sup> in heaven : Michael<sup>5</sup> and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his  
8 angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any  
9 more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan,<sup>6</sup> which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast  
10 out with him. And I heard a loud voice<sup>7</sup> saying in heaven,

<sup>1</sup> In the Greek *υἱὸν ἀρρῆνεα*. It points to the Messiah : see Ps. ii. 9. The Roman power not only stood ready to devour Him at His birth ; it was by the agency of this same power He was at length actually brought to the cross.

<sup>2</sup> This denotes the ascension of Christ and that dominion which He holds at the right hand of the Father.

<sup>3</sup> We are more particularly to understand, by the flight of the woman into the wilderness, the Church fleeing to a place of security on the invasion of Palestine by the Romans. The three years and one half, or 1260 days, is the continuance of that invasion. The persecution of the Church is placed in juxtaposition with that of the Son, and is therefore introduced here by way of anticipation. The prophet returns to it again in ver. 14.

<sup>4</sup> This must take its place among the other symbolical representations of the Apocalypse. Drs. Burton and Bloomfield regard this passage as parenthetical, and referring to an event belonging to the past ; the former translating, *now there had been war in heaven*. Mr. Barnes thinks that the *language* is such as would be used on the supposition that there had been at some period a rebellion in heaven, and that Satan and his followers had been cast out to return there no more. This passage and the words of our Lord in Luke x. 18, and of Jude 6, furnish the ground as far as there is any in Scripture of the common belief of there having been at some period before the creation of man a rebellion in heaven ; and of which Milton has made such extensive use in his great poem.

“Th’ infernal serpent, he it was, whose guile,

Stirr’d up with envy and revenge,” etc. (Par. Lost, i., 34-43.)

But this common belief, so far as it locates the angels in heaven when the rebellion took place, or some of them left their first estate, rests more upon Paradise Lost than upon Revelation.

<sup>5</sup> Some Protestant interpreters, Hengstenberg *e.g.*, maintain that Christ Himself is meant. This cannot be so, for see Jude 9.

<sup>6</sup> Of the four names applied to this enemy, the first two denote his power and cunning, the other two his intense hostility.

<sup>7</sup> This proceeds from the redeemed, as they call Christians on earth their “brethren.” It shows the deep interest which those who have gained the prize take in believers on earth, struggling for victory.

Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and 11 night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives 12 unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

*The Persecution Continued.*

[Ver. 13-17.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *Child*. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,<sup>1</sup> from the face

<sup>1</sup> The same period as the 42 months and the 1260 days, chap. xi. 2, 3, and xii. 6. It is similar to the time, times, and dividing, or part of a time, in Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7; where it is equivalent to the 1290 days, Dan. xii. 11, under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. In Daniel there is no period equivalent to the 1260 days of the Apocalypse. The fulfilment of passages in Daniel which contain notes of time in literal days may be seen in the following table, viz. :—

<p>Dan. viii. 13, 14. — 2300 DAYS.</p>	<p><i>Subject.</i>—Whole time during which the sanctuary and the "host" (priesthood) would be trodden under foot, and the daily sacrifice interrupted.</p>	<p><i>Events.</i>—Massacre of Onias, the high priest, by Antiochus, Aug. 5th (supposed), 171 B.C. The temple cleansed by Maccabees, and the daily sacrifice restored Dec. 25th, 165 B.C.</p>	<p><i>Time.</i> 171 B.C. Aug. 5th. 165 B.C. Dec. 25th.  6 yrs., 4 mos., 20 days = 2300 days.</p>
<p>Dan. vii. 25. xii. 7. (margin.) xii. 11. — 1290 DAYS.</p>	<p><i>Subject.</i> — The taking away of the daily sacrifice. The restoration of the daily sacrifice.</p>	<p><i>Events.</i>—Daily sacrifice taken away, May 25th, 168 B.C. Restored Dec. 25th, 165 B.C.</p>	<p><i>Time.</i> 168 B.C. May 25th. 165 B.C. Dec. 25th.  3 yrs., 7 mos. = 1290 days.</p>
<p>Dan. xii. 12. — 1335 DAYS.</p>	<p><i>Subject.</i>—Blessedness of the believing Jews who should see the end of the persecutions.</p>	<p><i>Events.</i>—The daily sacrifice taken away (the chief circumstance in the predicted persecutions), May 25th, 168 B.C. The persecutor dead, Feb. 10th (supposed), 164 B.C.</p>	<p><i>Time.</i> 168 B.C. May 25th. 164 B.C. Feb. 10th.  3 yrs., 8 mos., 15 days = 1335 days.</p>

of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water<sup>1</sup> as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be <sup>16</sup>carried away of the flood. And the earth helped<sup>2</sup> the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood <sup>17</sup>which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant<sup>3</sup> of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

*The Imperial Magistracy of Rome, the agency in carrying on the Persecution.*

XIII.]

[Ver. 1-10.

<sup>1</sup> And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast<sup>4</sup> rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blas-  
<sup>2</sup>phemy.<sup>5</sup> And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is characteristic of the symbols in this book. Stuart well remarks "*Quoddam immane prodigiosum* is admissible in the case of Satan, and we are prepared to expect it."

<sup>2</sup> When the greatest peril threatened the Church in the pagan persecution under Nero, there is no telling what evils this monster would have inflicted, if the rebellion of the Jews had not been interposed, and thus another object been presented on which he might vent the rage of his savage nature.

<sup>3</sup> Other Christians, besides those who were the objects of the persecution at first, fell by the hands of other emperors, particularly Domitian.

<sup>4</sup> Here, as Satan does not appear visibly and bodily on the earth, we have that earthly power which he animates, or actuates, represented by a beast rising out of the sea. The prophet Daniel uses wild beasts as symbols of fierce and powerful states. John was on an island, hence the place the sea occupies in the visions of this book. It is not necessary to look for anything figurative in the sand; and if the sea is to be taken in a figurative sense, it may be regarded as designating peoples and nations, great masses of human beings. The beast is a symbol of some mighty cruel power coming up from among and over these masses and nations. The history of this beast is explained, chap. xvii. 7-11. John had an angel for an interpreter. It was the imperial magistracy of Rome. Its heads represent not merely hills, but seven kings. The "ten horns" are symbols of so many kings subordinate and tributary to the Roman empire, chap. xvii. 12. Of course each particular emperor, in whom all the power of the state centred during the period of his reign, must be regarded as the beast itself, or its embodiment.

<sup>5</sup> Emperors of Rome did not hesitate to assume divine titles and to permit divine honours to be paid to them. Divine honours were decreed to Julius Caesar by the Triumviri. Caligula commanded sacred rites to be performed to him, as to a god; Nero was called *Divus* and the eternal one. (Dion Cassius, pp., 337, 459, 643, 724, edit. Lemaire. Virgil, Horace, and Ovid style Augustus a god. Ec. i. 6-8; Ep. ii. 1-16; Fast. i. 1 (13).)

<sup>6</sup> The beast is said to resemble beasts of prey of the most ferocious kind, to indicate the bloodthirsty cruelty which would seize on the objects of its wrath. The



AUGUSTUS.





and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound<sup>1</sup> was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped<sup>2</sup> the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him<sup>3</sup> a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.<sup>4</sup> And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.<sup>5</sup> And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book<sup>6</sup> of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into

beasts of Dan. vii. 3, etc. are here combined in one monster. Those to whom the classical poets of antiquity gave divine titles and worship are represented in this verse as incarnate fiends, or vicegerents of Satan; they exercised his power, they were his allies and instruments.

<sup>1</sup> The healing of this wound excited the wonder of the world. What are we to understand by this mortal wound and its being healed? *Ans.*—The overthrow of the pagan empire of Rome, but the continuance of its power, as a persecuting power, in another form.

<sup>2</sup> The apostle Paul pronounces heathen worship to be the worship of Satan: 1 Cor. x. 20. If the gods of the heathen were worthy of homage, it was easy to transfer the same, even to so vile a person as Nero.

<sup>3</sup> The heathen magistracy of Rome as represented by Nero. The ancient persecutor of the Church, Antiochus Epiphanes, is represented by Daniel as having a mouth, speaking great things; Dan. vii. 8, 20.

<sup>4</sup> "The persecution of Nero began in the middle of Nov., A.D. 64; Mosh. Com. de Reb. Chr., § 64. De Vignoles, Dissert. de causa et initio Persecut. Neron., in Masson's Hist. Critique, viii., p. 74 *seq.* It ended with the death of Nero, which took place on the 9th of June, A.D. 68; for Galba was proclaimed emperor on the 9th of June in the same year, and Nero was assassinated on the same day" (Stuart).

<sup>5</sup> The vast extent of the dominions of the persecutor is here expressed. It was no ordinary individual, no petty prince, but a mighty ruler, whose dominions were nearly coextensive with the boundaries of the known world.

<sup>6</sup> In this book the names of the redeemed of the Lamb are inscribed. We connect the expression "from the foundation of the world" with the Lamb slain; and the meaning is, not that Christ was actually put to death from the foundation of the world, but that the purpose of God was so certain of accomplishment that its accomplishment might be represented as coeval with the purpose itself.

captivity :<sup>1</sup> he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

6. THE CORRUPTIONS, TEMPORAL POWER, IMAGE WORSHIP, PERSECUTIONS, ETC., IN THE NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.  
 CHAP. XIII. 11 TO XIX. 21.

*The Symbol, Dominion, and Name of a New Persecuting Power.*  
 XIII.] [Ver. 11-18.]

11 And I beheld another beast coming<sup>2</sup> up out of the earth ;  
 and he had two horns like a lamb,<sup>3</sup> and he spake as a dragon.  
 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first<sup>4</sup> beast before

<sup>1</sup> It is a striking fulfilment of these words, that Nero, who banished John to Patmos, and imprisoned and slew so many of Christ's servants, actually fled from Rome, with the view of hiding himself in exile, from those who were seeking his life ; and that when he fell into their hands, his own sword, as is commonly supposed, was the weapon that inflicted the mortal wound. It was also remarkably fulfilled in the case of Domitian, Valerian, Julian, and other pagan enemies of God and His Church. There would be room for patience and room for faith before this persecuting power would be finally overthrown.

<sup>2</sup> We come now to the disclosure of the evil and danger which were to spring from the bosom of Christianity itself. The prophet, having finished the description of the persecuting power of pagan Rome, proceeds to predict a hostile power, which would not be fully developed, or established, until long after the Christians, for whose consolation he immediately wrote, had passed from this earthly scene. We shall now therefore have occasion to speak of Rome, as it is, or has long been, since the fall of the Empire, but we mean Rome strictly, papal Rome, Jesuit Rome, and not that great and venerable body called the Catholic Church, as it exists in Europe, on which this papal power has been long sitting, like a dire and stiling incubus. This is a distinction that ought ever to be made, as enabling us, on the one hand, to preserve charity, and on the other, to maintain the true interpretation of those solemn prophecies which point to the terrible evil that was to be developed in the history of the Christian Church. It is thus only we can preserve a feeling of brotherhood for our fellow Christians, and love them for the saintliness often exhibited in their characters. But with Jesuit Rome, the Rome of Hildebrand and Borgia, there can be no communion. She herself utterly repels it, and her ban is to be preferred to her embrace. See an excellent article, in *Christian Statesman*, Phila., by Taylor Lewis, LL.D.

The beast which represented pagan Rome came up out of the sea ; this came up out of the earth, or seemed to grow with somewhat of the silent progress of growing plants ; which indicates the gradual and imperceptible way in which the corruptions of Christianity were introduced.

<sup>3</sup> He assumed the appearance of that inoffensive animal, the name of which, in this book, is used so frequently for the symbol of the true Head of the Church. Although such was his outward semblance, he spoke as a dragon ; *i. e.*, he resembled the "Roman emperor, in usurping Divine titles and honours, in commanding idolatry, and in persecuting and slaying the true worshippers of God and faithful servants of Jesus Christ."

<sup>4</sup> Nominally Christian Rome, as early as the eighth century, claimed temporal as

him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship<sup>1</sup> the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.<sup>2</sup> And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down

well as spiritual power. "It united," as Whiston observes, "all the distinct kingdoms of the Roman empire, and by joining with them secures them a blind obedience from their subjects; and so it is the occasion of the preservation of the old Roman empire in some kind of unity, and name, and strength."

<sup>1</sup> On this there can be no better commentary than that contained in Dr. Middleton's celebrated "Letter from Rome, on the similarity between Popery and Paganism." He informs us that the object of his visit to Rome was to make researches into some branches of its antiquities, and that the very reason he thought would prevent him from noticing the religion of modern Rome was the chief cause which led him to pay so much attention to it: "for nothing," to use his own language, "I found concurred so much with my original intention of conversing with the ancients, or so much helped my imagination to fancy myself wandering about in heathen Rome, as to observe and attend to their religious worship," etc. The use of incense or perfumes, holy water, of lamps and wax candles, of pictures and votive offerings, are customs all borrowed from the heathen. The very composition of this holy water was the same among the heathen as it is now among the papists, being nothing more than a mixture of salt with common water; and the form of the sprinkling brush the same as that which the priests now make use of. He shows that the Church of Rome in its present practice has found means, by a change only of names, to retain the same things. He maintains that the statues which the old Romans erected to their deities have not in all cases been removed, but have been retained, consecrated anew by the imposition of Christian names. He says: "in their very priesthood they have contrived, one would think, to keep up as near a resemblance as they could to that of pagan Rome, and the sovereign pontiff, instead of deriving his succession from St. Peter, may with more reason, and a much better plea, style himself the successor of Pontifex Maximus, or chief priest of old Rome, whose authority and dignity were the greatest in the republic." (But see the Letter, *passim*.) Mosheim speaking of the fourth century says: "the Christian bishops introduced, with but slight alteration, into the Christian worship, those rites and institutions by which formerly the Greeks and Romans and other pagans had manifested their reverence towards their imaginary deities." There was little difference between the public worship of the Christians and that of the Greeks and Romans. In both there were splendid robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, images, gold and silver vases, and innumerable other things alike."

The late Dr. Alford, Dean of Canterbury, so well known by his Commentary on the Greek Testament, bears similar testimony in a series of letters from Italy, in *Good Words*. He says: "Rome is essentially a pagan city. Her churches are numerous as the days of the year, yet, with rare exceptions, the worship of the people has nothing in common with Christianity. God has passed out of the practical worship of this people; the Son of God has, as a matter of fact, ceased to be an object of their adoration. The Madonna has usurped the place of the Divine Son, and even of the whole Three Persons in the Holy Trinity."

<sup>2</sup> This reference, or identification, confirms the interpretation of the healing of the deadly wound, ver. 3, as designed to prefigure the revival and preservation of the Roman power in a new form, with somewhat of its original ability and disposition to persecute and injure the Christian cause. The beast that rose up out of the sea, and had a wound by the sword and did live, survived in the image that was made to him, and was worshipped precisely as the beast himself had been worshipped.

14 from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles<sup>1</sup> which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.  
 15 And he had power to give life unto the image<sup>2</sup> of the beast,

<sup>1</sup> It is here foretold that this new beast, by which we understand papal Rome, or the Church in its usurpation of temporal power and consequent corruptions, would profess or seem to work miracles. "Any one who has read the story of the holy fire at the Church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem will be at no loss to imagine that the accomplishment of such a thing, in the view of the populace, was not difficult. A moderate skill in pyrotechnics could perform such a feat" (Stuart). Dean Alford, in the letters referred to above, gives an account of his visit to the miraculous picture of the Madonna at Vico Varro, near Tivoli, and says: "Winking images, miracle working images, speaking images, are among the very commonest tricks of this degraded priesthood, and are implicitly believed in by the people." The Romish Breviary is replete with examples of miracles wrought by the saints: St. Francis Xavier turned salt water into fresh, and saved the lives of five hundred travellers who were dying of thirst; St. Raymond laid his cloak on the sea, and sailed from Majorca to Barcelona, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, in six hours.

<sup>2</sup> The popedom, or the pope himself for the time being, is the living representative of usurped worldly power. By the temporal authority, which every pope who has assumed it has perpetuated, and by preserving the old spirit of intolerance and cruelty, as well as the idolatrous ritual of pagan Rome, he may be said to give life to the image of the beast, "whose deadly wound was healed." The history of the popedom teaches it is unsafe to predict too positively that the temporal power of which Victor Emmanuel stripped Pio Nono by the entrance of the Italian army into Italy, September 20th, 1870, is a permanent dispossession. Rome has seen many vicissitudes. It was in the eighth century that the temporal power had its commencement. It was in A.D. 754 that Pepin crossed the Alps, defeated the Lombards, and conferred the exarchate of Ravenna and Pentapolis on the pope. This was the origin of the pontifical sovereignty. Under Charlemagne the popes were invested with further power. He conferred on them Spoleto and Perugia. Boniface VIII. attempted to complete the mighty work of his predecessors, by the subjection of all the kings of the earth to the pontifical authority. In the council held at Rome in 1302 he composed the famous decretal, *Unam Sanctam*, which asserts that the power of kings is to be held subordinate to that of popes, and that popes have the right of appointing, correcting, and deposing them; but the temporal power has been by no means held during this long period in undisputed possession. The revolution in 1818 expelled the present pontiff, who was restored by Louis Napoleon by force of arms, only to a small remnant however of his former territorial dominions, the city of Rome and its immediate adjacent territory. While it may be too soon to affirm that diplomacy and foreign arms may not again force back on Rome the despotism from which it has been delivered, there are certain reasons which render such a result, to say the least, quite improbable: *i.e.* (1) The pope has been dispossessed by a king who claims to be a loyal son of the church. (2) The effect in Roman Catholic countries, particularly Germany and France, of the decree of infallibility. (3) The great change among the nations of Europe, by which those known as Roman Catholic have lost greatly in influence, and Protestant powers have gained in equal if not greater proportion.

that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be  
 16 killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and  
 poor, free and bond, to receive a mark<sup>1</sup> in their right hand, or  
 17 in their foreheads : and that no man might buy or sell, save he  
 that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of  
 18 his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding  
 count the number<sup>2</sup> of the beast : for it is the number of a man ;  
 and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

*The gloomy picture relieved by a vision of the heavenly glory, and  
 of the flying angel having the everlasting gospel to preach.*

XIV.]

[Ver. 1-7

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb<sup>3</sup> stood on the mount Sion,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Allusion is here made to an ancient custom, by which slaves received a mark, *χάραγμα*, of their masters, and soldiers of their commanders, on their persons, as a sign of abject servitude or submission. All who had not the mark of the beast, *i.e.* who had not owned subjection to the papacy, were to be deprived of political privileges, even to be prohibited from traffic and commerce. In fulfilment of this it is on record that during the reign of William the Conqueror none but avowed Roman Catholics among his subjects were permitted to buy and sell. Pope Alexander III. published an edict, in which he prohibited, on pain of anathema, any Roman Catholic from trading with the Waldenses and Albigenses. In a bull by Pope Martin V., after the Council of Constance, his subjects were commanded not to permit the heretics to own houses, or enter into contracts, or carry on commerce. A similar edict, as noticed by the learned Joseph Mede, was published by the pagan emperor Diocletian in the bloody persecution he carried on against the Christians.

<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.*, v. 30, refers to the fact that the number of this name may be made to agree with a variety of names, but speaks of it as undoubtedly expressing the name of Antichrist. After cautions against the fanciful interpretations which might be made out from the number 666, he mentions several names as answering to this number, among them that of ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ, *Latæinus*. Taking the letters in their order, and giving them their value according to the system of notation among the Greeks, we have  $30 + 1 + 300 + 5 + 10 + 50 + 70 + 200 = 666$ . It has been well remarked by Mr. Pyle, in his "Paraphrase," quoted by Bp. Newton, that "no other word in any language can be found to express both the same number and the same thing." After the division of the empire the people of the Church of Rome were called Latins, and to the present day that Church is not unfrequently called the Latin Church. The original is more impressive than the translation ; the *χάραγμα* 666 is not written out, but is expressed by the three letters *χξς'*. It has been suggested by Herder and Hengstenberg that there may have been some design and significance in this mode of writing the name. The first and last of these letters are the common abbreviation of the name of Christ. The *ξ* in the middle is in form like the serpent or dragon, representing Satan chaps. xii. 9 and xx. 2 ; so that in the mark, or name, we have anti-Christ.

<sup>3</sup> In marked contrast with the beast of the preceding chapter, which had the appearance of a lamb. This is the true Lamb.

<sup>4</sup> Sion was one of the hills in the earthly Jerusalem, and one of the names by

and with Him a hundred forty *and* four thousand,<sup>1</sup> having His  
 2 Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice<sup>2</sup>  
 from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of  
 a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping  
 3 with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before  
 the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no  
 man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four  
 4 thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are  
 they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins.  
 These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.  
 These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits<sup>3</sup>  
 5 unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no  
 guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.  
 6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the  
 everlasting gospel to preach<sup>4</sup> unto them that dwell on the  
 earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and  
 7 people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to  
 Him; for the hour<sup>5</sup> of His judgment is come: and worship  
 Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fount-  
 ains of waters.

which the whole city was called. But as in this prophecy the destruction of that city has now been accomplished, henceforward, whenever Jerusalem, the temple, the altar are mentioned, the City, Temple, and Altar in heaven are intended.

<sup>1</sup> These are the same the vision of whose sealing we have in chap. vii. 1-8. The mark, or seal, was "His [the Lamb's] Father's name written in their foreheads." They were the redeemed "out of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

<sup>2</sup> This was the voice of the sealed ones, for none but they could learn the song that was sung. The prophecy now clearly relates to a time when the first converts to Christianity, from among the Jews, represented by the 144,000, were all deceased and in heaven; and therefore to a period considerably posterior to the overthrow of the Jewish persecuting power and the times of the apostle John. This vision of the enthroned and conquering Son of God, in the midst of those already saved by Him, and receiving their homage, occurring as it does in the melancholy picture of the apostasy, corruptions and persecutions of the papacy, is admirably fitted to impart consolation.

<sup>3</sup> An expression which clearly means that they were the earliest converts to Christianity, who were, as is well known, from among the Jews. Their ingathering is a pledge of the ingathering of all the followers of the Lamb to the same glory.

<sup>4</sup> This is a figurative representation of the spread and ultimate triumph of the gospel; and occurring as it does in the midst of predictions which relate to abuses and corruptions of Christianity, it must have animated, and may still serve to animate, a true Christian faith.

<sup>5</sup> When the time is arrived for the preaching of the gospel to all nations, then will be the hour for the overthrow of that antichristian power represented by the beast that grew up out of the earth, having horns like a lamb, but with the speech of a dragon.

*Judgments on the Papacy.*

[Ver. 8-20.]

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon<sup>1</sup> is fallen, is fallen,<sup>2</sup> that great city, because she made all nations drink  
9 of the wine<sup>3</sup> of the wrath of her fornication. And the third  
angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man  
worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his  
10 forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine<sup>4</sup>  
of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into  
the cup of His indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire  
and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the  
11 presence of the Lamb : and the smoke of their torment ascendeth  
up for ever and ever : and they have no rest day nor  
night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever re-  
12 ceiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience<sup>5</sup> of the  
saints : here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and  
13 the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice<sup>6</sup> from heaven saying unto

<sup>1</sup> BABYLON : as this name occurs frequently in subsequent parts of this book, it is important to determine its significance and application. It was the name of a well known city on the Euphrates, one of the most splendid and powerful capitals of antiquity. It was here that God's chosen people were held in captivity and greatly oppressed. It was the capital of a vast empire, the religion of which was idolatry, and the government of which was in the hands of a single despot, whose arbitrary will, both in respect to civil affairs and the idols which the people might worship, was the supreme law. This literal Babylon was no more. The prophecies in regard to it, uttered by Isaiah, had long since been fulfilled. That Rome is to be understood by Babylon is almost universally agreed, not excepting even Roman Catholic commentators. Rome, at the time the apostle lived, had succeeded to that position in the empire of the world which Babylon had anciently filled. But it is not pagan Rome which is here meant, but that Rome which had made an image to the beast which rose up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and thus preserved the old empire in some sort of unity and strength ; it is Rome as perpetuated in the papal dominion.

<sup>2</sup> So inevitable is its fall that the angel speaks of it as already fallen. Mystical Babylon was a fallen city when the Divine decree went forth, that on account of her abominations she should fall.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah had said of ancient Babylon, it " hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken " (Jer. li. 7). The modern Babylon is represented as a harlot, with a cup of wine, inflaming men to commit fornication ; a figure usual in the sacred Scriptures, especially the prophets, for idolatry.

<sup>4</sup> " This, above all measure, dreadful threatening is undoubtedly the most severe to be found in Scripture " (Bengel). It is directed against those who are guilty of idolatry, and of worshipping the beast and his image and receiving his mark, by the abject submission of their consciences to the see and priesthood of Rome. Idolatry certainly is not less offensive to God in papal than in pagan Rome.

<sup>5</sup> Here is that which will try the patience of the saints in the long continued persecutions.

<sup>6</sup> We are not told that this was the voice of the Lord, or of an angel ; and why

me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth:<sup>1</sup> Yea, saith the Spirit,<sup>2</sup> that they may rest from  
 14 their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold<sup>3</sup> a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man,<sup>4</sup> having on His head a golden crown, and in  
 15 His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple,<sup>5</sup> crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee  
 16 to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth  
 17 was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which  
 18 is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to Him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in Thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the  
 19 earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in His sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and  
 20 cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.<sup>6</sup>

may we not suppose it was that of one of the redeemed from earth, once a sharer in the sufferings and sorrows of life, now employed to bear testimony that they who die in the Lord are blessed? It is the dead, those who have passed out of life, who are the subject of the declaration; not the dead indiscriminately, only those who die in the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> There is no reference here to time gone before, as if there could have been a time when those who died in the Lord were not blessed. It means, substantially, *even now, already, i.e.*, immediately upon their departure from this world. It has its proper explanation in the words of the apostle, "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8).

<sup>2</sup> The Holy Spirit responds to the voice from heaven "Yea," and adds, "that they may rest from their labours," etc.

<sup>3</sup> In the remainder of this chapter, "what in history is realized in a whole series of judicial acts, which at the last run out into the final judgment, is here brought together in one great harvest, one great vintage and pressing of the grapes."

<sup>4</sup> The true sense of this title is determined by its use in Daniel vii. 13, where it is confessedly applied to the coming Messiah, as a partaker of our nature, implying of course that He had a higher nature. See Note, chap. i. 13.

<sup>5</sup> The temple was the temple as seen by John in heaven (see ver. 17). The angel, or messenger, crying to the Son of man and issuing the command to thrust in his sickle, is to be understood merely as maintaining the symbolical action in the piece, or he may be understood as bringing to Christ the commission of the Father.

<sup>6</sup> So deep is the sea of blood which issues from the winepress that it reaches even unto the horse bridles, as on a field of slaughter. This sea would extend far



*Seven Vials of the last Plagues delivered to Seven Angels.*

XV.]

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous,  
 seven angels having the seven<sup>1</sup> last plagues; for in them is  
 2 filled up the wrath of God. And I saw<sup>2</sup> as it were a sea of  
 glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory  
 over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and*  
 over the number of his name, stand on the sea<sup>3</sup> of glass, having  
 3 the harps of God. And they sing the song<sup>4</sup> of Moses the  
 servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and  
 marvellous *are* Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true  
 4 *are* Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee,  
 O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for *Thou* only *art* holy: for  
 all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judg-  
 5 ments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and,  
 behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven  
 6 was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple,  
 having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen,<sup>5</sup>  
 7 and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one  
 of the four beasts<sup>6</sup> gave unto the seven angels seven golden  
 vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

beyond the city's walls. That it would be of great extent is perhaps all that was intended. But it has been observed by Mede that the *State della Chiesa*, or territory of the Church, over which the Pope, until recently, has been the acknowledged temporal head, extending from the city of Rome to the banks of the Po and the marches of Verona, contains 200 Italian miles, just equal to the 1600 furlongs.

<sup>1</sup> As the seven trumpets are included under the seventh seal, so the seven vials are included under the seventh trumpet.

<sup>2</sup> The main subject of this chapter is the preparatory vision of the happiness and victory of those who, in lifetime, had refused to submit to the authority of the beast, and had been persecuted by him. The design of its introduction here is similar to that of the vision of the 144,000 (chap. xiv. 1-5), namely to throw light into the dark picture, and to animate and console the people of God.

<sup>3</sup> This victorious company was standing on a sea of glass, or a pavement resembling a sea of glass, variegated with a red or fiery colour.

<sup>4</sup> A song similar to the triumphal song (Exod. xv.) on the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage, and they sung the *new* song in honour of the Lamb.

<sup>5</sup> John now sees the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony opened in heaven. "These judgments would be executed on the enemies of the church, in mercy to the people of God; while the white clothing and golden girdles, worn by these ministers of vengeance, represented their holiness, and the righteousness and excellence of these awful dispensations" (Bloomfield).

<sup>6</sup> See Note, chap. iv. 6, where the beasts are explained as symbolical beings representing the government or providence of God.

- 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

*The First Six Vials poured out.*

XVI.]

[Ver. 1-16.

- 1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials<sup>1</sup> of the  
2 wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast,  
3 and upon them which worshipped his image.<sup>2</sup> And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood<sup>3</sup> of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

<sup>1</sup> Let it be understood, these vials were designed to predict the judgments or chastisements to be sent upon papal Rome.

*First Vial. Priestcraft and Degeneracy of the Clergy.*

<sup>2</sup> The idolatry of the men that worshipped the beast was to be punished by the vices and exactions of those whom they credulously followed as spiritual guides. In the time of the Reformation, in order to obtain the intercessions of the Virgin Mary, or some pretended saint, the people were required to bring money, fowls, eggs, wax, butter, and everything that was of any value to the priests. Relics were introduced to increase the revenues of bishops and monks. In one place a seller of indulgences might have been seen, with his head adorned with a feather from the wing of the archangel Michael. In another was shown a fragment of Noah's ark, some soot from the furnace of the three children, a piece of wood from the crib of the infant Jesus. Impunity for crime was even purchased by money.

The houses of the clergy were the resorts of the dissolute, and the scene of numerous excesses. Some imitated the customs of the East, and had their harems. Priests frequented taverns, played dice, and finished their orgies by quarrels and blasphemy. They sealed walls in the night, committed disturbances and disorders of all kinds, and broke open doors and locks. (See Hist. of the Ref., by Dr. J. H. Merle d'Aubigné, vol. i., pp. 45-51.) Such was the noisome and grievous sore which fell on the men who had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image.

*The Second and Third Vials. Mohammedan power in the Seventh, and Ottoman power in the Thirteenth, centuries.*

<sup>3</sup> There appears to be a close connection between the second and third vials, as both are poured upon the waters and their effects are similar; the sea became blood, and the rivers and fountains became blood. We shall derive assistance in understanding what was here predicted by attending to the meaning of what John heard the angel of the waters say: "Thou art righteous, O Lord," etc. He declared the righteousness of God in visiting with retributive justice the kingdom of the beast, and those who had received his mark. As they had delighted in shedding blood, God gave them blood to drink. Persecutions of papal Rome far exceeded, both in degree and duration, those carried on by the pagan emperors of

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and  
 5 fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard  
 the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which

Rome. Indeed, it has been estimated that, in the papal persecution, more than ten times the number of Christians perished than in all the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors put together.

Seas, rivers, and fountains, turned into blood, are proper emblems of widespread devastation and slaughter. Here then are foretold the bloody victories of Mohammed and his successors. Early in the seventh century, this impostor began to publish that he was favoured with revelations from God. At first he met with little success; but he gradually acquired such ascendancy among the Saracens, that they adopted his religion, enlisted under his banner, and he led them forth to propagate his religion by the sword. Many nations, where once the light of Christianity shone, but among whom the doctrines of Christianity had become greatly corrupted, were subdued. They desolated and oppressed the Greek and Latin churches; they repeatedly besieged Constantinople, and even plundered the suburbs of Rome. Incredible as it may seem, yet in the short space of little more than eighty years the disciples of Mohammed had subdued Palestine, Syria, Portugal, Spain, Egypt, Numidia, all Barbary, and had overrun almost all Asia Minor. Nor did they stop here till they had added a great part of Italy, as far as to the gates of Rome, and even the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. It seemed, at one time, "that the threat of Muza would come to pass, that the name of Mohammed should be proclaimed in the Vatican." Such was the bloody scourge which God raised up against an apostate church. The Saracens even advanced into France, designing the conquest of Europe and the extermination of Christianity. Much blood was shed; but it was not for the extermination of Christianity that this scourge was raised up, but for the chastisement of those who had shed the blood of the saints.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Ottoman power arose; and it is from this point we may date the third vial. They were converted to the Mohammedan faith; but at a subsequent period turned their arms against the Saracens, conquered them, and subjugated such parts of Asia and Africa as had submitted to the Mohammedan faith. Under the third sovereign of this new dynasty the plan was conceived, a second time, of blotting from existence the religion which professed to be derived from the gospel. Thus did God continue to scourge the beast, and visit those who bore his mark with retributive justice. But Christianity was not to be exterminated. The Ottomans were put in check by Tamerlane, who also professed the Mohammedan faith, and who, in his turn, for a season held the retributive sword against a corrupt priesthood and apostate church. He employed the most inhuman severity against the Roman Catholics, of whom many suffered death, by his orders, in the most barbarous manner.

But it was by the Crusades, those romantic expeditions set on foot by popes and potentates who acknowledged their supremacy (avowedly for the purpose of rescuing the Holy Sepulchre from the *infidels*, as the Mohammedans were called) that the greatest effusion of blood was caused. It was near the close of the eleventh century when Peter the Hermit first preached the crusades. He painted the sufferings and insults of the pilgrims at the hands of the Saracens, who had possession of Jerusalem. Persons of all ranks flew to arms. A spirit of enthusiasm soon pervaded all Europe; and for about two centuries these quixotic but sanguinary expeditions disturbed Europe. The loss of human life was immense. It is computed that two millions of Europeans were buried in the East. Thus did the sea, the rivers, and fountains of waters become blood.

art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus.  
 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou  
 7 hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And  
 I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God  
 8 Almighty, true and righteous *are* Thy judgments. And the  
 fourth<sup>1</sup> angel poured out his vial upon the sun;<sup>2</sup> and power  
 9 was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were  
 scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God,  
 which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not  
 10 to give Him glory. And the fifth<sup>3</sup> angel poured out his vial

*The Fourth Vial. The Inquisition.*

<sup>1</sup> St. Dominic, as he is called in the Romish calendar, is said to have commenced the Inquisition. It met with approval at Rome, and he was appointed first inquisitor general. To inflict pain seems to have been the pleasure of his unnatural heart, and cruelty was in him an appetite and a passion. In a single day eighty persons were beheaded, and four hundred burnt alive, by this man's order and in his sight. (See Art. on Inquisition, *Quarterly Review*, Dec., 1811, from the pen of the late Robert Southey, LL.D.) The common modes of torture to force victims to confess, or accuse themselves, were dislocation by means of pulleys, ropes, and weights; suffocation by water; and roasting the soles of the feet. Those who were condemned to death were roasted alive. The prisoner who was willing to say that he died in the Catholic faith had the privilege of being strangled first. The *auto da fê* was a term applied to the burning of a large number of heretics, when they were led forth in procession to the place of martyrdom, dressed according to the fate that awaited them. (See "Inquisition Unmasked," etc. By D. Antonio Puigblanch, from the Spanish, London, 1816; Limborch, vol. ii., p. 289; Geddes' Tracts against Popery, p. 446.)

<sup>2</sup> As a star has been in this book interpreted to represent a ruler, civil or ecclesiastical, so the sun represents a dynasty or form of government, civil or ecclesiastical. Under the sixth seal it was interpreted to mean the Jewish nation, and under the fourth trumpet the commonwealth or republic of ancient Rome; here it means the spiritual dynasty of papal Rome.

*The Fifth Vial. The Reformation.*

<sup>3</sup> This vial obviously refers to the Reformation. It was poured out on the seat of the beast; that is, it was aimed at the supremacy of the pope, the grand usurpation on which had been engrafted, from time to time, the other corruptions of the church. Wickliffe and Huss prepared the way for such men as Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin. On all sides, as the time for the pouring out of this vial drew near, "from above, and from beneath," to use the language of Merle d'Aubigné, "was heard a low murmur, the forerunner of the thunderbolt that was about to fall. Providence, in its slow course, had prepared all things; and even the passions which God condemns were to be turned, by His power, to the fulfilment of His purposes." The bolt fell, and the kingdom of the beast was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. This refers to the effect produced on the pope, the bishops, and priesthood; the malice and rage it excited within them, when those lion-hearted men, the Reformers, stood up for the long hidden truths, casting the fear of dungeons and gibbets to the winds. Amazement

upon the seat of the beast ; and his kingdom was full of darkness ; and they gnawed<sup>1</sup> their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel<sup>2</sup>

seized the minds of men who had long bowed in slavish fear to the supremacy of the pope. "In the space of a fortnight," after Luther had nailed to the church door in Wittenberg the ninety-five propositions against the church of Rome, says the same admired historian, "they had spread through Germany ; within a month they had run through all Christendom. They shook the very foundations of proud Rome ; threatened with instant ruin the walls, gates, and pillars of the papacy ; stunned and terrified its champions ; and, at the same time, awakened from the slumber of error many thousands of men."

<sup>1</sup> As soon as the pope and his clergy had, in some measure, recovered from the first shock, they began to gnash with their teeth upon the bold and fearless monk. "And they gnawed their tongues for pain," by reason of the powerful, searching, and condemning truths which he still fearlessly published to the world. But they "repented not of their deeds"; for all the essential errors of papacy remain to this day: the celibacy of the clergy, auricular confession, worship of saints and relics, purgatory, the mass, transubstantiation, and the supremacy and infallibility of the pope.

That the vials are symbolical of judgments is perfectly obvious. But the difficulty of regarding the Reformation as symbolised by one of them is only apparent. It will be removed by considering that whilst it was one of the greatest blessings to the world, it was a disaster to the papacy, a disaster more serious than all the sanguinary wars waged against it by the Saracens and Turks. The power and authority which it lost then it has never been able to regain.

President Edwards, in his *History of Redemption*, expresses the opinion that the fifth vial was poured out at the Reformation. And Dr. Dwight advocates the same opinion. "That the Reformation was an event," is his language, "perfectly answering to this prophecy, will, I suppose, not be questioned; as without violence it plainly cannot. The seat of the beast is literally his throne, and symbolically his power. Every one knows that this great providential dispensation was directed immediately against the power of the Romish hierarchy. The pontiff, his court, his ordinary and extraordinary agents, his clergy universally, the secular princes, and the immense body of people under his control, were all agitated by a general convulsion. A large part of the dominions over which he held a spiritual sceptre revolted; and, notwithstanding the immense efforts made by the emperor of Germany and his coadjutors, for the destruction of the Protestant cause, was finally rescued from their thralldom, and established in the full possession of religious liberty." (*Discourse, delivered July 23rd, 1812, on the Public Fast, in the chapel of Yale College, p. 9.*)

#### *The Sixth Vial.*

<sup>2</sup> It is evident we are approaching the point which separates the fulfilled and unfulfilled portions of this book. From the nature of the case, it is impossible to point out precisely where this line falls. Prophecy was not meant to be history written beforehand, and it even seems to be necessary that some time should elapse after the accomplishment of a prediction before we are fully qualified to decide in respect to it. The word FUTURE must be written, as indicating that what refers to the past in this book ceases, and that all that follows it remains to be fulfilled either between the fifth and the sixth, or the sixth and the seventh, vials.

poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates;<sup>1</sup> and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings<sup>2</sup> of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits<sup>3</sup> like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the

<sup>1</sup> Babylon being a symbol of the Romish spiritual empire, the great river Euphrates must be understood as symbolical of the wealth, strength, and safety of that empire; the drying up of its waters as the failure of these. Since the French Revolution, near the beginning of the present century, that process certainly has been rapidly going on.

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the east mean the destroyers of spiritual Babylon.

<sup>3</sup> The unclean spirits are symbolical of bitter and violent enemies of Christianity. They were like frogs, *i.e.*, grovelling, clamorous, intrusive, pertinacious in their modes of acting. They came out of the mouth of the dragon, *i.e.*, the secular persecuting power of this spiritual empire; and out of the mouth of the beast, or ecclesiastical persecuting power of the same empire; and out of the mouth of the false prophet, *i.e.*, were primary agents of a corrupt priesthood. They were the spirits of demons, malignant, hostile to human happiness and virtue, enemies to God. The working of miracles is ascribed to these spirits of demons; of course they were not real miracles, they were results brought about, as wonderful really as miracles. Have we not in these unclean spirits a symbol of those bitter enemies of Christianity, the infidels who were the leaders in the French Revolution? To a great extent, this class was composed of the gentry, nobles, and *literati* of Roman Catholic countries. Many of the clergy embarked in the design of the infidels. Few persons, it is said, rendered their system such important service as Briennes, Archbishop of Toulouse; the Jesuits too were infidels in great numbers. They were atheistical and more furiously hostile to God than any other men since the deluge. They thrust themselves into every office and situation in which mischief could be done by them. "The press groaned with their labours on all subjects, handled in all forms which promised to be injurious to Christianity. From the magnificent encyclopædia down to the farthing pamphlet, the handbill and the song, infidelity descended in a regular progress, satisfied if it could only oppose God and destroy mankind." The world stood aghast at their designs and their efforts. The emperors of Austria, France, and Russia, princes of the house of Bourbon, the king of Prussia, several of the British princes, two kings of Sweden, the various reigning princes of Germany and Italy were all enlisted with those abandoned men. The emperor of Persia, moreover, was drawn to embark in their great design. They seduced Tippoo Saib to his ruin, and embroiled the Mahrattas and Sikhs, and the Spanish colonies on the American continent, in the same contest. The miseries which spread through the French kingdom during "the reign of terror," or the domination of the infidels, extended over surrounding countries. Revolutionary leaders seized on the property of princes, nobles, and the clergy, as their lawful prey. More than £200,000,000 are supposed to have fallen into their hands by one vast act of confiscation. The life, liberty, and property of every bordering nation were consumed. Italy, Sardinia, Switzerland, Belgium, Batavia, Germany, Prussia, Austria, bowed successively to the French arms. Paris was a pandemonium, where every species of vice, crime, and iniquity was perpetrated, not only with impunity, but with the applause of its desperate populace; for three days it was searched before a copy of the sacred Scriptures could be found. That remarkable man, Napoleon Buonaparte, with Europe prostrate at his feet, and controlling the destinies of 80,000,000, caused the pope, Pius VII., to be arrested and confined as a prisoner, first at Savona, and afterwards at Fontainebleau.

mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.  
 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.  
 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his  
 16 shame. And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The hill of Megiddo. Here the Israelites gained a signal victory over the Canaanitish kings (Jud. v. 19). John, writing in Greek, by the expression "called in the Hebrew tongue" seems to refer his readers back to the Hebrew Scriptures for the significance of this name. The battle of Armageddon is simply a conflict between the Lord's servants and His allied foes. The European war, which began in 1792, is without a parallel in the history of man, whether we regard the number of nations engaged, the number of armies in the field, the number of battles, the multitude of slain, the destruction of cities, the depopulation of countries, or the immense ruin and devastation brought on the world. On the testimony of a French officer, 3,000,000 of Frenchmen perished within the first four or five years of the Revolution. Fields and vineyards had to be cultivated by women and old men. It will be no excessive estimate if we suppose 10,000,000 to have perished in the wars occasioned by the French Revolution. Thus the water of the great river Euphrates began to be dried up. A great change is still in process among the nations of Europe by which those known as Roman Catholic have lost greatly in influence, and the Protestant interest has gained in equal if not greater proportion. Spain long since lost that potency by which, as her chief agent, she executed the behests of Rome. When the so called "invincible armada" threatened England, she could boast of over 40,000,000 inhabitants; she has now only 14,000,000. The British islands had at that time 10,800,000; they have now over 30,000,000. Austria has been humiliated, first in the conflict with Louis Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel, and then with Prussia, and has sunk from its rank as a first-rate power. And now France, the avowed champion of the pontificate for the last twenty years, instead of having bayonets to spare to defend a foreign throne, has not found enough for the protection of its own. Solferino, Sadowa, and Sedan, are names which will long have a peculiar significance in the history of our times, as they will be seen to sustain a peculiar relation to the recent overthrow of the temporal power. Not only are the remains of the "fourth kingdom" (Dan. ii. 40-45), as perpetuated even to our day by the Roman hierarchy, passing rapidly away; but it is most remarkable that, simultaneously with this great overturn, Cæsarism as it is called, or the empire whose ruler has upheld the pope in Rome during the last twenty years, and by the French naval, military, and political power, supported papal propagandism in the South Seas, China, and elsewhere, has fallen, certainly beyond all hope of ever gaining its former power and prestige in the world. It was the highest ambition of Louis Napoleon to be viewed as sustaining the same relation to the great Napoleon which Augustus did to the great Cæsar; and not merely by natural relationship, but in the founding of a great empire. He was seeking in his Life of Julius Cæsar to prepare the way for that *plébiscite* by which he hoped to win, in the vote of the masses, a power to override the popular will, as expressed in regular representative assemblies. But this centralization of irresponsible power in one man has undergone a sudden and hopeless collapse in France, simultaneously with the collapse

*The Seventh Vial: its Symbols of Destruction.*

[Ver. 17-21.]

17 And the seventh<sup>1</sup> angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake  
18 and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine  
19 of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail;<sup>2</sup> for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

*The Seventh Vial continued.<sup>3</sup> The Papacy under the Symbol of a Woman upon a Scarlet Coloured Beast.*

XVII.]

[Ver. 1-18.]

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth  
2 upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,<sup>4</sup> and the inhabitants of the earth have

of the priestly dominion in Italy. The collapse followed immediately upon the *plébiscite*, that mockery of the people, in an appeal to their vote, in the one instance; and in the other, upon the ascription of a Divine attribute to a mere mortal, that mockery of God in the decree of infallibility.

<sup>1</sup> This prediction completes the overthrow of spiritual Babylon. The vial will be poured out into the air, and a great voice will be heard from the throne of God,—"IT IS DONE."

<sup>2</sup> Putting conjecture entirely aside as to the import of the symbols here employed, viz., the great earthquake, dividing the city into three parts, the flight of islands and mountains and the great hail, we leave them to be made plain by coming events.

<sup>3</sup> In chapter xvii., together with xviii. and xix., we have a minute account of the abominations and impostures of papal Rome, and of the final overthrow of that antichristian power. Having had the *denouement* given in connection with the act of pouring out the last vial, to make the action of the piece correspond with the preceding vials, we may regard what is contained in these three chapters as included under the seventh vial, *i.e.*, the seventh vial as extending to the end of chapter xix.

<sup>4</sup> This word in the figurative sense of Scripture means idolatry. Nearly all commentators, Romish as well as Protestant, agree that Rome is meant. Bossuet, in



3 been drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness : and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet<sup>1</sup> coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy,

his commentary, and other Romanists, apply all this part of the Apocalypse to *heathen* Rome. Several of the German critics do the same. Professors Lee of Oxford, Stnart of Andover, and Cowles of Oberlin, among English interpreters, consider Babylon as designating pagan Rome, both in its political and religious character. The leading reason in support of this opinion is that, as it was the great object of this book to console the persecuted at the time it was written, it would have been foreign to this design to predict distant times, and the overthrow of future persecutors. But how, we ask, does it militate against the design of this book that John should proceed, after having foretold the destruction of the Jewish and pagan persecuting powers, to foretell that a similar destruction would befall every other persecuting power that might rise against the Church? At least one half of the Apocalypse is devoted to predicting the overthrow of the enemies of the Christian religion, who were active at the time it was written; how therefore it can be pronounced incongruous or inapposite to regard the residue of the book as relating to the destruction of similar enemies whom the God of prophecy must have foreseen in the future, it is hard to understand? And it is equally hard to understand why the whole of an inspired book of Scripture should be given for the consolation of believers in a single generation and age, and no specific prediction to the same end, in the case of Christians who were to suffer from persecutions equally sanguinary. Dr. Cowles says that "as surely as this prophecy makes the first beast and the second contemporaneous and co-working, and as surely as history locates the persecuting activities of the seven heads of pagan Rome on the one hand and of papal Rome on the other, one thousand years asunder, so surely do the stubborn facts of history rule out as absurd and impossible the theory that this second beast is papal Rome." But he fails to give the evidence that "this prophecy makes the first beast and the second contemporaneous." Instead of this it does just the contrary. It represents the first beast as slain and as having of course passed away, and as brought to life again in the second. "He exercises all the power of the first beast;" "and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed." "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast [a dead thing of the past], that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Pagan Rome, it is well known, was never at any pains to disseminate her false systems of religion. It might, on the contrary, with more truth be said that she imported the superstitions and idolatry of other nations, than that she spread her own in other countries. Her great ambition was military conquest; conquered nations she permitted to retain their forms of religion, as in the case of the Jews. But papal Rome has made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication; she has deluded them with her splendid and fascinating ritual, borrowed, as already shown, in its main features from the idolatry of ancient Rome. Kings and princes have been filled with a strange infatuation by partaking of the abominations which the woman mingles in her "golden cup."

<sup>1</sup> In sculpture and painting cities and nations are often represented by the figure of a woman. The symbol of the American republic is that of a female figure. The symbol of ancient Rome, as represented on her coin, was a woman seated on a lion. By the woman then we understand papal Rome. In chapter xii. 1, under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun, we have a representation of the true Church

4 having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed<sup>1</sup> in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication :  
5 and upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY;<sup>2</sup>

of Christ; therefore we understand by a female arrayed in gay, meretricious ornaments, a fallen or apostate church. There is nothing in such a figure or symbol appropriate to a civil state like that of ancient Rome. By the scarlet coloured beast we understand the temporal power of papal Rome. "Having seven heads and ten horns": *i.e.*, the woman is represented as seated on a beast, which symbolised a supreme majesty which succeeded to the widespread dominion of the old empire of Rome, and was facilitated in its usurpations by an alliance with the state.

<sup>1</sup> Scarlet, it is well known, has been the colour of the pontifical robes of popes and cardinals. "Decked with gold and precious stones and pearls": in the splendour and magnificence of her vestments and ornaments of all kinds papal Rome has far excelled pagan. Like a fallen woman who prides herself on her finery, this costly and gaudy array was formerly the boast of papists. Bishop Newton refers to a Romish author, Alexander Donatus, and the same is mentioned by Vitranga, who drew a comparison between ancient and modern Rome, and asserted the superiority of the latter in pomp and splendour. The whole of Bishop Newton's dissertation on this part of the Apocalypse is exceedingly able and satisfactory. The mitre of one of the popes, Paul II., was adorned with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, jaspers and all manner of precious stones. Addison, in his travels, speaking of the vast extent in the number, rarity, and richness of the jewels with which one of the Romish images was honoured, says that the sight as much surpassed his expectation as other sights had generally fallen short of it. Silver can scarce find an admission, gold itself looked but poor among such an incredible number of precious stones.

<sup>2</sup> It has been asserted by some respectable writers that, prior to the Reformation, the very word MYSTERY was inscribed in golden letters on the front of the pope's mitre. But, as it has been controverted by writers on the other side, be that as it may, it cannot be denied that the ancient mitres had on them emblematic inscriptions. MYSTERY (Τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας) was the title under which Paul foretold the Roman apostasy in 2 Thess. ii. 7. Papal Rome affects vaunting, high sounding names, designed to secure a superstitious reverence. The mass, purgatory, indulgences, penances, which she has invented, sitting in the temple of God and affecting Divine titles, make her "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." It was certainly believed by writers devoted to the papacy and writing long before the Reformation, that a woman, who had disguised herself and concealed her sex, was elevated to the papacy in the ninth century, on the death of Leo IV., under the title of John VIII. "That just here, at this epoch of history which corresponds with the great changes entailed upon the West by the career of Charlemagne and the successors to his empire, and at which the Church in Rome reached a depth of consummate apostasy from Christ, this figure of a harlot should be fixed upon the papal chair by *its own historians* is a noteworthy point." (See Bishop Cleveland Cox on Pope Joan, *N. Y. Obs.*, Dec. 12, 1872.) The bishop thus closes his pithy article: "If you ever find a Jesuit disposed to be impudent, there is one way to silence him which seldom fails of success. Remind him of the great cloud of Romish witnesses who have believed in Pope Joan; and challenge him to produce a tenth part of such evidence as confirms her historic character, in behalf of his fable about St. Peter's residence and pontificate in Rome."

BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS  
 6 AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the  
 woman drunken<sup>1</sup> with the blood of the saints, and with the  
 blood of the martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I wondered  
 7 with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Where-  
 fore didst thou marvel? I will tell<sup>2</sup> thee the mystery of the  
 woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the  
 8 seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was,  
 and is not : and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go  
 into perdition : and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder,  
 whose names were not written in the book of life from the  
 foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was,  
 9 and is not, and yet is. And here *is* the mind which hath  
 wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the  
 10 woman sitteth. And there are seven kings : five are fallen,  
 and one is, *and* the other is not yet come ; and when he  
 11 cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast  
 that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven,  
 12 and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou  
 sawest are ten<sup>3</sup> kings, which have received no kingdom as yet ;  
 13 but receive power as kings one hour<sup>4</sup> with the beast. These  
 have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto

<sup>1</sup> In the war which papal Rome carried on against the Albigenses and Waldenses it is said 1,000,000 of the pious Christians perished. In little more than thirty years after the institution of the order of the Jesuits there were slain 900,000 Christians. In the Netherlands, during a few years, 36,000 perished by the hands of the executioner. The learned and impartial Niebuhr says "that the Diocletian persecution was a mere shadow as compared with the persecution of the Protestants in the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva, in the service of Spanish bigotry and despotism."

<sup>2</sup> The angel, in explaining to John the mystery of the beast that carried the woman, clearly identifies it with the beast that came from the sea, which, as we have shown, must be understood as a symbol of imperial Rome. It was the continuance and support she derived from imperial Rome, by which papal Rome at length came to exercise a similar, or rather more mighty and extended, power over the nations. When the persecutions of pagan Rome ceased the old root did not die ; a thrifty shoot had already sprung up, which grew rapidly and soon overtopped the old, decayed trunk, casting even a wider and more fearful shadow over the nations of the earth.

<sup>3</sup> The ten horns represent the divisions, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided ; they were tributary and constituent parts of that empire.

<sup>4</sup> The words translated "one hour," *μικρον ὄραν*, might have been rendered, according to Vitringa, "at one and the same time, or for the same length of time" ; then the meaning would be that although these kingdoms, at the time of the vision, had no distinct existence, they formed constituent parts of the Roman

14 the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters<sup>1</sup> which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate<sup>2</sup> the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

*Fall of Babylon for her Spiritual Whoredom.*

XVIII.]

[Ver. 1-8.]

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon<sup>3</sup> the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habita-

empire. All the provinces gave their power to the beast, *i.e.* the imperial magistracy of Rome; especially there was but one mind among them in executing the edicts of the emperors in the persecution of Christians. The same was true after the empire became papal; the various kingdoms which acknowledged the supremacy of the pope, however they might have differed in other respects, agreed perfectly in contributing their forces and riches to execute the decretals of the pope.

<sup>1</sup> This denotes the great extent and numerical strength of the papal dominion. Previous to the Moslem conquests it was spread over all the principal known nations of the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Is it not true that some earnest has already been given of the turning of the kingdoms which once acknowledged the supremacy of the pope in revolt against his temporal power? Protestant England once gave her power to the pope, and Switzerland was one of the battle fields of the Reformation. What a mighty change has taken place in France: that country, the sovereigns of which did so much to establish (and up to a very late day to maintain) the pope in his usurpations, both ecclesiastical and political! Where is the German empire, the chief pillar of the papacy at the period of its greatest strength, in which at the present moment the most formidable resistance appears, directly against the decree of infallibility and indirectly against the temporal power? The time seems to be rapidly approaching when popish countries which have sustained and perpetuated the power of the beast will desert and turn against that power. "Behold, I come quickly."

<sup>3</sup> Here the cry of the angel (chap. xiv. 8) is resumed. The fall of Babylon is foretold, together with the crimes which deserved the punishment. The great

tion of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of  
 3 every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of  
 the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the  
 earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants  
 of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her deli-  
 4 cacies. And I heard another voice<sup>1</sup> from heaven, saying, Come  
 out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and  
 5 that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached  
 6 unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward  
 her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double  
 according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to  
 7 her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived  
 deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she  
 saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall  
 8 see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,  
 death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly  
 burned with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth  
 her.

crime mentioned against Babylon, for which she is visited with utter desolation, is her fornication, *i.e.* idolatry. Some of the theologians of the Latin Church have been sufficiently bold to teach that the Church of Rome was to fall away, and the papacy, or some individual pontiff, was to become the antichrist spoken of in Scripture. The abbot Joachim, a Franciscan, who flourished near the end of the twelfth century, and his followers, called "Spirituales," denounced the Church of Rome as the mystical Babylon of the Apocalypse. This was done also with great boldness by John Peter, of Oliva, who died near the end of the thirteenth century. His works were condemned as "blasphemous and heretical." He says: "the woman here stands for the people and empire of Rome, both as she existed formerly in the state of paganism, and has since existed, holding the faith of Christ, though by many crimes committing harlotry with this world. And therefore she is called a great harlot for departing from the faithful worship," etc. (See Maitland, *The Apos. School of Proph. Interp.*, p. 340.) "Not only the poets Dante and Petrarch denounced the corruptions of the Church of Rome, but down to the time of the Reformation that church was held up by a succession of theologians, or ecclesiastics, as the Babylon of the Apocalypse which was to be overthrown and rendered desolate." (*Systematic Theology*, Charles Hodge, D.D., vol. iii., pp. 831, 832.) Dr. Hodge ably argues that the harlot spoken of in chapters xvii. and xviii. is to be understood of the apostate church. (See *ut supra*, pp. 825-830.)

<sup>1</sup> The apostle records what he heard another voice from heaven say. It commanded the people of God to come out of Babylon, that they might not be partakers of her sins and her plagues. The voice then describes the heinousness of her sins in the sight of heaven, and declares that her punishment should be in proportion to her crimes. Some insist upon understanding the burning with fire literally; but this is unnecessary, it is enough to understand it as strongly figurative of complete destruction.

*Lamentations and Rejoicings over the Fall of the Papacy.*

[Ver. 9-24.]

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament<sup>1</sup> for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine<sup>2</sup> wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls<sup>3</sup> of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for

<sup>1</sup> The kings of the earth who have participated in her spiritual adultery, and the merchants of the earth who have been aggrandised by her superstitions and impostures, will join in the lamentation over her. Next, the mariners who had been enriched by reason of her costliness are represented as bewailing her. The Roman Catholic countries of Europe, Spain, Portugal, France, and the far famed Venice, have stood foremost in commerce, which consisted in no small degree in the transportation of costly articles to be used in ecclesiastical buildings, furniture, equipage, processions, dress, etc., gathered from all climes. We have no difficulty whatever with the prominent part commerce takes in this lament, understanding it as made over papal and not pagan Rome. So much of the *maritime* as is here introduced is altogether natural, if we understand by Babylon the Romish Church; but it is out of place and unmeaning if we understand the Roman empire in the time of Nero.

<sup>2</sup> Thyine wood, probably the *Callitris quadrivalvis*, from the coast of Africa, known to the Romans as citronwood.

<sup>3</sup> The enumeration in this strikingly descriptive catalogue ends with the "souls of men." That the papal Church has been guilty of this enormous crime of merchandising in the souls of men is sufficiently proved by her doctrines of purgatory, forgiveness of sins, and indulgences, by which her immense revenues have been supplied. St. Peter's at Rome, which continues to be the wonder of the world, was erected by the silver and gold procured by the sale of indulgences, *i.e.*, by selling to men the privilege of sinning. It was this traffic as superintended by the celebrated Tetzel in Germany which, more than anything else, served to arouse the intrepid spirit of Martin Luther.





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OLD TYRE.



16 the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, 17 and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and 18 sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* 19 *is* like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice<sup>1</sup> over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and pro- 21 phets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone,<sup>2</sup> and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be 22 thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

*Great Rejoicing in Heaven.*

XIX.]

[Ver. 1-10.]

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people

<sup>1</sup> Whilst kings, merchants, and seamen of Romish countries are lamenting the fall of spiritual Babylon, the holy apostles and prophets, and inhabitants of heaven, are called upon to exult and rejoice over her. To approve the righteous judgments of God is no breach of the spirit of benevolence. (See the striking paragraph in Edward Irving's Introductory Essay to Horne on the Psalms, "Rebuke is a form of charity," etc.)

<sup>2</sup> To confirm and render more vivid the sudden and utter destruction of the papacy, we have the emblem of a great millstone cast into the sea to represent the violence with which Babylon will be thrown down. Then the music for which she has long been distinguished shall cease; and artists will no more furnish specimens in painting and sculpture, *i.e.*, the fine arts shall no longer be perverted in the support of this great spiritual usurpation.

in heaven,<sup>1</sup> saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour,  
 2 and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous  
*are* His judgments; for He hath judged the great whore, which  
 did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged  
 3 the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said,  
 4 Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the  
 four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and  
 worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen;  
 5 Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise  
 our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both  
 6 small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great  
 multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of  
 mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God  
 7 omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give  
 honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His  
 8 wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that  
 she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the  
 9 fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto  
 me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage  
 supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the  
 10 true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him.  
 And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow  
 servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus:  
 worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of  
 prophecy.

*Final Conflict and Victory.*

[Ver. 11-21.]

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse;<sup>2</sup> and He  
 that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in right-

<sup>1</sup> First, John heard a voice of much people in heaven, praising God for faithfulness to His word in visiting an apostate and corrupt church. He also hears the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures respond as they fall down and worship God, saying, "Amen; Alleluia." Then came a voice from the throne exhorting the servants of God to praise Him, and immediately was heard from the voice of a great multitude the *epithalamium* to be sung at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

<sup>2</sup> A sublime description of the Saviour and His redeemed led forth by Him in battle array to the last conflict with antichristian powers. The white horse is not an emblem of bloodshed; and the glorious Leader that sat upon him, whose name was THE WORD OF GOD, was not clad in the armour of a warrior, but had on His head many crowns, and was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood as an emblem of His atoning work. The imagery is similar to that employed in describing what

12 eousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a  
 flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; and He had a  
 13 name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He *was*  
 clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called  
 14 The Word of God. And the armies *which were* in heaven fol-  
 lowed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and  
 15 clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it  
 He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a  
 rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and  
 16 wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on *His* vesture and on  
 His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD  
 17 OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and  
 he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls<sup>1</sup> that fly in  
 the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together  
 18 unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh  
 of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty  
 men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and  
 the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great.  
 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their  
 armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on  
 20 the horse, and against His army. And the beast<sup>2</sup> was taken,

John saw when the first seal was opened, applied to the early spread of the gospel. Moreover, the armies which followed Him were also upon white horses, and were clothed in fine linen. Does not this imply that the conflict is a moral one, and the victory is to be achieved by the mild and beneficent influence of the gospel? Evil has no doubt been done, and charity been wounded in the house of her friends, by interpreting too literally the symbols of the seventh vial as judgments or calamities to be visited on the papal world. We should be on our guard against harsh, uncharitable judgments, and that spirit which would find satisfaction in visitations of evil on those from whom we differ, however pernicious their errors.

<sup>1</sup> This imagery is appropriate to carry out the figure of a battle, as birds of prey follow armies and hover over battle fields, but is to be interpreted in harmony with the supposed spiritual nature of the conflict.

<sup>2</sup> This is the final appearance of the beast in this prophecy; here is that end which was foredoomed when the seventh vial was poured out (chap. xvi. 17-21). By "the false prophet" may be understood the priesthood of Rome, as directed and animated by the pope. When the power of the pope is entirely broken the Romish clergy will reassert their proper independence, and there will be a return to the primitive purity of the Church; the signs of the white horses and the crowns of the first seal reappear in connection with the last drops of the seventh vial of the last seal.

In this work the term "antichrist" has not been applied to the pope. It is used by the author of the Apocalypse in his First and Second Epistles (1 John ii. 18-23, iv. 1-3; 2 John 7), and occurs nowhere else in Scripture. It has been understood

and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.  
 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword<sup>1</sup> of Him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

## 7. MILLENNIUM, LAST JUDGMENT, AND HEAVEN.<sup>2</sup>

(CHAPS. XX. TO XXII.)

### *Millennium.*

XX.]

[Ver. 1-6.

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the

very generally as equivalent to the man of sin, and the *ὁ ἀντικείμενος*, *the adversary*, of 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. But St. John says there are "many antichrists," and applies to them the name of false "prophets" or teachers; and he expressly tells us that "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," *i.e.*, that denies the true and proper humanity of Christ, "is that spirit of antichrist," referring to the peculiar form of false doctrine regarding Christ's humanity (taught by Cerinthus and others) which was rife, or for which there were zealous advocates when he wrote. The man of sin of St. Paul is certainly to be identified with the second apocalyptic beast (Rev. xiii. 11); but whether this identification can be traced further, and made to include the antichrist of St. John, is doubtful. In the word antichrist the *anti*, in Greek, denotes, just as when it stands by itself, not always *opposition* but quite as frequently *substitution*; so that the word may stand for a counterfeit or pseudo Christ, a "false Christ" (Matt. xxiv. 21). The deceivers and false prophets, by presenting in their doctrine a spurious Christ, were themselves antichrists or representatives of a false Christ. But see further the Notes, where the term occurs, in the Epistles of John.

<sup>1</sup> The expression, the sword "proceeded out of His mouth," furnishes another hint as to the meaning of the figurative description of which it is a part. The sword that proceeded out of His mouth must be His word, His glorious gospel; "the sword of the Spirit is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). The slaying therefore of "the remnant" must mean their conviction and conversion by the power of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> This, the concluding part of the Apocalypse, is the grandest and most glorious of all. It carries out and concludes the design of this wonderful book in the most fitting manner. Its design was to cheer and animate Christians in the contest and struggles in which their cause would be involved through a long series of years. Mere touches and glimpses of the final victory and glory are all that are exhibited. At the close we have a description of the glorified state of the Church, which may well fill the pious heart with joy, and thrill the souls of the faithful followers of Christ. There will doubtless be long intervals between the events which are thrown together in this final grouping, which are not described and are scarcely noticed.

The doctrine of the Chiliasts, which is that of two resurrections, and a personal

2 key<sup>1</sup> of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon,<sup>2</sup> that old serpent, which is the  
 3 Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand<sup>3</sup> years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal<sup>4</sup> upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the

corporeal reign of Christ intervening for a thousand years on the renovated earth, was not the prevailing or authoritative one in the apostolic age. But on account of its affinity with the later Jewish idea of the Messiah and His kingdom, it was prevalent among the Jewish, as distinguished from the Gentile, Christians. It appeared first in the system of the Judaistic-Gnostic Cerinthus, the contemporary and opponent of the apostle John. There are no traces of this doctrine in the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch. Of the apostolical fathers only Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias exhibit in their writings distinct traces of this doctrine. Clement of Alexandria and Origen made a vigorous attack upon it. Augustine adopted it in his earlier, but rejected it in his riper, years. At the period of the Reformation it appeared again in the fanaticism and excesses of the Anabaptists. (History of Christian Doctrine, W. G. T. Shedd, D.D., vol. ii., pp. 389-398.)

<sup>1</sup> Here, as elsewhere throughout this book, the language is highly symbolical. What we have to do is to interpret these symbols in the unfulfilled portion of the prophecy as best we can, by the same laws we have found applicable in the fulfilled portion. In chapter i. 18 it is Christ Himself who claims to have the keys; and in Matthew xiii. 28, 29, it is represented as the peculiar work of Christ to bind Satan. Compare Colossians ii. 15; Hebrews ii. 14; 1 John iii. 8. The key suggests the further idea of a gate or door. In chapter ix. 1, 2, it is open for the discharge of evil on the earth; here the key is to be used for closing it up and securing him who is the great source and doer of evil.

<sup>2</sup> In chapter xii. 9 we have the same names of the great enemy, and in the same order precisely. The beast and the false prophet whom the dragon had once animated have been destroyed, but the dragon himself survives; and that he may not organize some new form of opposition to Christ and His cause, Christ now seizes and binds him for a thousand years.

<sup>3</sup> The Scriptures abound in predictions of the spread of the gospel and a latter day glory, but it is here alone that we find the idea of a thousand years. It is to be taken literally so far as to be understood as meaning a definite, protracted period; whether it is to be understood as meaning exactly ten hundred years, it becomes no one to speak positively. If however the question be settled according to the analogy of the book as regards other specified periods in its fulfilled portions, then we may suppose that the thousand years are to be taken in their ordinary sense, though not with rigid, arithmetical exactness. We can scarcely suppose that this period will have a beginning and ending as clearly defined and marked as that of a given century. We may rather suppose that in this respect it will be analogous to one of our natural days, which begins with dawn, the light increasing till the sun rises, and closes when the sun goes down, the light gradually diminishing till it is night again. It is worthy of notice that the "thousand years" are mentioned no less than six times, a repetition which shows that a real importance is to be attached to it.

<sup>4</sup> The symbol of sealing indicates the security of the custody. Darius sealed the stone at the mouth of the lions' den into which Daniel was cast; the stone at the tomb in which the body of Jesus was placed was sealed. The meaning is that

thousand years should be fulfilled : and after that he must be  
 4 loosed a little season. And I saw thrones,<sup>1</sup> and they sat upon  
 them, and judgment was given unto them : and *I saw* the  
 souls<sup>2</sup> of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,  
 and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the  
 beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon  
 their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned  
 5 with Christ a thousand years. But the rest<sup>3</sup> of the dead lived  
 not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the  
 6 first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the  
 first resurrection : on such the second<sup>4</sup> death hath no power,  
 but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign  
 with Him a thousand years.

there would be a state of peace and security in the highest sense, as if Satan, the deceiver of men, were chained and imprisoned, and could by no possibility escape. It will be a period in which all that has existed in the former history of the world, in antichristian systems and delusions, pagan idolatry, Jewish unbelief, Roman Catholic Mariolatry and superstition, Mohammedan delusion, and philosophy falsely so called, shall cease.

<sup>1</sup> It seems natural to suppose that these are the thrones which John saw, chap. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Not the bodies of the martyrs. This seems designed to exclude the notion of a literal or bodily resurrection in the millennium. They will live and reign with Christ, who was crucified, and for whose word they suffered and died, by the universal diffusion of that word, by His spotless example and their spirit of self denial and devotion more fully displayed in the daily walk and conversation of Christians. Christ may be said to reign in them, and they with Christ. "The image of Christ," exclaimed John Huss, the martyr, "will never be effaced. His enemies have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this, and I awaking from among the dead and rising, so to speak, from my grave shall leap with great joy." The pope Adrian, addressing the diet at Nuremberg, said : "the heretics Huss and Jerome are now alive again in the person of Martin Luther."

<sup>3</sup> We are to understand those who are in character unlike the faithful witnesses of Christ. This means that they were not in like manner to have their representatives on earth during this blessed period. Professor Stuart holds that the first resurrection is literal, and means that at the opening of the thousand years the bodies of the honoured martyrs will be raised up, not indeed to reappear on earth, but to be taken to heaven to reign with Christ in perfected bliss. This is very different from the millenarian doctrine, and is perhaps on the whole the preferable view, inasmuch as the word *first* in the declaration, "this is the first resurrection," may be taken as indicating the nature of the resurrection spoken of, and is the same as that mentioned in the close of the chapter.

<sup>4</sup> See John xi. 26 ; Rev. ii. 11.

*Final Destruction of Satan's Power.*

[Ver. 7-10.]

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall<sup>1</sup> be  
 8 loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the  
 nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and  
 Magog,<sup>2</sup> to gather them together to battle: the number of  
 9 whom *is* as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the  
 breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp<sup>3</sup> of the saints  
 about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out  
 10 of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived  
 them was cast into the lake<sup>4</sup> of fire and brimstone, where the  
 beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day  
 and night for ever and ever.

<sup>1</sup> John here distinctly announces the future, and does not as elsewhere merely describe what he sees and hears as passing before him. We are not to expect that during the millennial period human nature as to its corrupt tendencies will be essentially changed, and the evils of the apostasy wholly arrested. This can be expected only in the heavenly state. On the renewal of temptation from without, men will be liable, notwithstanding all the grace and culture which have characterized the thousand years' reign, to fall into the same degeneracy and corruption. This may be needed, to give the crowning proof of the weakness of man, and his need of the all-conquering grace of God to redeem him wholly from evil. We are expressly told in the third verse that this loosing of Satan is only for "a little season." It will probably be very brief, especially in comparison with the thousand years. Possibly there may be a long period succeeding it before the final judgment; we are not told. To such a supposition, however, the most obvious interpretation of other parts belonging to the eschatology of the New Testament does not seem to be favourable.

<sup>2</sup> The deceived among the nations are called Gog and Magog, names borrowed from the prophet Ezekiel. (See Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3, 16, 18; xxxix. 1-11.) As the terms are used by Ezekiel, Gog was the king of a people called Magog. It is commonly supposed that they were Scythians, residing between the Caspian and Euxine seas, or in the region of mount Caucasus. All that it is necessary to understand here is, that enemies of the Church would arise during the short period referred to, who might be compared to the ancient barbarous hordes under Gog, king of Magog.

<sup>3</sup> All are not deceived. There are those who remain faithful, like the seven thousand in the days of Ahab.

<sup>4</sup> The whole compass of nature affords no imagery more terrific: a lake of fire, whose flames are rendered intense and suffocating from burning sulphur. This destruction of Satan is complete and final. All forms of opposition to truth and righteousness perish with him. The great purposes of God in the creation of man are accomplished, the work of redemption finished. "All the great wheels of Providence," says President Edwards in his *History of Redemption*, "have gone round; all things are ripe for Christ's coming to judgment." The final destruction of wickedness and its author may be simultaneous with that coming. Christ Himself seems to teach that His second coming was to overtake men as the flood did, as the destruction of Sodom did, etc. (Luke xvii. 26-30, xviii. 8; compare 1 Thess. v. 2, 3; 2 Pet. iii. 3-10.)

*Resurrection and Last Judgment.*

[Ver. 11-15.]

11 And I saw a great white throne,<sup>1</sup> and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there  
 12 was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books<sup>2</sup> were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in  
 13 the books, according to their works. And the sea<sup>3</sup> gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell<sup>4</sup> delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man  
 14 according to their works. And death and hell were cast into  
 15 the lake of fire. This is the second<sup>5</sup> death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

*Prelude to the description of the New Jerusalem.*

XXI.]

[Ver. 1-8.]

1 And I saw a new<sup>6</sup> heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more

<sup>1</sup> The scene described by Christ Himself (Matt. xxv. 31, *seq.*) is that which now occurs. To Him all judgment has been committed: John v. 22; Rev. i. 7, 8; compare Rev. xxi. 5. The passage has been pronounced one of the most sublime to be found in any writing. It is "so majestic and grand that it exceeds commentary and paraphrase."

<sup>2</sup> The book of Nature, out of which pagans and Christians will be judged; the book of Revelation, out of which all who have received it will be judged; the book of God's remembrance; the books of human memory and conscience. The other book which shall be opened is the Lamb's book of life, in which are recorded the names of all the redeemed (Rev. xxi. 27, iii. 5; comp. Phil. iv. 3).

<sup>3</sup> It is to be remembered that John was on an island, within sight of that vast cemetery, the sea.

<sup>4</sup> Death and hades are personified and represented as delivering up the dead, as if they were held in captivity by them. The personification is continued in verse 14, where they are represented as cast into the lake of fire.

<sup>5</sup> The first death was that which overtook man in the day he incurred the penalty, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The second is that inflicted on all those who, judged according to their works and their names not found in the book of life, are condemned.

<sup>6</sup> Everything is now prepared for the kingdom of God in its final perfection and glory. The literal Jerusalem, when John wrote this description, was soon to be no more. The armies that were to lay it waste were gathering; and John, on his desolate rock in the *Ægean*, had heard the trumpets sounding as the armies marched to their work. The change is represented by the passing away of "the first heaven and the first earth" and the creation of new ones. This prediction is clearly referred to in the well known words of the apostle (2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, 13; compare



2 sea.<sup>1</sup> And I John saw the holy city,<sup>2</sup> new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride<sup>3</sup> adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice<sup>4</sup> out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle<sup>5</sup> of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away all tears<sup>6</sup> from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said<sup>7</sup> unto me, Write; for these words are true and

Isa. lxxv. 17, 18). The teaching of Scripture seems to be that the earth, having been purified and surrounded with new aerial heavens, is to become one of the "many mansions," or an apartment in the house of the Father especially appropriate to the redeemed. Man in the future state will still have a complex nature, a soul residing in an immortal body. He must therefore have a world suited to this nature, not "an abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension, where the inmates float in ether or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing" (Dr. Chalmers's Sermon on New Heaven and Earth), but a home suited to the body of the resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> Nature has fortified the separate divisions of the present earth by interposing vast expanses of water, which present somewhat difficult barriers to conquest and despotic rule, and the vices and corruptions which are propagated by example. In heaven there will be no need of these barriers.

<sup>2</sup> This is not the same city spoken of as "the beloved city," chapter xx. 9. That was the church militant; this is the church triumphant. It is called "new" Jerusalem, not merely because it forms a contrast to the church in the militant state, sometimes called Jerusalem, but to the literal Jerusalem, about to be so fearfully destroyed by the heathen.

<sup>3</sup> A beautiful woman richly attired for her nuptials, that seems to descend from heaven, is the symbol presented to the vision of John.

<sup>4</sup> As God is spoken of by this voice in the third person, we conclude with reason that this voice is like that spoken of, chap. xix. 1, "of much people, in heaven"; and belongs to the great multitude of the just made perfect, as they descend to their inheritance in the new heaven and new earth. It is the song or testimony John hears from the citizens of the new Jerusalem, as it floats down from on high.

<sup>5</sup> The allusion is to the tabernacle, or tent, in which God manifested His presence to His people of old. The meaning is not that the new Jerusalem is itself the tabernacle, but the city contains the tabernacle, as the literal Jerusalem contained the temple; it is its centre, grand feature, and highest glory. As the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us (*ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*, John i. 14), so will the eternal Word, in His risen glorified body, for ever tabernacle or dwell among the redeemed in heaven.

<sup>6</sup> The exclusion of just those things which belong to our present painful experience is specified. Even death, which is the bitterest cause of weeping in this world, shall cease.

<sup>7</sup> We now have a voice unmistakably from the throne. The words, "and he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful," are probably to be

6 faithful. And He said unto me, It is done.<sup>1</sup> I am Alpha<sup>2</sup>  
and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him  
7 that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He  
that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God,  
8 and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and  
the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcer-  
ers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake  
which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second  
death.

*The New Jerusalem described.*

[Ver. 9-21.]

9 And there came unto me one<sup>3</sup> of the seven angels which had  
the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with  
me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's  
10 wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and  
high mountain,<sup>4</sup> and showed me that great city, the holy<sup>5</sup>  
11 Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the  
glory<sup>6</sup> of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone<sup>7</sup> most  
12 precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a  
wall<sup>8</sup> great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates

taken parenthetically, and in them we may understand the angel who had prompted John before to write telling him to make record of the words he should hear uttered by the voice from the throne. The voice from the throne proceeds.

<sup>1</sup> "It is done" (it was so), was the word uttered in the beginning, after every creative act; and the same "It is done" is repeated now at the end in regard to the work of renewal (Hengstenberg).

<sup>2</sup> The Speaker identifies Himself with Him that was heard speaking, as recorded at the beginning of this book (chap. i. 8-11).

<sup>3</sup> The same of whom we read chap. xvii. 1. There was eminent fitness that this angel should make known the final triumph that awaited the church.

<sup>4</sup> The prophet Ezekiel (chap. xl. 2) was in like manner brought to the top of a high mountain. That which was about to be exhibited to John would be of vast magnitude, and it was necessary he should be in a position to see and describe it.

<sup>5</sup> Holy, in contrast with the wicked city which was about to be destroyed.

<sup>6</sup> From his position on the lofty mountain he descries the descending city. It was illuminated, resplendent with the glory of God.

<sup>7</sup> With John, what he calls a jasper stone was the most precious of precious stones. It is not certain that he meant what is known to modern lapidaries as jasper, of which there is said to be a crystal kind, pellucid and diaphanous. It glistened with the light like a crystal of the most beautiful kind.

<sup>8</sup> A wall with gates was essential to an ancient city, and the new Jerusalem is accordingly so represented. There are no enemies to be guarded against, as all enemies have been destroyed; but the wall and gates, and the angels standing as guards, are to be taken as symbolical of security, or freedom from danger of any sort.

twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names*  
 13 of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east<sup>1</sup>  
 three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three  
 14 gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city  
 had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve<sup>2</sup>  
 15 apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a  
 golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the  
 16 wall thereof. And the city lieth four square,<sup>3</sup> and the length  
 is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the  
 reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth  
 17 and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall<sup>4</sup>  
 thereof, a hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the  
 18 measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building<sup>5</sup>  
 of the wall of it *was of* jasper: and the city<sup>6</sup> *was* pure gold,

<sup>1</sup> The city is open alike to every quarter, and there are the same ample means of access and entrance.

<sup>2</sup> The most probable conception as to the relation of the foundation to the wall is the following: "every twelfth part of the walls, between the several gates, had a foundation stone stretching along the whole distance" (De Wette). And as upon each of the gates was the name of one of the tribes of Israel, so upon each of these foundation stones was the name of one of the twelve apostles. The two economies are brought into one; the new Jerusalem is a great unity, having a similar relation to both. The Lord himself and the disciple whom He loved knew only of twelve apostles; the office was not to be perpetuated.

<sup>3</sup> It was not merely four sided, but an exact square. The dimensions were ascertained from the measurement to be twelve thousand *stadia* or furlongs. The height was the same as the length, or one side of the square. Inasmuch as eight furlongs make a Roman mile, the city, according to this measurement, was 375 miles square, the height the same.

<sup>4</sup> The height of the wall was 144 cubits "according to the measure of a man," or common cubits, equal to 216 feet. The angel does not measure according to a scale unknown to us, but according to the measure of a man. It would be a perversion of this sublime vision to view these measurements as literally describing the plan and size of the city. It was 375 miles square; or if we take the 12,000 furlongs as the measurement of one side of the square, then it was 1500 miles square. The wall was 216 feet high. But there were eminences within the walls so lofty that the top of the highest pinnacles upon their summits was as many miles above the base of the walls as the walls were long. These dimensions are simply symbolical of magnificence, and the capacity of the new Jerusalem to accommodate the multitudes of the saved. In the figurative description there is nothing grotesque or disproportioned; to the eye of the apostle there rose within the walls of this vast city, as it floated down from heaven, mountain ranges, upon the loftiest summit of which towered the acropolis, high above the nethermost of its foundations.

<sup>5</sup> The material of which the wall was composed was of a single kind, that which was to John the most glorious among stones, called by him jasper.

<sup>6</sup> The city must denote the mass of edifices which rise within the wall. The gold

19 like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones.<sup>1</sup> The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, 20 a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a 21 jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate<sup>2</sup> was of one pearl: and the street<sup>3</sup> of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

*The New Jerusalem described in respect to its more Spiritual Elements.*

[Ver. 22-27.]

22 And I saw no temple<sup>4</sup> therein: for the Lord God Almighty 23 and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need

is *pure gold*, the glass *clear*. The meaning is not that the gold was transparent; but its absolute purity and homogeneity are the qualities regarded. The gold of which the city was composed was pure as pure glass. (See Bengel and Mill.)

<sup>1</sup> Precious stones which form the foundations may have respect to the peculiar gifts of God which unfolded themselves in the apostles severally. The twelve stones of which the breastplate of the Jewish high-priests was composed, set in gold, with the names of the twelve tribes engraved on them, were as far as we can certainly determine the same as those enumerated here. Exod. xxviii. 17-20; comp. xxxix. 10-13. John gives to the jasper the first place, which in the enumeration of Moses holds the last. Dr. Thomson says that but few of the precious stones mentioned in the Bible are to be found in Palestine. He had discovered jasper and agate in great variety, and very beautiful, along the southern and eastern base of Mount Casius and in a few other places. The biblical mineralogy, he thinks, is yet involved in great obscurity. The Orientals always paid far more attention to gems and similar matters than we are accustomed to bestow in our day and country. John is perfectly at home among precious stones, and without effort gives a list which puzzles our wisest scholars to understand. Lexicographers, commentators, and critics are equally uncertain (Land and Book, vol. i., pp. 437, 438). But see Professor Stuart's views on the character and classification, or arrangement, of these stones as here enumerated.

<sup>2</sup> Each of the gates was one solid pearl. Whatever is esteemed most glorious on earth is borrowed to add splendour to that which is above the loftiest flight of the imagination.

<sup>3</sup> The streets as well as the buildings of the city are of the purest gold, gold pure as transparent glass is pure.

<sup>4</sup> When the saved in heaven are said to be made pillars "in the temple of God" (chap. iii. 12), and to "serve Him day and night in His temple" (chap. vii. 15), the language occurs in the order of the prophecies prior to the destruction of the temple, and is figurative, meaning that the redeemed shall dwell in the presence of God. But now, as the temple, in the order of the prophecy, has been destroyed, John may be understood as speaking literally; the new Jerusalem has no such structure as adorns and was the chief attraction of the old. That which was a

of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of  
 24 God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. And  
 the nations<sup>1</sup> of them which are saved shall walk in the light of  
 it: and the kings<sup>2</sup> of the earth do bring their glory and honour  
 25 into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut<sup>3</sup> at all by day:  
 26 for there shall be no night<sup>4</sup> there. And they shall bring<sup>5</sup> the  
 27 glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no  
 wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever*  
 worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are  
 written in the Lamb's book of life.

XXII.]

[Ver. 1-5.]

1 And he showed me a pure river<sup>6</sup> of water of life, clear as  
 crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.  
 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river,

tabernacle in the wilderness, which was a temple in Jerusalem, which is a Christian sanctuary wherever sincere worshippers assemble, has grown into a strong city having the glory of the Lord. The temple with its rites was no longer needed. The Lord Himself in the person of Jesus Christ having come and filled it with His glory, it was now to pass away and not one stone to be left upon another. This same man, Christ Jesus, shall fill the new Jerusalem with His glory, shall be "the tabernacle of God with men" (chap. xxi. 3). This glorified humanity will be the tent or tabernacle in which God will be manifest and His Divinity shine forth with a lustre which shall fill His saints with ineffable delight (see ver. 23).

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the great multitude who will be saved.

<sup>2</sup> It will be as if the kings of the earth brought all that they consider as constituting their glory, (crowns, sceptres, treasures,) and laid them down at the feet of Jesus in heaven.

<sup>3</sup> The gates of ancient cities were always closed at night, and by day whenever there was danger from an enemy. But there will be no night in heaven and no enemy will ever threaten that city, therefore the gates will be always open.

<sup>4</sup> There will be neither darkness nor anything of which night is the emblem. Our varying positions, arising from the motion of our globe in its orbit and its diurnal revolution, give to the sun the appearance of many daily and annual changes; but there shall be no such alternation of light and darkness, summer and winter, in heaven. The Being who is the Sun of that world, the Father of lights, is without parallax (*παραλλαγή*, Jas. i. 17) or shadow of turning; with Him are no risings, no settings, no tropics.

<sup>5</sup> The prophet sees the nations of the saved, as in long procession, entering in through the open gates, and bringing, after the example of their kings, their glory and honour into the city; but all that pollutes or defiles is excluded.

<sup>6</sup> A river watered the garden of Eden, and there was the tree of life (Gen. ii. 9, 10). The prophet Ezekiel describes a stream which issued from under the threshold of the sanctuary, which deepened and widened as it flowed, fertilizing the desert and even sweetening the waters of the Dead Sea. The great fulness of life, which the redeemed in heaven partake of, is represented by a pure river of water of life, issuing from beneath the very throne of God and of the Lamb.

was there the tree<sup>1</sup> of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.<sup>2</sup> And there shall be no more curse :<sup>3</sup> but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it ; and His servants shall serve Him : and they shall see His face ;<sup>4</sup> and His name *shall be* in their foreheads.<sup>5</sup> And there shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light :<sup>5</sup> and they shall reign for ever and ever.

*The Epilogue.*

[Ver. 6-21.]

6 And he said unto me, These sayings<sup>6</sup> *are* faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.  
7 Behold, I come<sup>7</sup> quickly : blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings  
8 of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down

<sup>1</sup> The same life, or salvation, of which we had an emblem in the water, is here imaged by the fruit of a tree which produced twelve kinds of fruits, and a crop or harvest every month. The tree of life is the common tree in the new Jerusalem ; it abounds everywhere ; no angel with double flaming sword guards it.

<sup>2</sup> As there will be no imperfection or need of healing in heaven, the meaning seems to be that it was by the leaves of that tree of immortality the nations of the saved were made partakers of that life the full development of which is represented by their partaking of its fruit in heaven. We now have but the leaves of the tree ; we shall hereafter be admitted to partake of the fruit.

<sup>3</sup> There will be no object for the penal justice of God ; the curse pronounced on man, by reason of the fall, will have passed for ever away.

<p><sup>4</sup> "The bride eyes not her garments, But her dear Bridegroom's face ; I will not gaze at glory, But on my King of grace ;</p>		<p>Not at the crown He gifteth, But on His pierc'd hand : The Lamb is all the glory Of Immanuel's land."</p>
<p><sup>5</sup> "As flowers need night's cool darkness, The moonlight and the dew ; So Christ, from one who loved it, His shining oft withdrew :</p>		<p>And then, for cause of absence, My troubled soul I seamed ; But glory, shadeless, shineth In Immanuel's land."</p>

<sup>6</sup> There is clearly a reference to the opening words of the book (chap. i. 1), "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," etc. The book concludes as it begins, by declaring the things revealed in it are from God and are of the highest importance. The expression, "which must shortly be done," corresponds to "which must shortly come to pass." The Apocalypse, although part of it related to the distant future, some of it to scenes and events following the end of the world, was to begin to be immediately fulfilled.

<sup>7</sup> This verse is a substantial repetition of chapter i. 3.

to worship<sup>1</sup> before the feet of the angel which showed me these  
 9 things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not : for I am  
 thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of  
 10 them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God. And  
 He saith unto me, Seal<sup>2</sup> not the sayings of the prophecy of this  
 11 book : for the time is at hand. He that is unjust,<sup>3</sup> let him be  
 unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and  
 he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is  
 12 holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly ; and  
 My reward *is* with Me, to give every man according as his work<sup>4</sup>  
 13 shall be. I am Alpha<sup>5</sup> and Omega, the beginning and the end,  
 14 the first and the last. Blessed *are* they that do His command-  
 ments, that they may have right<sup>6</sup> to the tree of life, and may  
 15 enter in through the gates into the city. For without *are* dogs,<sup>7</sup>  
 and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters,  
 16 and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus<sup>8</sup> have sent  
 Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.<sup>9</sup>  
 I am the root and the offspring of David,<sup>10</sup> *and* the bright and

<sup>1</sup> He may have thought that it was the Redeemer himself. He is restrained, and the angel informs him that he was no more than one of the fellow servants of the prophets. As John the apostle was the only person who could have been known to the Asiatic churches in the character of the writer of this book, "I John" clearly designates that apostle as the author.

<sup>2</sup> The prophet Daniel was directed to seal up the prophecy given to him (Dan. xii. 4). His prophecy related to the distant future, record was to be made and secured for future use ; on the other hand the events John predicted, though in their development they were to extend to the distant future, were about to begin to be fulfilled, and were to be of immediate use in consoling the church. The theme of the Apocalypse, *the Lord cometh*, gives it its transcendent character.

<sup>3</sup> This verse undoubtedly refers to the everlasting condition of men when all that is revealed in this book has been fulfilled. That condition will be fixed and unchangeable.

<sup>4</sup> Romans ii. 6 : *i.e.*, according as his deeds give evidence of his being a true penitent and believer, or not.

<sup>5</sup> The same Being who addressed John at the beginning (chap. i. 8-11), God in Christ, the All-in-all.

<sup>6</sup> As among His commandments faith in Christ is foremost, the *right* is not in their own name and by their own merit, but in the name and righteousness of Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Dogs were unclean animals among the Jews.

<sup>8</sup> The Alpha and Omega now speaks to John in His well known and precious name, JESUS.

<sup>9</sup> These churches denote the seven in Asia Minor to which the epistles in chapters ii. and iii. are addressed, and hence it appears the entire prophecy was primarily addressed to them.

<sup>10</sup> Isa. xi. 1 ; 2 Sam. vii. 16 ; Ps. cxxxii. 11, 12 ; Luke i. 32, 33.

17 morning star.<sup>1</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.<sup>2</sup>  
 And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is  
 athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of  
 18 life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the  
 words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add un-  
 to these things, God shall add<sup>3</sup> unto him the plagues that are  
 19 written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the  
 words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his  
 part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from*  
 20 the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth  
 these things saith, Surely I come<sup>4</sup> quickly. Amen. Even so,  
 21 come, Lord Jesus. The grace<sup>5</sup> of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with  
 you all. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> The splendour and beauty of this star make it the object of comparison. It succeeds the darkness of the night and brings on the day. "In each trial," says Mr. Barnes, "each scene of sorrow, let us think of the bright star of the morning as it rises on the darkness of the night, emblem of our Saviour as He rises on our sorrow and our gloom."

<sup>2</sup> A response to Him who saith, "Behold, I come quickly" (ver. 12), who styles Himself "the bright and morning star." That the appeal in the last two clauses is to men, there can be no doubt; an appeal evidently suggested and enforced by the address first made to the Son of God. This interpretation harmonizes with verse 20, and is that of Daubuz, Dr. S. Clarke in D'Oyly and Maut, Calmet in his commentary, Bloomfield, Professor Stuart, Hengstenberg, etc.

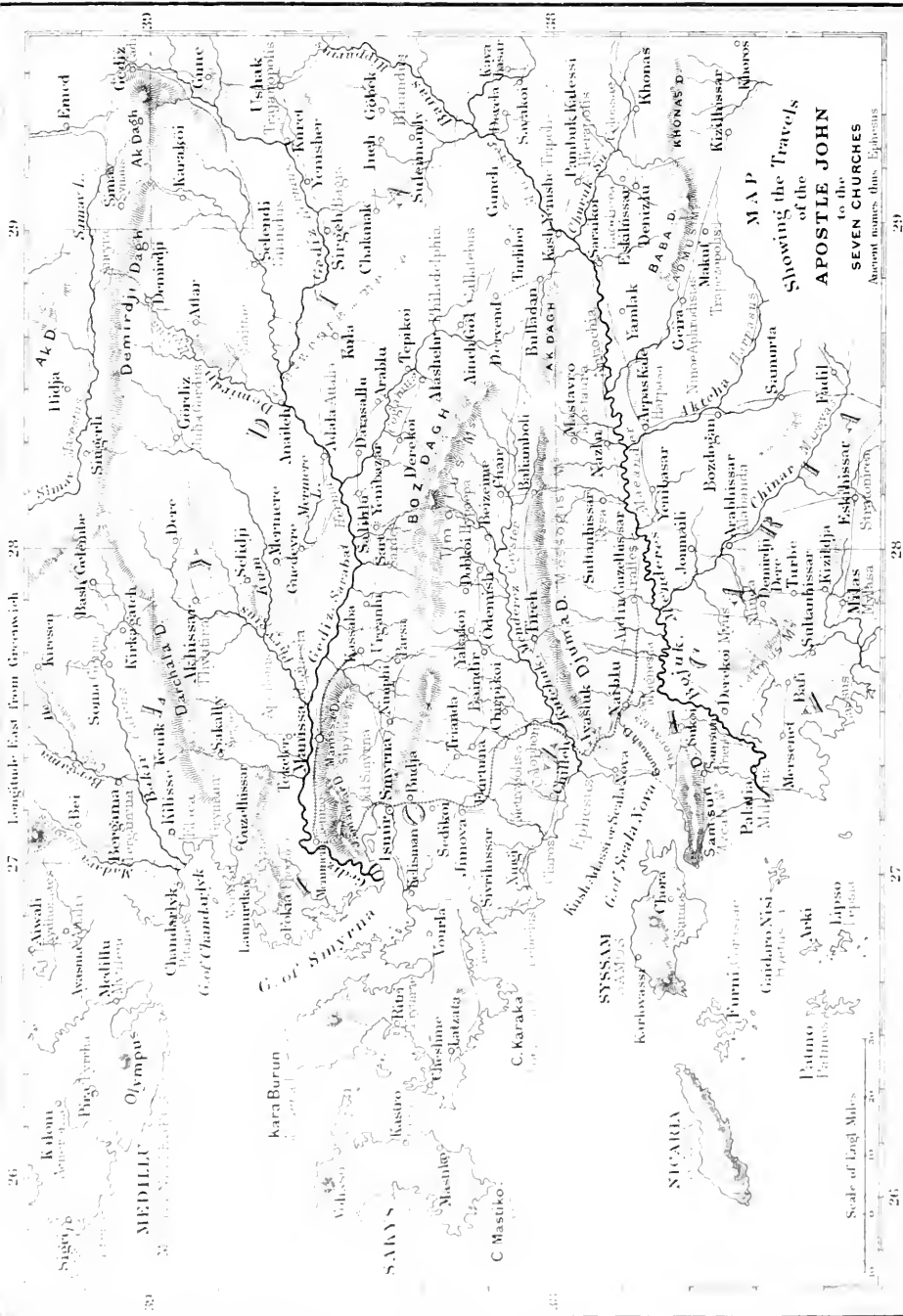
<sup>3</sup> These words of course have special reference to this book of the Apocalypse; although any alteration of the sacred Scriptures in any part by addition or subtraction must of course in like manner be criminal in the sight of God.

<sup>4</sup> We have here the parting words of Jesus and of John, Jesus once more repeating those animating words which contain the sum of the prophetic announcements of this book. The "Even so, come" is spoken by the Spirit (ver. 17), or by John as His organ and as the representative of the Church, the bride. The response to the invitation has as large a meaning as the promise.

<sup>5</sup> This is the simplest form of the benediction, and is the same as that which closes the epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, and is also found in Romans xvi. 21.







Showing the Travels  
of the  
**APOSTLE JOHN**  
to the  
**SEVEN CHURCHES**  
Ancient names thus explained

Scale of Engl Miles

## CHAPTER XI.

### TRADITIONAL HISTORY CONTINUED.

LENGTH OF HIS IMPRISONMENT IN PATMOS.—HEARS OF THE SIEGE AND FALL OF JERUSALEM.—EFFECT OF THE TIDINGS ON HIM.—SOLE SURVIVOR OF THE APOSTLES.—THE CHANGES THAT HAD COME OVER HIM.—ACCESSION OF TITUS TO THE EMPIRE.—CHARACTER OF THIS EMPEROR—WAS ST. JOHN ACQUAINTED WITH THE GREAT WRITERS OF GREECE AND ROME?—EPICURETUS, SENECA, AND PLINY.—ST. PAUL'S LABOURS IN ASIA MINOR.—THE JEWS OF ASIA MINOR.—HEATHEN PHILOSOPHY.—ST. JOHN'S SPECIAL FITNESS FOR THIS SCENE OF LABOUR.—EARLY ADULTERATION OF CHRISTIANITY.—THE APOSTLE VISITS THE SEVEN CHURCHES.—ANCIENT SMYRNA.—PERGAMOS.—THYATIRA.—SARDIS.—PHILADELPHIA.—LAODICEA.—RETURN TO EPHESUS.—ANECDOTE OF HIS PURSUIT OF A YOUNG ROBBER.—THE EBIONITES.—DOCETÆ.—CERINTHIANS.—CO-LABOURERS.

✓ We left the apostle in Ephesus, the chief city of what was known in Bible times as "Asia," the western part of what we term Asia Minor; and where shortly after his arrival, not far from the year 65, the Neronian persecution had reached him. In Patmos, to which he was banished, he had been permitted to see, in the visions of the Apocalypse, the consummation in perfect and everlasting glory of that kingdom, in laying the foundations of which, amid scenes of contest and bloodshed, he had taken, and was yet to take, so important a share.

As to the length<sup>1</sup> of his imprisonment, we have no reliable means of information. We cannot suppose it continued longer than the persecution under which it occurred; and the persecutor himself died in the middle of June, A.D. 68. At his release he probably returned at once to Ephesus. Clement of Alexandria says<sup>2</sup> that at the death of the tyrant John returned to Ephesus from the island Patmos. The persecution was then raging in his native land. The times he had foretold as at hand, and the things shortly to come to pass, had commenced. Tidings would no doubt reach him, from time to time, of the woes of Palestine, and of the progress of the siege of Jerusalem. At length he hears of the fall of the city, and the destruction of the temple, in accomplishment of the Lord's and his own predictions. It is not impossible that

<sup>1</sup> The Chronicon Paschale says he lived in Ephesus nine years before his exile, and spent fifteen years in Patmos.

<sup>2</sup> Quis Salvus Dives, § 42, quoted by Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., iii. 23.

he may have learned from some who escaped how the faithful witnesses (who, as we have supposed,<sup>1</sup> were two of his brother apostles) prophesied in the streets of that devoted city until they were slain, and their dead bodies permitted to lie unburied until God Himself resuscitated them and took them up to heaven. Sad indeed must have been the recital of the woes and horrors which attended the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem, to one who had known and loved it so well. Of all the stately city, its palaces, fortresses, temple, nothing remained except the towers of Phasaelus, Mariamne, and Hippicus, and part of the western wall, left as a defence of the Roman camp. Not only was it depopulated, but the same may be said of the adjacent districts for a wide distance. The political existence of the nation was annihilated, and never since has it been numbered among the states of the world.

7 We have now arrived at that point in the history when St. John was the only or almost the sole survivor of the apostles. He could not have been far from 65 years of age. James, and Peter, and Paul were no more. If Peter survived, or any of the others, it must have been in extreme old age, or in some remote quarter of the globe; and John must have been very soon left entirely alone, to continue some score and a half of years longer, engaged in settling the foundations and extending the borders of the Christian Church. His eye was not dimmed, nor his natural force abated; and for at least the period of still another human generation he was to be the acknowledged leader of the Christian Church. If hitherto he had seemed to be less prominent than Peter and Paul, "if," as has been said, "Peter was appointed by the Lord to lay the foundation of the apostolic church, and Paul to build the main structure thereon, John, the apostle of completion, was to erect the dome, whose top should lose itself in the glory of the new heaven."<sup>2</sup>

"Far away were the scenes of his youth and the graves of his fathers. The homes of his childhood were to know him no more for ever, and rejoiced now in the light of the countenances of strangers, or lay in blackening desolation beneath the brand of a wasting invasion. The waters and the mountains were there still, they are there now; but that which to him constituted all their reality was gone then as utterly as now. The ardent friends, the dear brother, the faithful father, the fondly ambitious mother, who made up this little world of life and joy and hope! Where were they? All were gone; even his own former self was gone too, and the joys, the hopes, the thoughts, the views of those early days, were buried as deeply as the friends of his youth, and far more irrecoverably. Cut off thus utterly from everything that

<sup>1</sup> See *Note*, Rev. xi. 12, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff, *Hist. of the Church*, i., p. 78.





TITUS.

once excited the earthly and merely human emotions within him, the whole world was like a desert or a home, according as he found in it communion with God and work for his remaining energies in the cause of Christ. Wherever he went he bore about with him his resources of enjoyment; his home was within himself; the friends of his youth and manhood were still before him in the ever fresh images of their glorious examples; the brother of his heart was near him always, and nearest now, when the persecutions of imperial tyranny seemed to draw him towards a sympathetic participation in the pains and glories of his bloody death;<sup>1</sup> the Lord of his life, the Author of his hopes, the Guide of his youth, the Cherisher of his spirit was over and around him ever, with the consolations of His promised presence, 'with him always, even to the end of the world.'"<sup>2</sup>

The year 79 was the date of the accession of Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem, to the imperial authority. He had shared already in the cares of state with his father. Born in the year 40, he was brought up in the imperial household of Claudius, with Britannicus, under the same instructors, and is said to have been an accomplished scholar. At the siege of Jerusalem he showed the talents of a great commander. It is said that, when associated with Vespasian in the government, his conduct failed to inspire the people with confidence, who were rather disposed to look upon him as likely to be another Nero. But the first year of his sole reign dissipated their fears. He soon won the title of "The Delight of Mankind," doing all that he could to promote the happiness of his people and to relieve them in times of distress. To him is attributed the saying, on recollecting that he had given away nothing in charity during the day, *Perdidi diem*, "I have lost a day." The public calamities that marked his short reign afforded repeated opportunities to test his generous disposition. In the first year of his accession to supreme power the famous eruption of Vesuvius occurred, in which Pliny the Elder perished, and Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried beneath showers of ashes. Titus sent money, and applied the property of those who had been destroyed, leaving no heirs to their estates, to repair the injured towns and relieve the wants of impoverished survivors. He went himself to survey the ravages, and during his absence a disastrous fire, which continued three days and three nights, broke out in Rome. The emperor declared that he should consider the loss his own, and applied his own property to repair it, even selling the decorations of his palace to raise the money. He completed the great Colosseum, commenced by his father, which remains one of the best preserved of the ruins that connect modern with ancient Rome; and among the mouldering reliefs of the arch raised to him,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> D. F. Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, pp. 341, 342.

still standing at Rome, the traveller may trace the representations of the spoils taken from the Jewish Temple, the censers, the silver trumpets, the golden altar and candlestick, and even the procession of captive Jews.

That the apostle John ever became familiar with the works of the great writers of Greece and Rome (that is, ever became what is known as a classical scholar), although it is evident he became a thorough master of the Greek language, it would not be safe to affirm. Nor would it do to assert positively that any of these writers received knowledge of the doctrines of Jesus, or of the writings of the apostles. Among those who may be mentioned as contemporary with John are the great names of Plutarch, Epictetus, Seneca, Pliny the naturalist, Pliny the Younger, and Quintilian. Whether any of these men were ever brought into contact with John, or Peter, or Paul, cannot be affirmed. But certain it is that the morals of several of them, as enforced in their writings, *e.g.* of Plutarch, Epictetus, Seneca, and Pliny the Younger, are far in advance of heathen writers of any preceding age. The moral maxims of Seneca have been often compared with those found in the Gospels, and a certain similarity traced between them. And it is not difficult to understand how an intelligent and studious man might obtain some knowledge of the truths that fell from the lips of Jesus, and had been proclaimed far and wide by the apostles. That such a man might have some knowledge of the Septuagint, which had been accessible to the heathen world for three hundred years, is more than probable. The resemblance between many passages in Seneca and passages found in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament, is not altogether imaginary; nor is it necessary to suppose that it was altogether an "accidental circumstance." It is not impossible that he may have had some acquaintance with Paul, although the letters to Paul, which are printed in the old editions of his works, are undoubtedly apocryphal. The Gallio, before whose judgment seat Paul was brought at Corinth, who was proconsul of Achaia under Claudius, was a brother of Seneca; and through him it is not improbable that he may have acquired some knowledge of the apostles and their doctrine. All that is really valuable for correctness and purity of sentiment in ancient literature is probably more indebted to the literature of the Old and New Testaments than is commonly supposed. The writings of Moses, of David and the prophets, of the evangelists and apostles, could not be in the world, without leaving their impress on its conscience and its intellect. In fact, a traditional light of the true revelation and of the true history of the primeval ages, as it is contained in the sacred Scriptures, glimmers along the whole track of ancient pagan literature.



The greater part of the converts to Christianity at Ephesus, under the labours of Paul, appear to have been from among the Gentiles rather than the Jews. Indeed, we are expressly told that after three months of strenuous effort among the latter in the synagogue, on account of their hardness and unbelief he turned from them, and devoted the remainder of his stay principally to the instruction of the Gentiles, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus, who kept one of the schools for instruction in philosophy and rhetoric so common at that period; and that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."<sup>1</sup> It was at this time (probably from A.D. 54 to 56) that the churches addressed in the Apocalypse as the seven churches of Asia were established. John, who had been so largely devoted hitherto to the ministry of the circumcision, was specially fitted to resume Christian labour among the Jews. The Jewish community had doubtless increased in consequence of the disasters that had come upon their own land; and these disastrous changes may have tended to soften their prejudices, or to open the way for a more dispassionate consideration of the claims of the gospel. No wonder if the glories of the ancient covenant had seemed to them to have passed away with their city and temple. Perhaps now they would relinquish their notions of a temporal kingdom, and would listen to what might be told them of a kingdom not of this world; and could "be trained to look for a spiritual temple, a city eternal in the heavens, whose lasting foundations were laid by no mortal hand for the heathen to sweep away in unholy triumph, but whose Builder and Maker and Guardian is God. Thus prepared by the mournful consummation of their country's ruin for the reception of a pure faith, the condition of the disconsolate Jews must have appeared in the highest degree interesting to the apostle John," and encouraging to his labours for their spiritual good. And we may fairly presume that under these more favourable circumstances, where Paul seems to have met with comparatively little success, John was the instrument of leading many to the knowledge of Christ, and of extending His influence from so favourable a centre far and wide among the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

But Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the capital, was one of the chief seats of ancient heathen philosophy; all the germs of what is known as gnosticism were already in existence there.<sup>1</sup> It was the theatre where, according to Chrysostom, "all the sects of Grecian philosophy cultivated their science." "There," adds this eloquent Christian father, "John flashed out in the midst of the foe, clearing

<sup>1</sup> Acts xix. 8-10; 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9.

away their darkness, and storming the very citadel of demons." <sup>1</sup> It was not only renowned for its philosophy, its temple and worship of Diana, but for its skill in the use of sorcery and magic. The books of those who used curious arts, which were burned after the owners were converted under the preaching of Paul, were valued at 50,000 pieces of silver. <sup>2</sup>

This was to be the scene of the apostle's future labours. Here in the synagogues and Grecian schools he was to make known the truth as it is in Jesus. Here he was to go in and out for many years as the sole surviving representative, in the Christian world, of the apostles. From his residence in Babylon, long known through succeeding centuries as the great eastern metropolitan centre of Hebrew theology and literature, where the transplanted stocks of rabbinical learning grew up and flourished in new luxuriance, John probably derived peculiar advantages through the facilities thereby afforded him for acquiring a knowledge of those things which, in the course of time, became the earliest occasion of error and sectarian division in the Christian churches, calling on the last of the apostles for the great concluding work of his life, the noble record of his testimony against the combination of Hebrew theological subtleties and oriental mysticisms with the pure simplicity of the faith of Jesus. "In this city, and in the farther East also, must have been rife both among Chaldeans and Persians that wild oriental philosophy, which had so large a share in the early corruptions of Christianity, and which, floating westward, soon obscured the first light of the apostolic revelation to the churches of Hellenic Asia; and afterwards, notwithstanding the evident opposition of the last written testimony of the apostles, continued under the high name of the Gnosis or science, to develop, during the second century, under a vast variety of forms, dividing the churches and perplexing the teachers. With the original source of these dreamy mysticisms John must have had good opportunities of becoming familiar; and the remarkable aptness and learning on these points which his writings show must have been owing to the circumstances of his long eastern residence at that time of his life when mental power was in its fullest vigour. The fact that some of these subjects had been pursued by him, with actual study and deep attention, appears from the profound, extensive, and familiar knowledge which his prophetic writings display of Jewish, apocryphal, cabalistic, and talmudic lore." <sup>3</sup>

St. John found all the conditions for an adulteration of Christianity with foreign elements existing at Ephesus and in the other great cities

<sup>1</sup> Hom. in Joan., Lampe, Prolegom.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Lives of the Apostles, by D. Francis Bacon, p. 330.

of the province, in Jewish and heathen superstitions and magic. Paul had found it, and he distinctly characterizes it in one of his letters to Timothy, whom he had left as an evangelist at Ephesus, as "gnosis," but falsely so called.<sup>1</sup> He referred to the insipid fables and traditions of the Jews respecting patriarchs, angels, genealogical investigations, subtle questions of the law, and allegorical interpretations of Scripture narratives. The heresies that arose from heathenism consisted essentially in antinomianism and a licentious freedom of spirit. The heathen as well as Jewish heretics encouraged fanatical asceticism. We have seen John already brought in contact with gnosticism in Simon Magus, who has been regarded, at least by the tradition of the Church fathers, as the patriarch of all heretics, especially of the heathen Gnostics. He was now, during the rest of his life, particularly the last thirty years of the first century, to stand face to face with a heresy which was to bring forth fruit so pernicious in the second.

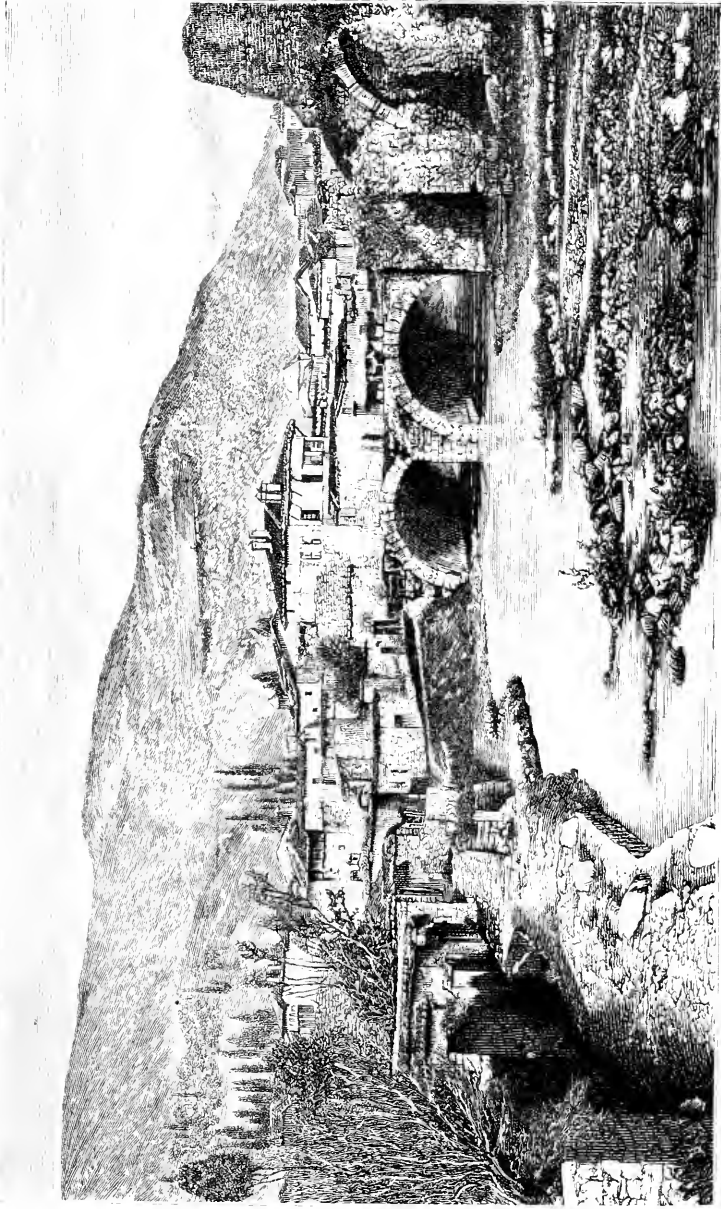
It is not improbable that St. John had time to make the circuit of the seven churches, and was well known to them in his apostolic office and authority, before he was directed to address to them the epistles and visions of the Apocalypse, *i.e.* before his imprisonment in Patmos. If he arrived in Asia Minor in the year 65 or 66, this would afford ample time to have made this tour, and have seen these churches face to face, before these visions were granted to him. As the heat in summer is excessive and the sun dangerous, and the cold in winter would render the journey fatiguing and unpleasant, the journey would probably be made in March and April, or in October and November; or he may have made part of it in the spring, and the return journey to Ephesus in the autumn. The apostle has made preparations. It is a long and toilsome way that lies before him; but he has been inured to hardships and exposure by the experience of former years. There are streams to be forded, which after rains are swollen, and bridges are rare. There are mountains to be climbed, although much of the distance between Ephesus and Smyrna, where the railway now runs, is flat. The ancient road appears to have run first in a north-easterly direction up the valley of the Cayster, and then north-westerly till it entered the valley of the Hermus, near the mouth of which Smyrna was situated. The distance by railroad is forty-eight miles; by the common road it must have been considerably greater. It occupied the same site and nearly the same extent of ground as the modern city. The objects that would most attract the attention of a visitor would be the theatre and the stadium, its form hollowed into the northern slope of Mount Pagus, and the temple built in honour of Tiberius, for the erection of which Smyrna had successfully competed with the Ionian cities before the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 20.

Roman senate. On the east it possesses a fine plain, and all along the sea coast are scattered the most picturesque situations for villas and the residences of its princely merchants. The scenery, in every direction, and the climate, are the finest in the world. It is scarcely possible John could have found Polycarp already in charge of the church at Smyrna; for when about the year 167 Polycarp was called to suffer martyrdom he said, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ," which goes no farther back than A.D. 81. It is not improbable, however, that before the apostle's death Polycarp had by him been appointed the bishop of that church.

St. John continues his journey to the north, some sixty miles farther, and more than a hundred from Ephesus, to Pergamos, on the river Cætus. Before crossing the Hermus, which makes a wide detour from its westerly course to the south in reaching the sea, he passes the ancient Temnos, where, according to Strabo, a statue of Venus was to be seen. The road gradually ascends the valley of the Hermus, and then winds up and down the hills for about two hours. Here and there a village is passed; the road runs close by a small lake, then up and down again among the hills, and for a long while by the sea coast. The country has a wild aspect, rocky and wooded, and is often (as it probably was in the days of John) infested by bands of robbers, who hide themselves in the bushes, and surprise travellers when passing in small companies. The river Cæus is crossed (at the present time by a long bridge), and the road becomes tortuous and rocky, and at length the Cætus is reached, and Pergamos, built of white marble, is seen perched on the summit of a mountain. It was a city dating from the most remote antiquity. The Romans, after it came under their rule, took great pride in decorating it. Here, in addition to the temple of Æsculapius, which was held in the highest veneration, were temples, one in honour of Cæsar and one of Rome itself. These objects are not without interest to the apostle, although his chief business is to visit the Christians and preach the gospel to Jews and Gentiles.

But the time comes for him to move forward again, and he starts for his next station, Thyatira, lying in a south-easterly direction, at a distance of some fifteen hours of travel. For a while the road winds along the banks of the river. The fine plain of Pergamos is crossed, and for a long distance its prominent acropolis is kept in view. The traveller continues in nearly the same direction, along the sides of the mountains, keeping the valley of the Cæus on his left, over which the view extends towards Mount Ida, and the country has a cheerful aspect. The road at length passes near the sources of the Cæus, and winding among the hills descends to the plain, and in about two hours



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PERGAMOS.







*Copied by permission from a photograph taken by F. FRITH*

SARDINIA.



reaches Thyatira. In splendour and wealth it did not compare with the other cities in Asia Minor, which it was the object of the apostle's tour to visit; but it was, and has always been, distinguished for the industry and thrift of its people. It had many important buildings, and some of the numerous fountains in its streets still bear Greek inscriptions. From time immemorial it had been famous for the dyeing trade.<sup>1</sup> It occupies the same picturesque position as of old, and probably, when John visited it, presented the same inviting market for the products of the interior and the same extensive bazaars as now.

The apostle is now on the road again, which for some time continues on the banks of the river Lycus, which flows into the Hyllus, one of the affluents of the Hermus, and then ascends and winds among the low hillocks. He continues in a nearly southerly direction, and crosses the whole valley of the Hermus, and arrives at Sardis, once the proud capital of Lydia. He found it a city flourishing and prosperous, and of great magnificence, notwithstanding the vicissitudes through which it had passed. Here could be seen the temple of Cybele, situated at the back of the acropolis, on the high banks of the Pactolus. Having accomplished the object of his visit, the apostle is moving again; his course is now more to the east, but still southerly. It lies along the valley of the Hermus, and at length takes an almost eastward direction, keeping on the right the range of Mount Tmolus. Philadelphia is now reached, on the north-eastern slope of the range of Mount Tmolus, on a site commanding the entrance to the valley of the Mæander on the one side and of the Hermus on the other. Although it was never a city of the first class, it is still inhabited, covering the same ground and surrounded by the same walls as of old. Here the apostle found a body of Christians who had embraced the doctrine of Christ with zeal and earnestness, and who courageously maintained their right to the free exercise of their religious duties and worship. His journey next takes him to Laodicea, and his course is again more nearly south-easterly, and lies at the start along the north-eastern side of Mount Tmolus. The road is in some parts bad and rocky, with many windings up and down, but picturesque. It requires two days to accomplish the journey. He passes close to ancient Tripolis, crosses the Mæander, and having reached Hierapolis his course lies directly south to Laodicea, in full sight on the opposite side of the Lycus.<sup>2</sup> He finds himself in a city in the midst of great wealth and grandeur, as the remains of its vast stadium, theatres, and gymnasium silently but most impressively testify. Colossæ (or its site), to which one of the epistles of Paul is addressed, is about three hours' ride to the east of Laodicea. There seems to have been a most intimate association

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, iv. 141.

<sup>2</sup> In the province of Phrygia.

between the churches at Hierapolis, Laodicea, and Colossæ, or the Christians residing in these places, at the time the apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, for he addresses them together.<sup>1</sup> When John arrived there they would seem to have been united in one church. Not long after Paul addressed the Colossians, their city, as we learn from Eusebins, was destroyed by an earthquake. This was in the ninth year of Nero, some two years before John arrived in Asia Minor. He therefore may have found Philemon and Onesimus<sup>2</sup> and Archippus and Epaphras<sup>3</sup> at Laodicea.

His course back to Ephesus, whence he started, lay almost directly west. The road at the commencement is flat and very good, keeping the valley of the Mæander, the river being first on the right and then on the left. It passes Tralles and Magnesia, which subsequently became seats of flourishing churches. After it crosses the Mæander it lies all the way from west to east, with the hill range of Messogis on the right and the river on the left.

How often the apostle may have crossed these mountains and rivers and plains in his long life we know not. But his care of the churches and his missionary excursions, no doubt, frequently made it necessary. It was probably on one of these excursions, perhaps at Pergamos, that as a tradition, which appears to be genuine and authentic, relates,—observing a young man in the congregation he was visiting, to whom he was powerfully drawn, he turned to the minister and said, “I commit him to you before Christ and the congregation.” The minister accepted the charge, took the youth home, and finally baptized him. The young man subsequently fell into bad company, became dissipated and lavish in his habits, and, renouncing all hope in the grace of God, joined a band of robbers and became their captain. When, some time after, the apostle again visited that city, having attended to other matters, he made inquiry of the minister for the young man he had committed to his charge. Sighing heavily, with tears, the minister replied, “He is dead!” “Dead?” said John; “in what way did he die?” “He is dead to God,” answered the minister; “he became godless, and finally a robber, and is now with his companions in the fastnesses of the mountains.” The apostle, on hearing this, takes a horse and guide and hastens to the spot where the band of robbers was to be found. He was seized, as he expected to be, by one of the band, and carried into the presence of their captain. Their captain, recognising John as he approached, attempted to flee; but John hastened after him with all speed, crying, “Why do you flee from me? Do not be afraid. If needs be, I will gladly die for you as Christ died for us. I will lay

<sup>1</sup> Col. iv. 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> Philemon 12.

<sup>3</sup> Col. i. 7, iv. 12.

down my life for you. Stop! stop! Believe, Christ hath sent me." He stopped, threw away his arms, and began to tremble and weep bitterly. The apostle finally led him back to the Church, and he became an example of sincere repentance and genuine conversion.

He would meet wherever he went, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem, Ebionites, Jews who professed themselves Christians but could not emancipate themselves from their former opinions, insisting on the continued obligation of the ceremonial law. The Gnostics he encountered both among the Jews and Gentiles. St. Paul had found Judaizing Gnostics, or Essenic Judaists, at Colossæ; see the second chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians. They held that Christ was one of the highest emanations from God; and that, although it was necessary He should appear in fashion as a man, it was impossible He should become a real man. Some held that His human form was a phantom, a mere appearance, without substance or reality, and hence were called Docetæ. Others admitted that He had a real body, but denied that it was material. Others, as the Cerinthians, held that Jesus and Christ were distinct. Cerinthus appeared subsequently to the apostle Paul's day, being contemporary with St. John in his later years. In his views of the validity of the law and the millennial kingdom, he was strongly Judaistic; but in respect to the creation he was a Gnostic, holding that the world was created by some being subordinate to God. In respect to the man Christ Jesus, he held that the heavenly Christ descended upon Him at His baptism, and imparted to Him the power of working miracles and revealing the knowledge of God, but forsook Him when His enemies led Him away to be crucified, to rejoin Him only at His second coming. In the later writings of John allusions are clearly discernible to the errors of this false teacher.<sup>1</sup>

The friends, associates, and co-labourers of the apostle in Asia Minor were such men as Epaphras, Gaius, Demetrius, Onesimus, and those earliest fathers in the Christian Church, Polycarp, Ignatius of Antioch, and Papias.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 18-23, iv. 1-3; 2 John 7.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ST. JOHN WRITES THE FOURTH GOSPEL. DATE, DESIGN, AND CONTENTS.

UNANIMOUS TESTIMONY OF ANTIQUITY THAT IT WAS WRITTEN AT EPHESUS A.D. 85 OR 86.—PURITY OF THE GREEK.—WRITTEN AT A DISTANCE FROM JUDEA.—WRITER HAD CEASED TO BE A JEW, AND HAD BECOME COSMOPOLITAN.—COMPARED WITH SYNOPTISTS WRITES MORE IN THE HISTORICAL VEIN.—ADOPTS THE ROMAN HOROLOGY THROUGHOUT.—ST. JOHN'S AUTHORSHIP NEVER QUESTIONED TILL RECENTLY.—STRAUSS DENIED ITS GENUINENESS.—THE TÜBINGEN SCHOOL, ETC.—JOHANNEAN AUTHORSHIP AS STATED BY CANON LIDDON.—NOT A MERE SUPPLEMENT TO THE OTHER THREE GOSPELS.—ITS DESIGN TRACED IN THE PARABLES AND MIRACLES IT ADMITS.—ST. JOHN'S PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE MIRACLES HE NAMES.—PRINCIPLE OF SELECTION.—DESIGN CLEARLY STATED BY HIMSELF, TO PROVE THAT JESUS WAS THE PROMISED SAVIOUR.—CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL.—ST. JOHN'S OBJECT NOT POLEMICAL.—*QUARTERLY REVIEW* QUOTED.—THOLUCK.

It is the unanimous testimony of antiquity that it was while residing at Ephesus St. John wrote his Gospel, and thus completed and gave new beauty to that picture of the incarnate Son of God, which, in the first three Gospels, was already in possession of the Church. In the purity of the Greek in which it was written it greatly excels the Apocalypse, and approaches more nearly to classical Greek than any other of the Gospels.<sup>1</sup> The conjecture therefore appears to be well founded that it must have been written some score or more of years later than the Apocalypse, *i.e.* somewhere about A.D. 85 or 86.

That it was written out of, at a distance from, Judæa, and considerably after the time the apostle left it, there are some very striking internal proofs. He constantly writes as if he had specially in view, in the people whom he addressed, those who were ignorant of the customs of the Jews; or he speaks as one who had himself ceased to be a Jew, and had become cosmopolitan, and was describing things wholly past, and which had taken place at a distance, under circumstances wholly unlike those of the mass of his readers. Thus he tells them that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans;<sup>2</sup> that there was a feast of the Jews (referring to the passover), and Jesus went up to Jerusalem;

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Tholuck's Comm.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. iv. 9.

and, in the same connection, that there is at Jerusalem a pool called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda;<sup>1</sup> he tells them how Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus, and prepared it for burial, "as the manner of the Jews is to bury."<sup>2</sup> He constantly speaks of those who opposed and persecuted Jesus as "the Jews": "therefore did *the Jews* persecute Jesus;" "therefore *the Jews* sought the more to kill Him;"<sup>3</sup> "no man spake openly of Him for fear of *the Jews*;"<sup>4</sup> "*the Jews* took up stones again to stone Him:" as if he were writing in the presence of the great Gentile community, who could not well be brought to recognise any mere party among the Jews as opposed to Him, when He was rejected by the nation as a whole, represented by their chief priests and rulers. He writes (comparing him with the synoptists, especially Matthew) more in the historical vein; that is, of things as long past and viewed from a distance. He makes no record of our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, as that destruction was already past, and that prediction already fulfilled.

He evidently adopts the Roman horology in place of the Jewish. This is commonly admitted in respect to chap. xix. 14, where it is said to have been "about the sixth hour" when Pilate sat down on the judgment seat, at the trial of Jesus, as the best and only satisfactory way of reconciling this passage with Mark xv. 25, where we have it that it was "the third hour" when they crucified Him, and with Matt. xxvii. 45, Mark xv. 33, Luke xxiii. 44, in which Jesus is described as on the cross at the SIXTH hour. The Jews commenced their civil day at sunset, dividing it until sunrise into twelve parts, and from sunrise to sunset into the same number, the hours of course varying in length according to the season of the year. The Romans commenced theirs at midnight, dividing it into twelve hours till noon, and again from noon till midnight, making the day to consist of twenty-four hours of equal length at all seasons of the year. And in the other instances in which John notes the hour of the day (chap. i. 39, "it was about the tenth hour;" iv. 6, "about the sixth hour;" iv. 52, "yesterday at the seventh hour"), it agrees better with the other circumstances recorded to understand him as employing Roman instead of Jewish time; and no good reason can be given why he should use it in one instance and not in the others. He gave the hour according to the Roman division of the day, because he had so long resided among the Gentiles, at a distance from Judæa, whose people were now dispersed, and the Christian Church had come to be so largely composed of Gentiles, and the Jewish element was destined steadily, proportionately, to decrease.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xix. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. v. 16, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. vii. 13, *et passim*.

## AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

The authorship of the fourth Gospel, as really belonging to St. John, was never seriously questioned until almost within our own times. This Gospel has been made on this question the battle field, as has been well said, of the New Testament. Dr. Strauss, in his first "Life of Jesus," took the position that the fourth Gospel was not the work of the son of Zebedee. The Tübingen school, or its leading writers, Drs. Baur, Schweigler, and Zeller, aspired to supplement the negative theory of Strauss by holding that this Gospel represented a highly developed stage of an orthodox gnosis, requiring at least a century after the apostolic age, and that it was not therefore written before the middle of the second century. Canon Liddon in his Bampton Lectures has briefly but with great clearness and ability set forth the proof in favour of the Johannean authorship of the fourth Gospel. The facts, as he shows, force back its date within the lines of the first century. "And, when this is done, the question of its authenticity is practically decided. It is irrational to suppose that a forgery, claiming the name and authority of the beloved disciple, could have been written and circulated beneath his very eyes, and while the Church was still illuminated by his oral teaching. Arbitrary theories about the time which is thought necessary to develop an idea cannot rightly be held to counterbalance such a solid block of historical evidence as we have been considering. This evidence shows that long before the year 160 St. John's Gospel was received throughout orthodox and heretical Christendom, and that its recognition may be traced up to the apostolic age itself." Ewald (adds Liddon) "shall supply the words with which to close the foregoing considerations. 'Those who, since the first discussion of this question, have been really conversant with it never could have had, and never have had, a moment's doubt. As the attack on St. John has become fiercer and fiercer, the truth during the last ten or twelve years has been more and more solidly established, error has been pursued into its last hiding places, and at this moment the facts before us are such that no man who does not will knowingly to choose error and reject the truth can dare to say that the fourth Gospel is not the work of the apostle John.'"<sup>1</sup>

## DESIGN.

This Gospel is by no means to be regarded as designed merely to supply what had been omitted by the synoptists. It has a distinct and

<sup>1</sup> Bampton Lectures, 1866. Rivingtons, London, etc. Scribner, Welford & Co., New York, 1868, p. 218. See also Essays, etc., by George P. Fisher, Professor Yale College (New York, 1866. Scribner & Co.), in an able article of more than 100 pages.

easily defined object. It has a precision of method and progressive development of ideas suited to this object. This may be easily traced in the parables and miracles which the writer admits, as well as in those he omits. Take, for example, the miracles. Only about one third of the number contained in the evangelic history are recorded by him. Of the thirty-three commonly enumerated he has but eight. Of these eight, six are recorded by him alone, to wit: 1. The water made wine; 2. Healing of the nobleman's son; 3. Healing of the impotent man at Bethesda; 4. Restoring sight to a man born blind; 5. The raising of Lazarus; 6. Second miraculous draught of fishes. The other two are the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, and the walking on the sea. The former is recorded by all the evangelists, the latter is found also in Matthew and Mark. It is further worthy of notice that St. John alone records the earliest miracles of Christ, and the last of them: the water made wine, and the cure of the nobleman's son; the miraculous draught of fishes after the resurrection of Christ. It is not easy to suggest a reason why such important miracles as the raising of Lazarus and the healing of the impotent man, for example, are not found in the synoptists; but in regard to the miracles at the marriage in Cana, and the healing of the young man lying sick at Capernaum, it may be said that these were performed before Matthew, the writer of the first Gospel and only apostle save John among the evangelists, was called to the discipleship. St. John, no doubt, had personal knowledge of all the miracles he names; and writing a considerable period of time after the narratives of the others had been in possession of the Church, the omission in theirs of those he exclusively records was a sufficient reason, but still it was not *the* reason, for their being found in his. It cannot be that it was merely his object to rescue from oblivion the miracles not named by his brother evangelists; for he does not confine himself strictly to them. The evangelists as a body do not profess to give an account of every miracle the Saviour performed. On the contrary, St. John expressly says there were many things which there had been no attempt to record,<sup>1</sup> and the others often content themselves by alluding in the general to other "works," or many other "wonderful works" He performed. The *reason why* the particular miracles found in the fourth Gospel were recorded by its writer, or *the principle of selection* in regard to them by which he was guided, is to be found in the special purpose which, directed by the Spirit of inspiration, he had in view in writing it. This he clearly states<sup>2</sup> was to set forth the "signs" or proofs that Jesus was the promised Saviour of the world, that, "believing," men "might have life through His name." We find in it not the miracles which Jesus performed "in the presence of His disciples"

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxi. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xx. 30, 31.

alone, but only those of the most public character, with but two exceptions (the walking on the sea, and the second miraculous draught of fishes), performed at Jerusalem, the very centre of opposition and enmity to Him, and in the presence of great numbers of witnesses; and in regard to the two exceptions named they were admirably fitted to give weight to the personal testimony of the apostles as witnesses for the Messiahship of Jesus.

Remembering what the apostle himself says as to the reason for the signs written in this book, and that he wrote after the other evangelists and after a long residence outside of Palestine, as in the presence of the great Gentile world, and in one of its most celebrated capitals, we are furnished with a key which will unfold the bearing of the several parts of this Gospel, not only the miracles but the parables and discourses, and the events recorded in it and their relation to its great topic, that Jesus is the Saviour of men. "All who have examined this Gospel with care have noticed a marked peculiarity in the order and the arrangement of the narrative, and in the principles of selection which apparently determined the author in his choice of what should be inserted. The explanation of this peculiarity is doubtless to be found primarily and mainly in the fact that he was writing a life of Jesus, not for its own sake, but for the purpose of proving thereby that He was the Christ, the Son of God. This being his aim, he shapes all things to the end which he has in view."<sup>1</sup> This specific and distinctly announced design is never for a moment lost sight of. He had the world, especially outside of Judæa, for which he was then labouring and writing, constantly in his thoughts.

### ANALYSIS.

PART FIRST *consists of a series of proofs or signs that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, the appointed Saviour of the world; or, it is a record of what Jesus made known of Himself to convince the unbelieving.* Chaps. I. to XII.

1. He starts with the truth, as lying at the foundation of all, that the Messiah was no other than the Eternal Word made flesh: chap. i. 1-14.

2. Testimony of John the Baptist, acknowledged as one of the greatest prophets by the Jews, to the pre-existence and Messiahship of Jesus: chap. i. 15-34.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Lectures, 1872: Christianity and Scepticism, Lecture VI., by Rev. Timothy Dwight, D.D. Pp. 160, 161. Dr. Dwight maintains that John meant to have his narrative bear a peculiar relation to his own experience, and the way in which his own religious life originated.



3. Testimony of John the Baptist to his own followers, whereby Jesus wins His first disciples from among them : chap. i. 35-51.

4. Jesus manifests His glory by turning water into wine, His first miracle : chap. ii. 1-11.

5. He exhibits His control over the wills of men, at the cleansing of the temple : chap. ii. 12-25.

6. The conviction wrought in the mind of one of the most intelligent of the Jews, a member of their great council, that Jesus had a Divine commission : chap. iii. 1-21.

7. The final and most complete testimony of that great prophet and holy man, John the Baptist, to the Divine mission and Messiahship of Jesus : chap. iii. 22-36.

8. The Messiahship of Jesus acknowledged among those natural enemies of His nation, the Samaritans : chap. iv. 1-42.

9. A nobleman, probably a courtier of Herod Antipas, is convinced, and believes in Jesus : chap. iv. 43-54.

10. Christ performs a miracle on that great public occasion, the Passover, which, in contrast with false miracles, points Him out as the Son of God and Saviour of the world : chap. v. 1-16.

11. The dignity of Christ's character and the Divinity of His person as asserted by Himself : chap. v. 17-29.

12. God's testimony to Jesus as His Son and our Saviour, in the miracles He wrought and the prophecies that were fulfilled in Him : chap. v. 30-47.

13. By His miracle in creating supplies for several thousands of people, so deep was the conviction wrought in their minds that He was the Messiah, that they were ready to make Him their king : chap. vi. 1-15.

14. By His authority over the elements of nature Jesus shows to His disciples that the greatest throne on earth would confer no power or elevation on Him : chap. vi. 16-21.

15. In a discourse called forth by the enthusiasm of the people, in consequence of His miracle in feeding the five thousand, Jesus lays claims to functions which can belong only to the promised Messiah and Divine Saviour : chap. vi. 22-71.

16. At the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, He vindicates His Messiahship before a promiscuous assemblage of the people with convincing power : chap. vii. 1-31.

17. Such was the impression made by Him even on the officers of the Sanhedrin sent to arrest Him, that they failed to do it : chap. vii. 32-53.

18. Such was the conviction wrought in the consciences of the members of the Sanhedrin itself, that they retired abashed from His presence : chap. viii. 1-11.

19. Christ again bears testimony to His exalted dignity and Divinity: chap. viii. 12-59.

20. His Messiahship proved by a miracle established by testimony, elicited after the most rigid scrutiny by His enemies sitting in a judicial capacity: chap. ix. 1-41.

21. The character of Christ (the Good Shepherd) a proof of His Messiahship: chap. x. 1-21.

22. Jesus declares His Messiahship distinctly, claiming equality with the Father: chap. x. 22-42.

23. The miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus an illustrious proof of the Messiahship of Jesus: chap. xi. 1-54.

24. The risen Lazarus a living witness among the Jews to His Messiahship: chap. xi. 55-xii. 1-11.

25. Jesus is proclaimed Messiah by the multitude at Jerusalem, at His triumphal entry: chap. xii. 12-19.

26. His Divine Sonship proclaimed by a voice from heaven, in the ears of certain representatives of the Gentile world: chap. xii. 20-33.

27. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews, notwithstanding the evidence of His Messiahship, was a fulfilment of prophecy: chap. xii. 34-50.

PART SECOND: *Evidence that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, derived from His intercourse and discourses in private with His chosen friends, and especially as seen in the great sacrifice offered by Him and its acceptance for the salvation of the world.* Chaps. XIII. to XXI.

1. The self sacrificing spirit which will enable His disciples to find happiness in any service, however humble, which brotherly love requires one to render to another: chap. xiii. 1-17.

2. Foretells His betrayal by Judas: chap. xiii. 18-30.

3. Final instructions of Christ to His followers, first removes their perplexities and misgivings: chap. xiii. 31-xiv. 1-7.

4. Proofs of His Messiahship in the provision made for His continued presence in the mission of the Holy Comforter: chap. xiv. 8-31.

5. Strength and comfort from union with Christ absent, by faith through the Spirit: chap. xv. 1-27.

6. Doctrine concerning the mission of the Comforter fully developed: chap. xvi. 1-33.

7. Messiah's prayer for His followers: chap. xvii. 1-26.

8. The Divinity of Messiah seen in the hour of His deepest humiliation in the garden of agony: chap. xviii. 1-9.

9. Fulfilment of His prediction in regard to the denial of Peter: chap. xviii. 10-27.

10. Evidences of the Messiahship of Jesus in His trial before Pilate: chap. xviii. 28—xix. 1-16.

11. Evidences seen in His crucifixion and the manner of His death: chap. xix. 17-30.

12. The supernatural in the death, and the Divine interposition in the burial, of Christ: chap. xix. 31-42.

13. Crowning proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, His resurrection from the dead: chap. xx. 1-31.

14. After His resurrection He performs similar miracles to those performed before His crucifixion, and thus identifies Himself in the highest regions of proof with the Jesus who died: chap. xxi. 1-25.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, in carrying out his particular design according to the above order of arrangement, has given us the fullest and deepest picture of his love. But we find scattered over the pages of the other evangelists passages which are in entire harmony with the peculiar strain of John.<sup>1</sup> While John discloses to us a more inward aspect of the doctrine of Christ, and supplies many propositions we could not directly gather from his predecessors, the moral and practical bearings of the four evangelists are in close and thorough correspondence. "Socrates," says Renan, "who like Jesus did not write, is made known to us by two of his disciples, Xenophon and Plato." He likens the synoptists to Xenophon, and makes John the Plato. But Plato and Xenophon, in their rival representations of Socrates, present two systems, the ethical bearings of which appear to be widely different, if not altogether irreconcilable. No such divergence from the other evangelists can be discovered in John. The four all have the same ethical basis, and they go to produce the very same frame of mind and course of action.<sup>2</sup>

The opinion that St. John had a polemical object has no better foundation than that he wrote to provide a supplement to the other Gospels. He wrote not primarily to refute errorists, but that men might believe and have life. "There may be truth in that surmise, that his spirit, kindled and informed by a higher Light, looked back upon the growth of his own faith in the Master who loved him, and he wrote for other men that which had led himself into the way of life; that his Gospel is not so much a history of the Lord as a history of those things which led himself to know and believe in the Lord. At any rate, the object of this Gospel is patent, to reveal to men the glory of Christ as it was manifested in His earthly struggle. In the first four chapters the Lord is seen gathering to Himself those who seek

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See Article on "Ecce Homo," by Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, in *Good Words*.

the truth, whilst the evil storm of opposition and unbelief begins to lower and mutter. From the fifth to the twelfth chapters the struggle with the unbelief of the world is open and severe; the Lord on the one side reveals Himself, the Jews on the other reject Him. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth chapters, He reveals Himself (through those more tender and richer unfoldings of the truth in His discourses with His chosen friends) and all that He is or can do with the Father on man's behalf. In the closing chapters He suffers when the rest of His work is finished, and rises again in final triumph, to send the promised Comforter, that through Him all that believe might have life. The glorious conquest of Christ over evil (or His power to effect this conquest), shown to men in order that they might believe and might have life through believing, this was the apostle's purpose. Who so fit to write on such a theme as he that had been a near spectator both of the struggle and the victory? Such an explanation is as far as possible from the notion that the writer had in view (controversially) new doctrines about the person of the Lord, and from the opinion to which the ancient writers gave too much countenance, that this is a polemic against Cerinthus and Ebion and the Gnostics. One writing of the incarnation in the midst of certain errors could not but write so that the errors should meet their refutation. But there is no pervading controversial aim, of direct polemical matter there is not one syllable in this Gospel. It is polemical in that, being true, it is a touchstone of error; it is against the modern Socinus almost in the same sense that it is against the ancient Cerinthus."<sup>1</sup>

"We have in this Gospel an exhibition of the power of Christianity as it presents itself to men of the most thoughtful and the purest minds. The author of it, as the world is coming to acknowledge more and more, belonged to this class of men, and was even an exalted one among them. He had indeed the devotion and love that belong to a woman, but the strength of intellect and the profound thought which characterize the higher order of men. We learn from it that the richest life of the richest soul, perchance, the world has ever known came to its earthly perfection through its following of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God."<sup>2</sup>

"As regards the substance, the superhuman in Christ, the necessity of faith in Him, regeneration, the mystical union of believers with Him and with one another, the commandment of love, and the blessing attached to it, these are the chief themes of John's teaching, and many of the facts recorded by him and peculiar to this Gospel cor-

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, Art., *Life of our Lord*. No. cexl., Oct., 1866.

<sup>2</sup> *Boston Lectures*, 1872: *Christianity and Scepticism*, Lecture VI., by Rev. Timothy Dwight, D.D., Yale College. Pp. 190, 193.

respond with them; among these are presented the condescending love of Christ, shown in His seeking men, His tender relation as a man to John, His position of earnestness yet of forbearance toward His betrayer, His superhuman knowledge, His glorification in suffering, and the obstinate unbelief of the world. To this substance the peculiar character of the author's spirit, impressing itself on the language, has imparted a form which enlists the sensibilities in a high degree." "This Gospel speaks a language to which no parallel whatever is to be found in the whole compass of literature; such childlike simplicity, with such contemplative profundity; such life, and such deep rest; such sadness, and such serenity; and above all, such a breadth of love, an eternal life which has already dawned, a life which rests in God, which has overcome the disunion between the world that is and the world to come, the human and the Divine."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tholuck's Commentary on John, Introduction, § 5.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL, WITH BRIEF EXPLANATORY NOTES.

I. SIGNS TO THE UNBELIEVING WORLD.—PROLOGUE.—TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO HIS PRE-EXISTENCE.—HIS TESTIMONY TO HIS OWN FOLLOWERS.—POWER OF JESUS' WILL OVER NATURE.—OVER THE WILLS OF MEN.—CONVICTION OF NICODEMUS.—FINAL AND COMPLETE TESTIMONY OF THE BAPTIST.—MESSIAHSHIP ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SAMARITANS.—A COURTIER OF HEROD ANTIPAS CONVINCED.—HIS MIRACLES IN CONTRAST WITH FALSE MIRACLES.—DIGNITY OF HIS CHARACTER, AND DIVINITY OF HIS PERSON ASSERTED BY HIMSELF.—GOD'S TESTIMONY TO JESUS IN HIS MIRACLES, AND THE PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN HIM.—MASSES OF THE PEOPLE CONVINCED.—HIS CHARACTER AS A PROOF.—DIVINE SONSHIP PROCLAIMED BY A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, ETC.—II. EVIDENCE TO ST. JOHN AND OTHER APOSTLES IN PRIVATE, AND ESPECIALLY AS SEEN IN HIS SACRIFICE.—CONTINUED PRESENCE IN THE MISSION OF THE HOLY COMFORTER.—PRAYER FOR HIS FOLLOWERS.—DIVINITY SEEN IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.—IN HIS TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.—IN THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH.—IN THE DIVINE INTERPOSITION IN HIS BURIAL.—IN HIS RESURRECTION.

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

PART FIRST.—*A series of proofs or signs that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, the appointed Saviour of the world; or, a record of what Jesus made known of Himself to convince the unbelieving.* Chapters I. to XII.

1. *Prologue. Messiah no other than the Eternal Word made Flesh.*

I.] [Ver. 1-14.

1 In the beginning<sup>1</sup> was the Word,<sup>2</sup> and the Word was with God,

<sup>1</sup> St. John, without tracing the genealogy of our Lord to Abraham as St. Matthew does, or to Adam as the evangelist Luke does, and without connecting the gospel with the prophecies of the Old Testament as Mark does, goes back as far as the finite powers of a mortal can reach. He penetrates the depths of the eternal past (passing by the creation of the world as an event of yesterday), and contemplates Christ as one with God, the invisible, incomprehensible Father. The "beginning," ἀρχή, is not the same spoken of Gen. i. 1. רֵאשִׁית. In Genesis it denotes the origin of creation; here, a beginning before time. And the expression that the Word "was," in this beginning, denotes an enduring, timeless existence.

<sup>2</sup> It is evident John uses this expression as a term known to his readers, and as

2 and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with  
 3 God. All<sup>1</sup> things were made by Him; and without Him was  
 4 not anything made that was made. In Him was life; <sup>2</sup> and the  
 5 life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness;  
 6 and the darkness <sup>3</sup> comprehended it not. There was a man sent  
 7 from God, whose name was John.<sup>4</sup> The same came for a wit-

the name of a Being or Person. A grammatical exposition is of no further use than to exhibit a certain fitness in the application made of this term in the writings of this apostle (1 John i. 1; Rev. xix. 13). John might have employed the term which Solomon had used before him, "Wisdom" (Prov. viii. 22-31); but he preferred that of Word, probably because it embraced an idea wanting in the other term, to wit, that God reveals Himself in this Being, that this Being was the expression of God, in some sense as the human spirit manifests itself in speech. It is not to be conceded for a moment that he gained the idea from any historical or external source whatever. He obtained it first in reality through the illumination of the Spirit revealing to him in Christ the doctrine of the true God. We learn through the writings of the Jewish Philo, of Alexandria, that there had been much speculation respecting the Logos, and, in the prevailing philosophy of the apostolic age, these subtle speculations were still rife. "Providence had so ordered it that in the intellectual world in which Christianity made its first appearance many ideas apparently at least closely related to it should be current, in which Christianity could find a point of connection for the doctrine of God revealed in Christ." (Neander's Kirchen., i. 3, p. 989.) The author of this Gospel, in his long residence in the Greek cities of Asia Minor, had been brought in contact with these ideas, and he sought to lead those who were busied with their speculations from their religious idealism to the recognition of that God who was revealed in the person of Christ. In the choice of an expression for the truth with which he was charged, he makes use of a term suited to all times, but specially adapted to the intellectual *status* of those around him, and to whom he primarily addressed himself. He placed the idea of the Divine Word in such express connection with the idea of Messiah that he points out the Messiah as Himself the incarnate Logos. The grand thought before the apostle's mind is that the pre-existent Word has appeared as a human person. He is not some sublime creature, some mysterious emanation brought forth at some fixed beginning, but was with God, and was God, the self manifestation from eternity of the Father, the pure perfect image of Himself.

<sup>1</sup> The whole vast universe, intelligent and unintelligent, creatures spiritual and material, in all their various ranks and orders (Col. i. 16, 17). It was the Father, imaging Himself in the Eternal Word, who uttered the creative fiat.

<sup>2</sup> The life that He imparted was the light of men; it was full of blessedness. All that we can imagine of the purity and joy of man in the innocence of paradise wearing the image and likeness of his Maker, and all that we can conceive of that confirmed state of holiness and bliss to which he would have been exalted had he not sinned, must be included in that light which was in, or accompanied, the life imparted to men.

<sup>3</sup> The apostle turns another leaf in this apocalypse of the past. What means this darkness, *ἡ σκοτία*, but the creature turned away from God, having through sin lost the Divine light; collective humanity, like this globe when it was formless and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep?

<sup>4</sup> The evangelist here refers to John the Baptist, his first teacher, who had directed him to Jesus, and who, as the greatest of the prophets, came to complete

ness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him  
 8 might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear  
 9 witness of that Light. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth  
 10 every man that cometh<sup>1</sup> into the world. He<sup>2</sup> was in the world,  
 and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.  
 11 He came unto His own,<sup>3</sup> and His own received Him not. But  
 12 as many as received Him, to them gave He power<sup>4</sup> to become  
 13 the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on His name: which  
 were born,<sup>5</sup> not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the  
 14 will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh,<sup>6</sup> and  
 dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the  
 only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

2. *Testimony of John the Baptist, acknowledged as one of the greatest prophets by the Jews, to the pre-existence and Messiahship of Jesus.*

[Ver. 15-34.]

15 John bare witness of Him, and cried, saying, This was He of  
 whom I spake,<sup>7</sup> He that cometh after me is preferred before  
 16 me; for He was<sup>8</sup> before me. And of His fulness have all we

the testimony that Jesus was the light that should enlighten the whole world. If the long line of prophets were like stars, illuminating the darkness of the night, John the Baptist was the morning star, the harbinger of the Sun of Righteousness.

<sup>1</sup> If we construe "that cometh into the world," or that *was* coming, ἦν, with the true Light, *i.e.* the Saviour, then the meaning is that He was coming to enlighten all nations, and not the Jewish nation only.

<sup>2</sup> The personal appearing now becomes more distinct, by the use of the pronoun He.

<sup>3</sup> "His own" here clearly forms an antithesis with the world, and means His own kindred or nation, according to the flesh.

<sup>4</sup> It means not merely opportunity, or prerogative, but ability. It was this that mankind lacked.

<sup>5</sup> It is only by regeneration of the Spirit that sinners of our race become sons of God. Men who are born of God have this birth accomplished in them by the power of the first born and only begotten Son of God, working faith in their hearts through the Holy Ghost.

<sup>6</sup> The climax to which all before has been tending. The "flesh" here means the whole human nature, body and soul, in its weak and necessitous condition, in which He dwelt, ἐσκήνωσεν, tabernacled. His glory shone through this tabernacle, as the glow of lamps at night makes a tent in the desert, or in the military encampment, luminous in the surrounding darkness.

<sup>7</sup> This testimony was borne subsequently to his baptism of Jesus and the appointed sign, designating Jesus as the Messiah, being given. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism he had declared that there was One coming after him mightier than he.

<sup>8</sup> He appeared officially after John, but was superior to him in dignity. "For He was before me," refers to the pre-existence of Christ. "The verb in the original



17 received, and grace<sup>1</sup> for grace. For the law was given by  
 18 Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man  
 hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in  
 19 the bosom of the Father, He hath declared<sup>2</sup> *Him*. And this is  
 the record<sup>3</sup> of John, when the Jews<sup>4</sup> sent priests and Levites  
 20 from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he con-  
 fessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.  
 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?<sup>5</sup> And he  
 saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered,  
 22 No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may  
 give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of  
 23 thyself? He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilder-  
 ness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet  
 24 Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.  
 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou  
 then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?  
 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there  
 27 standeth One among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who  
 coming after me is preferred<sup>6</sup> before me, whose shoe's latchet

refers to a fixed and permanent state of existence, and not to one upon which Christ entered, which is expressed by a different verb in the preceding clause. The employment of the two verbs, *to be* and *to become*, in their distinctive significations, is well observed in these verses, the one being used of our Lord's pre-existent and unchanging state as supreme Logos, the other of His becoming incarnate and dwelling among men." See Comm. of J. J. Owen, D.D., LL.D., *in loco*.

<sup>1</sup> Origen and Erasmus regard the words of ver. 16-18 as those of the Baptist; so also Luther, Melancthon, Lange, and others. But Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Alford, Schaff, and others, ascribe what is contained in these verses to the evangelist, on the ground of their distinctive Christian character. "Grace for grace," *i.e.*, grace in continual accessions. Believers may partake of the inexhaustible fulness that is in Christ, and, as their capacity of receiving increases as they receive, may continue to receive without danger of ever exhausting the fountain.

<sup>2</sup> It is only by Jesus Christ that the invisible Father has been manifested and can be known. He is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4).

<sup>3</sup> "Record," ἡ μαρτυρία, for the most part, in the New Testament has the sense of testimony.

<sup>4</sup> The party among the Jews hostile to Jesus, the Pharisees or representatives of the Sanhedrin. The general title *Jews*, so common in this Gospel, was natural to one who had been so long absent from Judæa as the apostle, who was writing mainly for the Gentiles.

<sup>5</sup> John was not Elijah in the sense of those who put the question, *i.e.*, he was not that old prophet risen from the dead; and it may be that John was ignorant that, by coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, in him was actually fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Exalted in dignity above.

28 I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in  
 29 Bethabara<sup>1</sup> beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The  
 next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith,  
 Behold the Lamb<sup>2</sup> of God, which taketh<sup>3</sup> away the sin of the  
 30 world! This<sup>4</sup> is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man  
 31 which is preferred before me; for He was before me. And I  
 knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to  
 32 Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John  
 bare record, saying, I saw<sup>5</sup> the Spirit descending from heaven  
 33 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  
 34 Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this<sup>6</sup> is the Son  
 of God.

<sup>1</sup> The three oldest Codices, the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine, have Bethany in place of Bethabara. Such is also the reading of the Syriac version. There were probably two Bethanys; this was distinguished from the one in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, by the adjunct "beyond Jordan." Bethabara was suggested by Origen, as no other Bethany but the one near Jerusalem was known to him. It was on the eastern side, or beyond Jordan, from Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> It is to be constantly borne in mind that the evangelist introduces the testimony of the Baptist as corroborative of his own, as borne in this Gospel. He bore testimony not only to the dignity and pre-existent nature of Jesus, but to the atoning or sacrificial character of His work. The coming of Jesus to John here spoken of was doubtless subsequent to His baptism and His temptation. John saw Him as He emerged from that fearful encounter in the wilderness. The paschal lamb, and the lamb in the daily sacrifice, were typical of a suffering Saviour; but there is here evidently an allusion to the great prophecy in Isaiah liii. 7, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter."

<sup>3</sup> He takes away sin by atoning for it, so as to exempt all who believe in Him from the punishment due to their sins. As the scapegoat had the sins of Israel put upon its head, and was sent away into the wilderness, so He bears or takes away sin (Lev. xvi. 21).

<sup>4</sup> He points to Jesus in person as the One to whom he had referred on the preceding day in his testimony.

<sup>5</sup> The sign at Christ's baptism was intended specially for John the Baptist. He saw the opening heavens and the descending dove, and heard the voice from heaven, "This is My beloved Son." The Sinaitic MS. omits "saying" and for "it abode" reads "abiding."

<sup>6</sup> When John saw the appointed sign He was fully qualified for His appointed work. The voice from heaven had declared, "This is My beloved Son"; and John's testimony is that He is the Son of God. For "this is the Son of God," the Alex. Cod. has, "He is the Son of God."

3. *Testimony of John the Baptist to his own followers, whereby Jesus wins His first disciples from among them.*

[Ver. 35-51.]

35 Again the next day after, John stood, and two<sup>1</sup> of his  
 36 disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith,  
 37 Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him  
 38 speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned,<sup>2</sup> and saw  
 them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They  
 said unto Him, Rabbi,<sup>3</sup> (which is to say, being interpreted,  
 39 Master,) where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come  
 and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with  
 40 Him that day: for it was about the tenth<sup>4</sup> hour. One<sup>5</sup> of the  
 two which heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew,  
 41 Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother

<sup>1</sup> These two disciples of John the Baptist had probably heard the significant testimony borne by him the preceding day; for John now simply says, "Behold the Lamb of God." He no longer speaks to the multitude, but to them individually; they are called to behold Him as their Saviour. "They followed Jesus." It was the beginning of their faith. They walk at a reverential distance behind Him.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus does not repel, but encourages them to come nearer; He did not wait for them to speak first.

<sup>3</sup> The interpretation which is given in the text of such words as Rabbi and Rabboni proves that the evangelist wrote primarily for those who did not understand the language spoken by the Jews.

<sup>4</sup> The Jews divided the day into twelve equal parts from sunrise, which of course were longer or shorter as the sun rose and set earlier or later, so that the "tenth hour," if we are to suppose that John adopts their method of noting the hours, would correspond to our four o'clock p.m. The Romans commenced their civil day at midnight, dividing it into twelve hours till the noon following, and again into the same number from noon till midnight, making the hours of equal length at all seasons of the year. According to the Roman notation (and the same is ours), it was about ten o'clock in the morning, or two hours before noon, instead of two hours before sunset, when this interview took place. As John evidently adopts the Roman reckoning chap. xix. 14, there can be little doubt he does the same here. If he felt it important to tell his readers the meaning of the word *Rabbi*, if he had followed the Jewish reckoning here he would doubtless have felt it important to give some intimation of it; although the Greeks and Romans were not unacquainted with the Jewish fashion of reckoning, and appear sometimes to have made use of it. That it was not a hurried visit in the evening, but an interview extending from an early hour in the day till night, is clearly implied by the language that the two disciples "abode with Him that day."

<sup>5</sup> The name of the other is not given; there can be little doubt, however, it was John, the author of this Gospel, as in other instances in which he unmistakably refers to himself he carefully suppresses his name. When he wrote his Gospel he was an old man; but this scene in his youth, on the far distant Jordan, and the very hour of the day on which it occurred, rose distinctly before his view.

Simon, and saith unto him, We have found<sup>1</sup> the Messias, which  
 42 is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to  
 Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon  
 the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas,<sup>2</sup> which is by  
 43 interpretation, A stone. The day<sup>3</sup> following Jesus would go  
 forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip,<sup>4</sup> and saith unto him,  
 44 Follow Me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew  
 45 and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael,<sup>5</sup> and saith unto him, We  
 have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets,  
 46 did write, Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>6</sup> the son of Joseph. And  
 Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out  
 47 of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus  
 saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an  
 48 Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto  
 Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said  
 unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under  
 49 the fig tree,<sup>7</sup> I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto  
 Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of

<sup>1</sup> It is clear that Andrew and John were fully convinced that the promised Redeemer had come. They at once sought another young man from Galilee, Simon, the brother of Andrew.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for *rock*; its Greek equivalent is Peter, by which name this apostle is usually designated in the New Testament. The name appears to refer less to his character, as it originally was, than to what he became, as the leading apostle in laying the foundations of the Church.

<sup>3</sup> The sequence of the events is very carefully noted. We have had the "next day" twice, and now we have "the day following," *i.e.*, the day following Peter's introduction to our Lord, and the next but one after the visit of Andrew and John, and the next but two after the witness of the Baptist to the deputation from the Sanhedrin.

<sup>4</sup> Philip was the first of the disciples called by the Lord Himself. He instantly obeyed. He was from the same city, doubtless a companion of Peter and Andrew.

<sup>5</sup> No one can doubt that, silent as is the history respecting Philip, this early zeal in finding and preaching Christ to Nathanael was the type of his later and more developed piety. Nathanael is commonly supposed to be the same who is known in the lists of the apostles as Bartholomew. He is mentioned again by John, chap. xxi. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Philip keeps back nothing of his belief, not even that which he might fear would awaken the prejudices of his hearer. He tells him Jesus is of Nazareth. Even among the Galileans Nazareth seems to have had a bad name; and Nathanael was too well versed in the Scriptures not to know that Christ must be born in Bethlehem.

<sup>7</sup> He had gone to the fig tree for seclusion. We may not even suppose that Philip knew whither he had gone, or how he was engaged. And yet before Philip called him the Lord saw him. The Divine aspect and words of Jesus, through the gracious power of the Holy Ghost, convinced Nathanael. To the conversion of

50 Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou  
 51 shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see<sup>1</sup> heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

4. *Jesus manifests His glory as the only begotten of the Father or the Messiah, in beginning to work miracles, by turning water into wine.*

II.] [Ver. 1-11.]

1 And the third<sup>2</sup> day there was a marriage in Cana<sup>3</sup> of Galilee; 2 and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, 3 and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted<sup>4</sup> wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee?

Nathanael and his companions is given this prominent place by the inspired evangelist, not merely because they were to become apostles, but because the evidence that convinced them ought to convince every candid, right minded man.

<sup>1</sup> It was not the outward visible opening of the material heavens, but the series of glories which were about to be unfolded in His person and work, that the Lord announces. By this figurative language He intended to represent His mediation. He spanned and bridged the gulf that separated man from his Maker. Nathanael and other disciples, by the miracles and wonders that attended Him, but especially by His gracious work in saving sinners, were able to comprehend the glory of Christ as Mediator, just as if they saw heaven opened, and a shining way stretching up to it from His cross, on which glorified and beatified spirits were passing in rejoicing throngs.

“ The ladder still is set,  
 And angel visitants still come and go;  
 Many bright messengers are moving yet  
 From the dark world below:  
 Spirits elect, through sufferings rendered meet  
 For those high mansions; from the nursery floor,  
 Bright babes that climb up with their clay-cold feet  
 Unto the golden door.  
 These are messengers for ever wending  
 From earth to heaven, that faith alone may scan;  
 These are the angels of our God ascending  
 Upon the Son of man.”

<sup>2</sup> It was the third day after that on which Jesus found Philip and Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Robinson, differing from most modern travellers who had preceded him, finds the site of this Cana at a ruin, north of Sefürieh, and about three hours distant north east from Nazareth, called Kána el-Jelil. It was about fifty miles from Bethany on the Jordan, or Bethabara.

<sup>4</sup> It is not necessary to attribute the failure of the wine either to the improvidence of the bridegroom or the intemperance of the guests, but rather to the unexpected number of the guests, increased perhaps because Jesus was there, as the nuptial feast might be attended not only by those specially invited, but by as many as chose

5 Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants,  
 6 Whatsoever He saith unto you, do *it*. And there were set  
 there six waterpots<sup>1</sup> of stone, after the manner of the puri-  
 fying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.  
 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And  
 8 they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them,  
 Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And  
 9 they bare *it*. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water  
 that was made wine,<sup>2</sup> and knew not whence it was: (but the  
 servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast  
 10 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  
 11 wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana  
 of Galilee, and manifested<sup>3</sup> forth His glory; and His disciples  
 believed on Him.

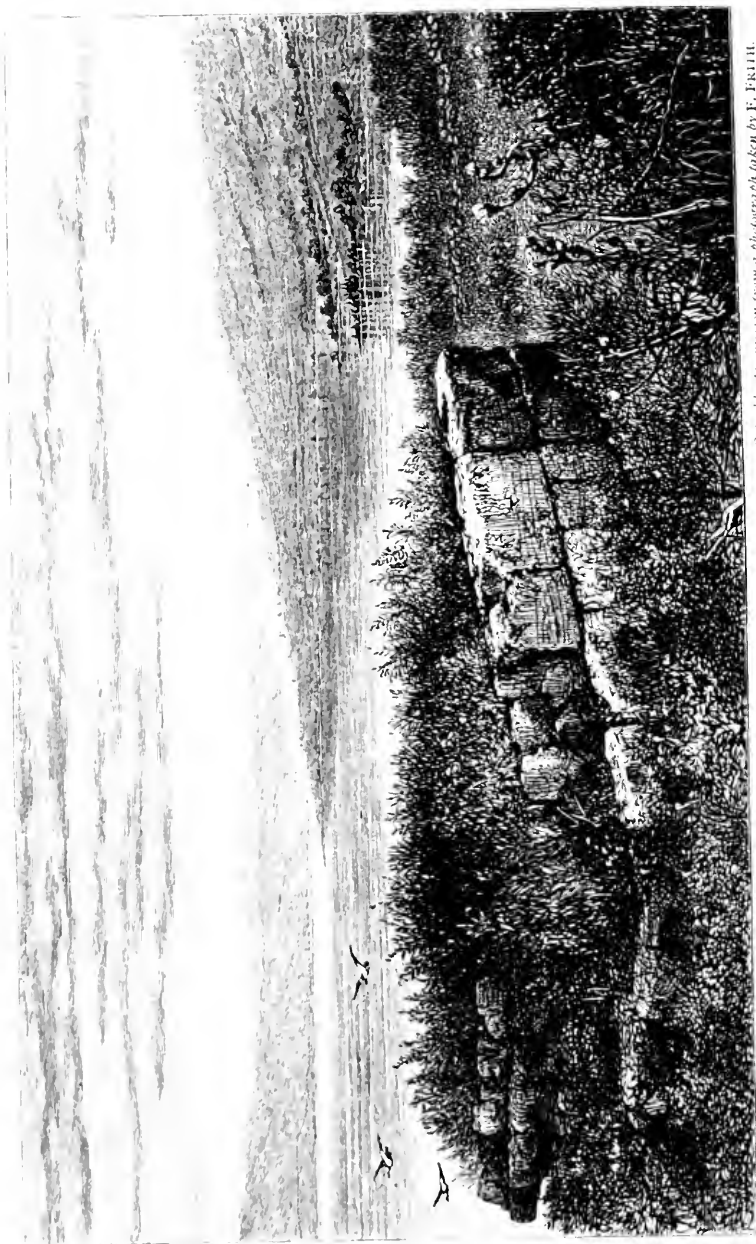
to bring presents. The Sinaitic MS. reads, *And they had no wine, because the wine of the marriage was finished*. Thus it appears that this beginning of our Lord's miracles was not performed in a corner, but in the presence of a numerous company.

<sup>1</sup> Large stone jars, or vessels for bathing or purifying according to the custom of the Jews. Here we have one of those numerous instances in which John has clearly in view readers not familiar with Jewish customs.

<sup>2</sup> In an instant, by an invisible power, was an ample supply of wine provided for the unexpected throng of guests. The miracle consisted in converting the substance of water into that which is the joint product of the fruit of the vine and human skill and labour, or by His creative energy imparting to simple water all the qualities of wine. "*Lympha pudica Deum vidit, et erubuit.*" (CRASHAW, 1634.) ["The conscious water saw its God and blushed," translated by Sydney Smith.] There was no violation of the laws of nature; the power of Him who ordained these laws was simply interposed, and this interposition being a new and peculiar antecedent required a new and peculiar result. He did not invoke any name; He did not even speak, as He did on many other occasions. He simply put forth a creative fiat, and the water became wine.

<sup>3</sup> It is never said that the miracles which the prophets performed, before Christ, or His apostles after Him, manifested forth their glory. They were mere instruments in the performance of these mighty works, while God was the real Author of them. Christ performed miracles, not instrumentally, but immediately and directly by His own inherent and underyived power. A miracle is seeming interruption to, or sensible variation from, the laws of nature, performed by the direct operation of the Power which created and governs the universe. "The laws of nature surely are not violated," says Dr. Brown, the successor of Dugald Stewart, "when a new antecedent is followed by a new consequent; they are violated only when, the antecedent being exactly the same, a different consequent is the result. A miracle therefore has nothing in it which is inconsistent with our belief of the most undeviating uniformity of nature; for it is not the sequence of a different event when the preceding circumstances have been the same, it is an effect which is new to our observation, because it is the result of new and peculiar circumstances."





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SITE OF CAPERNAUM, SEA OF GALILEE.



5. *He exhibits His control over the wills of men at the cleansing of the temple.*

[Ver. 12-25.]

12 After this He went down to Capernaum,<sup>1</sup> He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples; and they continued there  
 13 not many days. And the Jews' passover<sup>2</sup> was at hand, and  
 14 Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money  
 15 sitting: and when He had made a scourge<sup>3</sup> 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;  
 16 and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence;  
 17 make not My Father's house a house of merchandise.<sup>4</sup> And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine

<sup>1</sup> Capernaum. The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. have Capharnaum. Dr. Robinson, after a very thorough examination, determines the site of this place to have been on the western shore of the sea, known as the region of Gemmesaret. Christ was soon to make His first official visit to Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> St. John mentions four passovers as occurring during our Lord's public ministry. That referred to here was the first. The "feast of the Jews," chap. v. 1, was the second. The third is recorded in vi. 4; and the last, at which He suffered, in xii. 1, proving that His ministry must have continued three and a half years.

<sup>3</sup> His taking a scourge in His hands was only a part of this great symbolical transaction. It was not for the infliction of pain on the innocent animals, or their owners and purchasers, but part of the mere insignia of His authority.

<sup>4</sup> The cleansing of the temple, involving, as it did, control over the wills of men, can be regarded as nothing less than a miracle. Some, as Origen and Jerome, have regarded it as the most wonderful of all the wonderful works of Christ, exhibiting in the fullest manner the Messianic character and Divine glory of Him who wrought it. The great number of sacrifices required at the passover must have required a large supply of animals. Their sellers and purchasers, and the brokers who were in attendance to exchange foreign for current money, must have constituted a numerous throng. They were there by permission of the constituted authorities. Here, under the very eyes of the priests, and within the sacred precincts of the temple, the crowds of strangers might be sure of obtaining animals duly inspected, and meeting with honest dealing. It was as much for the interests of these crowds as of the market men and exchangers that the use to which the court of the Gentiles had been appropriated should not be disturbed. But a Galilean Stranger enters; He has no retinue save some five or six Galileans, poor men like Himself. His command is instantly obeyed when He said, "Take these things hence." Why did not avarice, and resentment, and those violent passions which govern mercenary minds, prompt them to resist? An invisible power accompanied Him. HE had suddenly come to His temple, of whom the last of the prophets had asked, "Who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. iii. 2.)

It is worthy of notice, and not without instruction, that this miracle with which our Lord opened His public ministry at Jerusalem was repeated by Him at its close (Matt. xxi. 12, 13; Mark xi. 15-19; Luke xix. 45-48). These purgations, both at the beginning and at the close of His public ministry, were decisive acts of Messianic

18 house hath eaten Me up. Then answered the Jews and said  
 unto Him, What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou  
 19 doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, De-  
 20 stroy this temple,<sup>1</sup> and in three days I will raise it up. Then  
 said the Jews, Forty and six years<sup>2</sup> was this temple in building,  
 21 and wilt Thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the  
 22 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 which  
 23 Jesus had said. Now when He was in Jerusalem at the pass-  
 over, in the feast *day*, many believed in His name, when they  
 24 saw the miracles<sup>3</sup> which He did. But Jesus did not commit  
 25 Himself unto them, because He knew all *men*, and needed not  
 that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man.

6. *The conviction wrought in the mind of one of the most intelligent of the Jews, a member of their great council, that Jesus was the promised Saviour.*

III.]

[Ver. 1-21.

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus,<sup>4</sup> a  
 2 ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,<sup>5</sup> and said

power, which involved a direct claim on the part of our Lord to that high character and office. They were miracles by which He manifested His Divinity and authority, and, at the same time, shadowed forth the holiness of His kingdom, or the effect of His coming on the moral and religious interests of men.

<sup>1</sup> Temple. The Jews understood Him to refer to the edifice where they were assembled; but He used language in a highly symbolical sense. The temple was but a type of that body which enshrined His wonderful person as the God-man. His resurrection from the dead made all clear to His disciples.

<sup>2</sup> The temple of Herod was begun in the fifteenth year of Herod's reign, twenty years before the birth of Christ, according to the Dionysian reckoning; add the age of our Lord, thirty years, and we have fifty, from which take the four years required for the correction of our era, and we have the exact period of forty-six years.

<sup>3</sup> The purification of the temple is the only miracle recorded at this His first visit to Jerusalem. There can be no doubt He performed others (chap. iii. 2, xxi. 25). Many believed in Him as the Messiah when they saw His miracles. Their senses were strongly impressed, but their faith was such only as men have who walk by sight. Hence Jesus, who knew what was in men, did not commit Himself to them.

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus belonged to the ruling sect among the Jews, the Pharisees; he was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the Areopagus of the Hebrew nation. It was composed of some seventy of the most learned and distinguished men to be found in the nation. The conviction wrought in the mind of such a man, so capable of forming an intelligent judgment, so little likely to be led astray, was well suited to the evangelist's object in setting forth to the great Gentile world His claims as the Messiah and the Word of God.

<sup>5</sup> The fact that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night has often been interpreted

unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except  
 3 God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily,  
 verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born<sup>1</sup> again, he can-  
 4 not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him,  
 How<sup>2</sup> can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the  
 5 second time into his mother's womb, and be born ? Jesus  
 answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born  
 of water<sup>3</sup> and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom  
 6 of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ;<sup>4</sup> and that

(perhaps most usually) as proof of his moral cowardice. But the work of conviction in Nicodemus cannot be supposed at this time to have proceeded so far as to justify this view ; nor had the hostility to Jesus, on the part of his associates, been so early developed as to lead him to wish to conceal his interview. The evangelist does not, either expressly or by implication, attribute fear to Nicodemus. There was a tradition among the Jews that the night was the most appropriate time for the study of religious subjects, by which Nicodemus, as a rabbi and Pharisee, would be apt to be influenced. Or, as he was a member of the Sanhedrin, and the business of that body would be greatly increased at the time of the Passover, the night might have been the only opportunity for such an interview as he desired. Moreover, as Jesus would be surrounded by crowds during the day, night was the only season when he could hope for a private interview.

<sup>1</sup> Nicodemus is given to understand that the kingdom is not an external, but an internal, invisible kingdom, the title to which must rest on a renewed spiritual condition, independent of natural birth, and necessary to every son and daughter of Abraham and of Adam.

<sup>2</sup> So long had Nicodemus been accustomed to look upon descent as contributing a title to membership in God's kingdom, and so thoroughly had this been inwrought with his most intimate convictions, that he understands Christ as speaking literally of natural birth.

<sup>3</sup> "Born again" now becomes "born of water and of the Spirit." *Seeing* becomes *entering* the kingdom. The Spirit, the Agent in this indispensable renewal, is expressly mentioned, and the water is joined with the Spirit, because, as it purifies in washing, the Spirit purifies and sanctifies the soul, by the washing of regeneration. The Divine Teacher meant by being born of water that we must be born again by the word of God ; in complete harmony with which we find the apostle Paul, when describing the same great change, saying that we must be sanctified and cleansed, "with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. v. 26). The sacrament of baptism, not then instituted as a Christian rite, cannot be alluded to, though it is understood by Lutherans as well as Romanists. Calvin and the able expounder of his doctrines, Beza, understood the expression "born of water" as exegetical, or explanatory of the expression "born of the Spirit." Zwingle, the great Swiss reformer, interprets "water" as a figurative designation of "knowledge, clearness, heavenly light," *i.e.* the knowledge or light that comes through the word, and which the Holy Spirit employs as the instrument in renewing the soul. This, comparing Scripture with Scripture, seems to be the true interpretation (John i. 11-13 ; 2 Thess. ii. 13 ; Jas. i. 18 ; Eph. v. 25, 26 ; Tit. iii. 5-7).

<sup>4</sup> Is flesh, is corrupt, and must in all cases be corrupt, because it is so born.

7 which is born of the Spirit is spirit.<sup>1</sup> Marvel not that I said  
 8 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, and whither it goeth: so is every one that  
 9 is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto  
 10 Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said  
 unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these  
 11 things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do  
 know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our  
 12 witness. If I have told you earthly<sup>2</sup> things, and ye believe  
 13 not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And  
 no man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down  
 14 from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.<sup>3</sup> And  
 as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must  
 15 the Son of man be lifted<sup>4</sup> up: that whosoever believeth in  
 16 Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so<sup>5</sup>  
 loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that who-

<sup>1</sup> Is spirit; a new spiritual principle, something which did not exist before, wrought in the heart, by which the will is restored to somewhat of its original rectitude, and obedience of the soul as well as of the life is secured. The flesh represents the old corrupt nature, the spirit the new. Again solemnly announcing the truth, "Ye must be born again," He directed his attention to the night wind, as it souged through the olives of the mountains or moaned round the city's roofs, and told him, as he could not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so it is with the breath of the Divine Spirit as it comes forth from God, and reaches and influences the heart of man.

<sup>2</sup> The things connected with this birth, taking place in this world, which are matters of human necessity and experience, are the "earthly things"; the "heavenly things" are those which relate more especially to the unseen and heavenly, and the deeper mysteries of religion.

<sup>3</sup> The two oldest MSS. do not have "which is in heaven."

It is not difficult to conceive how, as the light dawned on a mind like that of Nicodemus, so candid and so much in earnest, under the teachings of Jesus, in regard to the nature of His kingdom and the qualifications for admission to it, powerful convictions must have been wrought in him, and he was led to put his sole trust in Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, and the Holy Spirit performed His effectual work, and that which had been born of the flesh was born of the Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> Our Lord, in His discourse to Nicodemus having first pressed upon the necessity of regeneration, next proceeded to give prominence to the great doctrine of atonement for sin, and the necessity of holiness and faith. This master in Israel was perfectly familiar with the historical incident employed, and perhaps no one was better prepared to appreciate the application our Saviour made of it. There can be no doubt he believed. The evidence of his sincere discipleship appears again and again, in the notices of him in the Gospel of this evangelist.

<sup>5</sup> We have in verses 16, 17, one of the brightest jewels among the words of Jesus, the gospel in miniature. In the little monosyllable *so* there seems to be an acknowledgment of the insufficiency of human speech to set forth the Father's

soever believeth in Him should not perish, but have<sup>1</sup> everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world<sup>2</sup> through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: <sup>3</sup> 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.

*7. The final and most complete testimony of that great prophet and holy man, John the Baptist, to the Divine mission and Messiahship of Jesus.*

[Ver. 22-36.]

22 After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land<sup>4</sup> of Judæa; and there He tarried with them, and 23 baptized.<sup>5</sup> And John<sup>6</sup> also was baptizing in Ænon near to

infinite and eternal love in the gift of His Son. In the language used there is no mockery of mere words; it is love that finds fit expression in deed rather than in words.

<sup>1</sup> Life is in Him already, initially, who believes in Jesus; the death of the body is but a necessary incident in this great salvation.

<sup>2</sup> "The world" is repeated again and again; and it is the whole world which God loved, and for which He gave His Son. The only limitation of the gift of everlasting life, through this love of God, is found in the words, "whosoever believeth in Him."

<sup>3</sup> It is the manifestation of infinite love which leads to the deeper condemnation of all who are unmoved by it and neglect the salvation it has provided. The unbelief of men, or rejection of the blessings offered in the gospel, is judgment against themselves.

Truly remarkable was the discourse which Nicodemus heard from the lips of Jesus on that night. As John is the only one of the evangelists who makes record of his interview and of this discourse, it may be that he alone was present. Matthew, the only other apostle among the writers of the Gospels, had not yet been called. And it may be true, of some other discourses which John only records, that he alone was present to hear them.

<sup>4</sup> "The land of Judæa" is used in distinction from the city or Jerusalem. The meaning is that He left the city and went into the country or rural parts of Judæa.

<sup>5</sup> That is, His disciples baptized: John iv. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The reason why John the Evangelist makes so much of the testimony of John the Baptist probably was that at Ephesus, from which place he wrote, and in Asia Minor generally, he had encountered some of those Jews, or the influence of their teaching, who knew only the baptism of John, and had not so much as heard "whether

Salim,<sup>1</sup> because there was much water there : and they came, and  
 24 were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then  
 25 there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and  
 26 the Jews<sup>2</sup> about purifying. And they came<sup>3</sup> unto John, and  
 said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan,  
 to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and  
 27 all *men* come to Him. John answered and said, A man can  
 28 receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye

there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts xviii. 25, xix. 2). Apollon, one of this class, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, had been found at Ephesus by Priscilla and Aquila. Paul found there a singular sort of half Christians, twelve in number, who became the nucleus of the church he founded. It has been supposed that from the Jews visiting Palestine, who received their knowledge of the Messiah from the Baptist, and carried with them this knowledge on returning to their homes, at a later period sprung a heretical sect, the Zabæans, who held John the Baptist to have been himself the Messiah. (See Schaff's History of Apost. Church, p. 279.)

An educated Jewish gentleman, whom the author knew well as he was his neighbour for several years, once told him that there was still a society or sect among the Jews, professing to be the disciples of John and accepting his testimony in regard to Jesus, who were in possession of records and documents, dating back to the very time of John, and which they guarded with the most scrupulous care. He professed to be one of their number, and said that many of the most highly educated and wealthy of his nation belonged to this sect. He represented it to be one of the strictest of their laws that no one should act on his own individual behalf in professing his faith, but all were to wait till the heads or leaders of their order should intimate the time when all were to profess Christianity together. He claimed to be impatient for the time to arrive.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robinson on his second visit failed to find any trace of either name or remains of this place, at its traditionary site, some eight miles south of Scythopolis (Bib. Res., iii. 333). And the demands of the narrative seem to require that the locality should be found nearer Jerusalem in Judæa, as the disciples of Jesus and John were evidently baptizing at the same place or in immediate vicinity. Dr. Barclay reports (City of the Great King, pp. 558-570) the discovery of Ænon in a secluded valley, Wady Fârah, about five miles to the north east of Jerusalem. He found here very copious springs (*ῥῆματα πολλά*), and the name of Selam or Seleim, another wady near by. The W. Fârah runs into the great W. Fûwâr immediately above Jericho.

<sup>2</sup> The most ancient MSS. (Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine) have the reading "a Jew." The question between them probably related to the comparative merits of baptismal purification and the ablutions or purifications of the Mosaic law. It is not improbable that the Jew in this dispute referred to the fact that Jesus, to whom John had borne testimony as mightier than he, was baptizing, and contended that if the purifyings instituted by Moses were superseded by the baptism of John, then that of John must take an inferior place to that of Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> It was their appeal to their master which led him again in so emphatic a manner to bear testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus. To illustrate the superiority of Jesus to himself, John employs a simile drawn from the nuptial ceremony of the Jews. He compares Jesus to the bridegroom, and himself to the paranymphe, or friend of the bridegroom.

yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ,  
 29 but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is  
 the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which  
 standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the  
 30 bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He  
 31 must increase, but I *must* decrease.<sup>1</sup> He<sup>2</sup> 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  
 32 all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and  
 33 no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His  
 34 testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For He  
 whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God  
 35 giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto Him*. The Father  
 36 loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He  
 that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that  
 believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God  
 abideth on him.

8. *The Messiahsip of Jesus acknowledged among those natural enemies  
 of His nation, the Samaritans.*

IV.]

[Ver. 1-42.]

1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard  
 that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that John the Baptist was in the prime and vigour of his days, and that the words before us therefore are those of a young man. He was a few months older than Jesus, and it is supposed entered on his ministry about six months before Jesus. About the same length of time after Jesus entered on His ministry the ministry of John was brought to a close.

<sup>2</sup> Many excellent critics (such as Bengel, Olshausen, and Tholuck) have considered the verses from the 31st to the end of the chapter as containing the words of the evangelist rather than of John the Baptist. But almost all ancient and most modern commentators of the evangelical school adopt the view that they must be those of the Baptist. "There is a complete connection of these words with the preceding, without the interposition of any expression from which it could be inferred that what follows is from the evangelist. And there are obvious reasons why this passage should be from John the Baptist; for in it he seems to have intended to advert to the reasons confirming what he had said, namely, that the precedence is due not to him but to Jesus. It is, he means to say, only just that His fame should be spread abroad, and the number of His disciples increased, inasmuch as He was sent from heaven, endowed with gifts immeasurably great; nay, was the beloved Son of God, the Lord and promised Saviour of the human race." (Tittmann in Bloomf.) He had before established the distinction between Christ and himself, in the pre-existence of Christ; he now establishes it further in this, that the origin of Christ cannot be referred to a mere human descent; "He that cometh from heaven is above all." (See also Dr. J. J. Owen's excellent Commentary, *in loco*.)

2.<sup>3</sup> (though Jesus himself baptized not, but His disciples,) He left <sup>1</sup>  
<sup>4</sup> Judæa, and departed again into Galilee. And He must needs <sup>2</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> go through Samaria. Then cometh He to a city of Samaria,  
 which is called Sychar,<sup>3</sup> near to the parcel of ground that Jacob  
<sup>6</sup> gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus  
 therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the  
<sup>7</sup> well: and it was about the sixth<sup>4</sup> hour. There cometh a  
 woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give  
<sup>8</sup> Me to drink. (For His disciples were gone away unto the city  
<sup>9</sup> to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him,  
 How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am  
 a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings<sup>5</sup> with the  
<sup>10</sup> Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest  
 the gift<sup>6</sup> of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to

<sup>1</sup> The length of time Jesus spent at Jerusalem at this visit cannot be precisely determined; but probably it was not far from eight months.

<sup>2</sup> The need-be in this case was not because there was no other route to Galilee. The Jews commonly made the journey by the valley of the Jordan, to avoid going through Samaria. But our Lord had a work to do in Samaria, and was to receive a signal acknowledgment there among the enemies of His people that He was the promised Saviour.

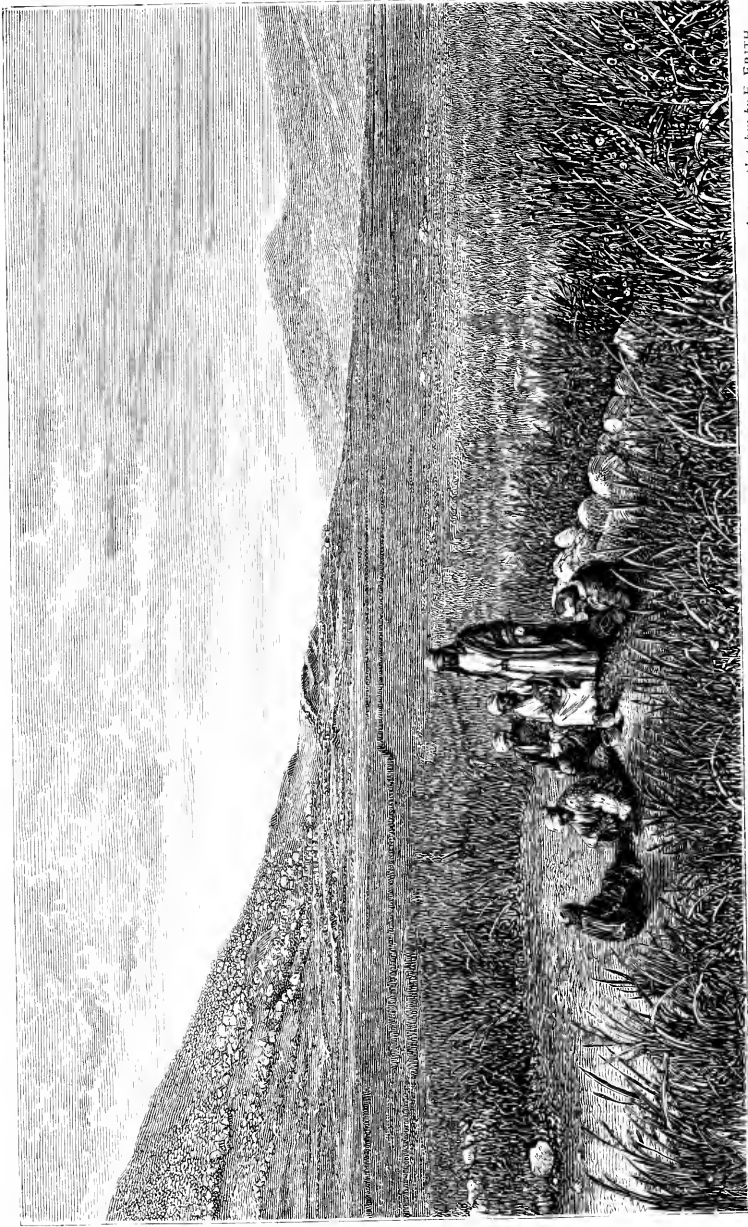
<sup>3</sup> Sychar was situated between the abutments of two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal. Its ancient name was Shechem, its modern Nâbulus, or Nâblus, a corruption of Neapolis, the "New Town" founded by Vespasian on the site of Shechem. Of the sacred localities in Palestine, as pointed out by tradition, this is almost the only one absolutely undisputed. Dr. Robinson thinks there can be no reason to doubt that here is Jacob's well, and here the parcel of ground he gave to his son Joseph, and that here the Saviour taught the Samaritan woman.

<sup>4</sup> As St. John adopted the Roman method of reckoning the hours of the day, which is the same as ours, this must have been either the sixth hour from noon (or at evening), or the sixth from midnight (or in the morning). As the sun must have set at Sychar, at the season of the year when this visit was paid, not far from five o'clock, we infer that it must have been in the morning, after a night journey to avoid the heat of the sun. And this opinion agrees best with the errand of the woman, who comes to get her morning supply of water. It was not, clearly, according to the Jewish method of reckoning the hours, at noon, under the fervid heat of the sun. The interview at the well was rather a morning than evening scene. We incline to the view that it was a morning scene, for the reason intimated above.

<sup>5</sup> The oldest and most complete MS. in existence, the Sinaitic, omits "for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." It is superfluous certainly as a part of the woman's address to our Lord; and it is easy to see how it may have been transferred from the margin (placed there as a note of explanation) into the text.

<sup>6</sup> The great salvation, under the figure of living water. He presents Himself under this figure, as having life in Himself, a life which can allay the craving in the human heart and impart full satisfaction. The simple woman was unable fully to understand the greatness of the thought. It was necessary for Him first to reveal her to herself, and thus prepare her for that gracious revelation He was about to make of Himself to her. But He did not seek to awaken confidence in Himself by the per-





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JACOB'S WELL.



drink ; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have  
 11 given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou  
 hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep : from whence  
 12 then hast Thou that living water ? Art Thou greater than our  
 father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof him-  
 13 self, and his children, and his cattle ? Jesus answered and said  
 unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again :  
 14 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  
 15 him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The  
 woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst  
 16 not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go,  
 17 call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and  
 said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well  
 18 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  
 19 truly. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou  
 20 art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain ;<sup>1</sup> and ye  
 say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.  
 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when  
 ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship  
 22 the Father. Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we  
 23 worship ; for salvation is of the Jews. But 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  
 24 Him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship *Him* must  
 25 worship Him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto  
 Him, I know that Messiah<sup>2</sup> cometh, which is called Christ : when  
 26 He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I  
 27 that speak unto thee am *He*. And upon this came His disciples,  
 and marvelled that He talked with the woman : yet no man

formance of a miracle, the raising of the water from the well for example, without  
 any vessel or rope to draw it with. The conviction He wrought in her mind, and  
 in those of her countrymen subsequently, was entirely independent of any miraculous  
 exhibition.

<sup>1</sup> The woman sought to divert the conversation from the unpleasant topic of her  
 past sins to the controversies between the Jews and the Samaritans. She affected  
 some religion ; she could talk about worship. This led our Saviour to condemn all  
 formality and bigotry, and to unfold the spiritual nature of all true worship.

<sup>2</sup> That which had been intimated at an early stage in the conversation Jesus now  
 distinctly declares : " I that speak unto thee am He. I am Christ. I am He that  
 came from heaven to save the lost." There stood her Saviour before her eyes.

said, What seekest Thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?  
 28 The woman then left <sup>1</sup> her waterpot, and went her way into the  
 29 city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all  
 30 things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they  
 31 went out of the city, and came unto Him. In the mean while  
 32 His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat. <sup>2</sup> But He said  
 33 unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore  
 said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him  
 34 *ought* to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the  
 35 will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. Say not ye,  
 There are yet four <sup>3</sup> months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold,  
 I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for  
 36 they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth  
 wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that  
 37 soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein  
 38 is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent  
 you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men  
 39 laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of  
 the Samaritans <sup>4</sup> of that city believed on Him for the saying of  
 the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.  
 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto Him, they be-

<sup>1</sup> In the intense interest that had been awakened in her mind forgetting the errand that had brought her to the well. That such a woman, whose character and conduct had been far from reputable, should exhibit so much interest, and come with the question "Is not this the Christ?" may have been the means of awakening the interest of her countrymen. They came out to Him on her testimony that she had met with a man who possessed supernatural knowledge, and could tell the very secrets of the heart.

<sup>2</sup> Ignorant of the important results to the Samaritans of His interview with the woman, they urge their Master to refresh Himself with the food they had brought, expecting no doubt soon to resume their journey towards Galilee.

<sup>3</sup> From the form of the expression, "Say not ye," etc., it is natural to infer that the harvest was yet four months distant. And as the harvest had its legal commencement when a sheaf of the firstfruits was waved before the Lord, about the 1st of April, if we count back from the beginning of this month four months we obtain the 1st of December, or last of November, at or soon after the sowing time, as the season when this visit was made by Jesus to Samaria. There is no such interval between the sowing and the spiritual harvest.

<sup>4</sup> The Samaritans were a mixed race, partly of Gentile and partly of Jewish extraction; and they stood therefore as a sort of connecting link between Jews and Gentiles. The apostles were sent to the Samaritans next to the Jews, before they were directed to go to the Gentiles. This was the very course Christianity took at its spread. At the dispersion which took place at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip went down, and it was probably in this very city, Sychar, where his preaching was attended with such remarkable effects. (See Alexander, Acts viii. 5.)

sought Him that He would tarry with them : and He abode  
 41 there two days. And many more believed because of His  
 42 own word ; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not  
 because of thy saying : for we have heard *Him* ourselves, and  
 know<sup>1</sup> that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the  
 world.

9. *A nobleman, probably a courtier of Herod Antipas, is convinced, and believes in Jesus.*

[Ver. 43-54.]

43 Now after two days He departed thence, and went into Gali-  
 44 lee.<sup>2</sup> For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour  
 45 in his own country. Then when He was come into Galilee, the  
 Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did  
 at Jerusalem at the feast : for they also went unto the feast.  
 46 So Jesus came again into Cana<sup>3</sup> of Galilee, where He made the  
 water wine. And there was a certain nobleman,<sup>4</sup> whose son  
 47 was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was

<sup>1</sup> It was a most wonderful work ; there is nothing more so in the history of our Lord's ministry. It was what they heard from His own lips (there was no miracle, as we have said) which prompted them to say with so much emphasis that they knew He was indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. They felt the authority that accompanied His teachings, a certain majesty and power, which belonged to unmixed truth.

<sup>2</sup> After spending two days at Sychar, He went into Galilee, directing His steps first to Nazareth, where He was scornfully and with violence rejected, calling forth the testimony from Him that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country." That by country here is meant Nazareth, and not Galilee, we have proof in the fact that Nazareth is so denominated frequently by the evangelists. (Matt. xiii. 54 ; Mark vi. 1 ; Luke iv. 23.) The Galileans generally were disposed to receive Him, as we are distinctly told in verse 45.

<sup>3</sup> This place was to be honoured as the scene of the second great miracle Jesus performed in Galilee at the opening of His ministry. Or rather this was the place where Jesus Himself was when He performed the miracle, while the scene itself of the miracle was at a distance of some twenty miles, at Capernaum on the Lake. This circumstance of the distance between the two places is an important feature in the miracle, as showing that distance could set no limit to the will and power of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> It has been conjectured that this nobleman was Chuza or Chuzas (Χουζᾶς) mentioned in Luke viii. 3 as "Herod's steward." Joanna, the wife or widow of Chuza, was one of the women who ministered to the wants of Jesus. If the conjecture be well founded, then his office made him a member of the court of Herod Antipas. The nobleman, whoever he may have been, must have filled an influential position. The healing of his son was probably the beginning of the wonderful works performed in the sight of the people of this city, and may have been the occasion which led Christ to take up His abode there.

come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son :  
 48 for he was at the point of death.<sup>1</sup> Then said Jesus unto him,  
 49 Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The  
 nobleman saith unto Him, Sir,<sup>2</sup> come down ere my child die.  
 50 Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way : thy son liveth. And the  
 man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and  
 51 he went his way. And as he was now going down, his  
 52 servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth. Then  
 inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And  
 they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh<sup>3</sup> hour the fever  
 53 left him. So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour,  
 in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth : and him-  
 54 self believed, and his whole house. This is again the second<sup>4</sup>  
 miracle *that* Jesus did, when He was come out of Judæa into  
 Galilee.

<sup>1</sup> He would have Him make no delay, but hasten back with him to Capernaum, and for greater expedition, we may presume, had come in his chariot. He never once dreamed that Christ had power to perform the miracle, remaining where He was. His faith was not equal to that of the centurion who did not feel worthy, nor think it necessary, that Christ should come to his house (Matt. viii. 5-13).

<sup>2</sup> It is an anguished parent's cry ; and notwithstanding the limitations he sets to Christ's power, and the corresponding weakness of his faith, it prevails with the merciful Saviour.

<sup>3</sup> As John computes time by the Roman division of the day into twelve equal parts, beginning from midnight and again from midday, the healing took place at seven o'clock in the evening ; unless we suppose that the nobleman came in the night from Capernaum, and arrived at or before seven o'clock in the morning. It is conclusive that it must have been at evening, as it was the following day when he was met returning by his servants with the message, "Thy son liveth." If the miracle had been performed at an early hour in the morning, in his deep anxiety about his son, it is not to be presumed the father would have remained at Cana an entire day before returning. The same argument militates against the seventh hour being reckoned according to the Jewish horology ; for if his son had been cured at one o'clock p.m., the nobleman might have returned that evening.

<sup>4</sup> Cana was an honoured place. In the first miracle performed at Cana He manifested forth His glory, by changing water into wine. In the second, by a simple act of volition, and at a distance of miles, He restored a dying person to health, and gave evidence of possessing perfect knowledge of his recovery.

10. *Christ performs a miracle on that great public occasion, the Pass-over, which, in contrast with false miracles, pointed Him out as the Son of God and Saviour of the world.*

V.]

[Ver. 1-16.]

1 After<sup>1</sup> this there was a feast<sup>2</sup> of the Jews; and Jesus went up  
2 to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market<sup>3</sup>  
a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having  
3 five porches.<sup>4</sup> In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,

<sup>1</sup> By "after this," *ταῦτα*, we are not to understand St. John as referring to what immediately followed in his narrative the healing of the nobleman's son, but to what took place after a considerable interval. Jesus had healed the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, Peter's wife's mother, and many others in that city. He had made a circuit, with the disciples who had then been called, through Galilee, preaching the kingdom. He had sent a message to John the Baptist in prison. He had healed a leper and a paralytic, had called Matthew the publican, and attended a feast in his house, and raised to life the daughter of the ruler Jairus.

<sup>2</sup> The question what feast is here meant is specially important, as bearing on the length of our Lord's ministry. In the oldest MS., the Sinaitic, we read "the feast," as we do also in several other less important MSS. That which was known by way of eminence as "*the feast of the Jews*" was the passover. Dr. Robinson states convincing reasons that the passover is meant here, in a note *in loco* to his *Harmony of the Gospels*. John notices three other passovers; to wit, the first, chap. ii. 13; the third, vi. 4; the fourth, xii. 1. It follows that our Lord's public ministry extended over more than three years. This is the view of most ancient and the best modern interpreters: Irenæus, Eusebius, Luther, Scaliger, Grotius, Lightfoot, Le Clerc, Hengstenberg, Tholuck, etc.

<sup>3</sup> The word "market" is not in the original. The marginal reading is "gate," which is probably correct, as we know there was a gate at Jerusalem having this name (Neh. iii. 1, xii. 39). Near this gate was a pool called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda (in the Sinaitic MS. Bethzatha; in the Vatican, Bethsaida).

<sup>4</sup> Porches. Places roofed over, where the sick might be laid.

It has been common for monks and travellers for many centuries to find the ancient Bethesda, mentioned by John, in the deep excavation on the north side of the area of the great mosque, near the gate now called St. Stephen's. But the learned traveller, Dr. Robinson, says: "There is not the slightest evidence that can identify it with the Bethesda of the New Testament." He thinks the name has been assigned to the excavation in question in comparatively modern times, from its proximity to St. Stephen's gate, which was erroneously held to be the ancient sheep-gate. (Bib. Res., i., pp. 231, 232; iii., p. 189; i., pp. 337-341.) He thinks he finds (of which there can scarcely be a question) the true Bethesda in the upper fountain of Siloam, the same with the king's pool of Nehemiah and the Solomon's pool of Josephus. He had heard that the irregular flow of this fountain was a belief among the people of Jerusalem, but his friends had never seen it, and they regarded the story as one of the popular legends of the country. But wishing to verify what was believed to be the fact, that the upper and lower fountains were connected by a passage or canal under that part of Zion called Ophel, he was permitted himself to be a witness of the phenomenon in question. "As we were preparing," he writes, "to measure the basin of the upper fountain, and explore the passages leading from it, my companion was standing on the lower step, near the water, with one foot on the step, and the other on a loose stone lying in the basin. All at once

of blind, halt, withered, waiting<sup>1</sup> for the moving of the water.  
 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and  
 troubled the water : whosoever then first after the troubling of  
 the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he  
 5 had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity  
 6 thirty and eight years. When Jesus<sup>2</sup> saw him lie, and knew

he perceived the water coming into his shoe ; and supposing the stone had rolled, he withdrew his foot to the step ; which, however, in a very few minutes was also now covered with water. This instantly excited our curiosity ; and we now perceived the water rapidly bubbling up from under the lower step. In less than five minutes it had risen in the basin nearly or quite a foot, and we could hear it gurgling off through the interior passage. In ten minutes more it had ceased to flow, and the water in the basin was reduced to its former level." He describes the pool as a deep cavity wholly excavated in the solid rock, the basin itself being perhaps fifteen feet long by five or six wide, the height six or eight feet. As to the cause of the irregular flow of this fountain as witnessed by Dr. Robinson, it no doubt belongs to the class of remitting fountains, of which there are not a few in that region of the world, and some which are wholly intermitting. Josephus gives an account of a stream, which he calls the Sabbatic River, which flowed only on the seventh day (Josephus, Wars, vii. 5, 1). Dr. W. M. Thomson discovered a stream quiescent two days, and active on part of the third (Land and Book, i., pp. 407, 408). It is well known that these intermitting fountains are merely the drainage of subterraneous reservoirs, on the principle of the syphon ; the condition necessary to make the stream intermit is that the capacity of the syphon be greater than the supply.

<sup>1</sup> The evidence that the last clause of verse 3 to the end of verse 4, beginning with the word "waiting," and in the Greek from *ἐκδεχομένων* to *ροσήματι*, lacks genuineness is as follows. The passage is wholly wanting in the two oldest Codices, the Sinaitic and Vatican ; and in the oldest MSS. next in authority, the Codex Regius in the imperial library at Paris, and that of Beza in the university of Cambridge, belonging respectively to the fifth and sixth centuries, the fourth verse is omitted. Tischendorf, in his edition of the Greek Testament, omits the entire passage. Tregelles does the same in his edition ; and so also in the Curetonian Syriac, the Memphitic MSS. and the Thebaic version. Neither Lücke, nor Tholuck, nor Trench regards the disputed clause as genuine. "It is in the highest degree probable," says Olshausen, "that it was introduced into the text from MSS. in the margin of which the owners had made this note from personal observation. Doubtless therefore it was a fact that the water from time to time fitfully bubbled, and in such seasons the greatest efficacy was ascribed to it." Here then, at what is now known as the fountain of the Virgin, was doubtless the scene of the miracle of the healing of the impotent man. It is necessary, in order to account for the great number of diseased persons waiting at Bethesda, to suppose that they believed some healing virtue was imparted to the water by its periodical rising and consequent agitation ; and it is probable there was a popular belief among the more credulous that an angel came down to agitate the water, and impart to it its healing efficacy. If we omit the disputed passage the narrative flows on without break or hiatus, evidently intact as it came from the hand of the inspired writer, and the miracle of our Lord is brought into striking contrast with the false miracle which the poor sufferers were there awaiting. (See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Jan. 1870, Art. V., by the author, for a more full examination of this subject.)

<sup>2</sup> In Jesus resided that power to heal, which the wretched crowd attributed to the



that he had been now a long time *in that case*, He saith unto  
 7 him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent<sup>1</sup> man answered  
 Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled,<sup>2</sup> to put  
 me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth  
 8 down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed,  
 9 and walk. And immediately<sup>3</sup> the man was made whole, and  
 took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the  
 10 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.  
 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said  
 12 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  
 13 walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus  
 had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being *in that* place.  
 14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him,  
 Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing  
 15 come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it  
 16 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.

11. *Dignity of Christ's character, and Divinity of His person, as asserted  
 by Himself.*

[Ver. 17-29.]

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father<sup>4</sup> worketh hitherto,  
 18 and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him,

water. This belief, which scholiasts had indicated on the margin of certain copies and which the transcribers have made a part of the text, hinders us from perceiving the beauty and force of the contrast between Him and the so accredited miraculous fountain. The removal of the interpolation at once reveals the contrast in bold and striking relief.

<sup>1</sup> No reason is given for the selection of this man from the crowd of sufferers, or for not extending the power of healing to others. It may have been because he was the most infirm and pitiable of all.

<sup>2</sup> The language implies that the swelling or moving of the water was only at irregular intervals, which answers precisely to what takes place at the waters of Siloam to this day.

<sup>3</sup> His impotency of nearly forty years' standing was instantly removed. This was a genuine and most wonderful miracle, wrought at a pool, in the midst of a large company of the diseased, where an angel, if we are to accept the incorporated scholium as expressing a popular belief, was expected to descend and impart miraculous virtue to the water. But the miracle was nothing in the estimation of "the Jews," who sought to varnish over their enmity to Jesus with a professed zeal for the sabbath.

<sup>4</sup> That Christ claimed a peculiar Sonship by the expression, "My Father," such

because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that  
 19 God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then  
 answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto  
 you, The Son can do<sup>1</sup> nothing of Himself, but what He seeth  
 the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also  
 20 doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and  
 showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show  
 21 Him greater<sup>2</sup> works than these, that ye may marvel. For as  
 the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so  
 22 the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no  
 23 man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all  
*men* should honour<sup>3</sup> the Son, even as they honour the Father.  
 He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which  
 24 hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth  
 My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting

as no merely created being could share, appears from the sequel. The Jews understood Him, by this claim, to make Himself equal with God. The charge of violating the sabbath was instantly lost sight of in the more serious one of having spoken blasphemy. It was the charge which was urged against Him, and of which the high-priest declared Him guilty, before the Sanhedrin, when He was pronounced worthy of death (Matt. xxvi. 65).

<sup>1</sup> He reiterates and explains His declaration. He asserts that the Father does nothing independently of the Son, nor the Son independently of the Father, but that they work together in ineffable union and love. He claims not only equal power but equal exercise of power with the Father. The Jews charged that He had used language by which, according to a fair interpretation, He made Himself equal with God. If they had misunderstood Him this was the time for Him to disabuse their minds; but He makes no attempt of the kind.

<sup>2</sup> These greater works were not alone those that were to mark His ministry on earth. The raising of the dead, and the judgment of the world at the last day, were to be committed to Him.

<sup>3</sup> We have no stronger argument for the Divine nature of the Saviour of the world in all those passages in which He is expressly called God. The worship of Christ, if He were not Divine, would be idolatry. But instead of rebuking He encourages and sanctions this worship. The eastern Magi worshipped Him in His cradle. Those on whom He had exerted miraculous power fell at His feet and worshipped Him. The mother of John, the woman of Canaan, the father of the lunatic who met Him at the foot of the mount of transfiguration, worshipped Him, and His disciples as He was carried up from them into heaven; and after His ascension the dying Stephen called "upon God," saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Paul cannot write an epistle without repeated acts of worship to Christ, as "God blessed for ever." In the writings of the Christian fathers we find this worship not only inculcated, but defended when it was charged upon them. The hymns of the early Church are full of Christ. The younger Pliny, in his report to Trajan concerning the Christians, gave special emphasis to the fact that they "sang hymns to Christ as to God," *quasi Deo (Epistola, x. 97)*. The universal faith of the Church has not been recorded to a falsehood.

life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from  
 25 death unto life.<sup>1</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is  
 coming, and now is, when the dead<sup>2</sup> shall hear the voice of the  
 26 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  
 27 in Himself ; and hath given Him authority to execute judg-  
 28 ment also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this :  
 for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves  
 29 shall hear<sup>3</sup> 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 damnation.

12. *God's testimony to Jesus as His Son and our Saviour, in the  
 miracles He wrought and the prophecies fulfilled in Him.*

[Ver. 30-47.]

30 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  
 31 the will of the Father which hath sent Me. If I bear wit-  
 32 ness<sup>4</sup> of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another<sup>5</sup>  
 that beareth witness of Me ; and I know that the witness  
 33 which He witnesseth of Me is true. Ye sent unto John, and  
 34 he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That is, He claims to possess the power of bestowing spiritual life on every one that believes. He raises dead souls, a greater work than to raise dead bodies. The believer in Him passes from death unto life, so that if we have faith we may know that we have been born again.

<sup>2</sup> The power of Christ in the resurrection of men is still the subject ; primarily the resurrection of their bodies, but by implication or inference their spiritual resurrection. It is in His character as Messiah and Mediator that the Son of God, who is also the Son of man, here speaks. It is the Divine and human so mysteriously blended in His person, which imparts such force and beauty to His discourse on this occasion, and makes it so suited to the design of the inspired evangelist so to present Jesus to His readers that they may believe in Him, and believing may have life.

<sup>3</sup> This event would be one of such amazing grandeur that there would be no place for wonder at the previous and lesser displays of His power. Not one individual, as at the gate of Nain or as in the case of Lazarus, but the whole human race, will be recalled to life.

<sup>4</sup> As His opposers were doubtless disposed to apply to Him the principle of the Jewish civil law in regard to testimony, He accommodates Himself to the notion, and shows that He is prepared to satisfy their demand.

<sup>5</sup> This other witness is not John the Baptist, as some have seemed to suppose, but the Father Himself ; for in supporting His extraordinary claims He did not rely upon mere human testimony. This leads Him to allude to the testimony of John.

<sup>6</sup> Literally *the testimony*, τὴν μαρτυρίαν, i. e., the only or highest testimony, in support of His claims.

35 from man : but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He  
 was a burning and a shining light ; and ye were willing for a  
 36 season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater<sup>1</sup> witness than  
*that* of John : for the works<sup>2</sup> which the Father hath given Me  
 to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that  
 37 the Father hath sent Me. And the Father Himself, which hath  
 sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His  
 38 voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His  
 word abiding in you : for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe  
 39 not. Search the Scriptures ;<sup>3</sup> for in them ye think ye have  
 40 eternal life : and they are they which testify of Me. And ye  
 41 will not come<sup>4</sup> to Me, that ye might have life. I receive not  
 42 honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love  
 43 of God in you. I am come in My Father's name, and ye re-  
 ceive Me not : if another<sup>5</sup> shall come in his own name, him ye

<sup>1</sup> This "greater witness" is the same as the "another," verse 32.

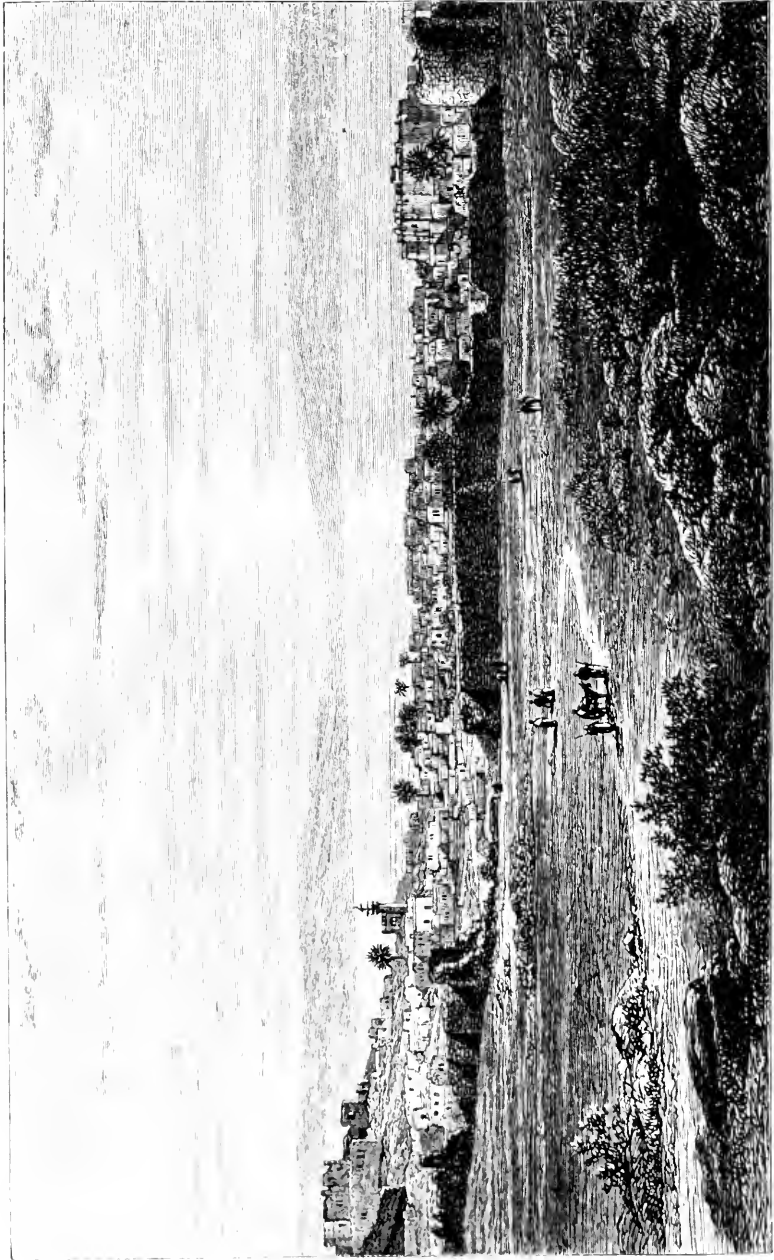
<sup>2</sup> First the Father bears witness to Jesus by "the works" which He gave Him to do. Storr, Flatt, Kuinoel, and Olshausen understand the "works" as referring to the miracles of Christ alone. Lücke, Tholuck, Stier, J. J. Owen, make the expression include all His acts during His earthly ministry, but as also having primary reference to the miracles He wrought. These miracles were proofs of the Divine mission of Jesus ; they were virtually the testimony of the Father Himself that He had sent the Son. "It hardly need be said," says Dr. J. J. Owen, "that the term *works* is here and elsewhere inclusive also of His doctrines and instructions, which, no less than His miracles, proved His Divine mission to man." The character and doctrine of Christ went along with the miracles He wrought, proving that they could not have been the works of a mere pretender. Not only did the miracles of Christ prove His doctrine Divine, but His doctrine was the evidence that His works were wrought by the power of God, and that He came forth from God.

<sup>3</sup> Again, the Father bore witness to Jesus by the mouths of Old Testament prophets, and all the previous forms of Divine revelation. "Search the Scriptures ;" or we may take *ἑπευῶτε* as indicative, rather than imperative, as is done by the great majority of modern commentators : "Ye do search the Scriptures." They are told that in the very Scriptures which they searched, thinking to find eternal life, they would find a revelation of Him ; they would find types and promises descriptive of His person ; they would find predictions containing distinct mention of the particular seed, line, and even family of which He was born,—the place, the time, and the circumstances of His birth, His forerunner described, and the miracles He performed. They would find it foretold in one of the best known of their Messianic prophecies that He was to be despised and rejected of men, which was then so signally fulfilled by them. The very spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Rev. xix. 10).

<sup>4</sup> The residue of the chapter is taken up with faithful rebuke, because notwithstanding all this evidence they refused to believe.

<sup>5</sup> Tholuck mentions that in the course of history sixty-four false Messiahs had appeared, and that one named Bar Cochba had gathered 24,000 adherents. And he remarks that "it shows a profound insight into the human heart when the Saviour





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TIBÉRIAS, SEA OF GALILEE.

44 will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one  
of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God  
45 only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father :  
there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye  
46 trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me:  
47 for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how  
shall ye believe My words ?

13. *By His miracle in creating supplies for thousands of people so deep was the conviction wrought in their minds that Jesus was the Messiah that they were ready to make Him their king.*

VI.]

[Ver. 1-15.

1 After<sup>1</sup> these things Jesus went over<sup>2</sup> the sea of Galilee, which  
2 is *the sea* of Tiberias.<sup>3</sup> And a great multitude followed Him,  
because they saw His miracles<sup>4</sup> which He did on them that were  
3 diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain,<sup>5</sup> and there He  
4 sat with His disciples. And the passover,<sup>6</sup> a feast of the Jews,

deduces the adhesion to false Messiahs from the fact that affinity begets sympathy, when He considers the striving after human glory as the chief cause of unbelief."

<sup>1</sup> "After these things," clearly means a considerable interval, for nearly a year had expired since the healing of the impotent man and the discourse to which it gave rise, in the preceding chapter. He was now at the Sea of Galilee, and had spent the greater part of this interval in Galilee. He had made His second and third circuits through that portion of Palestine; had made choice of the twelve apostles; had delivered His sermon on the mount; had begun to speak by parables; and had performed many miracles, all of which are passed in silence by the evangelist John.

<sup>2</sup> To the eastern or north-eastern coast.

<sup>3</sup> He adds the explanatory name Tiberias; probably because it was better or perhaps wholly known among people of foreign countries, at the time he wrote, late in the first century, by this name. In the Jewish war the city of Tiberias adhered to the Romans, was spared by their armies, and rewarded, after the destruction of Jerusalem, by being made the capital of the province. The importance thus given to the place caused its name to be given to the lake.

<sup>4</sup> These had been performed during His extensive circuits in Galilee, and are recorded by the synoptists.

<sup>5</sup> This was one of the bold headlands or hills which skirt the sea on every side and form the basin in which it lies. Rev. W. M. Thomson (Land and Book, ii., p. 29) thinks he found the very spot to which the evangelist refers. The hill or mountain is now known as Butaiha. At its "extreme south-east corner" "the mountain shuts down upon the lake, bleak and barren. It was doubtless desert then as now, for it is not capable of cultivation." He noticed the little cove, where the boats were anchored, and "the beautiful sward at the base of the rocky hill," where the people were seated to receive the miraculous food.

<sup>6</sup> The third passover of our Lord's ministry, a year previous to the one at which

5 was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up *His* eyes, and saw a great company<sup>1</sup> come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence 6 shall we buy bread, that these may eat? <sup>2</sup> And this He said to 7 prove him: for He himself knew what He would do. Philip<sup>3</sup> answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth<sup>4</sup> 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, 9 There is a lad<sup>5</sup> here, which hath five barley loaves, and two 10 small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass<sup>6</sup> in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves;<sup>7</sup> and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that

He suffered. The explanation that it was "a feast of the Jews" is another of the proofs that John wrote for those not familiar with the Jewish ritual, and after Jerusalem had been destroyed.

<sup>1</sup> His miracles had made a deep impression on the people, and great numbers were gathering preparing to go up to the feast. So many thronged around Him that His disciples could scarcely find an opportunity to give account to their Master of their late mission, or even so much as to eat. This led Him to retire with them to a more sparsely inhabited region on the other side of the sea. But the people saw them departing by boat, and ran afoot thither out of all the cities (Mark vi. 33, Matt. xiv. 13).

<sup>2</sup> The miracle of feeding the five thousand is found in the other evangelists, with the same attention to details. It had a wonderful effect in deepening and extending the conviction among the people that Jesus was the Messiah, as it did also in intensifying the hatred of the rulers.

<sup>3</sup> Some have seen a reason why Philip rather than any other apostle was singled out to have this question put to him, namely, that he had the greatest need of the teaching contained in it; and refer to his later words, "Lord, show us the Father" (chap. xiv. 8). (Trench.)

<sup>4</sup> Two hundred denarii, equivalent to about thirty or thirty-four dollars.

<sup>5</sup> One little boy, *παιδάριον*, could carry that from which these hungry thousands were to be fed.

<sup>6</sup> It was in the spring of the year, and grass would be found where at a later period all would be withered and desolate. They were seated in ranks of hundreds and fifties (Mark vi. 40) on the surrounding slopes; the shadows of evening were gathering.

<sup>7</sup> Whether the necessary increase took place in the hands of the Saviour as He broke, or in those of the disciples as they distributed, or in those of the people as they ate, it becomes not us to say. When five thousand hungry men besides women and children had satisfied their hunger, twelve baskets were filled with the fragments, greatly exceeding in amount the original loaves and fishes which a little boy carried in a bag. "The greatness of the miracle consists not merely in the vast increase of nutritive material, but in the nature of the process which effected it, and which must be regarded as creative, since it necessarily involves not merely change of form or quality, or new combinations of existing matter, but an absolute addition to the matter itself." (Alexander on Mark, *in loco*.)



were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they  
 12 would. When they were filled, He said unto His disciples,  
 Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.  
 13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve<sup>1</sup> baskets  
 with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained  
 14 over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men,  
 when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of  
 a truth that prophet<sup>2</sup> that should come into the world.  
 15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and  
 take Him by force, to make Him a king,<sup>3</sup> He departed again  
 into a mountain Himself alone.

14. *By His authority over the elements of nature Jesus shows to His disciples that the greatest throne on earth could confer no power or elevation on Him.*

[Ver. 16-21.]

16 And when even was *now* come, His disciples went down unto  
 17 the sea,<sup>4</sup> and entered into a ship, and went over the sea to-  
 ward Capernaum.<sup>5</sup> And it was now dark, and Jesus was not  
 18 come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind

<sup>1</sup> Each of the apostles had a basket full of what remained over. And so, when all have partaken of the bread of life, will there be enough and to spare; the supply cannot be exhausted.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion doubtless is to the prophet whom Moses foretold (Deut. xviii. 15). As Moses gave bread to the people in the wilderness, so had He given them bread in this solitary place. The miracle was well suited to produce the conviction that Jesus was the promised Immanuel.

<sup>3</sup> They shared in the low carnal views respecting the Messianic kingdom common among the Jews. They were looking for some one to lead them against their Roman oppressors, and what better leader could they have than One who could supply His armies with food at a word, and by the same power do other wonderful things? They were ready to seize Him in their enthusiasm and carry Him off by force with them to Jerusalem, and there at the passover publicly proclaim Him king.

<sup>4</sup> This miracle of walking on the sea is recorded with greater minuteness by two other evangelists, Matthew and Mark; but John does not omit it on this account, as he did not that of the loaves, although for the most part he makes no record of the miracles and parables found in the other Gospels. It was admirably suited to his great purpose.

<sup>5</sup> Mark names Bethsaida as the place to which He had directed them to go. There were two Bethsaidas (the name denotes a fishery); one of them situated at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake in Gaulonitis, the other in Galilee, and probably at no great distance from Capernaum; to sail towards this latter place therefore was to sail towards Capernaum. The Rev. W. M. Thomson's (Land and Book, ii., p. 30) attempt to show that there was but one Bethsaida, and to reconcile on this theory Mark and John, appears wholly inconclusive.

19 that blew.<sup>1</sup> So when they had rowed about five and twenty or  
 thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking<sup>2</sup> on the sea, and drawing  
 20 nigh unto the ship : and they were afraid. But He saith unto  
 21 them, It is I ;<sup>3</sup> be not afraid. Then they willingly received Him  
 into the ship : and immediately<sup>4</sup> the ship was at the land  
 whither they went.

15. *In a discourse called forth by the enthusiasm of the people in consequence of His late miracle, Jesus lays claim to functions which can belong only to the promised Messiah and Divine Saviour.*

[Ver. 22-71.]

22 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  
 23 were gone away alone ; (howbeit there came other boats from  
 Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after

<sup>1</sup> Matthew says, "the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves." It was an inland lake, surrounded with mountains, through the gorges of which sudden violent squalls often rush.

<sup>2</sup> Mark says that as He approached the vessel it seemed as if He "would pass by them." And they were afraid, "cried out," "it is a spirit," supposing it was some wild phantom moving amid the storm. It was not a dim glimpse or doubtful view which some one or two of the more terrified of the party thought they had, "for they all saw Him."

<sup>3</sup> Literally it is "I am," *Ἐγώ εἰμι*, strikingly coinciding with the Divine name as given to Moses (Exod. iii. 14). They were not far from the middle of the lake, as "they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs"; and as it was "about the fourth watch of the night" it was nearly morning. An incident is recorded by Matthew which is passed unnoticed by both Mark and John, eminently characteristic of Peter, his attempt to walk on the sea and the failure of his faith.

<sup>4</sup> By Matthew and Mark it is said that when He had entered the vessel "the wind ceased." The subsiding of the wind was a part of the miracle, as doubtless we are to understand, what John says, that the vessel was immediately at the land as also a part of it. We need not wonder that the disciples according to the record of Matthew came "and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God." It was a miracle designed to strengthen their conviction that He was verily the Christ of God; and to teach them that He was a Being of such power and glory that with Him the crowns and sceptres of this world were the veriest baubles, and that to be at the head of such an empire as that of the Cæsars would confer no authority, no power, and would be no elevation. They had seen this same power over the elements on this very lake on a former occasion. He was then with them in the boat, but was asleep at the rising of the storm. Nature, in the hour of her wildest uproar, yielded obedience to Him. He who retired to the mountain to pray, and slept on a pillow in the hinder part of the boat, could walk on the sea, still the tempest, and save the sinking Peter.

24 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.  
 25 And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea,  
 26 they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? Jesus  
 answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek  
 Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of  
 27 the loaves, and were filled. Labour<sup>1</sup> 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  
 28 God the Father sealed. Then said they unto Him, What shall  
 29 we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered  
 and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on  
 30 Him whom He hath sent. They said therefore unto Him,  
 What sign<sup>2</sup> showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe  
 31 Thee? what dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in  
 the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven  
 32 to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto  
 you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My  
 33 Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread  
 of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life  
 34 unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore  
 35 give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread  
 of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that  
 36 believeth on Me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That  
 37 ye also have seen Me, and believe not. All that the Father

<sup>1</sup> That the miracles of Christ are not to be viewed as merely wonderful works, but while they are proofs of His Messiahship suggest also important moral teaching, and particularly after the manner of types serve to illustrate the works of Christ in His kingdom of grace, or to demonstrate that He has the same power in the spiritual invisible kingdom which He has in the world of nature or matter, we have no better example than in the feeding of the five thousand and the discourse founded on it.

<sup>2</sup> When they asked for a higher "sign" than He had already given them, He directed their attention to the power or effect of faith in Him, to the miracles of grace that were wrought in the realm of the spirit, of which those wrought in nature were but a mere type. As in the conversation with the woman of Samaria, availing Himself of the figure suggested by the water, He sought to present Himself as the water of life of which if a man drink he shall never thirst; so here, taking the bread which He had multiplied in the miracle, and which His interlocutors, not relishing His doctrine, strove to bring into unfavourable contrast with the manna given by miracle by Moses in the desert, He seeks to present Himself as the true Bread from heaven, of which the manna and the loaves in these miracles were but types, and thus to reveal Himself as the Lifegiver and only Saviour.

giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I  
 38 will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to  
 39 do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this  
 is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He  
 hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up  
 40 again at the last day. And this is the will<sup>1</sup> of Him that sent  
 Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him,  
 may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last  
 41 day. The Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am  
 42 the bread which came down from heaven. 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?  
 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not  
 44 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  
 45 last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all  
 taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath  
 46 learned of the Father, cometh unto Me. Not that any man  
 hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen  
 47 the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth  
 48 on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life.  
 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.  
 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man  
 51 may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which  
 came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall  
 live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which  
 52 I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove  
 among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *His* flesh  
 53 to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto  
 you, Except ye eat<sup>2</sup> the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His  
 54 blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and

<sup>1</sup> These Jews might resist and ignore the evidence of His Messiahship, but His mission could not thus be defeated. There were others who would be convinced and come to Him. Coming to Him, *i.e.* believing in Him, He would be to them the source of everlasting life. Their resurrection, at the last day, would be the consummation of their redemption. The inability of any to come to Christ is moral, not physical; *i.e.*, it arises from an insensibility of heart, a disinclination of will, an inability the most deplorable of all.

<sup>2</sup> Although the Lord's Supper had not yet been instituted, we unmistakably find here the idea which underlies that holy sacrament, and the great doctrine which, in the breaking of bread and the pouring out of wine, is set forth, the expiatory death of Christ. We find the same mention of the death of Jesus, or in the same

drinketh My blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up  
 55 at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is  
 56 drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood,  
 57 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  
 58 shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from  
 heaven : not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead : he  
 59 that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said  
 60 He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many  
 therefore of His disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This  
 61 is a hard<sup>1</sup> saying : who can hear it ? When Jesus knew in  
 Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them,  
 62 Doth this offend you ? *What* and if ye shall see the Son of  
 63 man ascend up where He was before ? It is the spirit that  
 quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak  
 64 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.  
 65 And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come  
 66 unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father. From  
 that *time* many of His disciples went back, and walked no more  
 67 with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go  
 68 away ? Then Simon Peter<sup>2</sup> answered Him, Lord, to whom  
 69 shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we be-  
 lieve and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the  
 70 living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you  
 71 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.

form of speech, as in the institutive words of the Supper, and proclamation of the same truths of which that ordinance is the symbol and the memorial.

<sup>1</sup> Although Christ uttered no denunciations, a sifting power went along with His words ; and men who had been attracted to declare themselves His disciples, but possessed no true faith, pronounced His doctrine a hard saying.

<sup>2</sup> In his touching reply and grand confession, Peter must be regarded as speaking not only for himself, but for his associates, excepting Judas Iscariot the betrayer.

Christ calls Himself the Bread of Life, because He is the gift of God ; because He gave His life for the life of the world ; because it is only by believing in Him that we become partakers of spiritual life, and can be made partakers, even as to our bodies, of life immortal at the last day.

One of the Christian fathers has observed that as the magnet does not attract everything, but only iron, so also to be attracted by Christ there must exist a certain frame of mind, *the feeling of what we should be and are not*. "While some

16. *At the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem He vindicates His Messiahship before a promiscuous assemblage of the people, with convincing power.*

VII.]

[Ver. 1-31.

1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would  
 2 not walk in Jewry,<sup>1</sup> because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now  
 3 the Jews' feast of tabernacles<sup>2</sup> was at hand. His brethren<sup>3</sup>  
 therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that  
 4 Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For  
*there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself*  
 seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show  
 5 Thyself to the world. For neither did His brethren believe in

abuse the doctrine of dependence," says Dr. Jacobus (see his Notes) "so as to excuse themselves, and 'wait God's time,' others equally abuse the doctrine of independence, so as to wait a more convenient season."

<sup>1</sup> We have in verse 1 the evidence rendering it probable that Jesus did not visit Jerusalem on the occasion of the passover mentioned in verse 4 of the preceding chapter, which was the third in His ministry. He "walked," *i.e.* journeyed, or prosented His ministry in Galilee, and would not walk or journey in Judæa for the reason that the Jews, those dwelling at Jerusalem, the leaders of the nation, sought to kill Him. Six months were occupied in itinerating about Galilee, of which John gives no account whatever, and during which some of the most interesting events occurred in our Lord's history. For the only time during His ministry He then passed beyond the bounds of Palestine, visiting the region of Tyre and Sidon, where He had His interview with the Syro-phœnician woman whose daughter He healed. Within the same period falls the miracle of feeding the four thousand, and the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. At first sight it seems strange, considering that it was the object of John to present the signs or proofs of the Divine mission and Messiahship of Jesus, that he should omit an account of that wonderful scene, His transfiguration on the mount, and His being visited by two glorified saints from heaven, of which we have a particular account in the other evangelists. What could have been better suited to his purpose? Why does he then omit all reference to it, especially when he was himself one of the three disciples who were with Him on the mount? The only answer and one that seems to be sufficient is that John, writing in and for the Gentile world, selected those miracles which were performed on the most public occasions, in the midst of the greatest number of witnesses, or of witnesses that were hostile or unfavourable to Jesus, like those at the marriage in Cana, the healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum and the impotent man at Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, and the raising of Lazarus.

<sup>2</sup> The feast of tabernacles was one of the great annual festivals. It began on the Jewish month Tisri, with the new moon corresponding to that in our own month of October; it continued eight days, the first and last days being sabbaths to the Lord, the eighth or last being called the great day of the feast. (Josephus, Ant. viii. 4. 1.)

<sup>3</sup> By his "brethren" we are doubtless to understand His relatives and near kinsmen, who did not believe on Him, *i.e.*, had no conception of the spiritual nature of the kingdom He came to establish; they wished Him to go, and in the presence of the great ones of the nation establish His power and kingdom. These brethren subsequently had their erroneous views corrected: Acts i. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come :  
<sup>7</sup> but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you ;  
 but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof  
<sup>8</sup> are evil. Go ye up unto this feast : I go<sup>1</sup> not up yet unto this  
<sup>9</sup> feast ; for My time is not yet full come. When He had said  
<sup>10</sup> these words unto them, He abode *still* in Galilee. But when  
 His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the  
<sup>11</sup> feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.<sup>2</sup> Then the Jews  
<sup>12</sup> 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  
<sup>13</sup> deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of Him  
<sup>14</sup> for fear of the Jews. Now about the midst<sup>3</sup> of the feast Jesus  
<sup>15</sup> went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled,  
 saying, How knoweth this man letters,<sup>4</sup> having never learned ?  
<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine<sup>5</sup> is not Mine, but  
<sup>17</sup> His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know<sup>6</sup>  
 of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of  
<sup>18</sup> Myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory :  
 but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true,

<sup>1</sup> As private persons the time of His brethren's departure for Judea was a matter of little moment ; but there was a precise hour and moment fixed for His departure, and He was to stay in Galilee until it arrived.

<sup>2</sup> He permitted the company or caravan that were going to Jerusalem to start. For some important reason He desired to make the journey and to arrive in Jerusalem as privately as possible. On the arrival of the Galileans there was great inquiry made for Him. St. John gives an account of this sharp controversy among the people, that it might appear to his readers that the question of the Messiahship of Jesus, at the very time of His presence on earth, was weighed and considered, and that notwithstanding the hatred of the men in power, which had so threatened His life as to keep Him from Jerusalem for more than a year, there was a considerable party among the common people who were ready to receive Him.

<sup>3</sup> The days allotted to the feast had about half expired, and He suddenly, and probably after all expectation of His coming had subsided, presents Himself in the temple, and publicly assumes the character of one authorized to teach.

<sup>4</sup> By "letters" we are to understand learning as it existed among the Jews, rabbinical learning, the expression being used precisely as it frequently is amongst us when we say "a man of letters," meaning a man of literary culture. Every Jewish parent was required to teach his children to read, and to see that when arriving at six years of age they attended the schools where the rudiments of education were taught.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus seems to resume His teaching just where He broke it off, when after healing the impotent man at Bethesda His life had been sought, and He delivered the important discourse recorded in chapter v. He again openly claims to have come from God.

<sup>6</sup> In respect to moral and religious truth, the state of the heart has very much to do with clear and right perceptions.

19 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  
 20 to kill Me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil :  
 21 who goeth about to kill Thee? Jesus answered and said unto  
 22 them, I have done one<sup>1</sup> work, and ye all marvel. Moses there-  
 fore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses,  
 but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a  
 23 man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that  
 the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry with Me,  
 because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath  
 24 day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge  
 25 righteous judgment. Then said some of them of Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> Is  
 26 not this He, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh  
 boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know  
 27 indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this  
 man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth  
 28 whence He is. 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  
 29 know not. But I know Him; for I am from Him, and He  
 30 hath sent Me. Then they sought<sup>3</sup> to take Him: but no man  
 31 laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come. 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?

<sup>1</sup> Jesus refers to what had taken place when He was last in Jerusalem, eighteen months before, when He healed the impotent man. His reference to this one work was all that was necessary to justify the question why they sought to slay Him. He knew the answer they would make, that it was because He performed this work on the sabbath, and therefore refers to the rite of circumcision, which could be performed on the sabbath without violating it, and asks (the argument is *a fortiori*), "Are ye angry at Me?" etc. The Sinaitic MS. omits "therefore" in verse 22.

<sup>2</sup> Residents in Jerusalem, instead of visitors. They confess by their question their knowledge of the evil intentions of His enemies, and their surprise that He should be permitted publicly to proclaim His Messiahship and teach the people. It prompts the query whether the rulers did not know, or were not convinced, that Jesus was the Christ; and then, as if they had gone too far, they refer to His birth-place, presuming of course that He was born in Galilee, as conclusive proof that He could not be the Messiah.

<sup>3</sup> That is, some movement was made as if they would arrest Him on the spot; but as "His hour was not yet come," it proved a mere feint. They were manifestly restrained by the favour with which many in the crowd were disposed to regard Him. Many believed on Him as the promised Messiah, as is evident from the question "When Christ cometh," etc.



17. *Such was the impression made by Him on the officers of the Sanhedrin itself, that they retired abashed from His presence.*

[Ver. 32-53.

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things<sup>1</sup> concerning Him; and the Pharisees<sup>2</sup> and the chief priests sent officers<sup>3</sup> to take Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little<sup>4</sup> while am I with you, and *then* I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek<sup>5</sup> Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. Then said the<sup>6</sup> Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles,<sup>7</sup> 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? In the last<sup>8</sup> day, that great *day* of the

<sup>1</sup> Such things as the question in verse 31. The manifest tendency among the common people convinced the Pharisees of the necessity of immediate action.

<sup>2</sup> The Sanhedrin.

<sup>3</sup> Such was the effect of His discourse, which He continued in the hearing of the people, that they could not proceed; their officers stand and listen to His words, and felt the strange power that attended them.

<sup>4</sup> Another six months would bring the passover at which He was to suffer.

<sup>5</sup> His kingdom was to come with so little of "observation" that, so far as the great mass of the Jewish nation was concerned, it would be after His departure as if He had never appeared among them. That great, visible, temporal kingdom for which they were looking would never come; and in looking for it they would fail to become members of His spiritual kingdom.

<sup>6</sup> The hostile party among His auditors.

<sup>7</sup> The Jews were widely dispersed among the Gentiles, and had become permanently settled among them, forming communities that were to prove places of refuge to the people when the great calamity should come upon the nation. The *Greeks*, "Ἕλληνες, is the word in the original for Gentiles. So extensively had the Greek civilization impressed itself on the heathen world that the term Greeks in the N. T. is often employed to denote the heathen world: even in writing to the Romans Paul uses it, Rom. i. 14, for all that portion of the heathen world that might be distinguished from barbarians. "Neander," says Owen, "would almost seem to be right in his conjecture that the Jews had begun to surmise the tendency of Christ's teaching to embrace mankind universally."

<sup>8</sup> It was observed with great solemnity, it closed the festival, and it was the closing feast day of the year. On the day previous, the seventh day, the people had ceased to occupy booths and to offer sacrifices, or *the* sacrifice; for it was remarkable about this feast that the animal sacrifices offered were diminished in number daily, until the last day, when but *one* was offered, pointing plainly to the *one* great Sacrifice, the Lamb of God; and so also this great day of the feast pointed forward to that great festal day, when Christ, the firstfruits, should be presented in His resurrection. The concourse at the temple would be greater than on any previous occasion; Jesus availed Himself of the opportunity to deliver one of His most impressive and plainest addresses.

feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him  
 38 come unto Me and drink.<sup>1</sup> He that believeth on Me, as the  
 Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow<sup>2</sup> rivers of living  
 39 water. (But this spake<sup>3</sup> He of the Spirit, which they that  
 believe on Him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet  
 40 given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the  
 people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth  
 41 this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ.<sup>4</sup> But  
 42 some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the  
 Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David,  
 43 and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there  
 44 was a division<sup>5</sup> among the people because of Him. And some  
 of them would have taken Him ; but no man laid hands on  
 45 Him. Then came the officers<sup>6</sup> to the chief priests and Phari-  
 sees ; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought

<sup>1</sup> There is an allusion, as has been supposed, to the ceremony in which every day at the morning sacrifice the priest poured water, which had been brought from Siloam, mingled with wine, on the altar, amidst the sound of trumpets and cymbals, and the Hallel (Psalm cxiii. to cxviii.) was sung. On this day, with louder and more general expressions of joy, the water was brought from the pool in a golden vessel ; and it has been supposed that it was when it was being borne in jubilant procession towards the altar that Jesus cried, uttering these impressive words. The coming and drinking of the thirsty man is figurative of the believing of the weary and heavily laden sinner.

<sup>2</sup> He shall dispense to others, as an instrument, the grace which he receives, "as the Scripture hath said." The particular passages referred to are such as these: Isa. xlv. 3, lviii. 11; Ezek. xlvi. 1-12; Joel iii. 18; Zech. xiv. 8. Christ is the Siloam from which the living water is supplied ; believers are the golden vessels from which it is to be freely imparted to others.

<sup>3</sup> St. John here throws in an explanation of what is to be understood by the living water, "This spake He of the Spirit," etc. He says that it was of those copious effusions of the Spirit that should be granted when Jesus should be glorified, of which He spake. It was the permanent indwelling of the Spirit by which believers should, as never before, be channels of spiritual blessings from the fountain of life.

<sup>4</sup> Such was the effect of this tender and earnest discourse that those who had begun to whisper whether they could expect the Christ they were awaiting to do greater miracles, now boldly said, "This is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ." The opposing party condescend to argue, and raise the question concerning His origin and birthplace. But in their reference to Scripture they did but confirm the claims of Jesus, for He was of the seed of David, and was born at Bethlehem. Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4, cxxxii. 11; Mic. v. 2.

<sup>5</sup> It is evident that His friends and those who had been favourably impressed were now in the ascendancy ; although all the fear had been on this side in the beginning, it was now transferred to the other ; "no man laid hands on Him."

<sup>6</sup> The effect on the officers was most remarkable. Although armed with authority from the Sanhedrin, they did not make the arrest. Their report was, "Never man spake like this Man." It was, to say the least, a signal instance of His power over

46 Him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.  
 47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?  
 48 Have any of the rulers<sup>1</sup> or of the Pharisees believed on Him?  
 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.  
 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night,  
 51 being one of them,) Doth our law judge *any* man, before it  
 52 hear him and know what he doeth? They answered and said  
 unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for  
 53 out of Galilee ariseth no<sup>2</sup> prophet. And every man went unto  
 his own house.

18. *Such was the conviction wrought in the consciences of members of the Sanhedrin itself, that they retired abashed from His presence.*

VIII.]

[Ver. 1-11.]

1,2 Jesus went<sup>3</sup> unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came  
 3 unto Him; and He sat down and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought<sup>4</sup> unto Him a woman taken in

men in respect to whom there was no antecedent probability, but quite the reverse, that they would be impressed in His favour. The Pharisees were evidently startled and more alarmed than ever.

<sup>1</sup> This question may have been as much directed to Nicodemus as to the officers; and he very pertinently asks, hearing their reference to the law, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" He is not afraid to speak and let it appear in this excited assembly that he is so far a friend of Jesus that he will insist on His being dealt with according to law. For proof that his original coming to Jesus "by night" was not prompted by fear, see on chap. iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The truth was that several eminent prophets had arisen in Galilee.

<sup>3</sup> The last verse of the preceding chapter is closely connected with this: "and every man went unto his own house"; "but Jesus went," etc. This is the only instance in which St. John names the Mount of Olives. Jesus probably went to pass the night in His beloved Bethany.

The Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. omit the first eleven verses of this chapter and the last of the preceding, and in the MSS. in which the passage is found it is marked by an extraordinary number of variations, which by many are regarded as affording additional evidence of its spuriousness. That it is not found in so many of the early MSS. may be accounted for from the fear, in a period of ascetic austerity, that it might be understood as containing a licence for the breach of the seventh commandment. [Augustine, *De Conj. Adult.*, ii. 7.] The evidence for the genuineness of the passage seems to outweigh the objections to it. The reason of the insertion here of this narrative is that it adds another to those "signs" which it was John's purpose to record, showing that Jesus was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. It comes in most naturally as following the account of the deep impression made on the officers of the Sanhedrin, proving that the members of the Sanhedrin itself could not stand before that power which Jesus had over the inmost hearts and secret consciences of men.

<sup>4</sup> They were probably taking the woman before the Sanhedrin, which held its

4 adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say  
 unto Him, Master,<sup>1</sup> this woman was taken in adultery, in the  
 5 very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such  
 6 should be stoned:<sup>2</sup> but what sayest Thou? This they said,  
 tempting<sup>3</sup> Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus  
 stooped<sup>4</sup> down, and with *His* finger wrote on the ground, *as*  
 7 *though He heard them not*. So when they continued asking  
 Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is  
 8 without<sup>5</sup> sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And  
 9 again<sup>6</sup> He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they  
 which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience,<sup>7</sup> went  
 out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and  
 Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.  
 10 When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the

sittings in one of the halls of the temple. As they passed by Jesus it seems to have occurred to them to lay the case before Him; hoping, no doubt, that they might find some occasion against Him. The scene was in the porch or one of the outer courts of the temple.

<sup>1</sup> The title may have been given in mockery, as if this was the kind of case that should be submitted to Him, or as a sort of satire on those who called Him "Master."

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xx. 10, Deut. xxii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> This makes it evident that their real design was malevolent. It is probable they presumed He would display His accustomed mildness and compassion towards sinners, of which they would take advantage, on account of the strong Jewish feeling in regard to this crime, to awaken popular odium against Him.

<sup>4</sup> Stooping, or leaning forward, He wrote in the dust on the marble pavement of the court. The italicised clause, "as though He heard them not," is a comment or gloss of the translators. The significance of the action might have been that, whatever His decision should be, it would be of no more account with them than words written in the dust.

<sup>5</sup> Such were the searching words addressed to the party having the woman in charge, with which He broke the silence. Those who had brought an accusation and appeared as witnesses, according to the Jewish law (Deut. xvii. 7), were required when sentence had been passed to cast the first stones. He who knew their secret history probably knew that the culprit in this case was no worse than her accusers; He arraigns them at the bar of their own consciences.

<sup>6</sup> His writing now seems to strike terror into them, as if that finger might make revelations or carve their sins in the marble of that public court.

<sup>7</sup> That judge of right and wrong, who holds his court in every man's breast. No sentence of an earthly court can so make a man tremble as when conscience pronounces him guilty, or when he becomes his own accuser. Tholuck says, "There is evidence that at this period many of the rabbins, high in position, were living in adultery. (Wagenseil on the Sota, p. 525 *seq.*; Justin Mart., Dial. e. Tryph, p. 363 ed. Col.) It was from a baseless fear that, if suffered to remain, our Saviour might be thought to have compromised with this sin, or at least to have treated it as a comparatively light offence, that the narrative has been expunged from so many of the early MSS." (See J. J. Owen's Commentary *in loco*.)

woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine  
 11 accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man,  
 Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee:  
 go, and sin<sup>1</sup> no more.

19.- *Christ again bears testimony to His exalted dignity and Divinity.*

[Ver. 12-59.]

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light<sup>2</sup> of  
 the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but  
 13 shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto  
 Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true.  
 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of My-  
 self, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither  
 15 I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye  
 16 judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge,  
 My judgment is true; for I am not alone,<sup>3</sup> but I and the  
 17 Father that sent Me. It is also written in your law, that the  
 18 testimony of two<sup>4</sup> men is true. I am one that bear witness of  
 Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.  
 19 Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus an-  
 swered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father: if ye had known  
 20 Me, ye would have known My Father also. These words spake

<sup>1</sup> The exhortation to penitence lies in the "Sin no more." It is brief; but as Tholuck suggests, how mightily had the circumstances spoken! Would not many words have weakened rather than strengthened the impression?

<sup>2</sup> In vii. 37 Christ had presented Himself under the figure of life-giving water. He here presents Himself under that of light. It was early in the morning when He came into the temple. The sun was doubtless flooding the porticoes and courts of that edifice with its beams, when He seized upon the metaphor. It is one of the most remarkable doctrines established by modern science that there is just one force operating throughout the universe, derived almost exclusively from the sun, which enters into the life of both animals and vegetables, and gives the power that sets our machinery agoing. So Christ is the source of all spiritual life and activity: "Lumen et alia demonstrat et seipsum. Testimonium sibi perhibet lux, aperit sanos oculos, et sibi ipsa testis est." (Augustine.) "Light, which brings other things to view, brings itself to view. Light furnishes its own testimony, opens healthful eyes, and itself is a witness to itself."

<sup>3</sup> He introduces His own testimony for the sake of keeping distinctly in view His Divine origin and mission. But while He was one with the Father as the Son, He was distinct from the Father, and therefore in the wonderful constitution of His person as Mediator was prepared in the testimony He bore to meet the objections they brought, and all the conditions they could properly demand as essential to the validity of such testimony.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. xvii. 6 and xix. 15. He was willing to accept and abide by this principle or law of evidence, and declares who the two witnesses were to whom He appeals.

Jesus in the treasury,<sup>1</sup> as He taught in the temple : and no man  
 21 laid hands on Him ; for His hour was not yet come. Then said  
 Jesus again unto them, I go My way, and ye shall seek<sup>2</sup> Me,  
 22 and shall die in your sins ; whither I go, ye cannot come. Then  
 said the Jews, Will He kill Himself ? because He saith, Whither  
 23 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  
 24 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  
 25 sins. Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou ? And Jesus  
 saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the  
 26 beginning. I have many<sup>3</sup> things to say and to judge of you :  
 but He that sent Me is true ; and I speak to the world those  
 27 things which I have heard of Him. They understood not that  
 28 He spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them,  
 When ye have lifted<sup>4</sup> up the Son of man, then shall ye know  
 that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself ; but as My  
 29 Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that  
 sent Me is with Me : the Father hath not left Me alone ; for  
 30 I do always those things that please Him. As He spake these  
 31 words, many believed<sup>5</sup> on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews  
 which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, *then* are ye  
 32 My disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the  
 33 truth shall make you free. They<sup>6</sup> answered Him, We be Abra-  
 ham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man : how sayest

<sup>1</sup> This discourse was delivered in the most frequented part of the temple, the court of the women, where the treasure chests were placed. And although there was a concourse there, a motley crowd of men and women, no one attempted to interfere with Him.

<sup>2</sup> Their seeking would be "for and from necessity" as Calvin says, without faith, and consequently no seeking at all. They would die in their *ἀμαρτία*, a sin of unbelief. It was their rejection of Him, or their refusal to believe in Him as the promised Saviour, which made it certain that they would die in their sins. See verse 21.

<sup>3</sup> He could not waste time in a mere war of words, and fail to deliver as the Revealer of truth His great message to the world.

<sup>4</sup> He had used this expression before, to describe the manner of His death (John iii. 14), although it is hardly probable that the Jews so understood Him.

<sup>5</sup> This was probably a true faith, and not a mere temporary conviction ; as the Lord immediately addresses them as if they were true believers.

<sup>6</sup> The speakers here are not those who are said to have believed, but the unbelievers in the crowd, the same persons addressed in verses 21, 24. What had been addressed to the believers was a mere episode. This discourse of Christ is addressed mainly to His opponents.

34 Thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily,  
 verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant  
 35 of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but*  
 36 the son<sup>1</sup> abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you  
 37 free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's  
 seed; but ye seek to kill Me, because My word hath no place  
 38 in you. I speak that which I have seen with My Father; and  
 39 ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They an-  
 swered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith  
 unto them, If ye were Abraham's children,<sup>2</sup> ye would do the  
 40 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  
 41 not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they,  
 to Him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father,  
 42 *even* God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye  
 would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God;  
 43 neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do ye not  
 understand My speech? *even* because ye cannot hear My word.  
 44 Ye are of *your* father<sup>3</sup> 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  
 45 father of it. And because<sup>4</sup> I tell *you* the truth, ye believe Me  
 46 not. Which of you convinceth Me of sin? And if I say the  
 47 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  
 48 God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not  
 49 well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus an-

<sup>1</sup> The fact that they were Abraham's seed would be of no more advantage to them, if they remained the slaves of sin, than it proved to the son of the bondwoman of old. In the clause "the son abideth ever," *son* is incorrectly printed with a capital, as if it referred to the Son of God, whereas it clearly stands opposed to servant, and is put for the heir of the paternal estate. It is printed with a capital in the A.V. of 1611, as given in Bagster's Hexapla, and also in the Tauchnitz edition of the New Testament; but the clause is not found in the Sinaitic MS.

<sup>2</sup> He uses the term "Abraham's children," as Paul afterwards did similar terms, (Rom. iv. 11, ix. 8,) in its spiritual sense.

<sup>3</sup> He did not, on account of the peril in which He stood, abate one jot or tittle of that severe rebuke their sins deserved. The murder in their hearts proved their real paternity.

<sup>4</sup> They were so fully under the deceit of Satan, inoculated with falsehood, that the Saviour tells them that the very reason why they did not believe in Him was because He told them the truth.

swered, I have not a devil ; but I honour My Father, and ye do  
 50 dishonour Me. And I seek not Mine own glory : there is One  
 51 that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a  
 52 man keep My saying, he shall never see death.<sup>1</sup> Then said the  
 Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abra-  
 ham is dead, and the prophets ; and Thou sayest, If a man  
 53 keep My saying, he shall never taste of death. Art Thou  
 greater than our father Abraham, which is dead ? and the  
 54 prophets are dead ; whom makest Thou Thyself ? Jesus an-  
 swered, If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing : it is My  
 Father that honoureth Me ; of whom ye say, that He is your  
 55 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  
 56 know Him, and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced <sup>2</sup>  
 57 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  
 58 seen Abraham ? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say  
 59 unto you, Before <sup>3</sup> Abraham was, I am. 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.

20. *The Messiahship of Jesus proved by a miracle established by testi-  
 mony elicited after the most rigid scrutiny, by His enemies sitting in a  
 judicial capacity.*

IX.]

[Ver. 1-41.]

1 And as *Jesus* passed <sup>4</sup> by, He saw a man which was blind from  
 2 *his* birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who

<sup>1</sup> He once more proclaims salvation to these rebellious sinners.

<sup>2</sup> He not only rejoiced that he should see it, but he saw it. He saw it by the eye of faith ; he so believed in Christ that he never tasted of death, and was not dead in the sense in which Christ spoke of death.

<sup>3</sup> These words cannot possibly be made to mean less than that Jesus existed before Abraham.

<sup>4</sup> The unbelieving Jews became so enraged by the discourses recorded in the preceding chapter, that we are told they took 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." In the beginning of this we clearly have a resumption or continuation of the narrative. With Stier and Olshausen we must regard the event recorded here as having occurred on the same day the above discourses were delivered. There is no reason for inserting, as Robinson does, in his Harmony, between the discourses in chapter viii. and the miracle of chapter ix., the "lawyer instructed," and the parable of the good Samaritan, and especially such an event as the "return







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3 did sin,<sup>1</sup> this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but  
 4 that the works<sup>2</sup> of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the  
 5 night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the  
 6 world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat<sup>3</sup> on the ground, and made clay of the spittle,  
 7 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 his way therefore, and washed,  
 8 and came seeing. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that  
 9 sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others *said*, He is  
 10 like him: *but* he said, I am *he*. Therefore said they unto him,  
 11 How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and  
 said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went  
 12 and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him,  
 13 Where is He? He said I know<sup>4</sup> not. They brought to the

of the seventy," which clearly belongs to the ministry in Galilee, before this visit to Jerusalem at the festival of tabernacles.

<sup>1</sup> This question would seem to have been founded on what appears to have been at that time the popular belief, that such a calamity as natal blindness was a special visitation or judgment for some sin in parents or ancestors, or guilt which had been inherited.

<sup>2</sup> He told them that his blindness was not to be attributed to any such cause as their question supposed; but that it was in accordance with the will of Him who knoweth the end from the beginning, that "the works of God should be made manifest in him." The Saviour does not say *work* but *works*, thus recognising the twofold or double nature of the work that was about to be wrought for the benefit of the soul, as well as the body, of the blind man.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the miracles of our Lord were performed by His simple word; others by what seemed to be the use, or the imitation of the use, of means. He puts the highest honour upon the use of means, exalts them to such a place of importance, in the performance of some of His most miraculous works, that they may never be despised or undervalued by His servants. The pool of Siloam is in the mouth of the valley of the Tyropeon or cheesemakers, and is known by this name to this day. It is connected by a passage, under the hill Ophel, with the pool of Bethesda, where the impotent man was healed, now known as the fountain of the Virgin.

<sup>4</sup> Our Saviour passed on without waiting for the return of the man from the pool; and we are to bear in mind, as we go on with the account and find him defending the Saviour with so much effect, in the presence of the Pharisees, that he had not yet seen Him. He gave to the neighbours, and those who had often seen him in his blindness, an exact account of the miracle, leaving out no particular, telling them that it was Jesus who had directed him what to do. And thus ended what may be termed the preliminary examination, before his old neighbours, who were perfectly assured of his identity.

14 Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and 16 I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees,<sup>1</sup> This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the sabbath<sup>2</sup> day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such 17 miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that He 18 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<sup>3</sup> of him that 19 had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now 20 see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this 21 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 22 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 23 was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore 24 said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: 25 we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said,

<sup>1</sup> It was not, we may fairly presume, on account of any hostility to him that the case was reported to the Pharisees, but on account of the astonishing character of the event. From the formality of the investigation it is probable it was the Sanhedrin before whom the matter was brought; not on the same day that the miracle was performed, which was the sabbath, but the following day or very shortly after. He gave the same account to them of his healing which he had before given to the neighbours.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the Sanhedrin were disposed to proceed no further, or to make no other use of the case than to find in it additional evidence that Jesus was not of God, because according to their interpretation He had violated the sabbath. How utterly blinding and perverse must have been the doctrines and traditions of Phariseeism! But there was another class, men of the Nicodemus stamp, whom the prejudices of sect and party could not so thoroughly pervert. The division among them led them to turn again to the blind man and ask his opinion. He promptly professed his faith in Him as a prophet.

<sup>3</sup> The case is next made to turn on an attempt to prove the blind man an impostor. The parents must be found; they are closely questioned. We notice in these plain people the same intellectual shrewdness we notice in their son, and also their confidence in him to take care of himself, in responding to any questions the court might propose.

Whether He be a sinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know,<sup>1</sup>  
 25 that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him  
 again, What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes?  
 27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not  
 hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be His  
 23 disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art His dis-  
 29 ciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake  
 unto Moses: *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence He  
 30 is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a  
 marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and *yet*  
 31 He hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth  
 not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth  
 32 His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not  
 heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born  
 33 blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing.<sup>2</sup>  
 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born  
 in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.  
 35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had  
 found<sup>3</sup> him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of  
 36 God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might  
 37 believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen  
 38 Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord,  
 39 I believe. And he worshipped Him. 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.  
 40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these

<sup>1</sup> It has been often noticed how the loss of sight seems to render more acute the other senses. Does it not also tend, and for much the same reason, to improve the mental faculties, by leading those who suffer in this way to cultivate that power of *attention* upon which it is said intellectual superiority depends more than upon any other one thing? The Pharisees appear to no good advantage in their debate with him who was born blind; they appear as mere novices in his hand. There was one great fact out of which they could not argue him; he had seen the sun and the earth, he had seen the face of parents, perhaps of wife and child. So there is one great fact out of which the acutest dialecticians cannot argue the simplest and most unlettered believer.

<sup>2</sup> Never was the argument from miracles for the Divine mission and authority of Jesus more logically or forcibly stated. They met his calm, conclusive statement with anger, and carried the sentence of excommunication against him into effect.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus heard what had taken place, and searched for him who had consented to endure reviling and excommunication for His sake, that He might perform or complete another work in him more important than the removal of physical blindness. The one work prepared the way for the other. His experience heightened his tendency to faith.

41 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.

21. *The character of Christ (the Good Shepherd) a proof of His Messiahship.*

X.]

[Ver. 1-21.

1 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 2 a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is 3 the shepherd<sup>1</sup> of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own<sup>2</sup> sheep by 4 name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: 5 for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not 7 what things they were which He spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the 8 door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves<sup>3</sup> and 9 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 10 out,<sup>4</sup> and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal,

<sup>1</sup> In contrast with such false and hypocritical guides as the Pharisees, Christ is here presented to us in His spotless, tender, self-sacrificing character, as the Saviour of sinners. In the first five verses we have the "parable" without any mention of the Saviour Himself, or the truths it was intended to illustrate. It was founded upon what was familiar to them all, or what might be seen any day beyond the walls of Jerusalem, in the rural districts. Rev. W. M. Thomson gives an interesting and graphic description of sheepfolds and shepherds with their flocks; see *Land and Book*, vol. i., pp. 299-302.

<sup>2</sup> The fold signifies the spiritual kingdom of God; not the visible church, in which there is a commingling of the bad with the good. "The sheep throughout this parable are not the mingled multitude of good and bad; but the real sheep, the faithful, who *are* what all in the fold *should be*." (Alford.)

<sup>3</sup> All that ever came assuming the office of Messiah, or all like the Pharisees who assumed to be the only depositaries of the way of life, are doubtless included. What we are to understand by the door, and what by the wolf or robber prowling about the fold, and what by the fold, we are thus given plainly to understand. The main point in the parable is not the character of the flock or the true people of Christ, but the glorious character of the Shepherd who watches over the safety of the sheep, in contrast with the false teachers and misleading guides of the people. There is all the difference between them and Him which there is between the shepherd and the thieves and robbers, who come to steal and to kill and to destroy.

<sup>4</sup> The walls and bulwarks, by which they were surrounded, not only constitute

and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have  
 11 life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. I am the  
 good<sup>1</sup> shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the  
 12 sheep. But he that is a hireling,<sup>2</sup> 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  
 13 the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and  
 14 careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know<sup>3</sup>  
 15 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  
 16 the sheep. And other<sup>4</sup> sheep I have, which are not of this  
 fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice;  
 17 and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. Therefore doth  
 My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might  
 18 take it again. No man taketh<sup>5</sup> 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.  
 19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these  
 20 sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is

their safety but ensure their liberty. "The salvation to which Christ admits His people is not a bondage, but a deliverance from bondage." (Drummond on the Parables, Amer. edit., p. 88.)

<sup>1</sup> The twofold reference which Jesus makes in speaking of Himself as the door, and then immediately as the shepherd, entirely disappears if we keep in view the twofold relation involved in the character of Christ. As mediator between God and man, He is the door: as prophet or teacher, which is one of His great offices, He is the Good Shepherd. It is as the Good Shepherd He is brought before us in that wonderful character which, the more it is studied, the more it excites admiration, and is one of the best arguments to prove He was Divine.

"There has one Object been disclosed on earth,  
 That might command the place."

It is the sight of Christ as a sufferer, coming that by His blood sin might be washed away, which suffuses His character with its purest brightness and highest glory.

<sup>2</sup> The hireling represents the servants or under shepherds who serve merely for wages, and have no care or real love for the flock. The hirelings and thieves and robbers constitute the background on which the picture of Christ's character in all its loveliness and beauty is projected.

<sup>3</sup> "There is between Christ and the believer a mutual knowledge, founded upon love, such in kind as subsists between Him and the Father, although, as far as the believer is concerned, infinitely less perfect." (Dr. J. J. Owen, Comm.)

<sup>4</sup> This must mean those to be gathered from among the Gentiles. There is but one church on earth and in heaven.

<sup>5</sup> Christ claimed inherent and underived authority or power, *ἐξουσίαν*, over His own life; to lay it down, or take it again at His pleasure. It was His voluntariness in laying it down which rendered the sacrifice so acceptable.

21 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?

22. *Jesus declares His Messiahship, distinctly claiming equality with the Father.*

[Ver. 22-42.]

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication,<sup>1</sup> and it was  
23 winter.<sup>2</sup> And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.  
24 Then came the Jews<sup>3</sup> round about Him, and said unto Him,  
How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ,  
25 tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told<sup>4</sup> you, and ye  
believed not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they  
26 bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not  
27 of My sheep,<sup>5</sup> as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice,  
28 and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto  
them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall  
29 any *man* pluck<sup>6</sup> them out of My hand. My Father, which  
gave *them* Me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to

<sup>1</sup> The only time this feast is mentioned. It was established by Judas Maccabæus in commemoration of the purification and reconsecration of the temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was held in December, beginning with the 25th day of the Jewish month Chisleu, and continued eight days. (1 Mac. iv. 2; 2 Mac. i.; Josephus, Ant. xii. 7, 6, 7.) There was therefore an interval of two months between the feast of tabernacles, at which the events and discourses beginning at chapter vii. occurred, and this feast of dedication. It is not certainly known where our Lord spent this interval; but as no intimation is given of any journey it is probable He passed it at or in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Several things are recorded by the other evangelists, which may very naturally be referred to this time: His interview with the lawyer who asked, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" and to whom He addressed the parable of the good Samaritan; His visit at Bethany, where He received the complaint of the painstaking Martha against Mary (Luke x. 38-42); it was in the vicinity of Jerusalem He gave the instructions on prayer, Luke xi. 1-13. Thus occupied, He had been brought two months nearer the passover at which He was to suffer.

<sup>2</sup> Or the season of cold and rain, and Jesus ceased from excursions into the country, and walked in the temple in Solomon's porch, a lofty covered colonnade, rising above the valley of the Kedron.

<sup>3</sup> By the term *Jews* he designates the enemies of Christ, a very natural expression for him to use, writing so long after they had been dispersed.

<sup>4</sup> He refers doubtless to the very plain manner in which He had told them at the feast of tabernacles, and at former periods.

<sup>5</sup> He reverts to the similitude He had employed, verse 14. The unbelief of the Pharisees did not throw the least doubt or discredit on the claims of Jesus that He was the Christ. Unbelief that disregards such evidence only the more exhibits and demonstrates the sad moral state of those who cherish it.

<sup>6</sup> These are claims that could be set up only by the Divine Son of God.



30 pluck *them* out of My Father's hand. I and *My* Father are  
 31 one.<sup>1</sup> Then the Jews took up stones<sup>2</sup> again to stone Him.  
 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you  
 from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?  
 33 The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone  
 Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a  
 34 man, makest Thyself God.<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered them, Is it not  
 35 written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?<sup>4</sup> If He called them  
 gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture  
 36 cannot be broken; say ye of Him, whom the Father hath  
 sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because  
 37 I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works<sup>5</sup> of My  
 38 Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me,  
 believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the  
 39 Father *is* in Me, and I in Him. Therefore they sought again  
 40 to take Him; but He escaped<sup>6</sup> out of their hand, and went  
 away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first  
 41 baptized; and there He abode. And many resorted unto Him,  
 and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake  
 42 of this man were true. And many<sup>7</sup> believed on Him there.

<sup>1</sup> They are one in giving eternal life, and in keeping those to whom it has been given. The same agency is ascribed to the Father and the Son. This unity of power involves unity of purpose and unity of being and essence. "The numeral one is the Greek neuter, the idea of essence and not of personality being predominant." (Dr. J. J. Owen's Commentary *in loco*.)

<sup>2</sup> As they had done on a former occasion; chap. viii. 59. Our Lord, on this occasion, appears to have looked calmly upon them and restrained them, appealing again to His works in vindication of the exalted claim He had just made.

<sup>3</sup> This shows how the Jews understood His language, that He claimed to be God. He did not reply as if they had misunderstood Him, or attempt to correct their mistake; but His whole reply goes upon the assumption that they had understood Him aright, and that it was no blasphemy for Him to claim equality and oneness with God.

<sup>4</sup> The passage is in Psalm lxxxii. 6. He abates not one iota of His claims, but again asserts His Divinity in the most unmistakable terms.

<sup>5</sup> He was willing to be tried by this test. If His works were not the works of God, then they might reject Him; but if they were, then He demanded that, like honest men, they should accept the proof these works afforded that He was Messiah.

<sup>6</sup> On a former occasion He had evaded them, as His time was not yet come. He left Judæa, and went beyond Jordan, or to the east of that river, into Perea, to Bethabara or Bethany, where John had baptized, and where He Himself was baptized. He did not return again to Jerusalem till a few days before His crucifixion. At the summons of Mary and Martha He came once as near as Bethany, where He raised Lazarus, but immediately withdrew again into retirement.

<sup>7</sup> His rejection and persecution by the Pharisees did not hinder them from believing in Him.

23. *The miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus an illustrious proof of the Messiahship of Jesus.*

XI.]

[Ver. 1-54.

1 Now<sup>1</sup> a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany,<sup>2</sup>  
 2 the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was *that* Mary<sup>3</sup>  
 which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet  
 3 with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore  
 his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou  
 4 lovest<sup>4</sup> is sick. When Jesus heard *that*, He said, This sickness<sup>5</sup>  
 is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God  
 5 might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her  
 6 sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was  
 sick, He abode two<sup>6</sup> days still in the same place where He was.  
 7 Then after that saith He to *His* disciples, Let us go into Judæa

<sup>1</sup> This account is found in John alone, and is well suited to his great theme, that Christ is the Life as well as the Light of the world, that, as He can overcome death in a buried, putrefying body, so He can overcome it in the souls of those dead in trespasses and sins. The sickness and death of Lazarus preface the narrative of the last sufferings of Christ; and what more suitable introduction could there be to this narrative than an account which so beautifully exemplifies His love for those He came to save?

<sup>2</sup> Bethany was a village less than two miles distant from Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of the mount of Olives.

<sup>3</sup> John here alludes to an incident which was subsequent in time to the death and resurrection of Lazarus, one which is recorded by both Matthew and Mark, and by John himself in the next chapter. It is mentioned here for purposes of identification of the family in which the miracle was performed, as Christ had received anointing from the hands of another woman, (Luke vii. 37, 38,) or for the better appreciation of the pious act when it should come to be recorded in its true historical place. It had made the name of this Mary well known throughout the early church, according to the words of the Lord, Matt. xxvi. 13.

<sup>4</sup> The family of Bethany, although differing in their individual traits of character, were all alike devoted in affection to Jesus, and were all in turn beloved by Him: see verse 5.

<sup>5</sup> The words "this sickness is not unto death" were intended to exclude not the idea of dying, but of abiding or permanent death; they were spoken with reference to the resurrection which He knew would be accomplished by Him. The dying was to prove a means to the glory of God, or the glory of the Son of God. The record of the miracle and words of Christ, on this occasion, was to be for the instruction and consolation of believers to the end of the world. Jesus was to demonstrate His power as the Son of God by His power over death and the grave. Lazarus was already dead when the messengers returned with the answer of Jesus that his sickness would not issue in death. Even this did not shake the confidence of the sisters, for they knew that whatsoever He might ask of God, God would give it unto Him: verse 22.

<sup>6</sup> He had retired to Peræa because of the opposition and hostility of the Jews,

8 again. *His* disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late  
 9 sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again? Jesus  
 answered, Are there not twelve<sup>1</sup> hours in the day? If any  
 man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the  
 10 light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth,  
 11 because there is no light in him. These things said He: and  
 after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;<sup>2</sup>  
 12 but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His  
 13 disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus  
 spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of  
 14 taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly,  
 15 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  
 16 him. Then said Thomas,<sup>3</sup> which is called Didymus, unto his  
 fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.  
 17 Then when Jesus came, He found that he had *lain* in the grave  
 18 four<sup>4</sup> days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem,

after His plain discourse at the feast of dedication. He remains there two days after hearing of the sore affliction of His friends at Bethany; His delay argued no indifference.

<sup>1</sup> It is not at first sight easy to see the fitness of our Lord's answer to the remonstrance of the disciples when He announced His determination to visit Judæa again. The figurative language He employs was borrowed from the division of the natural day, which in Palestine was into twelve hours, from sunrise to sunset, varying in length according to the season of the year. The words of our Divine Lord, in this instance, contain a twofold reference. He first speaks of Himself as a man having an appointed work on the earth; and secondly alludes to His Divine mission, to give light to the world as its spiritual Illuminator; He had come to this world on His Father's business, and knew that the twelve hours of His day could not be cut short.

<sup>2</sup> The disciples understood Christ as speaking literally. They had heard that Lazarus was sick, but no new messengers had arrived to tell them that he was dead. Our Saviour on another occasion, that of the death of the daughter of Jairus, had designated death as a sleep. Is not the death of those who are to be raised again *surely* just as properly designated sleep as that of those who were to be raised *speedily*? Even the heathen called the places set apart for the burial of their dead *cemeteries*, or dormitories. And sleep as an image of death is very common in the Scriptures: see Isa. xxvi. 19; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxvii. 52; Acts xiii. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 6, 18, 31; 1 Thess. iv. 13; 2 Pet. iii. 4. The primitive Christians engraved the beautiful idea on their tombs. There is an instructive resemblance or analogy, which justifies the use of so favourite an image.

<sup>3</sup> We discover the same traits of character, the same weakness of faith, in Thomas here as in the other instances in which he is brought to our notice by this evangelist.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus remained two days in the place where He was, after hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, and He was probably occupied a part of two days in making the journey. Lazarus according to Jewish custom was probably interred on the day of his death. Compare verse 39.

19 about fifteen<sup>1</sup> furlongs off: and many of the Jews<sup>2</sup> came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went 21 and met Him: but Mary<sup>3</sup> sat *still* in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother 22 had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou 23 wilt ask of God, God will give *it* Thee. Jesus saith unto her, 24 Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know<sup>4</sup> that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection,<sup>5</sup> and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. 27 Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe<sup>6</sup> that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come 28 into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and 29 calleth for thee. As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, 30 and came unto Him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the 31 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.

<sup>1</sup> "About two miles," as it is in the margin. This is stated to account for the great number who came from Jerusalem to manifest their sympathy for the afflicted sisters.

<sup>2</sup> As all the relatives and friends of the family must have been *Jews*, the use of this expression here is one of those striking internal proofs that the writer had been separated from the Jewish and wrote as being consciously in the presence of the larger Gentile world.

<sup>3</sup> The character of the two sisters, just as it is pictured by Luke, is here brought to view: Martha active and demonstrative; Mary quiet and meditative.

<sup>4</sup> Martha shared with the rest of the Jews in the knowledge of the doctrine of the resurrection, and refers what Christ had just said about her brother's rising again in the general resurrection at the last day.

<sup>5</sup> He directs the glance of the mourner upon His own person as the great centre of hope and power. He is the Life as viewed by itself, without the antagonistic principle of death. He is the Resurrection, as being its author and efficient cause, in such a sense that He could claim to be the thing itself. He was very soon to lay down His own life, which no man could take from Him, and then by His own power in the time allotted to take it again.

<sup>6</sup> And we too believe, O Jesus of Nazareth, that "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." We believe that Thou art the Resurrection and the Life, and whosoever trusts in Thee, though he were dead, shall live, live for evermore.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she  
 fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been  
 33 here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw  
 her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her,  
 34 He groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where  
 35 have ye laid him? They say unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus  
 36 wept.<sup>1</sup> Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!  
 37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the  
 eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not  
 38 have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh  
 39 to the grave. It was a cave,<sup>2</sup> 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  
 40 he hath been *dead* four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not  
 unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the  
 41 glory of God? Then they took away the stone *from the place*  
 where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and  
 42 said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I  
 knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because<sup>3</sup> of the people  
 which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that Thou hast  
 43 sent Me. And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud  
 44 voice, Lazarus, come<sup>4</sup> forth. And he that was dead came

<sup>1</sup> We have in the tears of Jesus, on this occasion, one of the convincing proofs of His true humanity. We see Him also in His character of atoning Saviour. Mary and Martha were but types and representatives of a sorrowing world. He connected with death that which brought it into the world—*sin*. We couple the tears He shed at the grave with the blood He sweat in the garden and shed on the cross. St. John did not hesitate to picture Jesus weeping before the eyes of those whom He sought to convince that He was the Saviour of the world. It may have been as much for the sake of these Divine words, "JESUS WEPT," as for those words of Divine power, "LAZARUS, COME FORTH," that he sketched the tender and affecting scene at the grave of LAZARUS.

<sup>2</sup> The Jews "buried their dead," says Tholuck, "in sepulchres hewn in the rocks (Matt. xxvii. 60), through which were passages of the kind that may be seen to this day in the catacombs of Rome; on both sides of these passages were openings in which the bodies were deposited. Many of these caves entered into the earth horizontally, others perpendicularly, so that the stone closing the entrance might be said to be laid *against* as well as laid *upon* the grave."

<sup>3</sup> That which He said for the benefit of those who stood by, that they might believe in Him, were these words, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me." He would have them believe that the Father had sent Him, and was always with Him, and that He and His Father were one.

<sup>4</sup> The mighty voice of power with which Jesus raised Lazarus must be regarded as significant or typical of that word and authority with which Jesus, in the last great day, will call forth all who sleep in the grave.

forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose 45 him, and let him go. Then many<sup>1</sup> of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on 46 Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and 47 told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council,<sup>2</sup> and said, What do 48 we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all *men* will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come 49 and take away both our place and nation. And one of them named Caiaphas,<sup>3</sup> being the high priest that same year, said 50 unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and 51 that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year he prophesied that 52 Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children 53 of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth 54 they took counsel together for to put Him to death. 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.

24. *The risen Lazarus a living witness among the Jews to the Messiahship of Jesus.*

XI. 55.]

[XII. 1-11.

55 And the Jews' passover<sup>4</sup> was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to

<sup>1</sup> We have no reason to doubt that their faith was genuine and permanent. Such an exhibition of power, united with such purity of doctrine and excellence of character as were found in Christ, were well suited to win their confidence and impress their hearts.

<sup>2</sup> The Sanhedrin was called, and in order to tranquillize their own consciences the matter was represented in such a way as to create the impression that danger threatened the nation from the Romans, in case Jesus went on gaining reputation and influence among the people.

<sup>3</sup> The course which the high-priest recommended should be taken, in the deliberations of the council, is very remarkable. But his words doubtless had a meaning which he did not himself intend. Like Balaam, he became as it were a prophet against his will, and unconsciously declared the purpose of God in the Saviour's death. The evangelist explains or interprets his words as meaning that Jesus should die, not for the Jewish nation alone, but that He should gather into one the children of God scattered abroad.

<sup>4</sup> At the meeting of the Sanhedrin, immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus.

56 purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake  
among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think  
57 ye, that He will not come to the feast? Now both the chief  
priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment,<sup>1</sup> that, if  
any man knew where He were, he should show *it*, that they  
might take Him.

XII.]

1 Then Jesus six<sup>2</sup> days before the passover came to Bethany,  
where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from  
2 the dead. There they made Him a supper;<sup>3</sup> and Martha<sup>4</sup>  
served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with  
3 Him. Then took Mary<sup>5</sup> a pound of ointment of spikenard,  
very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet

the death of Jesus may be regarded as having been formally decreed. Our Lord therefore retired to "a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim," and after tarrying there for awhile went again into Peræa, east of the Jordan. There He taught and performed miracles, and when the time came joined one of the caravans going to the passover at which He was to suffer.

<sup>1</sup> His enemies were awaiting His coming, and had issued a process that as soon as His whereabouts should be known He might be arrested.

<sup>2</sup> The time here named, "six days before the passover," is equivalent to the sixth day before that festival. As our Lord ate the paschal supper on the evening of Thursday, which evening, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, was part of Friday, the sixth day before the passover was the first day of the week, corresponding to our Sunday, or Lord's day. Jesus then came to Bethany on the first day of the week. He had probably spent the preceding day, the Jewish sabbath, resting, according to the commandment, at Jericho, in the house of Zacchæus the publican. He told him when he came down from the tree that He must "abide" at his house (Luke ix. 5). Continuing His journey, the next day He stopped at Bethany, the scene of His great miracle. If His enemies supposed it was through fear of them He had concealed Himself, they would now be astonished to learn that He was to be found at Bethany. They would be still more astonished at His triumphal entry amid the Hosannas of the people into the city, at His expulsion of the profaners of the temple, and His faithful and solemn teaching from day to day, within its sacred precincts, returning nightly to His beloved Bethany for rest.

<sup>3</sup> We are not to infer that this supper was made on the same day as our Lord's arrival at Bethany. He arrived on the first day of the week. After His public entry on the first day He continued to visit the city from day to day, giving much instruction in the temple. The feast or supper appears to have been made on the fifth after His arrival, or on the evening of Wednesday preceding the passover. This is the chronological order of Matthew and Mark. We learn from these evangelists that it took place in the house of Simon the leper.

<sup>4</sup> Devoted to household pursuits, true to her tastes and character, she could make herself useful in the house of a friend and neighbour, having such a Guest.

<sup>5</sup> If we have a revelation of the character of Martha, in her serving, on this occasion, we have another of that of Mary in the beautiful incident here recorded. John mentions only the anointing of the feet. Both the head and the feet doubtless received the application; but John gives prominence only to the anointing of the

with her hair : and the house was filled with the odour of the  
 † ointment. Then 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 ?  
 § 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.  
 ¶ Then said Jesus, Let her alone : against the day of My burying<sup>1</sup>  
 † hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you ;  
 ‡ but Me ye have not always. Much people of the Jews therefore  
 knew that He was there : and they came not for Jesus' sake  
 only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had  
 † raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they  
 ‡ might put Lazarus also to death ;<sup>2</sup> because that by reason of him  
 many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

feet. Matthew and Mark speak of the anointing of the head, but say nothing of the feet. John speaks of the feet only, perhaps because of the use of so precious a commodity. The cost of the box, estimated according to the measure of value in our day, was a large sum for one in her circumstances. The value set upon it by Judas and others present was three hundred pence or denarii, a sum nearly equal, when the wages of the labourers were a penny a day, to a year's income from a man's incessant daily toil. It was because of its costliness that it served her purpose.

<sup>1</sup> She had treasured up in her heart the intimation which more than once had fallen from the lips of Jesus concerning His death. She saw the gathering darkness in the increased animosity of His foes, and with love's quick apprehension knew that the hour was come. As Jesus reclined at the table, after the ancient oriental fashion, Mary could with equal ease approach both His head and His feet. She pours upon them the precious oil or nard, and wipes His feet with her hair. And this may be the reason why John mentions only the anointing of the feet, because of the use which Mary made of her hair. His own "ardent love for his Master found a counterpart in that of Mary, and he records that feature of her pious service which exhibited most strongly her deep and superabounding devotion to Jesus." (Dr. J. J. Owen.) This was not the only instance in which the feet of our Lord had been anointed while He was reclining at table. See the touching incident of the "woman which was a sinner," who first washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, and then anointed them from an alabaster box of ointment, Luke vii. These women, and others who attended on our Lord and ministered to Him, were representatives of that great number of devoted women from the beginning, who, loving much because much forgiven, or who, like Mary and Martha, having sought and obtained consolation in sorrow from the words and presence of Jesus, have devoted themselves to the glory and advancement of His kingdom. The very world has been filled with the odour of their alabaster boxes, which they have poured on the feet and head of the Lord. What a contrast between these two portraits, standing here side by side on the evangelic page,—that of the gentle loving Mary, with her "ointment of spikenard, very costly," and that of the avaricious plotting Judas, with his money-bag! It is no mere accident that they stand in this close propinquity.

<sup>2</sup> So great was the sensation created by the resurrection of Lazarus, and so



25. *Jesus is proclaimed Messiah by the multitude at Jerusalem, at His triumphal entry.*

[Ver. 12-19.

12 On the next<sup>1</sup> day much people that were come to the feast,  
13 when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took  
branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried,  
Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name  
14 of the Lord. And Jesus, when He had found a young ass,<sup>2</sup> sat

desperate had matters become to the chief priests, that they even counselled about putting Lazarus to death. He was a living witness to the power of Jesus over death. The curiosity of "much people of the Jews" (ver. 9, ὄχλος πλὸς, *a great multitude*) was excited to see him; and as Bethany was near to Jerusalem it was easily gratified. Streams of people were coming and going, and many believed on Jesus. There was no lack of witnesses as to the death of Lazarus, and his burial four days; and there was no lack of witnesses when he was raised to life; and therefore every one who saw him alive became a new witness to the reality of the miracle, and to the truth of the words of Jesus that He was "the Resurrection and the Life." It was a miracle, as to its proof and its character, which might be held up before the whole world as demanding the belief of every man in Him as the Son of God and Saviour, that believing they might have life through His name.

<sup>1</sup> The rising enthusiasm in His favour, which had so disconcerted the chief priests and Pharisees, was about to manifest itself, and the declaration that He was the King of Israel, the promised Messiah, to be proclaimed in the hearing of Jerusalem by the shout of the multitude; presenting a scene in the Saviour's earthly career in the widest contrast with all that we read of Him on almost every other occasion. The evangelist introduces it into his narrative as one of the proofs that Jesus was the Christ, or as showing the evidence that went along with Him, addressed to and convincing the great mass of the people, even at Jerusalem the centre of opposition. It was on the next day after His arrival at Bethany, where He appears to have passed the night. The city was crowded with people who had come to the feast.

<sup>2</sup> Two of His disciples, as we learn from the other evangelists (Matt. xxi. 1-17, Mark xi. 1-11, Luke xix. 29-44), had been sent for the ass on which He was to ride into the Jewish capital. The information would not be long in extending to the city, and surrounding villages, that Jesus was coming. He moves towards the city, and the multitude precede and follow, bestowing that honour which men show to an illustrious prince. He did not prohibit them. His whole career had been unobtrusive; He had not sought such homage from the people. And although many of them may have joined in this demonstration through the contagion of popular excitement, yet, like Caiaphas in his prophecy, even these are made unconsciously to bear testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus. And by permitting these manifestations on the part of the people the great Messianic prophecy of Zechariah, chap. ix. 9, was fulfilled. The Saviour as He drew near the city, in which could be distinctly heard, from the sides of Olivet, the shouts of the multitude accompanying Him, was met by another multitude, who came pouring out of the gates and were not to be outdone in the honours shown Him by those who had accompanied Him from the villages on the other side. They returned the shout in words equivalent to acknowledging Him to be their expected Messiah. The words were no mere accident in their lips, any more than was the prophecy uttered by Caiaphas or the proclamation made by the spirits He cast out.

15 thereon ; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion : behold,  
 16 thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things under-  
 stood not His disciples at the first : but when Jesus was glorified,  
 then remembered they that these things were written of Him,  
 17 and *that* they had done these things unto Him. The people  
 therefore that was with Him when He called Lazarus<sup>1</sup> out of  
 18 his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this  
 cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had  
 19 done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among them-  
 selves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing ? behold, the world<sup>2</sup>  
 is gone after Him.

26. *A voice from heaven proclaims His Divine Sonship in the ears of  
 certain representatives of the Gentile world.*

[Ver. 20-33.]

20 And there were certain Greeks<sup>3</sup> among them that came up  
 21 to worship at the feast : the same came therefore to Philip,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The astonishing miracle, in the case of Lazarus, was the cause immediately operating in securing this acknowledgment on the part of the people that Jesus was the promised King. There were other mighty works which were proclaimed by His disciples in the ears of the two multitudes, as they met and mingled in one vast concourse, and raised their united voices, "Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest !"

<sup>2</sup> The world might seem to be running after Him ; but the Pharisees judged, and, as the event proved, judged rightly, that if they could secure His arrest under the authority of the Romans, and by a detachment of Roman soldiers, the fickle multitude, governed by impulse and awed by power, would be silent, if they were not found to join in the cry "Away with Him." In this scene of rejoicing and triumph there was one event in singular contrast with it, and forming as it were a striking episode, not related by John. As He gained the summit of Olivet, and came in sight of the city, He was overwhelmed with the deepest sadness and grief, and wept over it : see Luke xix. 41-44. It was on the following morning, as He returned into the city, that as a symbolic act He cursed the fruitless fig tree, and went directly to the temple, where He repeated another highly symbolic act by again driving out of it, as He had done at the beginning of His ministry, the profane traders and money-changers.

<sup>3</sup> There were representatives of the Gentile world, who came from the East at the beginning of the life of Jesus, and worshipped at His cradle ; these men, at the end of His life, came from the West to bow at His cross. As they had come to Jerusalem to worship they were doubtless proselytes. As Jesus was the one topic of conversation, and as they perhaps had been witnesses of the remarkable demonstration at His triumphal entry, they resolved to seek an introduction to Him. It was one of the few occasions in the history of our Lord, when others besides the lost sheep of the house of Israel shared in His instructions. We may hope that they were among the firstfruits of that harvest of souls which was to be gathered from the heathen world.

<sup>4</sup> Philip and Andrew, as may perhaps be inferred from their Grecian names, had been brought up in one of the Hellenic cities of Syria, and could speak the Greek

which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir,  
 22 we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and  
 23 again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them,  
 saying, The hour<sup>1</sup> is come, that the Son of man should be  
 24 glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn<sup>2</sup> of wheat  
 fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it  
 25 bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth<sup>3</sup> his life shall lose it;  
 and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life  
 26 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  
 27 will My Father honour. Now is My soul troubled;<sup>4</sup> and what  
 shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this  
 28 cause<sup>5</sup> came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then  
 came there a voice<sup>6</sup> from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified

language, which may have been the reason why the Greeks sought an interview with Jesus through them.

<sup>1</sup> That is, the appointed time. "The request of these Gentiles was so manifest a precursor of the great numbers who should come to Him as the Saviour of men, from the Gentile world, that our Lord breaks forth in triumphal exclamation, as though His future glorification in the universal spread of the gospel were already come."

<sup>2</sup> As it is necessary a grain of wheat should be deposited in the earth, in order to the development of the germ and its increase, so was the humiliation of Christ necessary to His glorification. The grain of wheat unless cast into the earth, remains "bare grain" and unproductive. There is no seed which, it is said, seems to come to more utter putrefaction, in evolving the germ of production, than wheat.

<sup>3</sup> In the hearing of these Gentile inquirers, our Lord not only without concealment speaks of His own humiliation, which must precede His glory, but in the most distinct manner tells them that all who would be His followers, and share His glory, must consent to follow Him in the path of humility and self denial. He would not have these Greeks (perhaps they belonged to the more cultivated and refined class of their race) go away with a false impression, as they might if He spake alone of His glory. It was a glory to be reached by the m, as well as by Him, through the path of suffering.

<sup>4</sup> There were several occasions when the Saviour's anticipated sufferings seemed to produce a most remarkable effect on His mind. See Luke xii. 50. In the garden He exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). And in the presence of these representatives of the Gentile world He seems to have had a foretaste of the agony of Gethsemane. His mind was thrown into a state of perturbation and distress. He felt the weight of the sins He had upon Him, as He contemplated the world, in all its tribes and nations, for which He came to provide salvation. He was bearing the guilt of Gentiles as well as Jews.

<sup>5</sup> It was "for this cause," that He might endure these very sufferings to atone for sin, that He came into the world.

<sup>6</sup> This, like the voice at His baptism and at His transfiguration, is one of the most wonderful events of our Lord's history. On these two former occasions the testimony was the same, "This is My beloved Son." On the present occasion the

29 *it*, and will glorify *it* again. The people therefore that stood  
 by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered : others said, An angel  
 30 spake to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not  
 31 because of Me,<sup>1</sup> but for your sakes. Now is the judgment<sup>2</sup> of  
 this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out.  
 32 And I, if I be lifted<sup>3</sup> up from the earth, will draw<sup>4</sup> all *men*  
 33 unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die.

voice was heard not only by His disciples, but by the whole company of both Jews and Gentiles present. It was probably uttered with special reference to the Greeks. It was meet that they should lack no evidence that this Jesus whom they had desired to see had come from God. They had this in the distinct articulate utterance from heaven in response to His prayer. There is a calm sublimity in the response, as if it came from that serene region for ever removed from all that disturbs and agitates the affairs and bosoms of men. As it was uttered with special reference to the Gentiles present, and they appear already to have been so favourably disposed towards Jesus, we may conclude that it wrought full conviction in their minds that He was the Son of God and Saviour of men.

<sup>1</sup> The voice was principally for their sakes who stood by, especially, as before intimated, for those interesting representatives of the Gentile world who had come seeking Jesus. It was intended as a testimony from the Father in behalf of the Son, that should dispel every lingering doubt in their minds that He was the Christ. They had probably seen none of His miracles; they had never heard His gracious words before. They would shortly return whence they came, and have no further opportunity of seeing the wonders of His hands or listening to His instructions. Probably, at length, in their far distant home the tidings would reach them that the Jesus whose presence they had sought, and to whose wondrous words they had listened, had been put to an ignominious death on the cross. They would then recall the voice, and what He Himself had told them about the corn of wheat falling into the earth and dying that it might bring forth fruit.

<sup>2</sup> The word rendered *judgment* literally signifies *a crisis*, a separating or discriminating process among men, according to their belief or unbelief.

<sup>3</sup> Our Lord in the presence of these Gentiles speaks distinctly of His death and the manner of His death. He refers to His being lifted up between heaven and earth, on the cross. He describes graphically the death He should die. When these Greeks, in their far distant home, should hear of His crucifixion, they would know that He fore-told the very manner of His death; and this instead of weakening would strengthen their confidence in Him.

<sup>4</sup> He was to endure a cruel ignominious death, that the prince of this world might be cast out, and men, emancipated from his power, might be drawn to Himself. The attraction of His cross was to be felt in every part of the world. The Greeks, who had come seeking Him, were but the firstfruits of a glorious harvest. He was to be lifted up higher than the cross, exalted at God's right hand, and have all power given Him. He was to send forth His servants to teach all nations, and His Spirit was to go with them, working with them and drawing men from their sins and vain hopes to Him. He, Jesus of Nazareth, after He had been lifted up from the earth, would do all this. When asked what text in the New Testament points to the universal spread of the gospel, and the conversion of the world, we point to this. Could anything more to the purpose be desired than these words of the Saviour Himself, uttered in the presence of this deputation, as they may be regarded, from the Gentile world?

27. *Even the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, notwithstanding the evidence of His Messiahship, was a fulfilment of prophecy.*

[Ver. 34-50.]

34 The people<sup>1</sup> answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever : and how sayest Thou, The Son of  
35 man must be lifted<sup>2</sup> up ? who is this Son<sup>3</sup> 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.  
36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and  
37 did hide<sup>4</sup> Himself from them. But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him :  
38 that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled,<sup>5</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> To set forth the evidence that Jesus was the promised Saviour, and show that unbelief in Him is inexcusable, is the one great object of the evangelist. To the question why with all this clearness of evidence they did not believe, we have the answer in the words of Christ Himself. We have, in fact, in their unbelief another evidence that Jesus was the promised Deliverer ; for their rejection of Him was a fulfilment of prophecy.

<sup>2</sup> This proves that the Jews by this expression had understood Him as referring to His departure from the world.

<sup>3</sup> This question is to be taken probably as spoken in a contemptuous tone, " What sort of a Son of man is this ? " He contents Himself with stating again, in another form, the fact that He should be with them but a little longer. They might reject Him on this account, but He would not attempt to conceal it, nor to explain it away. But two days remained before He was to be crucified ; they were to hear but few more words from Him.

<sup>4</sup> This appeal of the Saviour was the last which He seems to have made to those who had hitherto rejected Him ; it was His last warning. He returned no more to the temple. The expression that " He hid " Himself means that He sought retirement with His disciples, where He could be secure from intrusion ; for He had many things to say to them ; and all that remains, following this section, of the proofs of His Messiahship, appears in connection with these private instructions, and His crucifixion and resurrection.

<sup>5</sup> The evangelist now states distinctly that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews was a matter of prophecy, the fulfilment of so signal a prophecy as that by Isaiah, chapter liii. The Scriptures had not then been divided into verses and chapters ; he could cite it only by citing its title or the sentences with which it opens. The entire chapter, which is a graphic description of the lowly appearance and sufferings of Him who came for salvation, is doubtless referred to. The very unbelief of the scribes and Pharisees was foretold (Isa. vi. 9, 10). The judicial blinding and hardening spoken of in the second citation from Isaiah was not such as contravened in the least degree free moral agency, but was of a kind which made the guilt of the Jews in rejecting Christ (by which their blindness and hardness were but the more fully demonstrated and intensified) only the more inexcusable and appalling. He blinded their eyes just as the light of the noonday sun is painful to an inflamed diseased eye.

he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom  
 39 hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could  
 40 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,  
 41 and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he  
 42 saw His glory, and spake of Him. Nevertheless among the  
 chief rulers also many believed<sup>1</sup> on Him; but because of the  
 Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out  
 43 of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than  
 44 the praise of God. Jesus cried<sup>2</sup> and said, He that believeth on  
 45 Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he  
 46 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 dark-  
 47 ness. 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.  
 48 He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one  
 that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall  
 49 judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself;  
 but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment,  
 50 what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that  
 His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak there-  
 fore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak.

<sup>1</sup> This fact is stated in further vindication of the conclusive character of the evidence with which Jesus surrounded Himself that He was the promised Saviour. All the influence of their associates could not hinder the secret belief of many. In some of them it may subsequently have ripened into a true and living faith.

<sup>2</sup> The evangelist here puts on record the last words of Jesus before proceeding to those interesting discourses, addressed to His disciples in retirement, and which equally attest His fitness for the office of Saviour of the world. He reaffirms His oneness with the Father by again declaring that faith in Him was faith in God, and that to see Him was to see the Father that sent Him. He offers salvation to these enemies and opposers once more, by telling them that whosoever believeth on Him should not abide in darkness, and that He came not to judge the world but to save the world.

PART SECOND.—*Evidence that Jesus is the Saviour of the world, derived from His intercourse and discourses in private with His chosen friends, and especially as seen in the great sacrifice offered by Him, and its acceptance, for the salvation of the world.*—Chapters XIII. to XXI.

1. *The self sacrificing spirit, which will enable the disciples of Christ to find happiness in any service, however humble, which brotherly love requires should be rendered one to another.*

XIII.]

[Ver. 1-17.]

1 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  
2 loved them unto the end.<sup>1</sup> And supper being ended,<sup>2</sup> the devil having now put into the heart of Judas<sup>3</sup> Iscariot, Simon's  
3 son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and  
4 went to God; He riseth<sup>4</sup> from supper, and laid aside His gar-

<sup>1</sup> The immediate contemplation of His own sufferings did not diminish His deep love for "His own," nor the manifestation of it.

<sup>2</sup> That it was "ended" is inconsistent with what follows, where it is described as going on. (See verses 12 and 26.) It should have been rendered, "the supper being ready, or about to begin," *δέιπνου γενομένου*; the Sinaitic MS. has *γινόμενου*; and the earliest English translation (Wiclif's) has, "and whanne the souper was made," *i.e.* when it was ready. On the morning of the day on which the passover was to be eaten at evening, two of the disciples were sent into the city to make preparations for that feast. Towards evening our Lord, with the rest of His disciples, followed; and when the hour was come, which was after sunset, He was there ready to sit down, "and the twelve apostles with Him."

<sup>3</sup> A second preliminary to the account about to be given is here thrown in. The plot was all ready, the instrument prepared for the chief priests and Pharisees, and he was present, which would serve to give greater significance to the acts and words of the Saviour. We learn from another evangelist that a contention had occurred among the apostles as to which of them should be greatest, which may have had reference to the order in which they should take their places at the feast; or, as they had no servants, the strife may have arisen respecting the feet washing, who should perform this humble service, which usually preceded the feast. (Compare Luke xxii. 26, 27.)

<sup>4</sup> He had taken His place at the table, when the bickering that was going on among the disciples was suddenly arrested by His rising again and laying aside His robe, and while deeply conscious of the dignity of His person, of His pre-existent and future glory (verse 3), proceeding to gird Himself, after the manner of a servant, with a towel, and washing their feet. It was an act intended to impress on their minds a lesson of mutual kindness and service, "in honour preferring one another," which can proceed only from true humility, a lesson of unspeakable importance in such a

5ments ; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith He was girded. 6Then cometh He to Simon Peter : and Peter saith unto Him, 7Lord, dost Thou wash my feet ? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know 8hereafter. Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never<sup>1</sup> wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no 9part with Me. Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet 10only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean<sup>2</sup>

society or fraternity as He was establishing. He stooped from the height of His Divine position, and, as a most expressive act of self abasement, washed the feet of His unworthy disciples. He was affording them and the world a different class of proofs that He was the promised Saviour, from those which had been exhibited to the scribes and Pharisees ; or we see in His private intercourse with and His private instruction of His disciples the actual exercise of His office as the Saviour promised to the world. He was not a mere teacher of doctrines, but the author of a religion affecting experimentally the heart, and practically the life ; and the proofs now to appear are such as demonstrate His fitness for the office He had assumed, in the means He appointed and employed to qualify His disciples for the great work on which He sent them, and thus secure the salvation of the world.

<sup>1</sup> The impetuous, demonstrative character of this disciple manifested itself, as on many other occasions. With words of mild rebuke Jesus replies, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," doubtless referring to that of which the washing was only significant,—moral cleansing,—to effect which He was about to condescend to a deeper humiliation than that which so disturbed Peter, even of the cross and the grave. In mentioning the other parts of his body to which he would have the water applied, Peter seems to have had some idea of the spiritual cleansing to which Jesus referred, and indicated his desire for it to be applied to every part of his moral nature.

<sup>2</sup> We understand the meaning of these words by a reference to the ancient customs of the bath and the mode of covering the feet. The whole body was bathed before the principal meal, which was doubtless observed with great care on so important an occasion as partaking of the paschal supper. A person just coming from the bath, as they had just come, did not need to bathe again ; yet, as the sandals worn in those days covered but a part of the foot, he could not travel far without having occasion for the use of water. The act of our Saviour therefore not only set forth in the most striking manner the duty of serving, in honour preferring our brethren ; but it was designed to have a symbolic significance. We are not to suppose so much a double sense as to recognise a symbolical character in the transaction ; the lesson derived in this way was also specially needed by the disciples at this particular juncture. They had just been guilty of unseemly contention, although the occasion was so sacred and solemn. They were to be sorely tried in the future, and it was important for them to learn that the sins into which they might be betrayed would not of necessity prove that they were never in a state of grace ; and that they might daily receive fresh pardon for such defilements. And the same is true for all humanity : those who have been morally purified or regenerated need no repetition of the purifying process, except so far as those defilements incident to a



11 every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray<sup>1</sup> Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean. 12 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 13 have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say 14 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. 15 For I have given you an example,<sup>2</sup> that ye should do as I have 16 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 17 that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

2. *Jesus foretells His betrayal by Judas Iscariot.*

[Ver. 18-30.]

18 I speak not of you all: I know<sup>3</sup> whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with 19 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<sup>4</sup> that I

partially sanctified nature are concerned, which, like the dust from the feet of a pilgrim, would require to be cleansed and purified through the pardoning grace of the Redeemer.

<sup>1</sup> Our Lord knew as perfectly the state of Judas as of Peter; He knew that he had already bargained or resolved to betray Him. And as Judas, as well as Peter and the rest, received the external act of washing, it is evident that our Lord could not have referred to this external act when He said to Peter, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me"; but to that spiritual cleansing of which He here clearly speaks, "Ye are clean, but not all."

<sup>2</sup> Are we to understand the Saviour as instituting a rite to be observed in the Christian Church? It is certain the primitive Christians did not so understand Him; for they do not appear to have practised such a rite. The custom of washing the feet held in ancient times, in oriental countries, an important place among the duties of hospitality. The Saviour simply seizes upon this to enforce brotherly kindness and charity, and to rebuke ambition and strife. Nothing could be more important in the Church He was about to establish through them.

<sup>3</sup> He knew who truly belonged to Him. The betrayal by Judas was not only foreseen by Jesus; it had been foretold by Scripture. The quotation is from Psalm xli. 9, which, although it primarily relates to David and his betrayer, Ahithophel, was designed typically to mirror forth the more important fact of the Lord's betrayal. Our Lord utters a prediction concerning the fulfilment of a prediction. He did not point to a prediction as having had its fulfilment in Him, but to one unfulfilled, declaring it was now to be accomplished.

<sup>4</sup> Our Lord seems gradually to have approached the subject, and with the utmost delicacy to have revealed to His disciples the fact that one of their number should betray Him. It was necessary He should prepare their minds for this event. It might have proved a stumblingblock, had it appeared that Jesus Himself did not know Judas but had been deceived by Him. By foretelling, however, exactly what

20 am *He*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth<sup>1</sup>  
whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me  
21 receiveth Him that sent Me. When Jesus had thus said, He  
was troubled<sup>2</sup> in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I  
22 say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. Then the dis-  
ciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake.  
23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom<sup>3</sup> one of His disciples,  
24 whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him,  
25 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?  
26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop,<sup>4</sup> when I  
have dipped *it*. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave *it*  
27 to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. And after the sop Satan<sup>5</sup>  
entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest,  
28 do<sup>6</sup> quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent

was about to happen, He made it a new ground or fresh support of their faith. He gives them a distinct account beforehand of the whole matter. And in the record of it, by the Spirit of inspiration, to the whole world was given a new evidence that Jesus was what He claimed to be, the Divine Son of God.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning seems to be that the conduct of Judas should not be permitted to detract from the proper authority and credentials of the true apostles and ministers of Christ. Even "they that had received Judas," says Matthew Henry, "when a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterward proved a traitor; for he was one whom Christ sent."

<sup>2</sup> The presence of Judas has become painful and oppressive, and He speaks out in language that might convince that disciple his treachery was known, "Verily, verily, I say," etc.

<sup>3</sup> The position was not accidental, it indicated the intimacy and peculiar affection between the Master and St. John. This evangelist gives the fullest and most particular account, of any of the evangelists, of the betrayal by Judas. Several of the incidents are entirely new; *e.g.*, those relating to John's position on the bosom of his Master, and the beckoning of Peter to him to ask that the betrayer might be pointed out.

<sup>4</sup> The sop was a morsel of bread, broken from the loaf and dipped in the broth made of bitter herbs. This giving of the sop, it has been noticed, was one of the closest testimonials of friendly affection.

<sup>5</sup> Up to this moment we may suppose (see Tholuck) that there was vacillation in the mind of Judas; but Satan now took complete possession of him, and swayed him, so that he did not flinch in carrying out his wicked design, his agreement with the rulers of the Jews to betray Jesus. It was when his purpose was fully ripened and fixed within him, that Satan may be said to have taken full possession of him. It was only as he was insensible to goodness, unyielding to the motives that were set before him, and permitted himself to be carried away by his cursed love of gold, that Satan gained this advantage.

<sup>6</sup> "His direction to do quickly what he was about to do does not serve in any sense to exculpate Judas. It was not a command or direction for him to perform the act,

29 He spake this unto him.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

3. CHRIST, in His final instructions to His followers: first, in removing their perplexities and misgivings.

XIII. 31.]

[XIV. 1-7.

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified,<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup> come; so now I say to you. A

but, having fully yielded himself up to Satan, the Saviour could do him no more good, and desired his presence no longer. It is to be noticed also that he goes forth fully aware that to Jesus at least his whole heart lies bare, and that he performs his deed of treachery in the direct face of the new evidence, from the omniscience of our Lord, that He was the Son of God." (See Commentary of Dr. J. J. Owen.)

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that if Peter, John, and their associates, had known the errand on which Judas was about to depart they would have attempted to interfere.

<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt, from a comparison of the events as recorded by the several evangelists, that Judas retired before the institution of the Lord's Supper. He was present at the passover and not at the Eucharist, so that what has sometimes been said that a hypocrite was present at the first celebration of the Supper lacks foundation. When he went out the night had fully set in. It was the dark and gloomy night of the Saviour's sorrow and agony of soul. It was the hour of the powers of darkness. They seemed to walk the earth or crowd the air as perhaps never before, gathering in all their number and might for the fearful onset that was now to be made on the Son of the Highest. It was night over Jerusalem; its cup of indignation was rapidly filling. It was gloomy night in the soul of Judas, and as he plunged into the darkness from that lighted chamber to execute his dreadful crime, "it was to grope and perish in the yet deeper and more real night of his own spirit." It was the night of that long night which had covered the earth,—the midnight which preceded the dawn of a bright and glorious morn.

<sup>3</sup> No sooner had the door closed upon Judas than the Lord gave utterance to words of joy and triumph. His spirit rises above the depressing influences around Him, and rejoices in light even on that dark and dreadful night. He looks beyond His sufferings to the bright goal in the future. He applied Himself at once to those final instructions which must be embraced in the two or three hours that remained before His agony and arrest in Gethsemane.

<sup>4</sup> He had said something quite similar to this to the unbelieving Jews (vii. 34, viii. 21); but the exclusion of the disciples from His presence was not, as in the case of the Jews, because they should die in their sins. It was to be only temporary, as He tells them shortly after. They had a work to do before they could follow Him to His glory.

new<sup>1</sup> commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; 35 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 36 to another. Simon Peter<sup>2</sup> said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not 37 follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards. Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will 38 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<sup>3</sup> shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice.

XIV.]

1 Let not your heart be troubled: <sup>4</sup> ye believe in God, believe <sup>5</sup> 2 also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if *it*

<sup>1</sup> The key note of those instructions now to be given (p. 347, note 3) was contained in this "new commandment." As a source of strength and comfort in His absence, to this love for one another He gives the foremost place. It is called *new* because this love was to have an exhibition according to the example of Christ and the teachings and motives set before us in His gospel.

It was at this point it would seem, before fully entering upon His great sacramental discourse, that the Lord's Supper was instituted. It is remarkable that John gives no account of its institution. The reason may have been that it had been given so minutely by the other evangelists, and had become a well known ordinance in the Christian Church. John applies himself to putting on record a discourse omitted by them, in which we find evidence of the establishment of just such a rite as the Lord's Supper.

<sup>2</sup> Peter was the first to break the silence which followed its institution. Recurring to the words of the Lord, "Whither I go ye cannot come" (verse 33), he asked, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" Jesus takes occasion to explain what He had said before, that He simply meant, "Ye cannot go along with Me now. Ye must remain awhile on earth. Ye have a work to do, a testimony to bear. When that work as My faithful witnesses is done, ye shall follow Me and be partakers of My joy." This ought to have satisfied Peter, but with his characteristic ardour he asks why he cannot follow now, and adds in a spirit of boastful confidence, but no doubt with the utmost sincerity, that he was ready to lay down his life for Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Here comes in the sad record, or prophecy rather, of the sad defection of this noble spirited yet presumptuous disciple. It is given more at large by Matthew, chap. xxvi. 31-35; and by Luke, chap. xxii. 31-33.

<sup>4</sup> He does not mean to tell them that they had no real trouble. The trouble to which He referred, and for which He sought to bring them support, was unquestionably doubt or misgiving as to the confidence they had reposed in Him as the promised Messiah. They had just heard Him talking of going away, that they all should be offended because of Him, one of their number should betray Him, another deny Him. He had even spoken of the shedding of His blood, and given them a memorial to be observed in remembrance of His sufferings. He who needed not that any should testify what is in man could read the disquietude and misgiving of their hearts.

<sup>5</sup> There is special reference here to belief in Him as the Saviour of the world.

were not so, I would have told you. I go<sup>1</sup> to prepare a place  
 3 for you. And if I go and prepare<sup>2</sup> a place for you, I will come  
 again,<sup>3</sup> and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, *there* ye  
 4 may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye  
 5 know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither  
 6 Thou goest; and how<sup>4</sup> can we know the way? Jesus saith  
 unto him, I am<sup>5</sup> the way, the truth, and the life: no man  
 7 cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye  
 should have known My Father<sup>6</sup> also: and from henceforth ye  
 know Him, and have seen Him.

4. *Proofs of His Messiahship, in the provision made for His continued presence, in the mission of the Holy Comforter.*

[Ver. 8-31.]

8 Philip<sup>7</sup> saith unto Him, Lord, show<sup>8</sup> us the Father, and it suf-  
 9 ficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with

<sup>1</sup> Recurring to the question of Peter, "Whither goest Thou?" He gives them a blessed promise on which to rest. He gives them the promise of heaven under the figure of an everlasting house, a sure resting place, "My Father's house." Its many mansions are numerous, and large enough for the many sons to be brought home to glory. "He speaks," says Luther, "as he must who would charm and win the simple."

<sup>2</sup> He must go to appear in our nature, our Advocate with the Father. It is thus He prepares a place for His people.

<sup>3</sup> What can He possibly refer to but His advent at their death, to receive them to Himself? But we do not strain the sense when we suppose Christ also to refer to His second coming, to raise the dead and receive His servants in body as well as spirit to Himself.

<sup>4</sup> This second question, in which Thomas is the spokesman, serves further to give direction and point to this sacramental discourse. This disciple is mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, by name only; and this is one of the three incidents John records concerning him. Christ seemed to Thomas to be talking of the mysterious and unknown; but Jesus replied to him just as tenderly as to Peter.

<sup>5</sup> He did not claim to be a mere guide to show men the way, but the Way itself. He claimed also that perfect Truth might for once be seen to have living embodiment in Him, in His doctrine and example. And He claimed to be Life itself.

<sup>6</sup> As He began with Peter so He ends with Thomas, by referring to the intimate union and oneness of the Father and the Son. The disciples who knew and had seen Christ are expressly told that they knew and had seen the Father. This is the doctrine of which He made so great use with the chief priests and Pharisees, in claiming for Himself the great office of Messiah.

<sup>7</sup> Our Lord, at the table where the Supper was instituted, having answered the questions of Peter and Thomas, next answered those of Philip and Jude; and in His answers gave revelations well suited to remove all their perplexities and misgivings as to the character in which they had professed to receive Him as the Saviour of the world. Of Philip very little is recorded; but that little presents him to us in an engaging light. See John i. 43-46; xii. 21, 22.

<sup>8</sup> What did Philip mean? There can be little doubt he meant, although it is

you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen<sup>1</sup> the Father; and how sayest thou *then*,  
 10 Show us the Father? 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  
 11 the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake.  
 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works<sup>2</sup> that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than  
 13 these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask<sup>3</sup> in My name,<sup>4</sup> that will I do, that the  
 14 Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything  
 15 in My name, I will do *it*. If ye love<sup>5</sup> Me, keep My command-

impossible he could have understood all that was involved in his request, that if Christ would show to their bodily sight the Father, or show Himself to them in His Divinity as perceptibly to their senses as he had in His humanity, all their perplexities would be removed.

<sup>1</sup> It would be impossible for language to express more clearly and emphatically the essential unity of the Father and the Son. He exhorts them to give a hearty reception to this truth; it would enable them to understand the great purpose of redemption, and to see how ineffectual would be all the attempts of His enemies to hinder the work He had come to accomplish. The sight of Christ is the nearest view we can ever have of God the Father.

<sup>2</sup> Christ reminded Thomas and his fellow disciples of the wonderful works they had seen Him perform, as a reason why they should believe that He came forth from God, and was God. And now, as He was about to leave them and these works were to cease, and their hearts were filled with misgivings, He assures them that if they believed in Him as the promised Messiah, with an unshaken faith, they should have the power of performing similar miracles; and the possession of this power would continue to bear testimony to His Messiahship. He goes further, and assures them that they shall perform even greater works. Surely He did not mean that they should perform more wonderful miracles. He must refer to the triumphs of the gospel under their preaching, after the pouring out of the Spirit, the wonders which commenced on the day of Pentecost. These would be better and stronger proofs that He was what He claimed to be, the Saviour of the world; and they are continued from age to age in the Church. How suited were such words to reassure the hearts of His timid followers!

<sup>3</sup> Under the ministration of the Spirit, the great things that were to be done were to be done in answer to prayer. This was to be the secret of their success.

<sup>4</sup> This promise has but a single limitation, but it is one of the greatest moment, "In My name"; *i.e.*, this prayer can be offered only by one who is in abiding union with Christ, who depends on His power alone, and makes His glory his supreme object.

<sup>5</sup> With faith they must unite love; and they must give evidence of the genuineness of their faith by the love that manifests itself in obedience. He had said so much about the necessity of believing that it became necessary to present this practical test as to its genuineness. It is with faith as thus attested, that the great promise stands connected.

16 ments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you  
 another Comforter,<sup>1</sup> that He may abide with you for ever ;  
 17 *even* the Spirit<sup>2</sup> of truth ; whom the world cannot receive,  
 because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him : but ye know  
 18 Him ; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will  
 19 not leave you comfortless :<sup>3</sup> I will come to you. Yet a little  
 while, and the world seeth Me no more ; but ye see<sup>4</sup> Me : be-

<sup>1</sup> He had announced the gift of the Spirit before, but less distinctly (see chap. vii. 37-39). But it was only as He came to address His followers for the last time before His crucifixion, that He fully acquainted them with the mission of the Holy Ghost. All that He had to say in this pathetic farewell seemed to converge and concentrate in this blessed promise, so that this discourse with all its heavenly counsels is made to be, so to speak, the beautiful and fitting frame for this picture, the costly setting for this precious gem. That development of revealed doctrine in general, which has been observed in the Scriptures as a whole (see the admirable volume of Bampton Lectures, "The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament," by the Rev. T. H. Bernard, M.A.) will be found to hold true in a particular instance, in a remarkable degree, in regard to this doctrine of the Spirit, as presented in these last words of Christ. We require the full statement of our Saviour, as brought together in the several passages, in the order in which they occur, if we would fully understand this doctrine and appreciate its importance.

The term "another," which is joined to "Comforter," suggests not only what this promised Agent was to be, but what Christ Himself had been, or what this Agent was to be by what Christ had been, a Comforter. It is full of meaning that this very title, one so peculiar, Παράκλητος, Paraclete, is by St. John elsewhere applied to Christ Himself (1 John ii. 1), where it is translated "Advocate." The name itself is something new. When John employs it in his First Epistle, in application to Christ as our Intercessor on high, Christ is presented as one who propitiates the justice of God, and is thus the procuring cause of the highest comfort to men, even their salvation. Here Christ Himself speaks, and expressly applies it to another. The versions of Wicklif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva, as well as the A. V., all have "Comforter." A term comprehensive, expressive of tenderness, and at the same time of the kind of help afforded, even though it too should be new and unusual, is demanded, because the offices of the promised Visitant and Abider, so manifold, and which the Saviour proceeds to describe, are all referred to. The original signification, *one who is summoned for aid*, is merged in that of COMFORTER, which is suited not only to the circumstances in which the promise was first given, but to the place the Holy Spirit fills in the Church, in all ages, in the absence of its glorious Head. The Spirit of inspiration seems, in a wonderful manner, to have presided over the transfer of this term into our English Bible.

<sup>2</sup> That they might not be left to make any mistake, Christ goes on to tell them who the Comforter is, "even the Spirit of truth"; because as the manifestation of Deity He is the truth, and imparts the truth, not only as a power in the understandings but in the hearts of men.

<sup>3</sup> Or *orphans*, as it is in the margin.

<sup>4</sup> Although deprived of His bodily presence, they were to enjoy His spiritual presence, and because He lived their spiritual life was to receive a new development and impulse, by His promised presence through the Spirit.

20 cause I live, ye shall live also. At that 'day<sup>1</sup> ye shall know  
 21 that I *am* in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that  
 hath My commandments, 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  
 22 him. Judas<sup>2</sup> saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it  
 that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the  
 23 world? 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.  
 24 He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the  
 word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent  
 25 Me. 'These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present  
 26 with you. But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost,<sup>3</sup> whom  
 the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things,  
 and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have  
 27 said unto you. Peace<sup>4</sup> I leave with you, My peace I give unto

<sup>1</sup> That is, in the day of the promised advent of the Spirit they should know, every lingering doubt should be dissipated, and they should "know" of the unity of the Son with the Father, or of their mutual indwelling, and the indwelling of Christ in their own hearts.

<sup>2</sup> Judas proposes the fourth question. He is carefully distinguished from the betrayer, who had gone out, and is elsewhere called Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus (Matt. x. 4, Mark iii. 18). The point of his question was to ascertain how the manifestation of Jesus could be restricted to His disciples, and at the same time reconciled to that public display which he supposed would attend the establishment of His kingdom. What sort of a manifestation was that to be, of which the world was to be kept ignorant? Our Lord, instead of furnishing a reply to Jude, suited to vain hopes of worldly grandeur, simply explained the nature of the manifestation of which He had spoken. The expression He had used, "will manifest," was indeed one of strong import, its literal signification being to show forth, make plain. In Matthew xxvii. 53 it is employed of the saints who came forth from the grave after our Lord's resurrection. But it here points to a spiritual showing or appearing, as it is made conjointly with the invisible Father, and has reference not to the world but to individual believers. The promise is of infinite and marvellous condescension and comprehension. "There is no promise," says Stier, "greater and higher for man."

<sup>3</sup> He further unfolds the doctrine of the Comforter. Before called the Spirit of truth, He is now called the Holy Ghost. The Father was to send Him in the name of Christ, and He was to teach them and bring all things to their remembrance, which they had heard from Christ. This would be indispensable to them as living and inspired witnesses for Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Well might the Saviour say this, in view of such a manifestation of Himself as He would make after His departure, in view of such a promise and such a coming, in virtue of which they would know Him as they never knew Him before, and repeat His words, "Let not your heart be troubled."



you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not  
 28 your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have  
 heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto  
 you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice,<sup>1</sup> because I said, I go  
 29 unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. And now  
 I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come  
 30 to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much  
 with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath  
 31 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,<sup>2</sup> let us go hence.

5. *Strength and comfort, from union with Christ absent, by faith,  
 through the Spirit.*

XV.]

[Ver. 1-27.]

1 I am the true vine,<sup>3</sup> and My Father is the husbandman.  
 2 Every branch in Me that beareth<sup>4</sup> not fruit He taketh away:  
 and every *branch* that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may  
 3 bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word

<sup>1</sup> He tells them it would be a proof of love to Him if they were to rejoice rather than be sad.

<sup>2</sup> He invites them to arise from the table, and prepare to go forth.

<sup>3</sup> Having risen preparatory to going forth from the chamber and the city, while in a standing posture, as they still lingered around the table, the remainder of the valedictory discourse in the two succeeding chapters, and the intercessory prayer in the seventeenth chapter, seem to have been pronounced, and the hymn of which Matthew and Mark make mention sung. Our Lord seizes upon a striking allegory, of the vine and its branches, designed to set forth the intimate relation of His followers to Him, and their dependence on Him. His object is still to comfort them. The allegory was perhaps suggested by the branch of a vine, with signs of bearing, which had clambered within the room. The vine to which it belonged was out of sight, trained along the side of the house, invisible in the darkness of the night. He had told His disciples that He was soon to depart, to be seen no more on earth; and their hearts were filled with sadness. "See," He says, "this little grape branch: it is living, and has fruit or gives promise of fruit, because it is connected with a living vine rooted in the earth. You cannot see the vine, nor the point at which the branch unites with it, nor understand the process involved in its growth and fructuation." We seem to hear the vine in the allegory talking and saying to the little branch: "you cannot bear fruit, nor live even, separated from me. Do not forget that you have your life and derive all your verdure and luxuriance from me, invisible here in the cold and darkness." So, says Christ, I am the vine, ye are the branches; and although I pass from the light of the world, as into the gloom and coldness of the night of the tomb, My true disciples will abide still in Me; this abiding is not only essential to their vigorous life and fruitfulness, but to life itself.

<sup>4</sup> The fruitless branch has no permanent relation to the living vine. The fruitful branch is made more fruitful by pruning.

4 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  
5 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  
6 nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them*  
7 into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask<sup>1</sup> what ye will, and it shall be  
8 done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples. As the Father hath  
9 loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even  
10 as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might  
11 remain in you, and *that* your joy<sup>2</sup> might be full. This is My commandment,<sup>3</sup> That ye love one another, as I have loved  
12 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  
13 I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called  
14 you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen Me, but I  
15 have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain; that whatsoever  
16 ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.  
17 If the world hate<sup>4</sup> you, ye know that it hated Me before *it* hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his  
18 own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remem-

<sup>1</sup> Another great effect attributed to this abiding in Christ, in addition to fruitfulness, is the efficacy or effectualness of prayer. We take the words of the promise precisely as they stand, as literally true, true in every particular, and in every individual case, as true in the limitations as in the breadth and extent of the promise.

<sup>2</sup> Another effect of abiding in Christ should be peace and joy.

<sup>3</sup> Christ had commenced His discourse, after the washing of His disciples' feet, in rebuke of their contentious spirit, and after the departure of Judas on his hostile and cruel errand, with what He called His new commandment, and which He here repeats and enforces. In His absence they were only to love one another the more.

<sup>4</sup> He enforces this love by an additional consideration, the hatred of the world, to which they would certainly be exposed.

ber the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto 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 cloak 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 that is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause. But when the Comforter<sup>1</sup> is come, whom I will send unto 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.

6. *Doctrine concerning the mission of the Holy Comforter fully developed.*

XVI.]

[Ver. 1-33.]

1 These things<sup>2</sup> have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be  
 2 offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues:<sup>3</sup>  
 yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think  
 3 that he doeth God service.<sup>4</sup> And these things will they do  
 unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me.  
 4 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  
 5 with you. But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and

<sup>1</sup> Christ now recurs to that great promise about which everything else seems to revolve in this discourse, and further expands it. It is worthy of particular note that He Himself here promises to send what He had before said the Father would send, and what He would pray the Father to send.

<sup>2</sup> The manner in which the doctrine of the Comforter has been gradually developed has been noticed. In this chapter we find it expanded in all its completeness. "These things" refer to what He had just told them respecting the hatred of the world towards them (xv. 18-19), and the support they were to derive under it from the presence of the Comforter (xv. 26-27).

<sup>3</sup> This excommunication struck the greatest terror into the Jewish mind.

<sup>4</sup> If Saul of Tarsus is not here distinctly foretold, nevertheless according to his own testimony we have in him a fulfilment to the very letter of these words: Acts xxvi. 9-11.

6 none of you asketh Me, Whither<sup>1</sup> goest Thou? But because  
 I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.  
 7 Nevertheless<sup>2</sup> 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  
 8 unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And  
 when He is come, He will reprove<sup>3</sup> the world of sin, and of  
 9 righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe  
 10 not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye  
 11 see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this  
 12 world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye  
 13 cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth,  
 is come, He will guide<sup>4</sup> you into all truth: for He shall not  
 speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, *that* shall He  
 14 speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall  
 glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show *it* unto  
 15 you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore  
 said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show *it* unto you.  
 16 A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while,  
 17 and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father. 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

<sup>1</sup> As this question is identical with that asked by Peter (xiii. 36), it must be understood in another and deeper sense. Sorrow had filled their minds at His departure, and none of them as yet had any conception of the great spiritual end to be attained by His leaving them.

<sup>2</sup> He here completes His instructions concerning the Comforter. The withdrawal of His personal presence was necessary, and He teaches His disciples that the coming of the Spirit was of greater importance to them than His personal presence with all His miraculous power.

<sup>3</sup> The word *reprove* is too weak: He will convince, convict, the world of three things; sin, righteousness, and judgment. "All these are unreal and impractical till the *ἀνεγχοσ* of the Spirit has wrought in him" (Alford). The Holy Spirit, in convincing men of sin and leading them to a spotless righteousness which enables them to judge justly of themselves and to contemplate the judgment day with hope, and in judging and condemning unbelievers, is a Witness of and for Christ, and a blessed Comforter to His followers. It was calculated to be a source of unspeakable joy to the little band, whom Jesus was about to leave in an unfriendly world, that He would send the Spirit, who should give their testimony an energy which would cause it to reach the very consciences and hearts of men.

<sup>4</sup> To the apostles themselves He was to be the Spirit of inspiration and prophecy. By a direct influence on their minds the Spirit was to bear witness still further to Christ, by guiding them into the domain of His truth, and enabling them to unfold what He had communicated in the barest outline, or in detached sentences, for the instruction of the world in all ages.

18 go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He  
 19 saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith. 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  
 20 ye shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall  
 weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice ; and ye shall be  
 21 sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.<sup>1</sup> 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.  
 22 And ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again,  
 and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from  
 23 you. And in that day ye shall ask<sup>2</sup> Me nothing. Verily, verily,  
 I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name,  
 24 He will give *it* you. Hitherto<sup>3</sup> have ye asked nothing  
 in My name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be  
 25 full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs : but  
 the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in  
 26 proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that  
 day ye shall ask in My name : and I say not unto you, that I  
 27 will pray the Father for you : for the Father Himself loveth  
 you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came  
 28 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.  
 29 His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly,  
 30 and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that Thou knowest  
 all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee : by  
 31 this we believe that Thou camest forth from God. Jesus an-  
 32 swered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh,  
 yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered,<sup>4</sup> every man to his

<sup>1</sup> That is, when He should be restored to them again by His resurrection from the dead, and when they should be made to know the power of His resurrection and enjoy that spiritual presence promised by His return to His Father.

<sup>2</sup> He did not mean that there should be no more occasion for prayer, but that there would be nothing left for them to wish, or ask, for their encouragement or success in their work.

<sup>3</sup> Hitherto they had asked nothing in His name, or as they would ask with that prevailing power after His atoning death, and appearance as the great High Priest in the holy of holies.

<sup>4</sup> Referring doubtless to their flight, which was to take place that very night in the garden.

own, and shall leave Me alone : and yet I am not alone, because  
 33 the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken unto you,  
 that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have  
 tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome <sup>1</sup> the world.

7. *Messiah's prayer for His followers.*

XVII.]

[Ver. 1-26.]

1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven,  
 and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify <sup>2</sup> Thy Son, that  
 2 Thy Son also may glorify Thee : as Thou hast given Him  
 power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many  
 3 as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they  
 might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom  
 4 Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have  
 5 finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O  
 Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory  
 6 which I had with Thee before the world was. I have mani-  
 fested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of  
 the world : Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me ; and  
 7 they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all  
 8 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  
 9 Me. I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them  
 10 which Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine. And all Mine  
 are Thine, and Thine are Mine ; and I am glorified in them.  
 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world,  
 and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep <sup>3</sup> through Thine own

<sup>1</sup> The ground of all confidence and hope is in the victory of Christ over the world. This farewell discourse of Jesus has afforded consolation to believers in all ages and in all conditions of life. In no other portion of the word of God is the soul brought into more sensible contact with the blessed Saviour.

<sup>2</sup> He first prays for Himself ; that He might be glorified was the single petition He offered in His own behalf. The Son prays that the Father would accept the work to which the finishing stroke was about to be given, and that, exalted at His right hand, He might there prosecute His priestly work, interceding for those in whose behalf He died. In a word, the glory which Christ sought was the salvation of His people.

<sup>3</sup> He next prays expressly for His people ; and His first petition is that the Father would keep through His own name, or preserve sound in the faith, pure in worship and holy in practice, those who had been given to Him, in order to secure the perpetuity, and also expressly the unity, of the Church.

name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one,  
 12 as we *are*. 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 scrip-  
 13 ture might be fulfilled. And now come I to Thee; and these  
 things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy ful-  
 14 filled in themselves. I have given them Thy word; and the  
 world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even  
 15 as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take  
 them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from  
 16 the evil.<sup>1</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the  
 17 world. Sanctify<sup>2</sup> them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.  
 18 As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent  
 19 them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself,  
 20 that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither  
 pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on  
 21 Me through their word; that they all may be one;<sup>3</sup> as Thou,  
 Father, *art* in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in  
 22 us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And  
 the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they

<sup>1</sup> This is the next or second petition offered expressly for His disciples. He did not wish them removed from the world with Himself, but that they should be kept from the evil in it. The preservation of such feeble creatures against such mighty powers could only be by the mighty power of God.

<sup>2</sup> In this, the third express petition for His disciples, He prays that the good work begun in their hearts may be carried on, by their being cleansed from all sin and released from the power of sin. The consecration or the setting apart of the apostles and of their successors in the ministry may be included, but their being made holy is an indispensable preparation, and the most important part of consecration, for their office; as it is in every Christian for any service of Christ. He prayed that they might be sanctified through the truth; that is, the word of truth as the outward and ordinary means which the Holy Spirit employs: the written word, worship, the preaching of the gospel.

<sup>3</sup> That they might be one we have in a distinct petition, showing the high importance to be attached to the subject. It is not, of course, unity of essence; and it is not likened to the essential, substantive union of the Father and the Son, but to the union of spirit, of life, and of love, which subsisted between the Father and Son. Nor was it their organic unity in one whole, as constituting the visible Church, for which the Redeemer prayed. This would be giving to the shadow the place of the substance. The unity of the visible Church is not essentially affected by that which for convenience, or efficiency of administration, or on account of difference of views on minor points, requires separate organization; if the members of this one great visible family keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, their moral unification is secured. This is a UNITY which no more admits of being organized under a mere external form than that *love* which is its divinely appointed bond admits of being so organized.

23 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  
 24 hast loved Me. Father, I will<sup>1</sup> 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  
 25 before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee : but I have known Thee, and  
 26 these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare *it* ; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

8. *The Divinity of Messiah seen in the hour of His deepest humiliation in the garden of agony.*

XVIII.]

[Ver. 1-9.

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went<sup>2</sup> forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into  
 2 the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place : for Jesus oftentimes re-  
 3 sorted thither with His disciples. Judas then, having received a band of *men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees,

<sup>1</sup> The last petition for His followers, in this wonderful prayer, which fell from the lips of the Saviour. And verily it might well conclude all. It seems to lay aside the ordinary form of prayer, and to become a declaration of His *will*, or a proclamation of His eternal purpose. To be with Christ and remain where Christ is for ever, to see Him as He is and be like Him, this is heaven.

<sup>2</sup> He went in the direction of the Mount of Olives, and took the path which wound down the hill into the ravine or Valley of Jehoshaphat, which separated the city from the mountain. He crossed the brook Kedron. There is an enclosure in this vicinity now pointed out as Gethsemane, containing large and ancient olive trees, lying at the foot of the mountain as it begins to slope up from the bed of the stream. The agony He endured here is more particularly described by the other evangelists : see Matthew xxvi. 36-46. The striking incident John records, verse 6, is wholly omitted by the other evangelists. All were guided by the Spirit of inspiration as much in what they omitted as in what they recorded, for the particular end or object for which their respective narratives were designed. John wrote, as has been shown, for a very distinct and definite purpose ; to wit, to place before his readers some of the signs or evidences which were fitted to convince them that " Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through His name " (chap. xx. 31). On no occasion, not even on the cross, did Jesus appear more like a feeble helpless man than in that account of His agony which was already in possession of the Church when John wrote. It seems therefore to be the evangelist's object here to supplement the account of his brethren with an important feature omitted by them, or to present Christ in a different aspect and one essential to a faithful account of this deeply affecting part of His sufferings.



4 cometh thither with lanterns <sup>1</sup> and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing <sup>2</sup> all things that should come upon Him, 5 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. 6 As soon then as He had said unto them, I am *He*, they went 7 backward, and fell <sup>3</sup> to the ground. Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *He* : if therefore ye 9 seek <sup>4</sup> 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.

9. *A prediction of Christ fulfilled.*

[Ver. 10-27.]

10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew <sup>5</sup> it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's

<sup>1</sup> The other evangelists make no mention of the lanterns and torches, but speak of a great multitude as accompanying the soldiers. The lanterns and torches were probably taken at the suggestion of Judas ; for although it was the season of the full moon he knew that the soldiers would need them to guide their feet through the defiles and thickets among the rocks of the valley. There is something wildly picturesque in this night march down the steep declivity into the rocky ravine.

<sup>2</sup> This is a distinct attribution to Him of knowledge that could belong only to a Divine Being, a minute foreknowledge of all that was about to befall Him.

<sup>3</sup> He not only attributes to Him foreknowledge but clothes with an authority and power nothing less than Divine. We need the entire picture as drawn by the several evangelists if we would have a right view of Christ. We need not only to see Him as He falls to the ground in bloody sweat, but to see Judas and those whom he guides, as they go backward and fall to the ground at His words, " I AM HE." It was not all a scene befitting the human estate of our Lord or His deep humiliation in the garden. There was a flashing out of His Divinity in the miracle wrought by the mere exercise of His will, or by some influence that went forth from His sacred person. How vain all the military force Pilate had sent out for His arrest ! How vain all the immense power of the government he represented, unless Jesus had voluntarily submitted. How Divine as well as human the Saviour appears in the Garden of Gethsemane !

<sup>4</sup> That they were able to proceed to arrest a person before whom they had just fallen helplessly, as in the presence of a superior being, may still have been and really appears to have been in obedience to His will. If any are disposed to point to these scenes and say, " Could this Sufferer have been Divine ? " we point to them and ask, " Is it possible that He could have been a mere man ? "

<sup>5</sup> Peter, no doubt, supposed that the time of trial had come to which his Master had referred when He said, " Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake ? " (chap. xiii. 38.) He began to brandish one of the swords provided, and with one of his strokes cut off an ear of a servant of the high-priest. John is the only evangelist who gives the name of this servant, Malchus, which he may have been able to do from his acquaintance with the family of the high-priest.

11 name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put<sup>1</sup> up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, 12 shall<sup>2</sup> I not drink it? Then the band and the captain and 13 officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound<sup>3</sup> Him, and led Him away to Annas<sup>4</sup> first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, 14 which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel<sup>5</sup> to the Jews, that it was expedient that 15 one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another<sup>6</sup> disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The sword is not to be used in His cause. He permitted them to be brought, to render this teaching more complete and emphatic.

<sup>2</sup> He had just prayed that it might pass from Him; but it was His Father's will that He should drink it, and He bowed in submission.

<sup>3</sup> They treated Him as an ordinary malefactor. They put a chain on Him, and pinioned His arms, as if He were a dangerous or violent man. The other evangelists do not mention this fact, which is essential to the exact picture of the scene described. Peter, his valour having subsided, and all of the disciples, not excepting even the brave and beloved John, forsook Him, and fled away among the trees and rocks of the valley.

<sup>4</sup> He had been appointed high-priest in the year of our Lord 7, after the battle of Actium, by Quirinius, the imperial governor of Syria, and held the office until the beginning of the reign of Tiberius, seven years (Josephus, Ant. xviii. 2, 1: 2). Caiaphas succeeded to the office about the year 25, and held it till the passover in the year 37. Under him the father-in-law seems to have retained the title, and somewhat also of the power of that office. It was as a mark of respect and deference to Annas that Jesus was first presented before him; or his palace may have laid in their route. He sent Him, without removing the chains or thongs that bound Him, to Caiaphas.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter xi. 49-52.

<sup>6</sup> Now Peter and John reappear in the scenes that were passing; for John undoubtedly means himself by "another disciple." The interesting fact is stated that he was known to the high-priest. It seems strange that John, who appeared to know so little of the fear of man, should have fled at all; but he was not long in regaining his self-possession, and it was doubtless from his example that Peter, who had used the sword, and perhaps, on this account, felt that he was in the greater danger, recovered somewhat of his natural courage and resoluteness. He followed Jesus; but it was "afar off." He does not come near His person as John does, to be recognised as one of His followers, but keeps at a distance on the outskirts of the crowd.

<sup>7</sup> The palace was built in the ancient oriental style, around a paved courtyard or area open to the sky, into which there was an arched gate-way through the front of the house, closed with a massive gate, but having a smaller gate or wicket for ordinary admission, attended by a porter or portress. The rooms upon the ground floor opened directly on this interior court, and those in the upper storeys upon encircling galleries above it. A fire had been kindled on the pavement in this enclosed space, for at so early an hour in the morning, at this season of the year, it was cold.

16 of the high priest. But Peter<sup>1</sup> stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in 17 Peter. Then saith the damsel<sup>2</sup> that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am 18 not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves: 19 and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews 21 always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto 22 them: behold, they know what I said. And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the 24 evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me? Now Annas had sent 25 Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. And Simon Peter stood and warmed<sup>3</sup> himself. They said therefore unto him,

<sup>1</sup> John describes Peter through the bars of the gate, which had been closed to exclude the crowd, and interceded successfully with the portress for his admission; and Peter sat down, like an unconcerned spectator, "and warmed himself at the fire" (Mark xiv. 54). Jesus was standing before the high-priest in the audience room of that functionary, and, as it opened directly on the court, could both see and be seen by those sitting around the fire. A maidservant from one of the overhanging galleries fixes her eyes on Peter "beneath" (Mark xiv. 66), as his countenance is revealed by the flickering flashes of the fire, and recognises him as one of the followers and friends of Jesus. She hastens down, and charges him with being one of them. He does not deny it in words, but by the make-believe that he did not know what was meant.

<sup>2</sup> Peter now felt ill at ease, and retreats into the shadow of the porch or covered passage way (Matt. xxvi. 71), which led through the front of the building into the court. The portress knew him, or suspected who and what he was, as it was at the instance of John, who was known in the household of her master, she had admitted him. She asked, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" He promptly answered, "I am not."

<sup>3</sup> As an "hour" had passed, and no new accuser had appeared (Luke xxii. 59), Peter had gathered courage to return to the court, and was again sitting at the fire, where he could both see and be seen by his Master. Several who stood by now renewed the charge that he was one of the followers of Jesus, and referred to the provincialisms that marked his speech (Mark xiv. 70); the proof became positive and overwhelming when a kinsman of the Malchus whose ear Peter had cut off asked, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" Peter denied the third time, and Matthew and Mark represent him as accompanying this denial with oaths and curses.

Art not thou also *one* of His disciples? He denied *it*, and said,  
 26 I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being *his*  
 kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in  
 27 the garden with Him? Peter then denied again; and immedi-  
 ately the cock<sup>1</sup> crew.

10. *Evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus, in His trial before Pilate.*

XVIII. 28.]

[XIX. 1-16.

28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall<sup>2</sup> of judg-  
 ment: and it was early;<sup>3</sup> and they themselves went not into  
 the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they  
 29 might eat the passover.<sup>4</sup> Pilate then went out unto them, and  
 30 said, What accusation<sup>5</sup> bring ye against this man? They  
 answered and said unto him, If He were not a malefactor, we<sup>6</sup>  
 31 would not have delivered Him up unto thee. Then said Pilate

<sup>1</sup> The crowing of the cock was like a trumpet call to Peter. It aroused his slumbering conscience. The first crowing, which immediately followed his first denial, if noticed at all by him, had no such effect. Lifting a trembling glance to his Redeemer, just at that moment he caught a look from Him, and all the fountains of his soul were broken up within him. He went out and wept bitterly (Luke xxii. 61, 62).

<sup>2</sup> As they were not empowered by the Roman law to inflict that death of which they had declared Him guilty, He was led from the palace of Caiaphas to the Prætorium, *i.e.*, before Pilate, the Roman governor.

<sup>3</sup> It was probably not far from daylight. He had been tried in the night before the Sanhedrin, and was taken at this unseasonable hour to the bar of the governor, who appears to have been ready to receive them.

<sup>4</sup> Of the passover proper they had already partaken the evening previous. They wished to avoid the ceremonial uncleanness, which would exclude them from the sacrificial offerings and banquets which marked the paschal festival, comprising the seven days of unleavened bread.

<sup>5</sup> It would seem as if in their hot haste, without proper regard to judicial forms, the Sanhedrin had thrust Him before the bar of Pilate. It may be that they counted on his cruel and reckless character, and expected that he would, without inquiry, to gratify them and make himself popular, pronounce immediate sentence of death, or confirm that which they had themselves pronounced against Him. But although it is sufficiently evident that Pilate wished to stand well with the Jewish leaders, he would not sacrifice all show of justice, and therefore demands that they should bring a formal charge.

<sup>6</sup> They answered as if their dignity had been offended, or as if Pilate had failed sufficiently to regard their high and sacred character. They were probably embarrassed precisely what charge to bring, and knew that charges founded upon alleged violations of the Jewish law would be thrown out by the Roman governor. The charge of insurrection, on which they ultimately fell back, had so little to sustain it, was indeed so absurd upon the face of it, that they hesitated to bring it.

unto them, Take<sup>1</sup> ye Him, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful<sup>2</sup> for us<sup>32</sup> to put any man to death : that the saying<sup>3</sup> of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying what death He should die. <sup>33</sup>Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art<sup>4</sup> Thou the King of the Jews? <sup>34</sup>Jesus answered him, Sayest<sup>5</sup> thou this thing of thyself, or did <sup>35</sup>others tell it thee of Me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The lordly tone on the part of the Sanhedrin, or their overweening confidence that their presentation of a man as a malefactor was sufficient, without charge or proof from them, to secure his condemnation, appears to have stirred the spirit of Pilate. His answer is an ironical style of telling them that he is not willing to be the mere registrar of the sentence they had pronounced. If they could examine and condemn without him, could they not execute the sentence without him?

<sup>2</sup> The Jews now modify their tone, and acknowledge that it is not lawful for them, under the Roman authority, to exercise the power of life and death. So determined were they to effect the death of Jesus that they were willing so far to recognise their subjugated condition as to admit that even the Sanhedrin had no authority to inflict capital punishment.

<sup>3</sup> The mode of capital punishment among the Jews was by *stoning*; when therefore they admitted that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, it was the fulfilment, or in order to the fulfilment, of a saying of Jesus, referring to the particular manner of His death (see John xii. 23-33). If He had died by stoning, at the hands of the Jews, then what He had said about being lifted up from the earth, or crucified, according to the Roman mode of capital punishment would not have been fulfilled.

<sup>4</sup> There can be no doubt that the Jews, perceiving they could make no headway without a formal accusation, now brought the charge recorded by Luke, but of which John makes no express mention, except what may be implied in this question.

<sup>5</sup> The point of this reply of Christ to Pilate is that the charge, as the Jews meant it, was without the least colour of truth; or, in the words of Calvin: "Responsum Christi hue tendit, in ea accusatione nihil esse coloris." The ancient writers, as early as Chrysostom, according to Tholuck, regard the object of our Lord's question to be this; whether Pilate, with all his vigilant and jealous oversight, had ever himself, or by his agents and informers, detected in Jesus anything that had the least resemblance to an attempt at insurrection, or to create discord among the people. That the governor must well know the baselessness of the charge was the most emphatic manner of answering him in the negative, in the only way the language could be understood as coming from His lips.

<sup>6</sup> Pilate's question, "Am I a Jew?" was not intended as a taunt to Jesus, but as an acknowledgment that he knew nothing of the accusation which had been brought against Him, except what had been reported or then stated before Him by His accusers, His own nation and the chief priests. Members of their most venerable court were now clamouring for His condemnation. He asks Him to state the case Himself, "What hast Thou done?" This must have been from an over-aweing impression which His presence had produced on Pilate, and which we are specially to keep in view, in this account of His trial. It was one of the signs or evidences, less conspicuous than some others, which we are not however to overlook, that Jesus was something more than a helpless man in the hands of His accusers.

Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee  
 36 unto me : what hast Thou done ? Jesus answered, My king-  
 dom<sup>1</sup> 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.  
 37 Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king<sup>2</sup> 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  
 38 heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth ?<sup>3</sup>  
 And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews,  
 39 and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault<sup>4</sup> *at all*. But ye  
 have a custom<sup>5</sup> that I should release unto you one at the pass-  
 over : will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the

<sup>1</sup> As before the Jewish council the Lord had confessed His Sonship to God, so in the presence of this representative of Cæsar He openly declared that He was a sovereign ; He did not abate one iota of the claims He had set up. A mere pretender would have exhibited some signs of intimidation. The kingdom He claims is not however of this world, and He points to the fact that He has no armies or adherents to fight for Him or create commotion in the land. When He was arrested, there were none to attempt His rescue. Pilate himself, as chief magistrate, well knew that He had no soldiers in the field, and that He led no seditious bands to rapine and violence.

<sup>2</sup> This is not a question of mockery and contempt. The demeanour and words of Christ had evidently impressed Pilate. He receives from Jesus an emphatic affirmation in the oriental style, "Thou sayest that I am, a king ;" or, "That is precisely what I am." "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." By the two forms of expression referring both to His human and pre-existent nature, His incarnation as born of a woman, and His Divinity as having come from heaven. He came to bear witness to the truth by revealing Himself as the Messiah and Saviour of the world.

<sup>3</sup> It has been a question variously decided, whether we are to take Pilate as asking this question sarcastically or despondingly. Taking the most favourable judgment of his case, we find in these words, instead of mockery and scorn, only a sad utterance of despair of finding the truth. There can be no doubt that, like other educated men of his age, he partook of profound scepticism. He could only ask, after passing through the circle of philosophical systems, "What is truth ? Who knows ?" who presumes to tell after so many vain inquiries of the world's sages ?

<sup>4</sup> This is the testimony of one, an unscrupulous man, who, there can be no doubt, would have gladly discovered some evidence against Him. It was not only truth, but spotless innocence, that stood at his bar. One of the most unjust judges, one of the most pliant of tools, is constrained to utter this verdict. It was at this point that he sent him to Herod, hoping to escape from the perplexing dilemma in which the enemies of Jesus had placed him ; but the expedient was of no avail.

<sup>5</sup> He next attempted to avail himself of a custom that he should release unto them one of the prisoners at the passover, and asked that it might be Jesus. It was at this point that his wife sent him a warning.

40 Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

XIX.]

1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged<sup>1</sup> *Him*.  
 2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on His  
 3 head, and they put on Him a purple robe,<sup>2</sup> and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands.  
 4 Pilate therefore went forth again,<sup>3</sup> and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that  
 5 I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto  
 6 them, Behold the Man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *Him*,<sup>4</sup>  
 7 crucify *Him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him, and crucify *Him*: for I find no fault in Him. The Jews answered  
 8 him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate there-  
 9 fore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;<sup>5</sup> and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art

<sup>1</sup> This scourging was not intended for that which usually preceded crucifixion; but, if possible, to satisfy in some degree their feeling of hostility against, and perhaps dispose them to release Him, or consent to His release (Luke xxiii. 16).

<sup>2</sup> Doubtless as much in contempt of the Jews (seizing on every occasion) as of Him. "The image," says Tholuck, "which the brutal insolence of the soldiers, as if by the sport of accident, here creates, has become the most touching representation of Divine majesty in the form of a servant, and consequently also the sublimest subject of Christian art!"

<sup>3</sup> In the other evangelists the account of the trial concluded with the scourging and the mocking obeisance to Him, as a king, by the soldiers. They take no notice of the persevering attempt of Pilate for the release of Jesus, in which the same impression Jesus had made on this pagan ruler is brought out still more strongly. It is the testimony which is forced from this unjust judge, which is the true key of John's account of the trial of Jesus. "Behold the Man! *Ecce Homo!*" *Ἴδε ὁ ἄνθρωπος!* Is not this enough? Look upon this helpless, unresisting Man! What harm can He do to Moses or to Cæsar? Let this suffice. I find no fault in Him."

<sup>4</sup> They made the court ring with this fierce, continuous cry. Pilate replies with bitter sarcasm, "Take ye Him and crucify Him." If he had said "Stone Him," can we doubt that they would instantly have proceeded to execute the sentence?

<sup>5</sup> Pilate seems to have experienced "a strange sensation of awe in the presence of Jesus," at the first sight of Him, as He was brought to his bar. This had been increased by what He said of His kingdom and the great end for which He came into the world, and by the warning his wife sent him, and was now greatly intensified by the expression the Jews made use of, that He "made Himself the Son of God." He hurries back into the Prætorium, taking Jesus with Him, and earnestly asks Him, "Whence art Thou?" The very silence of Jesus had meaning.

10 Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest<sup>1</sup> Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release  
 11 Thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore  
 12 he<sup>2</sup> that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's<sup>3</sup> friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh  
 13 against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.  
 14 And it was the preparation<sup>4</sup> of the passover, and about the sixth<sup>5</sup> hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold<sup>6</sup> your King!  
 15 But they cried out, Away with *Him*, away with *Him*, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The  
 16 chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar. Then delivered<sup>7</sup> he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *Him* away.

<sup>1</sup> Pilate assumes an air of offended dignity at the silence of Jesus, and talks of his power, *ἐξουσίαν*, to crucify or to release Him.

<sup>2</sup> Doubtless Caiaphas, as representing the Sanhedrin. Pilate consented to be the tool of others who had had better opportunities of estimating aright the character and claims of Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> The jealous and suspicious character of Tiberius, who was then emperor, was well known. If Pilate failed to punish a man who claimed to be a king, and thus set up opposing claims to those of the emperor, it would reach the emperor's ears, who would regard it as a *crimen majestatis*.

<sup>4</sup> The preparation of the passover sabbath. This day, the sixth day of the week, was known in popular usage as the Preparation or fore-sabbath; just as in German the usual name for Saturday is *Sonnabend*, *i.e.* eve of Sunday.

<sup>5</sup> That is, according to the Roman computation of the hours of the day, which began at midnight, and which John follows; it was at this season of the year not far from sunrise.

<sup>6</sup> There is bitter sarcasm in these words of Pilate. Their humiliation and his revenge was complete, when he drew from these haughty priests and scribes the confession, "We have no king but Cæsar." So intent were they in carrying their point, that they scrupled at no means, not even a public declaration which falsified all the cherished convictions of their heart, and was at war with the deepest sentiments of the nation.

<sup>7</sup> Thus ended the trial of Jesus. Pilate not long after fell under the displeasure of the emperor, which he so much dreaded, was sent into exile, and is said to have perished miserably by his own hand. Many of those who cried "Crucify Him," and made the degrading confession "We have no king but Cæsar," perished afterward at the siege of Jerusalem, in open rebellion against the Romans.



11. *Evidences seen in His crucifixion and the manner of His death.*

[Ver. 17-30.]

17 And He bearing His cross<sup>1</sup> went forth into a place called *the*  
*place* of a skull,<sup>2</sup> which is called in the Hebrew *Golgotha*:  
 18 where they crucified<sup>3</sup> Him, and two others with Him, on  
 19 either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a  
 title,<sup>4</sup> and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS  
 20 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,

<sup>1</sup> A detachment of Roman soldiers were ready to receive the command of Pilate. We learn from John that when the procession started Jesus bore His own cross, but he omits the affecting incident, fully recorded by the other evangelists, that on the way the cross was transferred to one Simon a Cyrenian, who was compelled to bear it. The physical strength of the Saviour proved inadequate to the burden; death was already doing its work on Him when He sweat as it were great drops of blood in the garden. The image of Him, as He went forth bearing the cross, is one that should be dear and full of instruction to the hearts of His followers.

<sup>2</sup> "In the Hebrew *Golgotha*," in the Greek *Κρανίον*, and in the Latin *Calvaria*, which the A. V., following the Vulgate, has rendered in Luke Calvary. Those who have most dispassionately examined the question on the spot, by all the aids of history and of topography, have been "led irresistibly to the conclusion that the *Golgotha* and the tomb now shown (within the walls of the modern Jerusalem) in the church of the Holy Sepulchre are not upon the real places of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord." (See Robinson's *Bib. Res.*, i., pp. 373-417). All that the New Testament tells us regarding the site of *Golgotha* is that it was beyond the walls, or without the gate (Heb. xiii. 12), that it was nigh the city, and near some public highway leading into the country, and that it was no great distance from a garden or orchard in which was a tomb. There is said to be a skull-shaped eminence distinctly discernible even at the present day, lying a short distance north of the modern city, on the Damascus road, a locality which would have fallen just beyond the second wall of the ancient city. (See an excellent monograph on "The True Site of Calvary," by Fisher Howe, author of "Oriental and Sacred Scenes.")

<sup>3</sup> The cross was first securely planted in the ground, the body of the condemned was drawn up, and the hands and feet first tied and then nailed to it. We learn from the evangelist Mark, who follows the Jewish division of the day, that it was the third hour; John, following the Roman division, would have said it was the ninth hour, or, as we express it, it was nine o'clock in the morning.

<sup>4</sup> The inscription which Pilate caused to be placed over the head of Christ on the cross, whatever of irony or contempt it may have been intended to convey, was in fact a public recognition of Him in His real character. It was in the three languages which represented the literature of antiquity, so that all who could read at all could read what was written. Whatever Pilate may have intended, the use which he made of these languages seems to have had this significance, that the Greek and Roman elements were about to be brought into union with the more sacred elements of a Heaven-revealed religion; the intellectual civilization of the one, and the organizing civilization of the other, were to be brought in contact with a civilization which should sanctify and christianize them.

21 *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, 22 I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have 23 written I have written. 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<sup>1</sup> was 24 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 25 did. Now there stood<sup>2</sup> by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Mag- 26 dalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, 27 behold thy son ! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his 28 own *home*. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I 29 thirst.<sup>3</sup> Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar : and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put 30 *it* to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished :<sup>4</sup> and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

<sup>1</sup> The under garment worn next to the body. In the casting of lots for this, that scripture (Psalm xxii.) was fulfilled in which David speaking of his own sufferings, in the spirit of prophecy, described those which were fully realized only in his King and Lord. What the bones of the psalmist's emaciated body in his strong poetical language did for his garments, parting them among them, and as it were casting lots for his vesture, these soldiers did for the raiment of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> John makes no record of the scene of mockery so fully described by the other evangelists. But in one of the pauses of the storm that beat around the devoted Sufferer's head occurred this scene of inimitable beauty and tenderness, in which the evangelist himself bore a prominent part, and which he alone describes, and thus supplies what seems so essential to an occasion in which there were so many elements of terror and woe.

<sup>3</sup> This exclamation seems to have followed the passing away of the miraculous darkness, of which St. John makes no mention, as he does not of the other miracles attending the crucifixion. The hyssop, which grew to the length of about three feet, could be conveniently used to support a sponge. The vinegar was that which had been provided for the soldiers.

<sup>4</sup> No greater or more profound utterance ever fell upon the human ear. In the Greek it is but a single word, *Τετέλεσται*. There were seven words, or sayings, uttered by Christ on the cross. Three of them are recorded by John, three of them by

12. *The supernatural in the death, and the Divine interposition in the burial, of Christ.*

[Ver. 31-42.]

31 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 a high<sup>1</sup> day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken,<sup>2</sup> and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of 33 the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not 34 His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced<sup>3</sup> His 35 side, and forthwith came there out blood<sup>4</sup> and water. And

Luke, and one is found in both Matthew and Mark:—(1). His prayer for His murderers; (2) His answer to the prayer of the dying thief; (3) His address to His mother; (4) His address to the beloved disciple; (5) His cry of anguish; (6) “It is finished;” (7) “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

<sup>1</sup> It was the sabbath of their great national festival.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman custom was to permit the bodies to remain on the cross till they were devoured by birds, or wasted away in the sun and rain. But the Jewish law required, when capital punishment was inflicted by hanging on a tree, the body should not remain all night upon the tree but should be buried the same day (Deut. xxi. 22, 23). The Jews were especially solicitous that the provisions of their law might not be disregarded in this case, (although the sentence had been executed by the Romans,) and these bodies be left so near the sacred city on so solemn an occasion. The request that their legs might be broken was but another form of the request that their death might be hastened, and the bodies removed for burial, before sunset.

<sup>3</sup> This was done by the soldier, that there might be no possibility of mistake as to His death. It has been commonly supposed that this wound, although this is not affirmed, was on the left side of the body, in the region of the heart, and that the blow was aimed at and reached the heart. But it was not the mere impulse of the soldier, who would make sure that Jesus was really dead, which gave direction to the spear; there was a Divine hand connected with it, for the same Spirit of prophecy which had declared, “a bone of Him shall not be broken,” (the allusion clearly is to the paschal lamb, which was to be eaten without the breaking of a bone, see Exodus xii. 46,) had also predicted that He should be pierced: Zechariah xii. 10. The supernatural was in the death, as it had been in the life, of Jesus; he who overlooks this will fail to understand the narrative of the cross aright. The miraculous was not suspended in Him while He hung upon the cross, nor even after He had bowed His head and given up the ghost.

<sup>4</sup> This flowing out of blood and water after death has been the occasion of much discussion on the part of those familiar with physiological science. Infidels have objected that blood coagulates so speedily in a dead body as to render the fact here asserted an impossibility. On the other hand, it is claimed on the basis of medical observation (Ebrard, ii. 698) that the flowing of the blood, as here described by John, would be possible. But it seems to be of immaterial consequence how the question, whether blood would *naturally* flow under these circumstances or not, is decided, as far as St. John’s truthfulness here is concerned. Admitting it to be true that when

he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true; and he  
 36 knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these  
 things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone  
 37 of Him shall not be broken. And again another scripture  
 38 saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced. And after<sup>1</sup>  
 this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly  
 for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away  
 the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came there-  
 39 fore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nico-  
 demus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and  
 brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound  
 40 *weight*. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in  
 linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to  
 41 bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a  
 garden; and in the garden a new<sup>2</sup> sepulchre, wherein was  
 42 never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because  
 of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at  
 hand.

the heart ceases to beat the blood ceases to flow, and as the body becomes cold coagulates, what then? Is it necessary to understand the apostle as describing, and testifying so solemnly, merely to a physiological fact? Is it not better to understand him as declaring a supernatural event, and one to which some special significance is to be attached? Instead of reducing the number of miracles, a careful study of the history of Christ will reveal their existence where we have least suspected them, even in those stages of it when He was brought to the lowest humiliation. The attempts to explain the flowing of the blood and water as a merely natural event, and upon physiological grounds, are wholly unsatisfactory. We therefore infer that it was *miraculous*. Among other things, it may have been intended as a sign that the body was not subject to the ordinary law of corruption, as we know it was not. The cause assigned for the death of Christ, in the volume, "The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ," by William Stroud, M.D., is that it was "rupture of the heart from agony of mind;" see pp. 85-156, Appleton's edit. It was not the two component parts of blood, into which it had been resolved, John saw; but it was blood (both the *serum* and the *coagulum*) and water. We must look in another direction for the special significance of the flowing of the blood and water; see 1 John v. 6-8, where he explains the remarkable way in which he understood the water and the blood to be symbolical. See page 406 of this volume.

<sup>1</sup> The account of the burial of Jesus is one of exquisite beauty and pathos. Two rich men, both of them honourable counsellors, or members of the Jewish Arcepagus, appear to have agreed together to give the body a becoming burial. One of them goes to Pilate and craves possession of the body; the other procures the spices, a hundred pound weight.

<sup>2</sup> Christ was not buried in the common receptacle with malefactors, nor in a tomb in which man was ever laid. There seems to have been in this a special, Divine interposition, that nothing might interfere with the clearest evidence of His resurrection (see J. A. Alexander on Mark xv. 42, 43). Instead of the traditional

13. *Crowning proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, His resurrection from the dead.*

XX.]

[Ver. 1-31.

1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary<sup>1</sup> Magdalene early, when it was yet dark,<sup>2</sup> unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>5</sup> both together: and the other

site of the holy sepulchre on Mount Acra, within the walls of the modern city, being the true one, the new tomb in which Jesus was laid was near Calvary, or "in the place where Jesus was crucified." Calvary was an elevation or hill, having in the distance, as seen from the Mount of Olives, the shape of a human skull, situated just beyond the present Damascus Gate, which is supposed to occupy the identical spot where the northern exit was in the days of Christ. The hill is so steep in front of the gate that the path winds in order to reach its top. Here, in a garden, amid the fresh shrubbery and the early spring flowers, the body of Jesus was laid. Anemones, the star of Bethlehem, tulips, and numerous varieties of the scarlet flowers for which Palestine is celebrated, and which have suggested to visitors the touching and significant name of "the Saviour's blood-drops," were blooming and shedding their delicate fragrance on the air. The figs and olives were covered with fresh leaves, and afforded grateful shade, and the vines hung in graceful festoons from the trellises, or clambered along the terraces of the hill.

<sup>1</sup> There were other women with Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James the Less; Salome, the mother of James and John; and Joanna, the wife or widow of Chuzza (Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 10). There was something probably that gave Mary Magdalene in this company peculiar prominence, as John mentions her alone. It may have been that in her earnestness she had moved faster and reached the sepulchre in advance of her companions.

<sup>2</sup> That is, before it was fairly light; or, as Matthew has it, "as it began to dawn."

<sup>3</sup> It had been a matter of no little concern with the women, as they drew near, who should roll away the stone from the door; but they find it rolled away.

<sup>4</sup> Her only thought is that those who had been set as a guard over the sepulchre had removed the body, and she hastens to inform Peter. The other women exhibit more calmness. They enter the sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 5-7; Mark xvi. 5-7; Luke xxiv. 4-8). As they view it, pondering and perplexed, two angels in the form of men in shining garments appear, point out the place where the Lord lay, and direct them to go quickly into the city and "tell His disciples and Peter." The first witnesses to the fact of His resurrection were these angels. As the women, obedient to the heavenly vision, were hastening into the city, Jesus met them. This was His *first* appearance. He told them to go and make known the fact of His resurrection to His disciples.

<sup>5</sup> John being the younger and more active reached the sepulchre first, but hesitating about entering, Peter, with his usual promptness, goes directly in. There was no sign of disorder there, but rather of care and arrangement. The full and exact description of St. John is that of an eyewitness. "He saw and believed." The

5 disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And  
 he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying ;  
 6 yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him,  
 and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,  
 7 and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with  
 the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.  
 8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the  
 9 sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew  
 not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.  
 10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But  
 11 Mary<sup>1</sup> stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she  
 12 wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, and  
 seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the  
 13 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  
 14 where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she  
 turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not  
 15 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.  
 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith  
 17 unto Him, Rabboni;<sup>2</sup> 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  
 18 God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she  
 had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things unto

two disciples were satisfied, from the orderly condition in which they found the tomb, that it had not been rifled. They yielded to the evidence before them, in that empty tomb, that their Master had risen from the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Magdalene, who had returned or followed Peter back; and as she looked in, to her also was granted a vision of angels. The account, as it stands in unadorned simplicity on the inspired page, is one of inimitable beauty. How simple and artless the reply of Mary to the angels, and to Jesus when she mistook Him for the gardener! This was the *second* appearance of our risen Lord to human sight. Peter seems to have been the *next*, and was the first of the apostles to whom the Lord showed Himself. No account is given of it, the fact being merely mentioned by Luke (xxiv. 34) and referred to by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5). The two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Cleopas, and perhaps Luke, who gives the account with so much fulness and vividness) were the next.

<sup>2</sup> My great or adorable Master.

19 her. Then the same day<sup>1</sup> 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  
 20 midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them *His* hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.  
 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *My*  
 22 Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive  
 23 ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whosoever *sins* ye retain, they are  
 24 retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was  
 25 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  
 26 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  
 27 said, Peace *be* unto you. Then saith He to Thomas,<sup>2</sup> Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into My side; and be not faithless, but  
 28 believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My  
 29 Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that  
 30 have not seen, and *yet* have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not  
 31 written in this book: but these<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> There are five distinct appearances recorded as occurring the same day on which our Lord arose. At the last of these all of the eleven apostles were present save one; He convinced them of His identity by showing them His hands and side.

<sup>2</sup> As his associates related to Thomas how Jesus had appeared to them and had showed them His hands and side, he refused to believe. By his slowness to believe he contributed to render the proofs of our Lord's resurrection more abundant and convincing, sufficient for that large class of men found in all ages and lands of whom Thomas was a type. Just one week after, on the evening of the first day of the week, when the apostles were again assembled privately, Jesus appeared again. His entrance again into a closed room with a tangible material body must be regarded of course as among the supernatural events connected with His resurrection. Thomas was now afforded the very test which he had prescribed.

<sup>3</sup> The evangelist tells us that Jesus afforded His disciples many other signs or

14. *After His resurrection He performs similar miracles to those performed before His crucifixion, and thus identifies Himself in the highest regions of proof with the Jesus who died.*

XXI.]

[Ver. 1-25.

1 After<sup>1</sup> these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed<sup>2</sup> He<sup>2</sup> *Himself*. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas<sup>3</sup>

proofs of His Messiahship not written in this book. And then he adds that his grand object in writing was to set forth these signs or proofs that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God, that men might believe, and believing might have life in His name. He had accumulated proof upon proof until he closes with the confession MY LORD AND MY GOD of Thomas, who had been so slow of belief, so incredulous, who must have everything brought to the test of sense, a confession wrung from him by the overwhelming proof, one of the most explicit utterances of belief in the Divine Messiahship of Jesus which had fallen from the lips of any of the apostles. There had been the testimony of one whom the whole nation regarded as a prophet. There had been proof from miracles and the fulfilment of prophecy. There had been the conviction wrought in the minds of publicans and sinners, Samaritans, members and officers of the Sanhedrin, throngs composed of thousands of the common people and of the few Gentiles with whom He had been brought in contact, not excepting even Pilate who condemned Him and the centurion in command on the day of His crucifixion. There had been the pure and heavenly doctrine of His lips and the spotlessness of His character and life. There had been a voice from heaven owning Him as the Son of God. And now, to crown all the proofs, as the sign of signs He rises from the dead.

<sup>1</sup> In every part of this chapter the hand of the disciple Jesus loved is "plain and unmistakable; in every part of it his character and spirit are made manifest in a way which none but the most biased can fail to recognise." (Alford.) We are not told how long it was after the events recorded in the close of the preceding chapter that Jesus showed Himself at the Sea of Tiberias. Some have supposed it was just a week, or two weeks, which would make it occur on the first day of the week, the Christian sabbath. To the women, to whom He made His first appearance, the Lord gave the charge, "Go, tell My brethren [meaning not merely the apostles, but the disciples generally] that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." It was probably in obedience to this injunction that the "more than five hundred brethren," spoken of by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6) gathered on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had appointed them.

<sup>2</sup> The expression "showed Himself" is applicable simply to the fact that after His resurrection He did not associate freely and constantly with His disciples, as before His death, but only occasionally appeared to them. As no man saw Him rise from the tomb, and as He did not appear to His enemies and rejecters at all after His resurrection, so to His chosen apostles He appeared only a few times.

<sup>3</sup> There were seven of the apostles present. From the names given, with the exception of Thomas they appear to have been the same who were first called to the discipleship. It is not unnatural therefore to suppose that the two whose names are not given were Andrew and Philip. Thomas was present, that he might be still further strengthened in faith. To all of the apostles He appears to have shown Himself at least three times, and to some of them (for example, Peter and James) four or five. These manifestations were not confined to any one place or time. Now it is in the early morning, when the shadows and fears of the night are past; again, it



called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons*  
 3 of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. Simon Peter saith  
 unto them, I go a fishing.<sup>1</sup> They say unto him, We also go  
 with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immedi-  
 4 ately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the  
 morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the dis-  
 5 ciples knew<sup>2</sup> not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto  
 them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No.  
 6 And He said unto them, Cast<sup>3</sup> the net on the right side of the  
 ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they  
 7 were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 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  
 8 into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship,<sup>4</sup> (for  
 they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,)  
 9 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  
 10 bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish<sup>5</sup> which ye have  
 11 now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land

is in the broad noonday; and again, it is at evening. At one time it is in a chamber in the city; at another, in the open country, in the vicinity of Jerusalem; and now it is in those scenes so familiar to His disciples, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

<sup>1</sup> This proposal is not to be interpreted as if they were desponding, and despaired of the cause in which they had embarked, and were disposed to return to their old employment. They were then a considerable company, and might do something towards their own support. Moreover, they doubtless loved the Sea where in earlier life they had passed so many days; and now, having returned to it after a considerable absence, it had an irresistible attraction for them. Peter's proposal, instead of indicating a despondent, would show rather a calm, assured, cheerful state of mind, while they were waiting for the promised manifestation, for which the followers of Jesus from all parts, as far and wide as the message could be sent, were now assembling in Galilee.

<sup>2</sup> It was probably in the early dawn, before there was light sufficient for them to distinguish clearly, as they were near enough to the shore to speak and to be spoken to.

<sup>3</sup> He had on a former occasion, when they had toiled all night and taken nothing (Luke v. 4, 5), given a similar command. The present miracle, so similar to the former one, immediately opened the eyes of John, who turned to Peter and said, "It is the Lord."

<sup>4</sup> The small boat attached to the larger vessel. The distance was not far from two hundred cubits, *i.e.*, about one hundred yards.

<sup>5</sup> The fish just caught were as miraculously provided as those which could be seen broiling on the fire. There was no mixture of the common with the Divine.

full of great fishes, a hundred<sup>1</sup> and fifty and three : and for all  
 12 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.  
 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and  
 14 fish likewise. This is now the third<sup>2</sup> time that Jesus showed  
 Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead.  
 15 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<sup>3</sup> Thee. He saith  
 16 unto him, Feed My lambs.<sup>4</sup> 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  
 17 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  
 18 sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast  
 young,<sup>5</sup> thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou

<sup>1</sup> The count was suggested no doubt because the haul was so unprecedentedly large. It was sufficient not only for supplying their immediate wants, but their wants during the period of their waiting, and to enable them to show hospitality to other disciples who were gathering and were strangers in Galilee. Our Lord never performed miracles merely for the display of the power by which He performed them. He performed these miracles that He might be identified by His disciples in the very highest regions of proof, and for the beneficent purpose of supplying the wants of His followers on this great occasion of their gathering in Galilee by His own command.

<sup>2</sup> This was the third time He had appeared to the apostles in their distinctive character, or collected together.

<sup>3</sup> It is worthy of special notice that the word rendered *love* in Peter's answer, *φιλῶ σε*, is one of lower significance than the one thus translated in our Lord's question, *ἀγαπᾷς με*; He does not claim that he is more devoted to Christ than John, or James, or Nathanael; but he does profess to love Him, notwithstanding the past, as a poor sinner may love, although far below the standard such a Friend deserved.

<sup>4</sup> "Lambs and sheep include the whole flock, and are here employed to show that the pastoral care of Peter and all Christ's ministers is to be exercised over all the members of the flock, young and old, strong and infirm, rich and poor, high and low, without distinction of age or condition." (Dr. J. J. Owen's Commentary, *in loco*.) As sheep and lambs embrace the entire flock, so it has also been remarked that the two verbs employed (*βόσκει*, *feed*, and *ποιμαίνει*, *shepherdise*, or guide as a shepherd) include every provision for the spiritual wants of the flock, and every kind of supervision and care required.

<sup>5</sup> Peter was no longer young; he was probably several years the senior of the

wouldest ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither  
 19 thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He  
 20 saith unto him, Follow<sup>1</sup> Me. 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  
 21 that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, 22 and what<sup>2</sup> *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.  
 23 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  
 24 thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.  
 25 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<sup>3</sup> itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Lord. In the conclusion of this address He seems to describe the infirmities of old age, and the death of one who comes to the grave through these infirmities. If Peter was nearly forty years old when he was thus addressed, and laboured for nearly forty years after the ascension, then we may understand by what death he was to glorify God. Others suppose that our Lord's words to him are to be taken simply as a figurative prophetic designation of the binding of the hands of one about to be led to execution, and that in the stretching out of the hands there is a distinct allusion to crucifixion as the mode of his death.

<sup>1</sup> Probably towards that mountain where He had appointed to meet His assembled followers.

<sup>2</sup> *Shall* and *do* are in italics. The question in the Greek is, *ὄστος δὲ τί*; And what this man? *i.e.* What shall he suffer? or, How with him? The question was prompted by the close intimacy that existed between the two disciples and the loving regard of Jesus for St. John. With childlike simplicity John records the answer, and corrects the saying that had gone abroad, that Christ had foretold he should never die. He will not allow that interpretation of the words, "If I will that he tarry till I come," most glorious to himself. All that the Saviour foretold in regard to John was that he should live until His advent at the overthrow of Jerusalem. That event was passed, and John was standing, waiting for that other advent when he should go into the presence of that Saviour by whom he was so tenderly loved.

<sup>3</sup> The simple idea seems to be that if everything should be put down in detail it would be too cumbrous and voluminous for the world or the mass of men to receive and profit by. There is as much wisdom in the reticence of Scripture, or in its precise limitation, as in what it actually contains.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LAST DAYS AND CONCLUDING WRITINGS OF THE APOSTLE.

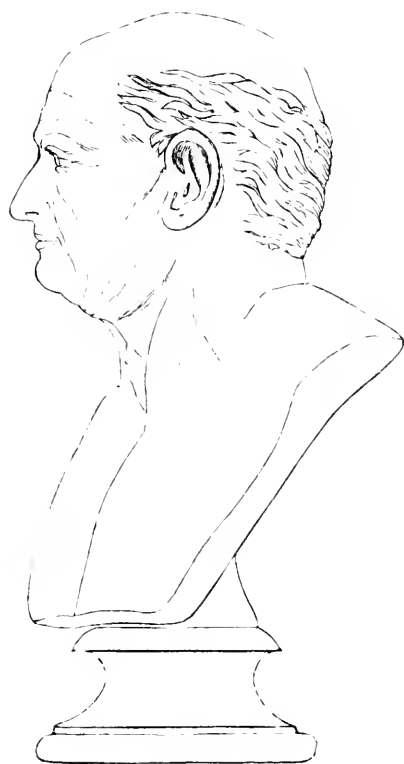
ST. JOHN FAR ADVANCED IN YEARS.—EPISTLES WRITTEN LATER THAN THE GOSPEL.—BREVITY OF THE SECOND AND THIRD PERHAPS INDICATIVE OF AGE.—GENUINENESS OF EPISTLES MOST EVIDENT.—SUBLIME THOUGHT AT FOUNDATION OF THE FIRST.—FIVE GREAT TOPICS.—THE SECOND EPISTLE ADDRESSED TO A CHRISTIAN WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN.—THE THIRD ADDRESSED TO GAIVS.—IT ADMIRABLY SKETCHES THREE DISTINCT PORTRAITS.—ST. JOHN VERY AGED, PROBABLY PAST NINETY.—THESE WRITINGS BREATHE SPIRIT OF HEAVEN.—BECOMING TOO WEAK TO WALK INTO THE ASSEMBLY, HE IS BORNE THITHER.—LIVED TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND CENTURY.—NOT LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED AT DEATH.—BURIED PROBABLY AMONG THE SEPULCHRES OF MOUNT PRION.—PERSECUTED UNDER DOMITIAN, NERVA, TRAJAN.—TRADITIONS, APOCRYPHAL AND GENUINE.—BOILING OIL.—LEGENDS OF THE SHIPWRECK, THE PARTRIDGE, DRUSIANA, THE POISONED CUP, ETC.—CERINTHUS AT THE BATH.—TRADITION THAT HE DID NOT DIE.—LEGENDARY INTERPRETATION OF JOHN XXI. 22.—LONGFELLOW ON THE LEGEND.—PROFESSOR PLUMPTRE QUOTED.

If the Gospel according to St. John was written some fifty years after the events to which it relates, the Epistles that bear the name of this apostle were evidently written considerably later, about the year 90; the Second and Third probably when he had begun to feel some of the infirmities of age. He was far advanced in years, and drawing near to the end of his earthly career. The pen of inspiration is held by the hand of one trembling with age, yet ripe in wisdom and Christian experience.

That the apostle St. John was the author of these three letters there is no room to doubt. In regard to the First, we find Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom A.D. 168, and who was St. John's disciple, freely quoting (in his Epistle to the Philippians, chap. vii.) 1 John iv. 3. Eusebius distinctly refers to the use Papias made of this Epistle, *τῆς πρώτης Ἰωάννου ἐπιστολῆς*.<sup>1</sup> The Muratorian fragment, written probably A.D. 170, and the Peschito version, which belongs to the same age, together bear witness to the genuineness of this Epistle.<sup>2</sup> When we

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Hist. Eccl., iii. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Ewald, Introd. to Comm., pp. 11-16.



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compare the subject matter and the style of the Epistles with the fourth Gospel, it is manifest that they must have proceeded from the same author. In the Epistles, as in the Gospel, we find "the same delicacy and diffidence, the same lofty calmness and composure, and especially the same truly Christian modesty, that cause him to retire to the background as an apostle, and to say altogether so little of himself: he only desires to counsel and warn, and to remind his readers of the sublime truth they have once acquired; and the higher he stands the less he is disposed to humble 'the brethren' by his great authority and directions."<sup>1</sup>

The simple, sublime thought, that lies at the foundation of the First Epistle is FELLOWSHIP; "fellowship in its twofold aspect: the union of believers with God and His Son Jesus Christ, and the union of believers with one another."<sup>2</sup> It admits of these five divisions:

1. Fellowship, its nature ..... chap. i.—iii. 1, 2.
2. Fellowship, its fruit, *Holiness* ,, iii. 3-24.
3. Fellowship, its law, *Truth* ,, iv. 1-6.
4. Fellowship, its life, *Love* ,, iv. 7-21.
5. Fellowship, its root, *Faith* ,, v. 1-21.

1. The Nature of Fellowship; presented (1) As effected by the incarnation and death of Christ, chap. i. 1-7. (2) As affording no ground for the denial of our sinfulness, chap. i. 8—ii. 5. (3) As the only efficient basis of brotherly love, chap. ii. 6-11. (4) Reason for addressing all Christians, the feeblest and youngest, on this subject, chap. ii. 12-14. (5) Non-fellowship with the world, chap. ii. 15-17. (6) Non-fellowship with antichristian error, chap. ii. 18-29. (7) Relation of fellowship to sonship and future glory, chap. iii. 1, 2.

2. The Fruit of Fellowship, Holiness. (1) Its binding nature, chap. iii. 3-9. (2) Brotherly love one of the fruits of holiness, chap. iii. 10-18. (3) Other fruits, chap. iii. 19-24.

3. The Law of Fellowship, Truth, chap. iv. 1-6.

4. The Life of Fellowship, Love, chap. iv. 7-21.

5. The Root of Fellowship, Faith. (1) Its efficacy, chap. v. 1-5. (2) The three witnesses to its all-sufficient foundation, chap. v. 6-12. (3) Faith in intercessory prayer, or prayer for one another, chap. v. 13-17. (4) Conclusion, Christians urged to maintain fellowship through Christ, chap. v. 18-21.

It has been a question whether the Second Epistle is addressed to a church or the Church at large, *ἐκλεκτῇ Κυρίᾳ*, "the elect lady," *i.e.*, under the symbol of a godly woman; or to some individual woman, unnamed,

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, *Die Johann. Schriften*, i., p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff's *Hist. of Apos. Ch.*, p. 417.

noted for her piety; or whether *Kυρία* is to be taken for the proper name of the woman addressed. The weight of criticism seems to favour the view that it is to be taken as a proper name. This has been maintained by Benson, Bengel, S. G. Lange, Lücke, Alford, and others. The Epistle, in its few brief sentences, expresses great tenderness and affection for the elect Curia and her children. It enforces the commandment of brotherly love, with a warning against the doctrine of false teachers and against fellowship with them. It was written mainly to give utterance to John's gratification at the discovery, apparently made on one of his apostolical visitations in a distant city, that the children of this pious woman were walking in the truth; which is followed by an exhortation to observe the commandment as to brotherly love, and a warning against false teachers and fellowship with them.

The Third Epistle is addressed to Gaius, a prominent man in the congregation of which he was a member, though it cannot be determined whether he was an elder or held any office in the church. After a salutation containing the remarkable wish that he might prosper and be in health "even as his soul prospered," the apostle refers with special commendation to his hospitality to missionary brethren. He next deplors the opposition of the ambitious Diotrephes, and warns against his example. Finally he commends Demetrius, the probable bearer of this Epistle, to the friendly and Christian regard of Gaius. It admirably sketches these three distinct portraits.

In such care for the churches, and for individual believers, the old age and life of the apostle passed calmly away. He was "diligent in business." He not only preached, but was active with the pen, whereby he became a permanent witness for the truth and an instructor of the Church. These three Epistles were the last composed of his inspired writings, when he could not have been less than ninety years of age. They breathe the very spirit of heaven, and bear marks of a godly man, full of affection as well as of years, who was looking forward to the grave as not far distant. They contain the concluding testimony of the last survivor of the apostles, the last of the race of inspired men, and his tender exhortations to holiness and love. Love is the theme on which he dilates as he draws near to that world the very atmosphere of which is love, and to the God who is love.

When in extreme old age he was too weak to walk into the assembly, but, as Jerome<sup>1</sup> relates, was still borne thither; unable to deliver a long discourse, he would lift his trembling hands, and simply say, "Little children, love one another"; and repeat these words again and again. When asked why he constantly repeated this ex-

<sup>1</sup> Epist. ad Gal., vi.



pression, his answer was, "Because this is the command of the Lord and nothing is done unless this thing be done."<sup>1</sup> He probably, of all the apostles (unless we also except Peter, with whom he had been so intimately associated), was the only one who died a natural death. ✓

He continued to the beginning of the second century, to at least the third year of the emperor Trajan, and could not have been less than one hundred years old at the time of his departure.<sup>2</sup> The event took place at Ephesus, and his sacred dust, as we are allowed to believe, awaits the resurrection among the sepulchres of Mount Prion. Gently he languished into life. Slowly he sank to his rest, like the descending sun of a long summer day to its setting. There was no sudden extinguishment of apostolic light. One apostle after another went to his rest; but the life of the youngest of their number was prolonged to the greatest age of all. Nearly or quite threescore years and ten after the crucifixion that light still glimmered; and when it went out, it was not as the sudden gust blows out a candle, but it burned to the very socket. And when men were ready to say, "Now it is gone," it would flash up and reveal those words which might well be written in letters of gold, "Little children, love one another."

The last three years of the reign of Domitian form one of the most frightful periods in the history of ancient persecution. The most distinguished and virtuous had to bleed for their excellence, or because their virtues distinguished them. He banished literary and cultivated men from Rome, and claimed divine honours for himself. Flavius Clemens, the consul, one of his cousins, being accused of atheism and Jewish manners, the common charge against Christians, was put to death; and his wife Domitilla, the emperor's niece, was banished. Ecclesiastical writers attribute to him a general persecution of the Christians; in which doubtless many known and dear to St. John perished. Domitian fell by the dagger of the assassin, in the year 96. Thus perished the last of the Cæsars, of whom it has been truly said, only four deserve the respect of posterity; Julius, Augustus, Vespasian and Titus. "Their unparalleled vices," says Gibbon, "and the splendid theatre on which they were acted have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid inhuman Domitian are condemned to everlasting infamy."<sup>2</sup> The apostle John, born under the reign of the first of these who received the title of emperor, (to wit, Augustus, who is reckoned the second in the list of the Cæsars) was contemporary with all the rest and probably outlived the last.

<sup>1</sup> "Et si solum fiat, sufficit."

<sup>2</sup> Decline and Fall, chap. iii., p. 96 ed. Boston, 1853.

Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, who reigned but two years and was followed A.D. 98 by Trajan. At an early period in his reign it is supposed that the apostle John closed his pilgrimage,<sup>1</sup> and went to join the celestial companies of whom he had visions in Patmos. He whom Jesus loved, and who had felt the throbbings of the heart of eternal mercy, sees Him face to face and is like Him for ever.

✱ The legendary history of St. John is singularly vivid and beautiful, and in some of its parts not without a good degree of probability. It is on the testimony of Tertullian, that the statement of his being carried to Rome, and there cast into a caldron of boiling oil which had no power to harm him, almost exclusively rests.<sup>2</sup> Jerome, who twice refers to this subject, in one instance gives Tertullian as his authority, and makes the further statement that it was by Nero<sup>3</sup> he was immersed in the oil; and adds that he came out more pure and vigorous than when he was put in. In the other passage he speaks of the apostle as having been immediately afterwards banished to Patmos,<sup>4</sup> *i.e.* by Nero. Tertullian, who wrote near the end of the second century, does not appear to have had any doubt of the truth of the statement made by him. Jerome writes as if he cordially accepted it. Cave,<sup>5</sup> Tillemont, and other learned men have defended it, or have referred to it as of unquestionable authenticity. But the learned and critical Mosheim thinks it admits of doubt, and hazards the conjecture that the account might be nothing more than a figure, which had been made use of by some one, to convey a strong idea of the peril to which St. John had been exposed, and that Tertullian, who was strongly predisposed to catch at everything that had the appearance of a miracle, instead of taking what was said in a metaphorical sense, understood it literally.<sup>6</sup> Neither Eusebius nor Origen, who both refer to the persecutions of St. John, by name make any allusion to his having been cast into the boiling oil; and no other record remains of

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

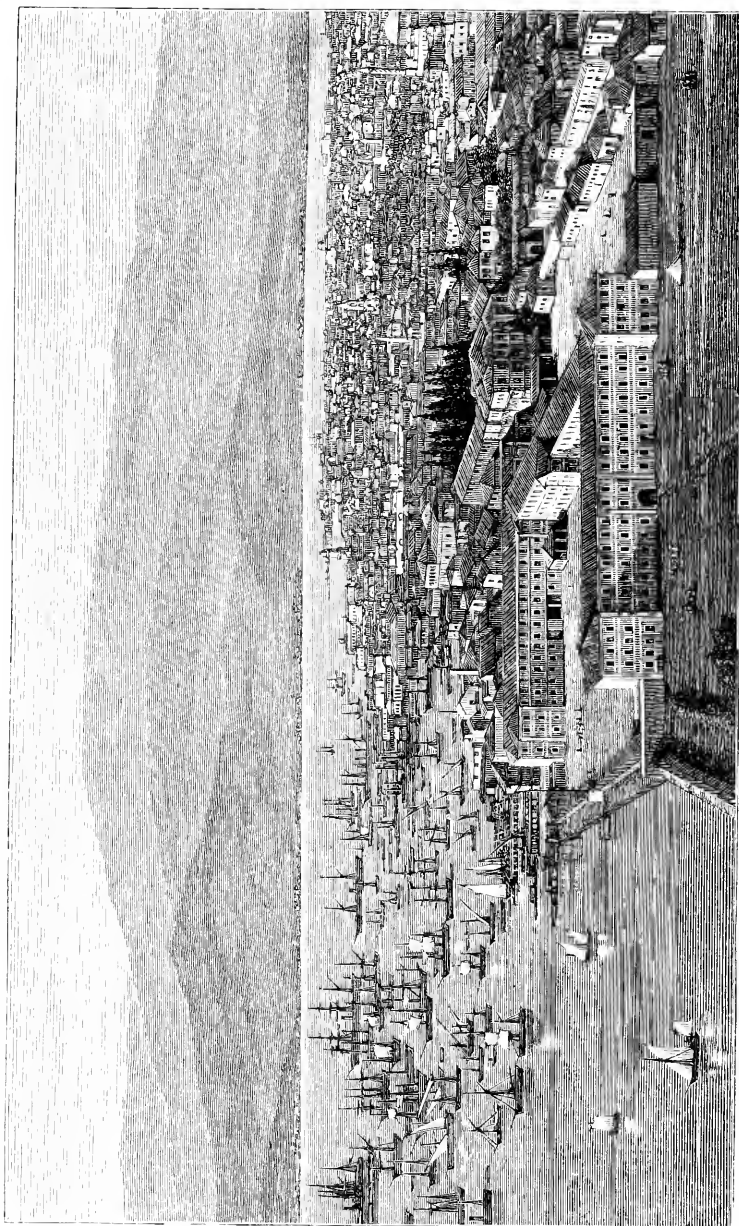
<sup>2</sup> In an apostrophe to the church at Rome, in his work, *De Præscrip. Hæret.*, after speaking of it as the place where St. Peter and St. Paul gained the crown of martyrdom, he adds: "ubi apostolus Joannes posteaquam, in oleum igneum immersus, nihil passus est."

<sup>3</sup> "Refert Tertullianus quod a Nerone missus in ferventis olei doluum purior et vegetior exierit, quam intraverit."—*Adv. Jorin.*, i., c. 14. Moreri writes: "Il en sortit plus sain et plus fort qu'il n'y étoit entré." *Diet.*, Art. *Jean*. And Tillemont: "Il en sortit mesme encore plus net et plus vigoureux qu'il n'y estoit entré." "Jean," Art. V.

<sup>4</sup> "Statimque relegatus in Pathmos insulam sit." *Comment.* on Matt. xx. 23.

<sup>5</sup> He makes the emperor to have been Domitian, and says: "that Providence that secured the three Hebrew captives in the flames of a burning furnace brought this holy man safe out of this one would have thought unavoidable destruction."

<sup>6</sup> *First Three Centuries*, i. Cent., § 36, *Note*; *Life of St. John*, § 5.



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any punishment of this kind being inflicted by the Romans. Beautiful as the story is as related by Jerome, that the apostle not only came forth unhurt but more strong and pure than when he was thrust in, there can be little doubt it must find its place among the legends, rather than in history.

In regard to the tradition that he met with shipwreck when approaching Ephesus, noticed on a preceding page,<sup>1</sup> there would seem to be no inherent or antecedent improbability in regard to it, as no motive can easily be conceived for the invention of such a statement. In this respect his experience might have been somewhat similar to that of the apostle Paul, in the same sea. It adds a new feature to his chequered history, of which we have no glimpse in the Scriptures. What he suffered, or how long it may have delayed his arrival, we know not. It is a beautiful and picturesque legend that St. John had a tame partridge and often amused himself with feeding and tending it; and that one day a huntsman passing by with his bow and arrows expressed astonishment at seeing the great apostle, so venerable for age and sanctity, thus amuse himself. The apostle asked him if he always kept his bow bent. The huntsman answered, "That would be the way to render it useless." "If," replied St. John, "you unbend your bow to prevent its being useless, I unbend my mind for the same reason."<sup>2</sup> Such a legend as this may be included in the same category with the traditions concerning his shipwreck and his pursuit of the young robber, as having a foundation in truth. There is an exceeding naturalness about it; it makes him appear (great apostle as he was) as a man like ourselves, having the same infirmities and needs. And, as the apostle unquestionably possessed the power of working miracles, perhaps the following may be included in the same list, and had the miracle been wrought at an earlier period, and in Jerusalem or Palestine, would have found record in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>4</sup> When St. John was returning from Patmos, having sojourned there a year and a day, as he approached Ephesus, where the disciples were awaiting him with great joy, lo! a funeral procession came forth from the gates. He inquired who was dead, and was answered, Drusiana. He was sad, as Drusiana had excelled in all good works and he had been an inmate of her house. He told the men who were bearing it to set the bier down; he then prayed earnestly that God would restore her to life. She rose up and returned to her house, and the apostle again took up his abode with her.<sup>3</sup> The apostle is not represented as

<sup>1</sup> See page 145, note.

<sup>2</sup> Cassian., Collat., xxiv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Mrs. Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art, i., p. 167. The incident is the subject of a fine fresco by Filippo Lippi, on the left-hand wall of the Strozzi Chapel, Florence.

touching the bier, as his Master did, at the gates of Nain, but as praying earnestly; and there seems to be the same distinction preserved between this miracle and those of our Lord as we notice in those recorded by Luke in the Acts, and those recorded in the Gospels.

∞ There are many other striking and beautiful legends of which as much cannot be said; for example, that John was made to drink of a poisoned cup, intended to cause his death, and suffered no harm from it; that no rain fell on the uncovered oratory near Ephesus, where the narrators of the story say that he penned his Gospel; that two young men, who had sold all their possessions to follow him, afterwards repented, and he sent them to gather pebbles and fagots, and on their return changed them into nuggets and ingots of gold, saying, "Take back your riches, as you regret having exchanged them for heaven"; that when he felt his death approaching he gave orders for the preparation of his grave, and when it was finished calmly laid himself down in it, and died, and there were strange movements in the earth that covered him, the dust gently heaving, like the covering of a couch beneath which one is quietly sleeping; and that sacred oil (according to some) and manna (according to others) might be gathered there; that it was through his agency the great temple of Diana was at last left of its magnificence and levelled with the ground. \* And so of the story that at Ephesus, as one who was a true priest of the Lord, he wore on his brow a plate of gold, *lamina*, with the sacred name engraved on it which was the badge of the Jewish pontiff. *Credat Judæus Apella!* It is here again not improbable that some strong statement of an early writer as to the new priesthood was misinterpreted, and that what was mere rhetoric was mistaken for veritable history.<sup>1</sup>

Most accounts of St. John's life give, as illustrating his character, some notice of his refusing to enter the bath at Ephesus because Cerinthus the heretic was within. It rests on the authority of Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> as primarily given by Irenæus as a narrative orally delivered to his hearers by Polycarp; and on that of Epiphanius, who, with his accustomed inaccuracy, substitutes the name of Ebion for that of Cerinthus while evidently recording the same narrative. There are other important discrepancies in the two accounts, which serve to throw doubt over the whole and lead to the conclusion that the writers, in their imperfect knowledge of some actual incident, have ascribed to the apostle their own subjective states of feeling and disposition towards heretics. The conduct and words ascribed to the apostle are hardly consistent

<sup>1</sup> For numerous stories of this kind see Lampe, *Prolegomena in Joannēm*, I., vi. 7; and Cave's *Lives*, § 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, iv., chap. 14.

with that sanctity and dignity wherewith he always appears in his writings and in sacred history.

It is one of the early legends concerning this apostle that he was translated, like Enoch and Elijah; but in the middle ages, and even in comparatively modern times, the saying has been widely spread that he still lives on earth. The legendary interpretation of his Gospel (chap. xxi. 22), “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” makes the words expressive of the mysterious survival of the apostle till the second coming of Christ. In the *Menologium Græcum*<sup>1</sup> the grave into which St. John descends is, according to the legend, in the form of a cross. “In a series of the deaths of the apostles<sup>2</sup> St. John is ascending from the grave; for according to the Greek legend he died without pain or change, and immediately rose again in bodily form.” In a small curious picture at Rome<sup>3</sup> there is a tomb something like the Xanthian tombs in form. One end is open, and St. John is seen issuing from it. The legend which supposes him preserved alive on the earth is interesting in the history of art, and has been treated in sculpture.

As an illustration of the power which such legends exerted over the minds of men, and the way in which their influence might sometimes prove salutary in promoting deeds of kindness and charity, the following is taken from Mrs. Jameson’s admirable work.

“King Edward the Confessor had a special veneration for St. John. One day returning from his church at Westminster, where he had been hearing mass in honour of the evangelist, he was accosted by a pilgrim, who asked him for an alms for the love of God and St. John. The king drew from his finger a ring, and, unknown to any one, delivered it to the beggar. When the king had reigned twenty-four years, two pilgrims, Englishmen, in the Holy Land, who were about to return to England, were met by one who was also in the habit of a pilgrim, who inquired of what country they were; and being told, ‘Of England,’ he said to them, ‘When ye shall have arrived in your own country, go to King Edward, and salute him in my name. Say to him that I thank him for the alms bestowed on me in a certain street in Westminster; for there on a certain day, as I begged of him an alms, he bestowed on me this ring. And ye shall carry it back to him, saying that in six months from this time he shall quit the world, and come and remain with me for ever.’

“The pilgrims, being astonished, said, ‘Who art thou, and where is thy dwelling-place?’ And he answering said, ‘I am John the Evan-

<sup>1</sup> Vatican MSS., tenth century.

<sup>2</sup> MSS., ninth century, Paris National Library, referred to by Mrs. Jameson.

<sup>3</sup> Vatican Christian Museum. *Idem*, page 160, vol. i.

gelist. Edward, your king, is my friend, and for the sanctity of his life I hold him dear. Go now therefore, deliver him this message and this ring; and I will pray to God that ye may arrive safely in your own country.' He then vanished out of their sight. The pilgrims, praising and thanking the Lord for this vision, went on their journey. Arrived in England, they repaired to the king and delivered the ring and message. The king received the news joyfully, and conferred honour on the pilgrims. He then set himself to prepare for his departure from the world, and died according to the message he had received. According to one account, the pilgrims met him near his palace at Waltham, at a place since called Havering. This legend is represented along the top of the screen of Edward the Confessor's chapel, in three compartments."<sup>1</sup>

It is a legend on which poets as well as artists have seized. One of the most celebrated poets of our day has made it the subject of the *finale* of the principal production of his pen; and for beauty of expression and conception it is worthy of him and the place he has assigned it.<sup>2</sup>

+But, in the words of Professor Plumptre, "we find it better and more satisfying to turn again for all our conceptions of the apostle's mind and character to the scanty records of the New Testament and the writings which he himself has left. The truest thought that we can attain to is still that he was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' returning that love with a deep, absorbing, and unwavering devotion. One aspect of that feeling is seen in the zeal for his Master's glory, the burning indignation against all that seemed to outrage it, which runs with its fiery gleam through his whole life, and makes him from first to last one of the 'sons of thunder.' To him, more than to any other disciple, there is no neutrality between Christ and Antichrist. The spirit of such a man is intolerant of compromises and concessions. The same strong personal affection shows itself in another form, in the chief characteristics of his Gospel. While the other evangelists record principally the discourses and parables which were spoken to the multitude, he treasures up every word and accent of dialogues and conversations which must have seemed to most men less conspicuous. In the absence of any recorded narrative of his work as a preacher, in the silence in which he appears to have kept for so many years, he comes before us as one who lives in the unseen, eternal world, rather than in that of secular

<sup>1</sup> Sacred and Legendary Art, pp. 170, 171.

<sup>2</sup> When calling on Mr. Longfellow at his home in Cambridge, in company with Professor Warren, now President of the Boston University, the poet presented the author with a copy of this gem before it was yet published, and explained the place it was destined to fill in the completed poem.



or even spiritual activity. If there is less apparent power to enter into the minds and hearts of men of different temperament and education, less ability to become all things to all men, than there is in St. Paul, there is a perfection of another kind. The image mirrored in his soul is that of the Son of man, who is also the Son of God. He is the Apostle of Love, not because he starts from the easy temper of a general benevolence, nor again as being of a character soft, yielding, feminine; but because he has grown ever more and more into the likeness of Him whom he loved so truly. Nowhere is the vision of the Eternal Word, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, so unclouded; nowhere are there such distinctive personal reminiscences of the Christ *κατὰ σάρκα*, in His most distinctively human characteristics. It was this union of the two aspects of the truth which made him so truly the 'Theologus' of the whole company of the apostles, the instinctive opponent of all forms of a mystical, or logical, or Docetic gnosticism."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Smith's Dictionary of Bible, Art. *John the Apostle*.

## CHAPTER XV.

### ANALYSES OF THE EPISTLES, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.

THEME OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.—FELLOWSHIP.—I. ITS NATURE, AS EFFECTED BY THE INCARNATION AND SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.—AS AFFORDING NO GROUND FOR THE DENIAL OF SINFULNESS.—AS THE ONLY SUFFICIENT BASIS OF BROTHERLY LOVE.—GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT TO ALL CHRISTIANS.—NON-FELLOWSHIP WITH THE WORLD.—NON-FELLOWSHIP WITH ANTICHRISTIAN ERROR.—ITS RELATION TO SONSHIP AND FUTURE GLORY.—II. FRUIT OF FELLOWSHIP.—HOLINESS.—BROTHERLY LOVE.—OTHER FRUITS.—III. LAW OF FELLOWSHIP, TRUTH.—IV. LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP, LOVE.—V. ROOT OF FELLOWSHIP, FAITH.—EFFICACY OF FAITH.—THREE WITNESSES TO THE SUFFICIENCY OF FAITH.—FAITH IN INTERCESSORY PRAYER.—CONCLUSION OF FIRST EPISTLE.—THEME OF SECOND EPISTLE—BROTHERLY LOVE AND WARNING AGAINST FELLOWSHIP WITH FALSE TEACHERS.—TO WHOM THE EPISTLE IS ADDRESSED.—THE INCIDENT WHICH LED TO THE WRITING OF IT.—GREETINGS.—THEME OF THIRD EPISTLE.—THREE PORTRAITS.—CHARACTER OF GAIUS.—CHARACTER OF DIOTREPHES.—CHARACTER OF DEMETRIUS.—FINAL GREETINGS.

### THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

SUBJECT OF THE EPISTLE.—*Christian Fellowship in its twofold aspect; the union of believers with God and His Son Jesus Christ, and their union with one another.*

#### I. *Fellowship, its Nature.*—Chapter I. to III. 2.

1. *The nature of fellowship presented as effected by the incarnation and death of Christ.*

I.]

[Ver. 1-7.

- 1 THAT which was from the beginning,<sup>1</sup> which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,

<sup>1</sup> A comparison of the opening of this Epistle with that of the Gospel by the same writer shows a striking similarity. It is addressed to no particular place, person, or body of Christians; and while it was originally addressed to the churches of

2 and our hands have handled,<sup>1</sup> of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and  
 3 was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship<sup>2</sup> *is* with the Father, and with His Son  
 4 Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your  
 5 joy may be full.<sup>3</sup> This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light,<sup>4</sup> and in  
 6 Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:  
 7 but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have

Asia Minor, it may be regarded as a circular letter to the people of God generally. What has been said of the writings of St. John at large may be applied with peculiar emphasis to this portion of them: "They are still waters, which run deep; flowing along with the easiest words, but the most profound meaning." (Herder.)

<sup>1</sup> One of the earliest forms of heresy did not relate to the Divinity, but to the humanity of Christ. There were those already who denied the reality of His incarnation, the true union of a human and Divine nature in His one person. His incarnation they held was but an *appearance* or *seeming*. The apostle, without entering into a formal argument like St. Paul, contents himself with setting forth in his emphatic manner the positive truth, that the only way in which we can have fellowship with the Father must be through the incarnation and mediation of His Son. The analysis herewith presented contemplates this as the one topic, and the exposition indicated will be readily seen to justify the statement that it is the true subject. It is comparatively recently that there has been any attempt at an analysis of this Epistle. The Lutheran expositors held that the Epistle was without method. Calvin, after describing it as containing doctrine mixed with exhortations, says: "Verum nihil horum continua serie facit; nam sparsim docendo et exhortando varius est: præsertim vero multus est in urgenda fraterna intellectione. Alia quoque breviter attingit."

<sup>2</sup> "ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν, κ.τ.λ. This fellowship is effected through our having fellowship with the Father. Besides the Father, His Son Jesus Christ is mentioned, and their identity or oneness recognised. It was in and through His Son that He came near to man that man might come near to God, and the broken fellowship be restored. Those who denied the incarnation and humanity of Christ perfectly obscured the plan by which sinful men could be restored to fellowship with God. The apostle means that fellowship or communion which extends to the whole redeemed church of God, which does not depend on personal contact or association of the individuals, but is consistent with their personal remoteness from one another.

<sup>3</sup> There may be a contrast designed here with the *πλήρωμα* of the Gnostics.

<sup>4</sup> The subject of this Epistle being communion with God, it became of the highest importance that its readers should have right conceptions of Him with whom, through the incarnation of Christ, we may be brought into such intimate fellowship. The figure expresses the purity and perfection of the Being with whom believers are brought into fellowship, *ἔστιν αὐτῆ ἡ ἀγγελία . . . ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστί.*

fellowship one with another,<sup>1</sup> and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.<sup>2</sup>

2. *Fellowship as affording no ground for the denial of our sinfulness.*

I. 8.]

[II. 5.

8 If we say that we have no sin,<sup>3</sup> we deceive ourselves, and  
9 the truth is not in us. If we confess<sup>4</sup> our sins, He is faithful  
and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all  
10 unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make  
Him a liar,<sup>5</sup> and His word is not in us.

II.]

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin  
not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate<sup>6</sup> with the

<sup>1</sup> *μετ' αὐτοῦ* is substituted chiefly by the Latin Codd. for *μετ' ἀλλήλων*, making the sense to be that we have fellowship with God. But it is better to understand the apostle as saying here that our fellowship with God leads to fellowship with Christian brethren. It is a fellowship that first unites earth and heaven, and then binds the discordant materials of earth together.

<sup>2</sup> The Sinaitic MS. reads *ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν*; "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all our sin."

<sup>3</sup> The apostle having shown that believers are brought into fellowship with God guards this glorious truth against antinomian abuse, and self righteous pride. He affirms that the man, whoever he may be, though he has been, or hopes he has been, exalted to the highest honour possible to a creature on earth, even that of fellowship with God, and who says he has no sin, plays the part of a deceiver on himself, and attempts that towards himself which he would find it difficult to forgive should the attempt be made by another. He becomes a liar to and about himself. Matthew Henry in one of his pregnant sentences says, "The Christian religion is the religion of sinners." The man who is not ready to own himself a sinner finds nothing in this religion suited to his case.

<sup>4</sup> Confession is the duty of Christians, even those most favoured with the privileges of grace. Instead of any of them ever saying, elated with a conceit of their own goodness, that they have no sin, that, as God has taken them into fellowship with Himself, they have become as holy in heart and life as the law of God requires, it becomes them all to cry out before the mercy-seat, "Have pity upon us, for we are miserable sinners."

<sup>5</sup> It is not only a deception practised on ourselves when we say we are not sinners, it is a falsehood which contradicts what God has most solemnly and emphatically declared in His word, and which therefore makes Him a liar. Shall they who have been brought into fellowship with God, and whom God requires continually to own their sinfulness, reply that they have no sin? Shall they ever say that they have arrived at a state in which they do not daily need pardon?

<sup>6</sup> The inspired writers preach that salvation is wholly of grace, without giving any patronage to sin; that we are saved through faith, without the works of the law, and yet without any disparagement of works. We have an advocate, *παράκλητον*. An advocate is one who pleads or vindicates the cause of another; specifically one who performs this service before a judicial tribunal. The term used in the original, in

2 Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and He is the propitiation<sup>1</sup>  
 for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the*  
 3 whole world.<sup>2</sup> And hereby we do know<sup>3</sup> that we know Him, if  
 4 we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and  
 keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not  
 5 in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love  
 of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in Him.

3. *Fellowship as the only sufficient basis of brotherly love.*

[Ver. 6-11.]

6 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to  
 7 walk,<sup>4</sup> even as He walked. Brethren, I write no new com-  
 mandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had

this place, has nothing perhaps fully answering to it in English. It sometimes means a comforter, as when it was applied by our Saviour, in His valedictory address to His disciples, to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it may be regarded as meaning an intercessor, one who frames and offers petitions in behalf of another. And sometimes, as here, where it has been judiciously rendered an advocate, one who appears before a tribunal of justice in the cause of an accused person ; but in this case not a tribunal for the trial, *i.e.*, to prove the guilt, or to secure the acquittal of the accused. There are courts among men before which advocates may appear for men found guilty and condemned to imprisonment or death, to plead for the removal or mitigation of the sentence. The office they perform more nearly corresponds to that which the great Advocate in heaven fills for those who entrust their cause with Him. He pleads that they may be pardoned, and in being delivered from the guilt may be delivered from the power of sin.

<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *ἰλασμός*, translated *propitiation*, is found nowhere else in the N. T. but in chap. iv. 10 of this Epistle. It occurs often in the Greek version of the O. T., where it means a *sacrifice of atonement*. In the fact that Christ offered Himself as such a sacrifice is found His chief qualification to be our Advocate with the Father.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus Christ is the only, the all-sufficient, the universal atonement and propitiation for sin.

<sup>3</sup> Obedience is the highest test of our having any real interest in Christ. The great and good President Edwards called this the very sign of signs, the evidence of evidences. If such obedience does not characterize us, our very life confutes and gives the lie to our pretensions and professions. "Those who have attained," says Bengel, "through the power of the gospel to faith in Jesus Christ, serve God in a new and willing spirit ; and this is called keeping the commandments."

<sup>4</sup> Christ appeared in bodily, palpable form and shape here on earth ; could be heard, seen, and handled ; He "walked," mingled with men in the realities of life, was no mere shadowy appearance or vision passing before the eyes of men. He came into actual contact with men, and discharged all the duties belonging to Him as a man. There must be in His followers something just as positive and visible, a *walk* among men, like His, in keeping the commandments of God, if they would abide in love and fellowship with Him.

from the beginning. The old<sup>1</sup> commandment is the word  
 8 which ye have heard from the beginning.<sup>2</sup> Again, a new  
 commandment<sup>3</sup> I write unto you, which thing is true in Him  
 and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light  
 9 now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his  
 10 brother, is in darkness<sup>4</sup> even until now. He that loveth his  
 brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of  
 11 stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in  
 darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither  
 he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

<sup>1</sup> This law was in one sense as old as the creation of man, as old as the first revelation of a Saviour, as the first organization of the visible church; it was as old as the law of Sinai.

<sup>2</sup> But this expression is probably to be understood as referring, specifically, to the beginning of the gospel as first preached by Christ Himself. It was no invention of the apostle's.

<sup>3</sup> By the commandment, ἡ ἐντολή, is not necessarily to be understood any single commandment, but "the message" (i. 5), "the word" (ii. 5), the gospel. The apostle means the same commandment he had just denominated old. He calls that *new*, which he had just spoken of as *old*, because it is and must always remain a new commandment in its constantly asserted claims, it can never become obsolete. It has not had its day, because it has existed from the beginning. It is true "the commandment" here has been understood as referring to the particular command requiring brotherly love; which was "old" as found first in the O. T. (Lev. xix. 18), "new" as re-affirmed and enlarged by Christ in the N. T. (St. John xiii. 34). And this precept might be called *new*, as the reasons which enforce it under the new dispensation are so new and peculiar that it seems almost like a law never before proclaimed. But this latter interpretation does not preserve the connection as naturally and thoroughly as that which refers the commandment to the entire word, or gospel, the whole sum of the Christian life, holiness, springing from the imitation of Christ Himself, appearing not in conformity to one commandment, but to all; of which, however, the precept to love one another fills the most important place. The apostle, in thus making the law by which we are introduced to fellowship with God consist in keeping the commandments of Christ and imitating His example, has a special object in view, to wit, to discover to us the basis on which fraternal love and fellowship must repose.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle, having pointed out the true and only basis of this fellowship and love, proceeds to unfold its binding obligation. As *light* is figurative of truth and grace as revealed by Christ, *darkness* is figurative of gentilism, of Jewish unbelief, of the blindness of the unredeemed, infidel world. Now the apostle affirms that he that hateth his brother, however he may claim to be enlightened, is still in this darkness, the darkness of non-Christianity; he practically denies or rejects Christianity. When St. John says *brother*, he means, however, not at least exclusively the natural relation, but Christian brother; and therefore is not pointing out so much what belongs to brothers by birth, or the duty of general philanthropy, as the love Christians owe one another as brethren.

4. *The great importance of this subject to all Christians, even the feeblest and the youngest.*

[Ver. 12-14.]

12 I write<sup>1</sup> unto you, little children,<sup>2</sup> because<sup>3</sup> your sins are  
 13 forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers,<sup>4</sup>  
 because ye have known Him *that is*<sup>5</sup> from the beginning.  
 I write unto you, young<sup>6</sup> men, because ye have overcome the  
 wicked one. I write unto you, little children,<sup>7</sup> because ye have  
 14 known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because  
 ye have known Him *that is* from the beginning. I have  
 written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the  
 word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the  
 wicked one.

<sup>1</sup> What is omitted at the beginning, to wit, the particular address of this Epistle, is here introduced. It is specifically addressed to the various classes among all Christians, by terms universal and perpetual.

<sup>2</sup> First the apostle addresses all Christians indiscriminately and collectively, using this form of address here, as in verses 1 and 28 of this chapter, as a general term of endearment for all Christians, without reference to age or attainments.

<sup>3</sup> The word rendered *because*, *ὅτι*, is not a demonstrative conjunction, but is what is denominated a *causal* conjunction, *i.e.*, it assigns the motive or ground why the apostle wrote.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle, having addressed Christians generally, proceeds next to address them in classes, using the different terms of appellation, *fathers*, *young men*, and *little children*. He means by *fathers* the aged or older and more experienced Christians, including of course those who had attained to the highest degree of spiritual progress.

<sup>5</sup> Omitting the words in italics, *that is*, it will read, "ye have known Him from the beginning," referring not to the eternal being of the Son with the Father, a truth which is found in St. John i. 1 and in 1 John i. 1, but to the period when their first knowledge of Christ commenced, *i.e.*, not by personal contact when He was upon earth, but by faith and experience.

<sup>6</sup> The term in the Greek for young men, *νεανίσκοι*, means those who have reached the full, as well as those in the earliest prime, of manhood. (See Robinson's Lex.)

<sup>7</sup> Little children, in verse 12, was explained as an affectionate title by which the apostle designated Christians generally, whether aged or young. As the word in the original here is not *τεκνία*, but *παιδιά*, it is not to be taken as a term of endearment merely, which may be applied to any and all Christians, but as meaning children or young persons literally. If the apostle had intended to designate Christians generally, he would again have used the former term *τεκνία*. In these several addresses the apostle intended to cover all the periods of life, and of course all degrees of spiritual attainment among Christians, as found from early childhood to the very extreme of life. The great subject of the Epistle, fellowship with God, was of the highest importance to all.

5. *Non-fellowship with the world.*

[Ver. 15-17.]

15 Love<sup>1</sup> not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If<sup>2</sup> any man love the world, the love of the Father 16 is not in him. For<sup>3</sup> all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of 17 the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth<sup>4</sup> away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

6. *Non-fellowship with antichristian error.*

[Ver. 18-29.]

18 Little children,<sup>5</sup> it is the last<sup>6</sup> time: and as ye have heard that

<sup>1</sup> Non-fellowship with the world, which consists in loving it not, belongs essentially to the great subject of fellowship with God, as the latter cannot exist without the former. "World," ὁ κόσμος, is a term used in opposition to the Father and the Son, and the redeemed family of God, and denotes the visible, material world which appeals to the sensual, carnal appetites and desires. It is that love of the world which is a predominating principle, which excludes the love of God, which is prohibited.

<sup>2</sup> The apostle assigns several reasons for the prohibition in regard to loving the world. The first is, that this love is wholly and absolutely inconsistent with our loving and having fellowship with God. The one love is exclusive and expulsive of the other. Says the Venerable Bede: "*Unum cor duos tam sibi adversarios amores non capit.*"

<sup>3</sup> The second reason is, that such love of the world is the great principle of evil and non-fellowship with God. We have first a description of the things in which that worldliness consists, which we are to avoid: (1) Sensuality, or the lust of the flesh; (2) Avarice, or the lust of the eyes, which are delighted with riches, imposing equipage, etc.; (3) Ambition, or the pride of life, which covets distinction and power. We have, in the second place, an important fact in regard to these principles of evil; viz., that they are the three great principles of evil in the world. And they are mentioned in the order of their degree of subtilty as temptations; so that we are here presented with what may well be denominated the philosophy of temptation. There is first a temptation addressed to the grosser appetites; secondly, we have temptation as addressed to the external senses of the body, as inlets from the outer world; thirdly, temptation as addressed to the sensibilities or affections of our inner nature. The temptations of both the first and the second Adam strikingly illustrate this subject.

<sup>4</sup> The third reason for not loving too devotedly the world is found in its transitoriness and vanity, and the certain disappointment that must attend its being made the supreme end of pursuit.

<sup>5</sup> Παῖδια, little children, the same as in verse 13; and Ebrard holds that on account of the peculiarly childlike character of this section, the reference is only to the little ones, or to children literally, the same who are addressed in verse 13.

<sup>6</sup> There is no allusion to the end of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity, which had already passed away; but the meaning is that the final dispensation was commenced, to end only with time.



antichrist<sup>1</sup> shall come, even now are there many antichrists ;  
 19 whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from<sup>2</sup>  
 us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they  
 would *no doubt* have continued with us : but *they went out*, that  
 20 they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But  
 ye have an unction<sup>3</sup> from the Holy One, and ye know all things.  
 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth,<sup>4</sup>  
 22 but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is

<sup>1</sup> We do not find that polemical object or character in this Epistle some have endeavoured to trace in it. It is, of course, polemical in that, being true, it is the touchstone of error. While the Epistle opens with statements in direct contradiction of the Docetic heresy, denying the reality of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, it was not written to refute the errors of Cerinthus or of the Gnostics. "The apostle," says Lücke, "explicitly assures his readers (ver. 21) that he has not spoken of the antichristian heresies because he considered them a prey to the seducers, but only in order to exhort them to keep firmly the acknowledged truth of the gospel." It is obvious that non-fellowship with antichristian error is just as essential to fellowship with God as non-fellowship with a sinful world. But are we to understand by the *ὁ ἀντίχριστος* of St. John the same as the *ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας, ὁ ἄνομος, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας* of St. Paul (2 Thess. ii. 3, 8)? "St. John speaks in a more general way," says Karl Braune, "and uses less definite terms than St. Paul, who gives more distinct prominence to the person and approach of the dreaded and dreadful One." They had "heard that Antichrist shall come," and in confirmation of the truth of this prophecy he points them to the fact that there were already many antichrists. The existence of these many antichrists warranted the expectation that what was exhibited in them, only in an isolated, undeveloped, and feeble form, would yet be gathered together and concentrated in an individual person and in a powerful form. (See Braune.) Already had enemies begun to spring from the bosom of Christianity itself, forerunners of the ANTICHRIST. The great apostasy might be distant ; but there had been apostasies in their day and among themselves. As before the time of Christ there had been attempts to blend the Jewish religion with heathen philosophy, so in the time of John there were attempts to combine this paganized Judaism with Christian doctrine, resulting in a mere caricature of the doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ. The great central mystery of the gospel, the incarnation of the Son of God, was denied. This is just the mark which St. John gives (ver. 22) of the antichrists which existed in his day.

<sup>2</sup> Only those whose communion was merely visible and apparent forsake it. The purest churches under heaven, formed as they are in the world, gathered from among imperfect men, who are welcomed on the exhibition of the merest germ of faith, in all ages have embraced some false members. The "no doubt" supplied by the A. V. is unnecessary, and tends to weaken the sense.

<sup>3</sup> Unction, *χρίσμα*, i. e. chrism. This anointing from the Holy One refers to the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and the indwelling of the Spirit. It is this preserves all true believers from fundamental error (St. John vii. 17). Their own reins instruct them (Psalm xvi. 7).

<sup>4</sup> To those who knew the truth, *τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, by an experimental acquaintance with the power of the gospel, there was no need of a prolix defence, polemically, of its very central doctrine.

a liar but he that denieth<sup>1</sup> that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-  
 23 christ, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth  
 the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] he that  
 24 acknowledgeth<sup>2</sup> the Son hath the Father also. Let that there-  
 fore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning.<sup>3</sup>

If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in  
 25 you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And  
 this is the promise that He hath promised us, *even* eternal life.  
 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that  
 27 seduce you. But the anointing<sup>4</sup> which ye have received of  
 Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you:  
 but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is  
 truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall  
 28 abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him; that,  
 when He shall appear, we may have confidence,<sup>5</sup> and not be  
 29 ashamed before Him at His coming. If ye know that He is  
 righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is  
 born of Him.

7. *The relation of fellowship to sonship and future glory.*

III.]

[Ver. 1, 2.

1 Behold,<sup>6</sup> what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon  
 us, that we should be called the sons<sup>7</sup> of God: therefore the

<sup>1</sup> The heretics to whom St. John refers denied that Jesus was the Christ, by denying that there was any real union between Him and Christ. Sinners have no other revealed knowledge of God, *i.e.* they have no knowledge of Him whatever as a Father, but through the manifestation of His Son in the flesh.

<sup>2</sup> The italicised clause in the Greek, *ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱόν, κ.τ.λ.*, not found in the common text, is found in the Sinaitic and A B C, and is retained by Bengel, Griesbach, Knapp, Tittmann, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Wordsworth, Lillie, and has every evidence of genuineness.

<sup>3</sup> That which they had heard from the first announcement of the gospel was that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the incarnate Son of God. To this truth they were exhorted to cleave, if they would continue in communion with the Son, and through Him with the Father.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle recurs again to the spiritual anointing Christians have, and their security therefrom against corrupting errors. In their conversion and sanctification the Holy Spirit writes on their hearts the essential truth. This Divine unction, this chrism of the heart, teaches them and secures them.

<sup>5</sup> "Confidence," *παρρησία*, is the apostle's word. Christ will strengthen the hearts of His servants in that great day, and be glorified in them.

<sup>6</sup> Even the apostle seems to fail of expression here; just as before in his Gospel, when he could say no more than that "God so loved the world," all he seems to attempt is little more than to throw in a note of admiration.

<sup>7</sup> *Τέκνα Θεοῦ*, "children of God," would be better than "the sons of God." To adopt

<sup>2</sup> world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons <sup>1</sup> of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall <sup>2</sup> be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

## II. *Fruit of fellowship, Holiness.*—Chapter III. 3-24.

### 1. *Binding nature of holiness.*

[Ver. 3-9.]

<sup>3</sup> And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth <sup>3</sup> himself, even as He <sup>4</sup> is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression <sup>5</sup> of the law.

a person, according to Roman law, was to take him in the place and give him a right to all the privileges of a son. It was made a matter of public enactment; the reasons being formally drawn up, a bill was passed to make it valid. The parties appeared before a magistrate and entered into solemn compact, the son assuming the name of his adopted father, and thenceforward becoming an heir to a share of his inheritance. Those who have fellowship with God are brought as it were into His family, and into the closest relations.

<sup>1</sup> Children of God.

<sup>2</sup> We reach, in this conclusion of the first part of this Epistle, that which may be regarded as its culminating point: fellowship involves sonship; sonship, heirship to heavenly blessedness. The future blessedness, to which the sonship entitles, is thus presented by the apostle: (1) The impossibility of our having a complete conception or knowledge of it in this world; (2) Resemblance to Christ in heaven is, however, a matter of knowledge; as is also (3) Our vision of Him as He is in the glory of His exaltation. It does not yet appear from anything we have discovered of the grace and goodness of God, from experience or the word of God, what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall see Him, and be like Him in spiritual glory, and in the glorified bodies with which we shall be raised up from the grave.

<sup>3</sup> One of the best tests of our hope of seeing and being like the Saviour in heaven, is its purifying tendency, or its tendency to promote the cultivation of holiness.

<sup>4</sup> The expression, "in Him," ἐπ' αὐτῶ, does not relate to the sinner himself, or to hope as cherished within him, but to God or Christ, every man that has this hope *in* and *upon* Christ (see Rom. xv. 12, ἐπ' αὐτῶ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν). Purity or holiness is an attribute belonging to Christ, without any stain or spot. The hope of being with and like Christ for ever must attest its genuineness in leading us to strive to be like Him now.

<sup>5</sup> The apostle proceeds to show the necessity or obligation of holiness as connected with a good Christian hope. The first point he makes is, that if we would cherish a well founded hope we must cultivate holiness on earth, because sin, which is opposed to holiness, is, by its intrinsic nature, a subversion of that law which is a transcript of the Divine purity. The law as the rule of duty marks out the path in which the forgiven sinner walks, as he walks with God the path to heaven. Sin is ἡ ἀνομία, lawlessness. That law does not tolerate sin in the least

5 And ye know that He was manifested to take <sup>1</sup> away our sins ;  
 6 and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth <sup>2</sup> in Him sinneth  
 not : whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known  
 7 him. Little children, let no man deceive you : he that doeth  
 8 righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that  
 committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the  
 beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested,  
 9 that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is  
 born of God doth not commit <sup>3</sup> sin ; for his seed <sup>4</sup> remaineth in  
 him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

2. *Brotherly love one of the fruits of holiness.*

[Ver. 10-18.]

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of  
 the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God,

degree. The doctrine of Christian liberty does not deny nor disown the positive character of the moral law as a Divine prohibition. Salvation by grace is salvation from the power as well as the guilt of sin.

<sup>1</sup> The second point he makes is, that the Christian will cultivate holiness because his love for Christ will prompt him to seek to concur with Christ in the great object of His mission, which was to put away sin. The expression here, *αἰρεῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας*, to take away sins, is of more extensive import than in the words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (St. John i. 29), where it means to bear sin, to undergo the punishment it deserves, as a sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction, that a way may be opened for the exercise of pardon. Here it includes not only the idea of expiation, but the application of Christ's work of redemption ; it refers to the removal of sin through the act of pardon, and the work of sanctification. Every sin a believer commits is in opposition to the great end of Christ's redemption.

<sup>2</sup> The third point is, that by studying to avoid sin is the only way Christians can have any evidence of their real union with Christ. The meaning of the apostle, by "sinneth not," is not that union and communion with Christ presupposes entire freedom from sins of frailty, any more than it is all the apostle means that true Christians will be careful to avoid only gross sins. The difficulty of understanding this, that all who abide in Christ sin not, arises from failing to notice the large import of the expression, *ἐν αὐτῷ μένων*, *abideth in Him*, and the manner in which it necessarily qualifies the meaning of the statement. After this perfect union or abiding Christians will constantly strive. Habitual allowance in known sin is proof that this union with Christ has never been established.

<sup>3</sup> The cultivation of holiness is essential to the evidence that we have been truly born of God. To be born of God is to have the spirit of the mind renewed, the interior principle of life and action, which lies back of all that is outward and phenomenal. It is to have the old law of the mind superseded. It is not an improvement or modification in the old nature, but an entirely new nature. Sin is not in accordance with this new nature, nor can it be supposed ever to flow from the new nature.

<sup>4</sup> The spiritual, terminal principle of holiness. No sin can arise from a nature created and supported like this.

11 neither he that loveth<sup>1</sup> not his brother. For this is the mes-  
 sage<sup>2</sup> that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love  
 12 one another. Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and  
 slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his  
 13 own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not,  
 14 my brethren, if the world hate you. We know<sup>3</sup> that we have  
 passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He  
 15 that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. Whosoever  
 hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no  
 16 murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive  
 we the love of *God*, because He<sup>4</sup> laid down His life for us: and  
 17 we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. But whoso<sup>5</sup>  
 hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and  
 shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth  
 18 the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in  
 word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

### 3. Other fruits of holiness.

[Ver. 19-24.]

19 And hereby<sup>6</sup> we know that we are of the truth, and shall  
 20 assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart<sup>7</sup> condemn us,

<sup>1</sup> Brotherly love is a comprehensive expression for that kindness and charity without which there can be no "righteousness."

<sup>2</sup> *Commandment* in the margin, heard from the beginning (St. John xiii. 34, 35). The apostle here returns to this subject of brotherly love to show how this love enters necessarily into the evidence of true piety. He finds a striking illustration of the subject in the history of Cain and Abel. He attributes Cain's fratricide to the evil worker, who was a murderer from the beginning (St. John viii. 44).

<sup>3</sup> Love of the brethren is the most unequivocal proof that we have passed from death unto life; it is of a nature which admits of no mistake as to its reality. And hatred of a brother is just as clear and positive a proof of abiding in death.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle sets before us the highest example and expression of love, that he may show that the love he is enforcing is not a mere profession, or thing of words, but of deeds. The words, *of God*, are omitted in most MSS., and are printed in italics in our version, but the "He" in "He laid down His life for us" beyond all question refers to Christ. From His example we learn to know and recognise what is true and perfect love.

<sup>5</sup> In times of persecution, Christians are called often to this test of the strength and sincerity of their love, the exposure of their lives for their brethren; and at all times they are called to be compassionate, liberal, and communicative to the necessities of brethren. Where there is none of this love, there is none to God. This must be found, by an absolute necessity, among the fruits of love to God. There must be something more than words—a real, practical benevolence.

<sup>6</sup> It is by understanding what are the evidences of saving piety, and being able to discover these in ourselves, that we may know we have passed from death unto life, and have assurance of heart before God.

<sup>7</sup> The interpretation here has been felt to be somewhat difficult, because the

God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence <sup>22</sup> toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive<sup>1</sup> of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that <sup>23</sup> are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment,<sup>2</sup> That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, <sup>24</sup> and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit<sup>3</sup> which He hath given us.

### III. *Law of fellowship, Truth.*—Chapter IV. 1-6.

IV.]

[Ver. 1-6.]

<sup>1</sup> Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false<sup>1</sup> prophets are gone out

words as they stand appear to be better suited to alarm the distrustful believer than to tranquillize and console an awakened conscience. But the clear and unmistakable meaning is, "We know, if our heart condemn us, that God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence towards God." *Heart* here, ἡ καρδία, is that self reflecting, judicial power, whereby we take cognisance of our dispositions and actions, and pass judgment on them as right or wrong; it is the same therefore as conscience, or the power of moral self consciousness. If not self condemned, by a conscience enlightened and guided by the word of God, we may have confidence that we are not condemned by God. This then is another evidence by which Christians may have their hearts assured before God; to wit, the testimony of a good conscience, a conscience enlightened as to truth and duty by the word and Spirit of God.

<sup>1</sup> Another evidence is that our prayers are heard and answered. It is one of the most oft repeated promises that the prayers of good men shall be answered; and it is everywhere a matter of record, in the word of God, that their prayers are answered. The answer of prayer is the favour God shows to those who humble themselves before Him, and please and honour Him by cherishing the spirit of obedience in their hearts.

<sup>2</sup> We are told in what the commandments we are to keep summarily consist; we have a compendium of the life of faith and love.

<sup>3</sup> The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is another of the fruits of that holiness which is itself a fruit of fellowship with God; or it is another evidence that we are the children of God. God's abiding in man is effected through the communion or presence in his heart of the Holy Spirit. When God dwells in a man it is proof that he is a Christian. And it is proof that God dwells in a man when he keeps the commandments, which are summarily comprehended in faith in Jesus and in brotherly love.

<sup>1</sup> The attempt of some to undermine the gospel, by denying that there was anything real in the incarnation of Christ, is turned to good account in this Epistle. The apostle is here drawn back again to the occasion of its being written; and proceeds to furnish a test by which false teachers may be proved to be false. The spirits that are to be tried are the spirits of men, of these false teachers or

2 into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : Every <sup>1</sup>  
 spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is  
 3 of God : and every spirit <sup>2</sup> that confesseth not that Jesus Christ  
 is come in <sup>3</sup> the flesh is not of God : and this is that *spirit* of  
 antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and  
 4 even now already is it in the world. Ye <sup>4</sup> are of God, little  
 children, and have overcome them : because greater is He that  
 5 is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world :  
 therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.  
 6 We <sup>5</sup> are of God : he that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is  
 not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of  
 truth, and the spirit of error.

IV. *The life of fellowship, Love.*—Chapter IV. 7–21.

[Ver. 7–21.]

7 Beloved, let us love one another : for love <sup>6</sup> is of God ; and  
 8 every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that  
 9 loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love. In this was  
 manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent <sup>7</sup>

prophets, *ψευδοπροφήται*, pseudo-prophets. It is made the duty of private Christians to try every man who claims to be of God, even the pontifex maximus himself, by the test God has given, His truth.

<sup>1</sup> Then follows the test.

<sup>2</sup> We have the same answer to the question, Who is antichrist? given before (chap. ii. 22). Not to confess, or to deny, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is that spirit of antichrist. Any denial which tends to impair His full and sufficient work of atonement, or which makes Him essentially different in His person, as it respects either His human or Divine nature, from what is stated by inspired apostles, is fatal to any man's claim of being a teacher from God, or of knowing Him by faith and regeneration.

<sup>3</sup> *Ἐν σαρκί* denotes the mode of existence in which Christ appeared, and must not be taken as equivalent to *εἰς σάρκα*. It is as essential to a true confession to believe and maintain the humanity as the Divinity of Christ.

<sup>4</sup> *Ἑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, ye are begotten or born of God (chap. ii. 29).

<sup>5</sup> *Ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, i.e., we, the apostles and divinely inspired teachers of the church, as opposed to the *αὐτοὶ* of verse 5, the *ψευδοπροφήται*, are in like manner born of God and commissioned by Him.

<sup>6</sup> Fellowship with God and with Christians finds its very life in love. This love is enforced in a series of most weighty arguments. The first is that love is of God, born in the heart of all who are born of God. The word LOVE better describes God than any other known even to inspired terminology. As His excellence consists in love, it is the best thing in the universe, most worthy to be sought and cultivated ; and there can be no resemblance to Him, no communion with Him, no fitness to dwell in His presence, without love.

<sup>7</sup> Again, the exhibition of the love that belongs to the very nature of God, in sending His Son to atone for the sins of the world, is one of the grandest arguments

His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live  
 10 through Him. Herein<sup>1</sup> is love, not that we loved God, but  
 that He loved us, and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation<sup>2</sup> for  
 11 our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we<sup>3</sup> ought also to love one  
 12 another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one  
 another, God dwelleth<sup>4</sup> in us, and His love is perfected in us.  
 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because  
 14 He hath given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do  
 testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the  
 15 world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God,  
 16 God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and  
 believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he  
 that dwelleth in love<sup>5</sup> dwelleth in God, and God in him.  
 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in  
 the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this  
 18 world. There is no fear<sup>6</sup> in love; but perfect love casteth  
 out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not  
 19 made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved  
 20 us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is  
 a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen,

for love. What belongs so essentially to His nature is so acted out, and that towards man himself, as to constitute the strongest of all imaginable appeals.

<sup>1</sup> It is a manifestation of love which eclipses all others. Here all its scattered rays converge into a focus of such surpassing brightness as altogether eclipses every other exhibition. Our want of love to God is specified as being no bar to this display of His love.

<sup>2</sup> Propitiation, *ἱλασμός*, found also chap. ii. 2. He was sent to be Himself the propitiation, to be the priest and to offer the sacrifice. He is the propitiation in and through Himself alone.

<sup>3</sup> The stupendous revelation of God's love to man, in the gift of His Son, was designed to win back to Him man's alienated heart, and to beget love for his fellow men. Love to God is accompanied and evidenced by love for others. Not to love one another is a sign that we are strangers to the power of His love in Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Another argument for love is here stated. It is proof of our being born of God, and that God dwells in us. There is both the love of complacency and the love of gratitude in the love which is an evidence of change of heart. "We love Him, because He first loved us."

<sup>5</sup> The apostle renews the subject to which he had already given so much prominence. It is the love of God's own image, seen in the face of His children, which every true Christian loves.

<sup>6</sup> The confidence inspired by love is the remaining argument by which love is recommended. The apostle seems to regard perfect brotherly love as perfect love to God; and he says that this love excludes terror, and begets a cheerful confidence. The highest perfection of our love shows itself in this, that we can have confidence in the day of judgment.



21 how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

V. *The root of fellowship, Faith.*—Chapter V. 1-21.

1. *Efficacy of faith.*

V.]

[Ver. 1-5.

1 Whosoever believeth<sup>1</sup> that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that  
 2 is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children<sup>2</sup> of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.  
 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep<sup>3</sup> His commandments:  
 4 and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory<sup>4</sup>  
 5 that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

<sup>1</sup> To have that faith wrought in the heart which works by love to God, a love which is evidenced by fraternal love and obedience to Christ, is to be born of God. Charnock, in his admirable work on regeneration, says of faith that it is "the prime evangelical grace, upon which all other graces grow, and consequently all the acts of the new creature spring from this principle immediately; to wit, faith in the precept as a rule; faith in the promise as an encouragement; faith in the Mediator as a ground of acceptance." Even that love by which it works, and which is greater than itself, springs from it or is inseparably connected with it. Faith and regeneration are so far coincident that they are represented in the Scriptures as having the same author, the Holy Spirit; the same instrumental cause, the word or truth; and the same results or fruits; namely, exemption from condemnation (Rom. v. 1), benevolent deeds (Jas. ii. 14-16), victory over the world (1 John iv. 4), sonship to God (John i. 12), everlasting life (John iii. 36).

<sup>2</sup> Faith makes all believers our brethren, as it makes them by means of the like precious faith the children of God. "Now as, in the family life of man, the child naturally loves its father, and the love to common parents is the basis of the love of brothers and sisters, even so, in the family of God's children, love to their common Father in heaven is the common and primary feeling with them all, from which love to the brethren as God's children must necessarily spring." (Lücke.) "He that loves God has in this love the evidence that he also loves his brethren, because brotherly love is the necessary consequence of the love of God; but the converse is also true, as stated before in this Epistle (chap. iv. 20, 21)." (Luther.)

<sup>3</sup> Not only is the proof that we love God found in our keeping the commandments, but it is in virtue of that love we are enabled to keep them, the love that is the fruit of faith. His commandments are not grievous. The love that is in them makes the duties pleasant; and it also makes them acceptable.

<sup>4</sup> The faith that works by love overcomes the world. No other power has, according to the testimony of history, so much overcome the world as this faith in Jesus

2. *Three witnesses to the all-sufficient foundation of faith.*

[Ver. 6-12.

6 This is He<sup>1</sup> that came by water and blood,<sup>2</sup> *even* Jesus  
 Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is  
 7 the Spirit<sup>3</sup> that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For

as the Son of God. The apostle, in styling Jesus the Son of God, not only refers to His essential glory but to the fact that believers are partakers of His glory, and, as the children of God, conquer with Him and participate in His victory.

<sup>1</sup> So great is the power ascribed to faith that it becomes important to set forth its sure foundation. And the apostle proceeds to cite the testimony of three witnesses to the efficacy of faith in Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup> The expressions "water" and "blood" refer to certain great facts in the history of Christ, having particular reference to His atoning work; distinct facts, each of which contained evidence that He was the Saviour of the world. They are these: His baptism, by which He entered on His office and consecrated Himself to that death which His baptism symbolised; and His bloody death at the end, by which He became the propitiation for the sins of the world. These two facts are conspicuously presented by St. John in his Gospel (John i. 32-34; xix. 34) as a reason for faith in Jesus as the Saviour. He had been typified under the law in all the purifications made by water and blood, which purifications were typical of His sacrifice on the cross. He came by water not only in His own baptism, but in the baptism which He instituted. He came by blood, in His bloody sweat in the garden and His bloody death on the cross, and in the sacrament commemorative of that death. He came by both water and blood, at once, in a special manner on Calvary, at His death. John perhaps makes special reference to what he saw with his own eyes, and which he thus records: "but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John xix. 34). "He came by blood and water, He proved thereby the reality of His *humanity* and of His *death*"; and thus He has given a practical refutation, which the writer of this Epistle saw with his own eyes, to the heretical notions of those in the apostolic age, such as Simon Magnus and the Docetæ, who alleged that Christ had not a real human body, but was merely a spectral phantasm, crucified in show. In the words 'not by water only' there seems also to be a reference to another heresy of the apostolic age, that of Cerinthus, who said that Christ came in the water of baptism, and descended into the man Jesus; and afterwards departed from Him, when He shed His blood on the cross (or immediately upon His being seized by His crucifiers). In opposition to this notion John says, "This is He that came by water and blood; *not by water only*, but by water and blood." (Dr. Wordsworth, *Commentary in loco.*) The water may be taken as symbolical of the perfection of character and untainted purity of the Lord Jesus; the blood points to His sufferings. They may also be taken as significant of the two great benefits which believers partake of through Him, justification and sanctification.

<sup>3</sup> But there is another witness. The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit, as operating in Christ's wonders and miracles proceeding from Him, and poured on all who are born of God (John xv. 26, 27). We have the testimony of the Spirit to Christ, not only at His baptism, but in the inspired word, and in the great company of believers, a cloud of witnesses, the one army of the living God, who have left the monuments of their faith along the track of more than eighteen centuries. This testimony loses nothing because it stretches back through so many hundred years; but has been continually augmented and confirmed. The church in all ages, the living body of

there are three that bear record [in heaven,<sup>1</sup> the Father, the  
 8 Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And  
 there are three that bear witness in earth,] the Spirit, and the  
 9 water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we re-  
 ceive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for  
 this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.  
 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him-  
 self:<sup>2</sup> he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; be-  
 cause he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.  
 11 And this is the record,<sup>3</sup> that God hath given to us eternal life,  
 12 and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life;  
 and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

### 3. Faith as expressed in intercessory prayer.

[Ver. 13-17.]

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name  
 of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life,  
 14 and that ye<sup>4</sup> may believe on the name of the Son of God. And  
 this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any  
 15 thing according to His will,<sup>5</sup> He heareth us: and if we know

Christ, give an extant, visible testimony of the truth of Christ's religion and of His power to save. The ministry and testimony of the Spirit, in one respect, has the advantage over the signs and wonders and preaching of Christ's personal ministry: it continues from age to age.

<sup>1</sup> The words included in brackets in the text, beginning with "in heaven" in the seventh verse, and ending with "in earth" in the eighth verse, are not found in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine Codices, and are wanting in all the Greek codices, and in almost all the ancient versions, including the Latin, down to the eighth century. They are found in a copy of Cod. 173, which was made in the sixteenth century, and with variations in other codices. The external historical evidence against the genuineness of the passage is so conclusive that it is dismissed without further discussion. See the arguments, *pro* and *con*, very ably stated in Horne's Introduction, Vol. II., part vi., chap. 4, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> His faith in a crucified Saviour is the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

<sup>3</sup> *Ἄλλη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία.* The testimony consists in this.

<sup>4</sup> It appears from his own statement that the apostle's object was not a polemical one; it was not primarily to refute any class of heretics, although he refers again and again to the false teachers who were corrupting the Church. That reading of the original text is probably genuine which makes the apostle say "that ye may know that ye have eternal life, ye that believe in the name of the Son of God," giving the last clause as *τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.* This makes the great purpose of the Epistle to be to give assurance of eternal salvation to believers. The remainder of it is largely devoted to pointing out one of the principal ways in which this confidence or assurance manifests itself; viz., in prayer, especially intercessory prayer.

<sup>5</sup> It becomes a matter of great importance how we may know what to pray for

that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know<sup>1</sup> that we have the  
 16 petitions that we desired of Him. If any man see his brother<sup>2</sup>  
 sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall  
 give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin<sup>3</sup>  
 17 unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All un-  
 righteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

4. *Conclusion. Final appeal to Christians to maintain fellowship  
 through Christ.*

[Ver. 18-21.]

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth<sup>4</sup> not; but  
 he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one  
 19 toucheth him not. *And* we know that we are of God, and the  
 20 whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son  
 of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we  
 may know Him that is true; and we are in<sup>5</sup> Him that is true,  
*even* in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal  
 21 life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.<sup>6</sup> Amen.

according to this rule, *i.e.*, for things according to His will. The will of God (ac-  
 cording to good old Ezekiel Hopkins) may be best known by the promises He has  
 given. Spiritual blessings are promised *absolutely*, and all are commanded to seek  
 after them. And yet for degrees of grace and glory, and for the comforts of the  
 Holy Ghost, we must pray conditionally, *if the Lord will*. But for outward worldly  
 blessings the answer is conditioned on their being consistent with the will of God  
 and our good.

<sup>1</sup> It is this assured confidence in which the spirit of prayer largely consists.

<sup>2</sup> It prompts especially to intercessory prayer. The apostle recognises two  
 classes, those who were God's true children, and those who were Christians by pro-  
 fession or in name only, and who might be guilty of the sin unto death. For those  
 not guilty of this sin we are to pray that God would give them "life," that which is  
 wrought in the soul when it passes from death unto life.

<sup>3</sup> There is no absolute prohibition of prayer in this latter case. But what are we  
 to understand by the "sin unto death"? It is the sin of which spiritual death is  
 the inevitable consequence, the sin which, according to the laws of the kingdom of  
 God, or that fellowship which is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,  
 destroys the capability of life and extinguishes the hope of salvation. It is a sin  
 which has its culmination when they who have once been enlightened by the truth  
 of God return to idolatry or apostatize from Christianity. As "the confession of  
 Christ with the mouth and in the heart is salvation unto life (Rom. x. 9), so the  
 denial of Christ with the mouth and in the heart is sin unto death." (Alford.) In-  
 tercessory prayer is to be offered in behalf of all who have not put themselves  
 beyond the reach of mercy by denying Christ, or rejecting the mercy offered only  
 through Him.

<sup>4</sup> See note on chap. iii. 9. Or the meaning of the words may be that every one  
 born of God does not commit the sin unto death.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. i. 3. Being in Christ, believers are in communion with God, in the  
 knowledge of whom through Jesus Christ consists eternal life.

<sup>6</sup> This is a solemn warning that beyond the sphere of communion with Christ

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

SUBJECT OF THE EPISTLE.—*Brotherly love, with a warning against the doctrine of false teachers and fellowship with them. The children of the "elect lady" addressed are commended for walking in the truth, which is in order to the goodness or fellowship enjoined.*

1. *To whom the Epistle is addressed, and the salutation.*

[Ver. 1-3.]

1 THE elder<sup>1</sup> unto the elect lady<sup>2</sup> and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they<sup>3</sup> that have  
2 known the truth: for the truth's sake, which dwelleth<sup>4</sup> in us,  
3 and shall be with us for ever. Grace<sup>5</sup> be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

there is only death; and an earnest entreaty to beware of idols and of communion with them. In communities that had been converted from heathenism, and where idolatry was sustained with so great parade and at such an enormous expense as in cities like Ephesus, and in which persecution often raged, there was no little danger of a temptation to return to literal idolatry. But there is a figurative idolatry against which Christians in all lands and ages may be warned.

<sup>1</sup> Instead of calling himself *ὁ ἀπόστολος*, he assumes the title of an ordinary minister of the church, *ὁ πρεσβύτερος*. That he describes his office, not his age, is sufficiently evident; for if it had been his age the term would have been *ὁ πρεσβύτερος*.

<sup>2</sup> It has been frequently supposed that by this appellation the apostle intended to denote the Christian church as a whole, or some particular congregation. But no good reason can be conceived why the apostle should have resorted to a style so mystical and allegorical; it is more natural to suppose it was addressed to an individual. It then becomes a question whether the word rendered "lady," *Κυρία*, is not rather to be understood as the name of the person addressed (see Lücke's, Braune's, and Wordsworth's Commentaries). CURIA, as a woman's name, was not unusual; there were two female martyrs that bore it. But whether Curia, or Cyria, is a proper name or not, there can be little doubt that the apostle here addresses a pious woman, a mother of pious children. He could however, as he was on a journey, write only briefly.

<sup>3</sup> He connects with himself all those Christians who, in the place where he was writing, knew Curia's children, and loved them for the truth's sake.

<sup>4</sup> It is interest in the common truth and the common salvation, which is the foundation of Christian communion and brotherly love.

<sup>5</sup> The usual apostolic salutation or greeting (Rom. i. 7, 1 Cor. i. 3, 2 Cor. i. 2, Gal. i. 3, Eph. i. 2, Phil. i. 2, 1 Pet. i. 2).

2. *Incident which led to the writing of the Epistle, and apostolical exhortations.*

[Ver. 4-11.]

1 I rejoiced greatly that I found<sup>1</sup> of thy children<sup>2</sup> walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.  
 5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the  
 6 beginning, that we love<sup>3</sup> one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in  
 7 it. For many deceivers<sup>4</sup> are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver  
 8 and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full  
 9 reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine  
 10 of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive<sup>5</sup> him not  
 11 into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: for he that bid-  
 deth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

3. *Farewell greetings.*

[Ver. 12, 13.]

12 . Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write*

<sup>1</sup> We have here the pleasing incident which led the apostle to address this letter to the "elect" Curia. Probably on one of his apostolical visitations, in some city remote from Ephesus, he had met with her children, who were giving the most pleasing evidence of devotion to Christ's truth.

<sup>2</sup> The expression "of thy children," *ἐκ τῶν τέκνων*, means some of thy children, or those of thy children residing here. Their religion was not a mere profession, but a walk according to the commandment received from the Father.

<sup>3</sup> And first he exhorts her to love, not as anything new, but as that which had been heard from the beginning (1 John ii. 7, 8; John xiii. 34, xv. 12).

<sup>4</sup> He warns her against the deceivers who denied that there had been any real manifestation of Christ in the flesh, and maintained that it was only an apparent or seeming manifestation: the Docetae. It was soul-destroying error against which he warns: verses 8, 9. See 1 John ii. 18-22.

<sup>5</sup> He warns Curia and her children against receiving or performing any act which would seem to express fellowship with these false teachers, or which might be interpreted as giving them encouragement. The hospitality and salutations, which John forbids, in the apostolic age were significant signs of Christian communion and confidence. We have no right to bid God-speed to errorists and deceivers.

with paper<sup>1</sup> and ink : but I trust to come unto you, and speak  
 13 face to face, that our joy may be full. The children<sup>2</sup> of thy  
 elect sister greet thee. Amen.

### THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

SUBJECT.—*Three portraits, or the characters of Gaius, Diotrophes,  
 and Demetrius.*

#### 1. *Character of Gaius.*

[Ver. 1-8.]

1 THE elder<sup>3</sup> unto the well beloved Gaius,<sup>4</sup> whom I love<sup>5</sup> in the  
 2 truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest  
 3 be in health, even as thy soul<sup>6</sup> prospereth. For I rejoiced  
 greatly, when the brethren<sup>7</sup> came and testified of the truth  
 4 that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no  
 5 greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Be-  
 loved, thou doest faithfully<sup>8</sup> whatsoever thou doest to the  
 6 brethren, and to strangers ; which have borne witness of thy  
 charity<sup>9</sup> before the church : whom if thou bring forward on

<sup>1</sup> Διὰ χάρτου καὶ μελανός. Paper made of layers of the Egyptian papyrus ; ink made of soot, water, and gum.

<sup>2</sup> The sister of Curia may have been dead, but her children send greetings.

<sup>3</sup> The apostle again assumes the title belonging to all ministers of Christ, "the elder."

<sup>4</sup> There appears to have been a Gaius at Derbe, who was with St. Paul at Ephesus, and was one of his travelling companions ; and a Gaius of Corinth, who was St. Paul's host in that city, and whom he baptized (Acts xix. 29, xx. 4 ; Rom. xvi. 23 ; 1 Cor. i. 14). But whether the person here addressed was one of these, or some other converted under John's ministry, it is not easy to determine. Nor are we able to decide that he was a presbyter, or that he held any other ecclesiastical office.

<sup>5</sup> He was one who had strongly commended himself to the affection of the apostle.

<sup>6</sup> This shows the very high estimation in which the apostle held his character as a Christian. He makes the prosperity of his soul the measure of all the other prosperity he could desire for the friend he loved so well ; in other words, he makes his spiritual state the standard by which he would have his well-being in all other respects graduated.

<sup>7</sup> Gaius was a Christian well established in the faith, as evidenced by his walk, according to the report of the brethren. He walked in the truth ; he was a living epistle.

<sup>8</sup> He was full of activity and zeal. He was not one of the drowsy, half-way sort of men ; but did faithfully whatever he undertook for strangers as well as brethren.

<sup>9</sup> Such was his charity that even strangers joined in bearing witness to it before the church.

7 their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well : because that  
 for his name's sake they<sup>1</sup> went forth, taking nothing of the  
 8 Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might  
 be fellow helpers<sup>2</sup> to the truth.

2. *Second portrait : character of Diotrophes.*

[Ver. 9-11.

9 I wrote unto the church : but Diotrophes,<sup>3</sup> who loveth to have  
 10 the preeminence among them, receiveth<sup>4</sup> us not. Wherefore,  
 if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating<sup>5</sup>  
 against us with malicious words : and not content therewith,  
 neither doth he himself receive<sup>6</sup> the brethren, and forbiddeth  
 11 them that would, and casteth<sup>7</sup> them out of the church. Be-  
 loved, follow not that which is evil,<sup>8</sup> but that which is good.  
 He that doeth good is of God : but he that doeth evil hath not  
 seen God.

3. *Third portrait : or, the character of Demetrius.*

[Ver. 12.

12 Demetrius<sup>9</sup> hath good report of all<sup>10</sup> men, and of the

<sup>1</sup> These were doubtless evangelists or missionaries to the heathen.

<sup>2</sup> By receiving such and helping them forward on their journey, Gaius became a fellow helper in their work. Not called to go in person to the heathen, he still had a distinct agency in helping the spread of the truth.

<sup>3</sup> Diotrophes was probably a presbyter, or office bearer, in the church to which Gaius belonged. This ambitious and influential man used his office to lord it over God's heritage. He is described as *φιλοπρωτεύων*, loving to be first.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle had addressed an Epistle to the church, but Diotrophes had refused to recognise his authority. He did not hesitate to put himself into open collision with the venerable apostolic head of the church.

<sup>5</sup> This sets the man distinctly before us, and shows us what kind of a man he was; a garrulous, talkative, conceited fellow.

<sup>6</sup> Not content with slandering the apostle, he not only himself refused reception to the brethren who went forth taking nothing of the brethren, but hindered others.

<sup>7</sup> This seems to decide the question that he was clothed with authority or the influence of a high office in the church.

<sup>8</sup> In this the apostle seems more than to express a doubt that Diotrophes could have been a really good man. If he had ever possessed grace, his love of power and dictation had for the time at least overmastered it.

<sup>9</sup> He was probably the bearer of this Epistle to Gaius, and may have been one of those who went forth on their self denying work to the Gentiles.

<sup>10</sup> A three-fold testimony is borne to the excellence of this man. First, he had a good report of all men, that good name which is of great price, being consistent with a faithful profession of godliness.



truth<sup>1</sup> itself: yea, and we<sup>2</sup> *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

4. *Final greetings.*

[Ver. 13, 14.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and  
14 pen<sup>3</sup> write unto thee: but I trust I shall shortly see<sup>4</sup> thee,  
and we shall speak face to face. Peace<sup>5</sup> *be* to thee. *Our*  
friends salute thee. Greet the friends<sup>6</sup> by name.

<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the Divine truth so dwelt in him as to render him a sort of image of the truth, in his conversation and character. Or the objective truth "was the mirror in which the walk of Demetrius was reflected, and his form appeared in the likeness of Christ." (Alford.)

<sup>2</sup> John adds his own as a third and independent testimony to the excellence of Demetrius.

<sup>3</sup> Compare 2 John 12, where instead of *καλάμου*, pen, the apostle uses *χάρτου*, paper. The apostle means the writing reed, probably split for use. Perhaps the infirmities of age had made the use of the pen wearisome.

<sup>4</sup> But the apostle expected shortly, in his accustomed visitations, to see his friend Gaius face to face.

<sup>5</sup> This salutation may well remind us of the peace promised by Christ as His legacy. It is peace of conscience, peace flowing from fraternal concord, and the heavenly peace shed abroad in the heart.

<sup>6</sup> The apostle gives neither the names of those sending salutations, nor of those to whom similar greetings are sent. So intimate were the relations between him and Gaius that Gaius would know; the friends of one were the friends of the other.



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