

A COMPANION TO
ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

A COMPANION TO ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

by

J. STEPHEN HART

M.A., B.Sc.

formerly Bishop of Wangaratta



MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS

First published, 1952

*Wholly set up and printed in Australia by
Melbourne University Press, Carlton, N.3, Victoria
London and New York : Cambridge University Press*

Registered in Australia for transmission by post as a book

PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to enable all people of ordinary education to read St. John's Gospel with interest and profit. I have studied it just as previously I studied the characters in the tragedies of Shakespeare, but with a conviction that it is true history. This means that I have relied entirely on the text of the Gospel and Epistles to ascertain what the personality of Jesus Christ was in the mind of its author.

We need nothing so much as a picture of Christ in our own minds, as He was revealed to St. John in his two years of close intimacy with our Lord. It is the foundation of a true spiritual religion, for which our troubled world hungers.

My book must be read for the sake of understanding the Gospel, and therefore never without consulting the corresponding passage in St. John. An easy way is to get from the Bible Society' their small paper edition of the Gospel and use it as a book-marker in my book.

I have given most of the quotations in my own translation, together with verse references to the relevant passages in the Revised Version.

Mrs. Claud Du Crô's, to whom I must express my thanks for acting as my typist, tells me that I have made the Gospel stories live. As that, and only that, is my purpose, I am encouraged to hope that others will find the book similarly helpful.

J.S.H.

CONTENTS

PART ONE—CONTROVERSY

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. The Rationalist Attack on St. John | 3 |
| The Real World, 3 | |
| Miracles, 8 | |
| 2. St. John and St. Mark | 14 |
| The Plan of St. Mark's Gospel, 15 | |
| The Use of St. Mark's Gospel, 18 | |
| St. Mark's "Second Book", 21 | |
| 3. St. John, the Author of the Fourth Gospel | 24 |

PART TWO—THE COMMENTARY

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 4. Introduction | 35 |
| The One Foundation, 35 | |
| Christ the Lord, 37 | |
| 5. The Prologue | 39 |
| 6. The First Week of the Ministry | 46 |
| Thursday, 19 February, 48 | |
| Friday, 20 February, 50 | |
| Saturday, 21 February, 51 | |
| Sunday, 22 February, 51 | |
| Monday, 23 February, 52 | |
| Wednesday, 25 February, 55 | |
| 7. The First Passover | 58 |
| The Temple Market, 58 | |
| The Miracles of Passover Week, 60 | |
| The Instruction of Nicodemus, 61 | |
| Spring-time in Judea, 65 | |
| 8. Photina at the Well | 68 |
| 9. The Love of the Father | 77 |
| 10. Gathering Clouds | 81 |
| The Bethesda Miracle, 81 | |
| The Self-defense of Christ, 87 | |

11. The Bread of Life and its Rejection	93
The Miraculous Meal, 94	
Expansion of St. Mark, 96	
The Bread of Life, 100	
Rejection of the Bread of Life, 106	
12. At the Feast of Tabernacles	108
Jerusalem a Danger Spot, 109	
Christ Defies the Rabbis, 110	
Voices of the Crowd, 111	
13. The Tragedy of Judaism	114
On Seeing the Light, 114	
The Threatening Death, 115	
The Judgment of the Jews, 118	
14. The Man Born Blind	121
The Miracle, 121	
A Man of True Vision, 123	
Christ Claims the Man for Himself, 125	
15. The Divine Shepherd	128
Shepherds and their Folds, 128	
The Door of the Sheep, 130	
The Good Shepherd, 130	
The Blindness of the Jews, 133	
16. The Raising of Lazarus	136
The Sickness of Lazarus, 138	
Christ and the Sisters, 140	
The Miracle, 143	
The Council Acts, 145	
17. Holy Week	147
Palm Sunday, 147	
The Greeks, 148	
The Travail of His Soul, 149	
Closing Comments, 150	
18. The Last Supper	152
Introductory, 154	
The Feet-washing, 154	
Treason Unmasked, 158	
The First Leave-taking, 161	

19. The Apocalypse of Christ	167
The Problem of the Two Chapters, 167	
Fruitfulness—a Grace, a Duty and a Joy, 168	
The World's Hatred, 171	
The Promised Comforter, 171	
The Resurrection Foretold, 175	
20. The High-Priestly Prayer of Consecration	179
The Glory for which Christ Yearns, 180	
Trials of the Apostles, 180	
Intercession for the Church, 181	
21. The Road to the Cross	182
John's Omission of the Agony in Gethsemane, 182	
The Arrest of Christ, 183	
The Examination by Caiaphas, 184	
The Lapse of St. Peter, 186	
The Trial before Pilate, 188	
22. St. John at the Cross	196
23. Easter Day	203
The Empty Tomb, 203	
The Missing Document on the Risen Lord, 204	
Mary Magdalene, 206	
The Ordination of the Apostles, 207	
The Faith of St. Thomas, 208	
24. The Epilogue	210
Breakfast at the Lakeside, 210	
The Destiny of St. Peter and St. Paul, 211	

PART ONE
CONTROVERSY

THE RATIONALIST ATTACK ON ST. JOHN

After many years' study of the Fourth Gospel, I am more and more convinced that until we reinstate it as the most reliable account we possess of the Incarnation of the Son of God and His Mission of Redemption, we shall continue to suffer from the powerlessness of our witness to Him. It is, however, only since I obtained the liberty of retirement from active work that I have become confident that I am called to devote myself to a campaign in support of my conviction. It has ceased to be merely an interest and has become a responsibility.

The attack on the Gospel has lasted for a century and a half. At first it involved the Christian creed and the greater part of the New Testament; but it has been defeated on all major points except in the authorship and authority of St. John. There has never been a legitimate and sincere case against the sacred writings. The motive and foundation of it were two erroneous assumptions. The first was that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation can no longer be held by rational thinkers; the second, that the Gospels are incredible because miracles do not truly happen.

THE REAL WORLD

The first of these assumptions sprang directly from the belief that God created, at a particular date, a world such as we now inhabit. Some critics even argued that our world must be the best possible world, because it is the work of a perfect Creator, perfect in power, wisdom and holiness. They maintained that we have no knowledge of anything except Nature, but that from the study of Nature we can discover all that is necessary for us to know about God and ourselves. "Nature is to be contemplated as the finished and unimprovable product of divine wisdom, omnipotence and benevolence." Philosophers still talk as if this were inevitably true.

It has been found to be indubitably false. God did not create the best possible world. It may be said that what He created was the worst possible. Even the children in our schools are

taught that our world began as a nebula—a formless and chaotic mass of gases heated to a temperature far beyond anything in our experience or imagination. It reminds me of what our forefathers pictured as hell, differing from hell only in having no inhabitants. That and nothing more was God's first creation, and it may have lasted like that (save for the segregation of the moon from it) for many millions of years, all the time gradually cooling down. But when it was cool enough to possess solid rocks and liquid seas, there appeared on the rocks, or colouring the water, a green or greenish slime. It was alive. Whether life was a new addition to the existing creation, or a new activity of its substance, does not concern us at the moment. The difference between the two conceptions may not be so profound as it seems. The important fact is its novelty, and its uniqueness, for, ever since its first appearance, life has never sprung from lifeless matter, but has only persisted as the offspring of previous life.

It has its own self-contained history, and a very mysterious and important one. To begin with, thanks to its chlorophyll, the slime had the power to capture the light-energy that poured upon it from the sun over ninety million miles away, and to manufacture thereby the new kind of substance, called by us "organic compounds". The whole food supply in our planet is either the continuation of that process or derived from its products. Life now exists in hundreds of thousands of species—"What an imagination God must have", was Tennyson's comment on the fact—all of which are the present result of that first slime life. Its history teems with striking developments. For instance, there is the organic body, the cells of which, each living a life of its own, combine to serve the whole by a special kind of unity. Feeding, growth, recuperation after injury, and reproduction, are among such services. God's invention of death, again, is one of the most remarkable of His mechanisms. Indispensable for the well-being of the contemporary world, it is still more so for the progress of its evolution. Another wonder is the creation of the male sex. Sexual reproduction lessens the maximum number of possible births which might occur if every individual bore young; but it fosters by the mingling of genes the variability needed for evolution. It comes to full fruition only in secondary differences between man and woman, not only physical, but mental

and spiritual as well. Released from child-bearing and incessant after-care, the man has seemingly a surplus of creative energy which makes him the more adventurous and the more inventive. Most creative work in the fine arts is also his; but the woman seems the more appreciative of their appeal. It is invariably assumed that the cave-man, not the cave-woman, made drawings on the walls of their home. But it is probably true.

After long ages, towards the end of which plants and animals gradually took on the forms familiar to ourselves, another new stage in creation was reached with the appearance of Mind. Two powers were necessary if man was to guide his life by his mental activities. He must have memory if he was to learn by experience, and he must be able to imagine what was to be expected from the future. These two capacities, the possessions of a self-conscious being, enabled him to retain his past as a real and present fact, and also to seek for himself a future containing a maximum of what he desired and a minimum of what past experience had taught him to fear. He did not remember only his own yesterdays; he listened to the stories of his elders and their legends of still older times which, purified by the criticisms of later thought, became world-history and human experience. Similarly his thought of the future became extended to an expectation for his whole life, and even for generations still to come. He lived in the whole of past and future time so far as it interested him, and this conquest of time is the basis of human mind, of its reason and also of its emotions and conations. Hence the absurdity of some well-known lines of Longfellow. "Trust no future howe'er pleasant" ignores the fact that well-grounded expectations are the only way to deal with the future. The "dead past" does not exist for us, for all we know of the past is that which lives in our memories. To "act only in the living present" is to discard mind and degenerate to the life of the lower animals. Only the fourth line remains true.

Through his conquest of time man has gone forth to conquer the world. No other creature can dominate it for his own purposes. No other can devote itself to the discovery of nature's secrets, and use its discoveries for his own pleasure and comfort. No other can experience a sense of being at home in an environment that is being made more and more friendly and congenial.

But since man may also use his powers for destruction, the opportunities of mind are terrible to contemplate unless we pass on to the stage beyond it.

In humanity alone a fourth reality is normally present, namely a spiritual nature. We may accept Sir William McDougall's description of it. "It is the nature of man to recognize the true, the good, and the beautiful; to esteem highly all such things; to aspire towards them; to strive to preserve, augment and create truth, goodness and beauty." At first sight this looks like a department of the Mind. It is true that just as life occurs only in antecedent matter, and mind only where physical life is present, so the spiritual life dwells within mind. Creation is in that way recognizable as one indivisible process, and not as a companionship of several processes. Each stage, in fact, has features whose full importance only becomes clear in that which follows. Thus, as a whole, it reveals itself as a gradual fulfilment of the Creator's original and unaltered purpose.

The essential novelty of the spiritual is that man does not aim at conquering and using it. He greets it with reverence as above himself, as something which makes claim upon him, which he must respect or else suffer degradation in his own eyes. By means of mind he lives; but by spirit he discovers ends for which he must live, or even die. His sense of these possessions or ideals is not generally expressed by McDougall's abstract nouns, but by reference to the concrete will of God. In so doing man is entirely justified, for abstractions do not create worlds. He is also justified in his demand for freedom to tread the spiritual path. Freedom is the complement of the spirit, itself springing from the dominating mind. If I surrender myself to the guidance of the spirit, I must do that by my own will. Of God it is said, "If we deny Him, He will deny us: if we are faithless, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." Our own personality also is not to be denied freedom; it is inviolable even when it makes that necessary and total surrender.

This bare outline of our scientific conception of the world is important for our subject, because it puts out of court the eighteenth-century view assumed by rationalism to be true. The finished and unimprovable world turns out to be a mirage. The isolation of our origin as an event in the distant past has given

place to seeing that first occurrence merely as the beginning of a process which is our present environment. Science is not hostile to religion, but has come to the rescue of Christianity from an antiquated rationalism. If I say that Darwin in 1859 put the coping-stone upon the true doctrine, I do not attribute any finality to him. Science has never made the mistake of claiming to be finished and unimprovable. But the last two pages of the *Origin of Species* are still valuable. To Darwin's mind "it accords with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator, that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes, like those which determine the birth and death of the individual". The comparison between the cosmos and the individual is similar, and possibly due, to the Church of England catechism: "I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world."

Darwin also says, "We may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection." This virtually leads to the Christian doctrine of God. It looks to future progress, and not to mere continuation of our present nature and behaviour. He puts aside the difficulty, felt even by many Christians, of the sorrows, pains and sins of our world. His explanation of these is that the world has not yet reached the perfection which is its destiny. All its maladjustments are to be expected in a world that is a process still unfinished.

Here we become aware of a possible reason why God created a universe at all. There is one kind of "goodness" which He does not and cannot possess in Himself. He cannot experience progress. He cannot say, "Every day and in every way I become better and better." Therefore, for completeness, He must create for Himself, in something which is not God, the world of striving for perfection, with all that this entails, even now, of courage, penitence, hope, perseverance, self-denial, and humility.

Can we suppose that our spirituality, even if fully developed

in every individual, is the best that the Creator can provide? Consider McDougall's description of it and let us imagine that His "aspiration" had become attainment, His "striving" victory, His "preservation" security, His "augmentation" universality, His "creation" completeness—would God then have fulfilled His purpose? Christianity says No. The Alpha implies the Omega. The beginning from God demands an ending in God. The fitting consummation, for us at least, is personal union of the human creature with the divine Creator. God's world, still creaturely, must be taken into God. This is the reason for the fifth stage in human evolution, effected through the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, and a new birth which makes us children of God. St. Paul calls us, conveniently, men who are "in Christ". Of himself he writes, "I live: and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." From this point of view the Incarnation ceases immediately to be for us an isolated and therefore meaningless fact, or an incredible and superstitious error. It becomes a highly characteristic work of God, in the pursuit of His unchanging purpose, to inaugurate a new race of humanity. "The Son of God", said Chrysostom, "became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might become the Sons of God." "He took all that was ours", said Ireneus, "to make us partakers of all that is His." Further discussion of this belongs to "The Commentary".

MIRACLES

It is most unfortunate that when we discarded the finished and unimprovable world, we took over from its adherents the word "Law" and the phrase "Laws of Nature". The eighteenth century was right in its emphasis on the order and regularity of Nature; but law means more than that. It introduces ideas of compulsion and necessity. It suggests that the regularity has authority over us, if not also over God; that exceptions to it would not only be extraordinary, but wrong and contrary to the known character of Nature and (we conjecture) of God. Now, it is true that Nature is regular on the whole. It is essential that regularity should prevail for us normally to depend on it. Mental life would be impossible unless we can expect the normal repetition of observed sequences. We must be able to argue from cause to effect, and from effect to cause. We need not expatiate

upon that. Miracles must not cease to be rare, startling, miraculous; but that does not make them impossible, and this is at least pretty generally allowed by modern scientists.

On the other hand, we should avoid using the word "miraculous" about natural facts which surprise us because of our incomplete knowledge. How does sap rise against the force of gravity to the tops of tall trees? How does a migratory bird return to its own nest? There are plenty of these wonders but, although the word "miracle" is derived from the verb "to wonder", the English language uses it of a distinction of much greater importance. A miracle is really an exceptional and direct action of God upon His world. It stands outside the regularity of nature. It is an invasion of nature by the supernatural. Only careless writers on either side of the discussion use the word in any other sense. In the New Testament the word "wonders" is rarely used, and then with some contempt. Generally, miracles are "signs" or deeds of "power". There are two classes of facts which have this character, and they must be distinguished.

(a) We have seen that God does intervene at a few far separated points in this history of creation, to raise it to a new level or stage. The first life, the first mind, the first spiritual mind, are all of that kind. Between these there are events of truly epoch-making importance, such as natural death and bi-sexuality, or gregariousness. I do not know how all this was done; but it is no part of the natural regularity which was the normal fact before and after the miracle. If God does act on the large scale in this way, there is no reason to deny Him a part in the events of individual life. Christ's teaching, that the Father is concerned about the death of a sparrow, might be taken as a motto by a Darwinian.

There is a great mass of testimony to the reality of answers to prayers and of providential guidance. The greater part of it, though quite certain to the person concerned, is inconclusive to unbelievers, who attribute what is claimed as supernatural to coincidence, or to psychological disturbances such as wishful thinking, imagination, or tradition. But one who has received answers to prayer is ready to accept another's story of guidance. So we become divided into two camps, those who trust their own and therefore other people's convictions, and those who, having no such experience, distrust the confessedly imperfect evidence.

Between them are a few who use reason in order to come to an opinion, and a more numerous set who "really don't know what to say".

It seems to me that if I indulged in autobiography I could show that I had been intended to do just what I am doing now; that the development of my physical and mental furniture, the home I was brought up in, and the education I received, all tended to guide the course of my life from the day I was born on the feast of St. John the Evangelist to the present time when, much too late, I make some sort of response to it. But what would be the good? For how can one make an argument the steps of which are not communicable in logical form? The only real basis for a belief in providential guidance is just that it is so very widespread and so harmonious with religion. But I stand firmly with the crowd that votes "Aye".

(b) When we speak of a miracle we do not generally mean an unseen, inscrutable guidance of events, but something the existence of which may be questioned but which, if real, is certainly supernatural. The typical instances with which we are concerned are the stories of Christ's actions in the Gospels. Unbelief in them is generally based on our own experience and is expressed by the affirmation that miracles do not happen. It is often assumed that the Bible is full of them. The story of Israel's exodus from Egypt and its forty years' wandering is certainly grounded on them. The period of Elijah and Elisha is also essentially miraculous. It was a time when, through apostasy and persecution, Elijah could say, "I am left a prophet of the Lord and they seek my life to take it away." If miracles happen at all, it is at such times that we should expect them. But in the rest of the Old Testament, which is the history of two thousand years from Abraham to Christ, there are not a dozen that seriously involve a problem, for it is mere common-sense that questions legends recorded centuries after they are dated. For the New Testament the evidence for miracles is good; but it was a period when they were also appropriate, as in the period of the Exodus. Expectation of them must have died out almost completely as in our own day, leaving nothing but a tendency in some quarters to believe in queer stories that had no bearing on religion. But the advent of the Son of God demanded miracles, and therefore they occurred.

At the same time, we can give no rational argument for denying the possibility of real miracles. Atheism leaves us without any explanation whatsoever, either of Nature or of the Supernatural. It makes mental activity a vain imagination except when it engages in the invention of more mechanisms. Our spiritual ideals become sheer delusion, useful only to humbug people into restraining their passions and living harmlessly with others. But as Thomas Carlyle said, "Man everywhere is the born enemy of lies." A civilization founded on deceit will not stand. But when we do believe in God, we shall not easily be persuaded to put shackles upon Him. There may be things impossible to Him because incompatible with His nature or His will. Their non-existence may lead us to surmise such an impossibility. But concerning miracles, the strongest denial possible to us is, "I have never seen a miracle or heard on satisfactory evidence that one has occurred." It is not justifiable to imitate the man who, when he first saw a giraffe, gazed for a while, and then turned away muttering, "I don't believe it."

At a particular period of my life, about 1920, I was asked to anoint a year-old baby of a brother priest, who was dying of diphtheria. I had never used the rite and consented only for friendship's sake. The medical man had said, with unusual frankness, that the child would die before morning, and that the nurse whom he would send could do nothing except pay the usual attentions to a dead body. Two or three minutes after the service the mother came to us saying, "Baby has been able to swallow for the first time for [I think] two days." Next morning he was pronounced out of danger. I anointed him again while still an infant. He was suffering from some complaint which was not responding to treatment. The doctor (not the same one) at his next visit saw fit to try a different treatment, and recovery followed. This was not of course a proper miracle, but one of the unprovable coincidences mentioned above—if God guided the doctor in His providence.

At a mission in a New South Wales parish some time later, a woman who had suffered for years from an ulcerated leg, and could hardly walk, received my laying-on of hands with prayer. Next morning she came to the vestry as I was disrobing after the Eucharist, and danced round the room to show me she was

healed. Months later I enquired about her and was told, "Still thanking God."

At the same mission a woman asked for our prayers that she might get news of her daughter who had left home after some domestic quarrel three years before. On the second day, her son in Sydney saw in a shop window something that he needed, decided to get it while it was in his mind, and in the shop came face to face with his sister. It was a happy meeting, followed by reconciliation. The effect on the congregation when I bade them turn their prayers into a thanksgiving, reminded me of the Gospels, just as much as the miracle did.

I am therefore not an unbiased witness on this subject, since I must believe that, in the sense in which the phrase is used of Peter and John, I have worked three miracles myself. But my feeling about them is also like theirs: "Why look ye on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him walk?" I seemed to myself to be right outside the events, as if I had only looked on, and another priest with a similar experience volunteered to me that he felt similarly. I did not want to be concerned in the miracles. I was expecting little. I have never wanted to repeat the experience. I do not like miracles when they frustrate the orderliness of the creation.

The people who benefited by my miracles must have been known to God as proper objects of His exceptional grace; but it was a long time before I learned that He brought me into it for my own sake. I used to find a difficulty in miracles and only half-heartedly accepted them. So long as I was of that mind I could not do my task for St. John's Gospel. I had to be convinced that St. John's report was the truth about them. Then, with an enlightenment like a revelation, I realized that there are two aspects of a miracle. First, there is the will of God to grant some grace, of health or life, to the individuals benefited. Secondly, the miracle reveals that God can act miraculously, and when He wills does so. Therefore, as in the Old Testament, it occurs in periods of irreligion and apostasy. As in the New Testament, it helps to assure us of the fact of the Incarnation of the Word and the deity of Christ. At the present time tradition and reason united ought to be sufficient to produce a belief in God and the supernatural. Nobody ought to expect to witness a

miracle or to demand modern evidence in support of the Gospels, though the miracles do happen. The reason for what we may call evidential miracles, as distinguished from those wrought secretly, is that they proclaim to us "Consider this, Ye that forget God" (Psalm L 22). It is on that principle that I shall deal with each one as we come to it in the Commentary.

It means that while regularity and rationality are the most prevalent characteristics of the universe, its deeper truth is that it is progressive towards perfection. It is necessary that we should always bear this in mind. It follows that we have to deal with two fundamental imperfections: Nature is still an unfinished process; our scientific knowledge of it is incomplete. The Newtonian system of the physical world was true and inspiring, so far as it went. It was not because of error in it that it led the Germans into an almost godless conception of Nature, but because they ascribed to it a completeness which it did not possess. They thought like Alexander Pope:

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night;
God said, "Let Newton be", and all was light.

The mistake is in the word "all". German philosophy (no philosophy is a reliable guide) made its two false assumptions. It had no place for the Incarnation. Miracles did not happen. Therefore the Gospels were untrue; and it was with their minds fixed on these unbeliefs that they turned aside to the study of the Gospels. One of their own nation has said, "A German can believe anything that he wishes to believe."

One can but admire the diligence, the acuteness, the toil which they have exhibited; but because their foundation is on sand, their positive accomplishment is nil.

The sciences they had studied (astronomy, physics, chemistry) were those which are relatively static. In the nineteenth century a new geology, a new biology, a new psychology, the sciences of life, cast them into an exploded antiquity. There is an open field for our study. We are free to build upon the undamaged witness of the Gospels.

ST. JOHN AND ST. MARK

The conflict over the authenticity and the trustworthiness of St. John's Gospel began, as has been said, with a philosophical denial that we have, or can have, knowledge of anything beyond what we call Nature; but it could not be confined to that treatment. The dispute itself proclaimed the Gospel a book, and what it required was literary criticism. All through the nineteenth century a strong and growing school of German theologians devoted themselves to the overthrow of the church tradition. They were almost entirely destructive, and they arrived at no positive result. There has not emerged any general agreement about the Gospel of St. John, its authorship, its interpretation, its purpose, its theology, and especially its conception of Christ. It has become an enigma without a clue to its solution.

The Church has remained curiously unimpressed. Most of the book still ranks as the first favourite of pious minds. There is no movement to change the Eucharistic Gospels which (except on Ascension Day) are always from St. John in the great festival seasons. Some damage has been done, however. The publishers of the smaller commentaries, intended for lay readers or young students, shrink from dealing with St. John. There is a tendency to regard it as too full of problems for beginners to understand. There is also hesitation in appealing to its authority.

This state of opinion has existed among the English only from the beginning of the present century, when a change of opinion suddenly attacked the Universities. Before that time only an individual here and there among real Biblical scholars took the German side. At the present time we are faced with two destructive arguments: (a) That the difference between St. John and the Synoptists in their accounts of Christ is so great that we cannot accept both as conjoined in the one Person; and (b) That the little we know of the Apostle St. John suffices to prove that he cannot have written the Gospel. To the first of these we now turn.

There is no doubt that the Christ of St. John does make a different impression on us from that which we get from the

earlier Gospels; but for the sake of simplicity we shall first consider some more external matters. The earliest criticism known to us comes from the first years of the second century, and relates to a difference in their chronology.

THE PLAN OF ST. MARK'S GOSPEL

In the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 117-138) a bishop of Hierapolis, Papias by name, published "Expositions of the Lord's oracles, in five rolls", obviously a book of considerable size. It has disappeared since the twelfth century; but Eusebius, a fourth-century historian, quotes two passages from it, and there are nearly a score of other quotations among the writings of the fathers of the Church. According to Eusebius,¹ Papias declared that

Mark, having become the interpreter [i.e., expounder] of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said [he followed] Peter, who adapted his instructions [i.e., lessons] to the needs² of his hearers; but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake [or, is not to be blamed] while he thus wrote down some of the things as he remembered them [from Peter]; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein [or, to admit any falsehood among them].

The Elder's explanation and excuse of Mark were clearly addressed to those who were puzzled to find the Gospels differing in chronology. According to this explanation, the "order" which Mark could not preserve was order in the sense of sequence of events.

For any other orderly arrangement he could invent whatever plan he chose, and the one he did choose is discoverable in his Gospel. But if he got his material piecemeal and without dates, he could not, having no first-hand knowledge, observe chronological order. John practically says that such inability did not matter, in spite of his own love not only of dates, but even of the time of day when events took place.

¹Eusebius also guesses that the "Elder" was a second John; but he was really the Evangelist himself, making his self-defence. The translation is Lightfoot's, except for the parts in square brackets.

²The Greek for "to the needs" is *pros tas chreias*.

It was not a sign that St. Mark was careless about details. He loved to write with an artist's aim to let his readers see not only the story he was telling, but also its environment. The best example is that of the epileptic boy in ix. 14-29. The raising of the daughter of Jairus is also graphic (v. 21-43). Within it is inserted the cure of the woman with an issue of blood. Her tragic history, her growing hopelessness, her hearing of Christ and her seemingly superstitious thought, which was effectual because of her faith, are wonderfully described. Still more striking is the picture of Jesus looking round to pick her out in the crowd, and the conquest of her first natural desire to be healed secretly. The storm on the lake which Christ stilled (iv. 35-41) is more graphic in the Greek than in our versions. "And other boats were with Him" brings the whole environment into our minds. "And there arises a great storm of wind, and the waves kept dashing into the boat, until now the boat is filling. And He (wonderful man) was in the stern on the cushion, actually still sleeping. And they wake Him, saying, 'Master, don't you care that we—you and we—are all face to face with death?'" Mark, of course, may have received all the artistry of these stories from Peter, but there is nothing in Peter's reported speeches to suggest it. That our debt is to Mark is more likely. Moreover, he sees that besides picturing an environment, it is good to show how it came to exist. It was Mark who started the custom of beginning a Gospel further back than Jesus, in the work of His forerunner or even of the old prophets. Mark's literary gifts are in fact outstanding, in spite of an imperfect knowledge of Greek, which is another matter. From such a man we expect the Gospel as a whole to be clearly planned, and we are not disappointed.

The plan which Mark used was not exhibited to his readers, but it is very clearly discernible. At x. 45 he writes: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." All serious readers recognize the importance of the statement; but that is not what concerns us. It is hardly ever noticed that it divides the Gospel into two sections which are kept entirely separate. Before this point the one subject was the ministering of Christ. Where there is any reference to the ransom, it is as something in the future of which Christ prophesies, as, for instance, in viii. 31-3.

After the dividing verse the subject is the ransom through the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. Before the verse, the scene is Galilee, or the country districts of Judea and Perea; after it, it is Jerusalem. (The story of Bartimaeus is prefatory to what follows.) Yet Mark must have known well that Christ had made previous visits to the capital. There is a complete change in the tone and atmosphere of the Gospel. In other words, Mark has given us two books, or, at least, a book in two distinct parts.

The plan of the Ministry book is as follows:

THE FRAME

- (a) i. 16-20, Call of the first four Apostles.
- (b) iii. 7-19, Organization of the disciples with the twelve as leaders.
- (c) vi. 7-13, First preaching tour of the Apostles.
- (d) viii. 27-33, The Twelve through Peter profess faith and fealty.
- (e) x. 34-45, The way of suffering and martyrdom.

THE CONTENT

- (a) i. 21-iii. 6, The Person of Jesus (a) received with an inconvenient excitement, (b) opposed and threatened with death.
- (b) iii. 20-vi. 6, The Christian fellowship as a family of God, and as a harvest. Rejection by community action, Gerasa and Nazareth.
- (c) vi. 14-viii. 26, Christ as living Bread. Demand for understanding and "inwardness", or spiritual religion.
- (d) viii. 34-x. 34, In the shadow of the Cross. From ix. 29, Christians must die to self, and live for others, but beyond that for Christ and His Gospel.

The frame is surprising, for it does not refer to the career of Christ, but to stages in the choice, training and destiny of the Twelve; yet that is really natural, because it was the chief occupation of Christ during the ministry. In the end it turned out to be good history, for the only lasting result of the Galilean sojourn was that is furnished the Church with trained leaders in other countries. No Galilean church has a place in the New Testament. What I treat as stages in the development of the frame are paragraphs noted by almost all commentators as turning points in the narrative. There is no doubt that Mark meant them to be a framework. The significance of the four blocks of narrative between them is not so generally observed. Yet it is obvious

that each of them has a character of its own, and the order in which they stand could not be changed without unreality. It indicates an appropriate progression from (a) Christ's individual ministry towards individuals to (b) the formation of a fellowship; from the urgent demand for faith in (a) and (b) to the higher gift of understanding and adherence to inwardness in (c); from salvation of the individual in (c) to self-sacrificing fruitfulness in the service of other souls and in furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ in (d).

This progressiveness was a real aspect of Christ's activities, and therefore it leads to a chronological treatment not for its own sake, but as a consequence of the progress. Accordingly, Mark does not scruple about dropping chronology when his plan becomes clearer thereby. The call of the four fishermen had to stand first whatever its date was. Belief and opposition must be shown as separate aspects in the first and second chapters, though in fact intermingled. The rejection at Nazareth had to come in the second group because it was the act of the community. Section one had to be continued up to the plot of the Pharisees and Herodians to kill Him in order to complete that aspect; yet the time when Herod heard of Him (vi. 14) was in the third section. Sections one and two end contemporaneously, as they were throughout. There is really no serious chronological difference between Mark and John in the history of the ministry. What difference there is arises from Mark's indifference about chronology, whereas John is chronological because he is keenly interested in dates. Nearly everything that he tells us can be dated approximately if not exactly.

THE USE OF ST. MARK'S GOSPEL

Before passing on to the difficult problem of Mark's "ransom book", it will be well to consider with what purpose he planned the "ministry book" as he did, and that leads us back to what the Elder told Papias: "Mark framed his lessons for the *Chreias*." In 1946 a posthumous book by the Rev. R. O. P. Taylor threw a new light on this word *Chreias*. *Chreia* was a technical term used by teachers in various countries, including Jewish rabbis, and therefore, we may presume, by Christians who taught children the Faith or instructed adult converts in preparation

for baptism. Most of our information about it is contained in the writings of Greek instructors in the art of rhetoric; but it was the same everywhere. "A *chreia* was a short and pointed statement of an act or saying of some person of undoubted authority." Jewish and Christian teachers had an advantage over the heathen ones in being able to quote their *chreias* from the Word of God. Thus a *chreia* resembled the text of a sermon but was even more like the statements in a catechism. The universal custom was to make the class commit it to memory; but the teacher was not satisfied with a parrot-like repetition of words. He went on to explain the words until the pupils understood them. He next had to enlarge upon them so that their value and scope might be appreciated, using illustrations from common life, stories, parables, the contrast presented by the opposite statement; in fact, whatever would drive the lesson home. If he could, he would work out the ground principle on which it depended. By that means the class would learn to what circumstances it could safely be applied for the guidance of their lives in conformity with their religion. This is the account given by those who used the *chreias*. Is it not exactly the same process as the thoroughly skilled teacher of our church catechism would use?

Indeed, a catechism is just what it was called. The preface to St. Luke's Gospel ends (i. 4) with "the things thou was taught by word of mouth", and the word used was *katechetes*, "wast catechized". A catechism need not be in questions and answers. That was the fashion in the sixteenth century, and it lasted until my boyhood. But the essential feature of a catechism is its use in oral teaching and, as a corollary, a strong appeal to memory, which the pupil generally delights to use.

By the time St. John wrote the Gospel, Mark, who was using the *chreias* in teaching before A.D. 46, had come to be the textbook, the collection of *chreias*, in probably the whole Christian Church. The young people had to a great extent grown up with it. Others could remember its use when they were catechumens. So it comes to pass that John usually assumes that the contents of Mark will be known to his readers. He does not have to inform them who the Baptist was, or why and when he was cast into prison, or that Christ went to him for baptism. He does not

give a list of the twelve Apostles or say that four of them were previously fishermen. He does not mention the institution of the Sacraments. He passes over the Galilean ministry, except the part I have called the third section in Mark. John deals with this in his sixth chapter because Mark had omitted what he considers its most important teaching. As a rule, he seems only to repeat Mark's stories in order to correct or expand them. He is himself very familiar with the Catechism, and when he does insert it, the overlapping passages generally show traces of its language. Moreover, his corrections are always right and always worth while, as we shall discover later.

The objection to St. John, because of its difference from Mark, has so little foundation that the opposition has been forced to support it by statements that are contrary to fact. James Drummond showed (in 1903) that it is not true that St. John makes Christ use long and argumentative speeches to a much greater extent than the Synoptists. The truth is that he puts two or more discourses together without marking the divisions between them. Some object that from St. John we gather that Christ taught chiefly in Jerusalem, not in the country districts. There are about ninety-five weeks in the period from St. John's fourth chapter to the end of the eleventh. The time that would be necessary for all that he tells about a Jerusalem ministry could be as little as five or six weeks, and can hardly have occupied more than twice that time. It is not true that John makes Jerusalem the chief scene of the ministry. What he does is to tell more about the short visits to Jerusalem, which the Synoptists omit. There is no harm in that. But the real reason for such differences as there are is not of this mechanical nature. It is simply that the purposes of the two Evangelists are different, because they deal with different classes of people.

St. John's purpose is declared in xx. 31: "These (signs) are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name." It is thus evangelistic, intending to establish faith in Christ's unique Person. St. Mark's purpose, as has been said, was to instruct people who had already professed faith in Christianity. But a second purpose of St. John was to show how it was that the Jewish nation, through its government, rejected Christ and, though

he does not explicitly refer to it, this purpose pervades the whole book. Even in the prologue he says, "He came unto His own home and His own people received Him not." At a time when each nation swore by its own religion, the Christian preachers had to confess that the religion preached had been refused by the Jews and its Founder crucified. This really accounts for the whole difference of emphasis and tone between St. Mark and St. John, for their dissimilar plans, and for their individual selection of incidents. To expect a close resemblance would be as stupid as to insist that a lesson-book for children should have the same style as a Pope's attack upon Communism.

ST. MARK'S "SECOND BOOK"

It is in the "ransom story" that Mark differs most seriously from John. Both of them are interested in the growth of hostility that finally led Christ to the Cross. Here is its development as described in St. John :

(1) When He first came as a public character to Jerusalem, He cast out those who bought and sold in the Temple courts (iv. 13-22).

(2) When He paid visits to Jerusalem, He ministered by miracles like that of Bethesda and the raising of Lazarus, by parabolic teaching like the Good Shepherd passages, and by more direct ethical teaching as in chapter eight.

(3) From the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (chapter seven), the chief priests and Pharisees of the Council plotted against Him with the intention of killing Him.

(4) The Pharisees were religious in their own way. They acted as a brake on the Sadducean Chief Priests. Among them were some who were inclined to take Christ's side in the controversies (x. 19-21, etc).

(5) Christ taught them that the essential need was to accept Him as the Messiah, though not behaving as they expected the Messiah to act (xii. 43-50).

St. Mark in chapters eleven and twelve gives exactly the same features as St. John, and in the same order, but he transfers the whole history to Holy Week. This is specially marked in his cleansing of the Temple on the Monday. Most of the rest is placed apparently on the Tuesday. The miracle described is

the blasting of the fig-tree. The parables point not to salvation, but to judgment. There is only a scrap of direct ethics dealing with prayer and faith. The Sadducees are represented by some underlings, not on the Council, in a rather nauseating attack. A Pharisee, on the other hand, can be praised, as not far from the Kingdom of God. Christ Himself at last becomes the questioner, asking them: "What think ye of Christ?", "Whose Son is He?" There can be no doubt that St. John's account is the historical one. The definite attribution of the incidents to Holy Week, and to particular times within it, is a device which is contrary to chronology, though it preserves a fairly correct picture of the gradual progress of the opposition. Since each story in it was to be used in a separate lesson, of which it was to provide the *chreia*, the time might be thought negligible. The order, however, was important, because St. Mark was describing a development. That is the best that we can say for it. Later we shall point out that the cleansing of the Temple is almost impossible in Holy Week, and that the challenge to Christ's authority which ensued becomes sheer nonsense if we make the mistake of taking St. Mark's date seriously.

It is remarkable that the other Synoptists blindly follow St. Mark. It is the absolute reliance that creates the synoptic view. It would be most interesting to pursue the question further, for it gives the Synoptists a new attractiveness; but it is not our subject. We may, however, note that in his "ransom book" St. Mark makes two certain blunders. These are his plain statement that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, and his assumption that the scourging of Christ was the customary one inflicted after condemnation of criminals who were to be crucified. We shall see that when there is a real discrepancy between St. Mark and St. John, it is not likely that St. John is the one in error.

St. John appears to have made no use at all of St. Matthew's Gospel, the peculiar passages of which are themselves a greater problem than anything in the Fourth Gospel. It is also remarkable that there seems to be no tradition about Matthew except that he had in his earlier days been a "publican". His Gospel, however, is thought to have been for a while the most widely read of the four.

St. Luke's, especially in the final scenes, has a relationship with

St. John not of quotation, but of similarity. It seems certain that St. John made no use of it, for reasons which will be given in our commentary. When we consider that St. Luke spent two years in Judea, while St. Paul was a prisoner at Caesarea, and that at that time, but at no other time known to us, he could have collected information from eye-witnesses, of which he speaks in his preface, the simplest theory seems to be that his informants had received teaching from St. John during the thirty years or more of his residence in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood. Thus the resemblances indicate Luke's debt to John, not *vice versa*, and they arose from oral teaching and not from written documents.

ST. JOHN, THE AUTHOR OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

People who are confident that the Fourth Gospel cannot be a true remembrance of the facts of Christ's life and the words He said, almost necessarily deny that its author was an eye-witness and a specially intimate friend. I am not calling them biased or prejudiced. I have become confident myself of the historical truth of the mystery declared in the Gospel and therefore am prepared to acknowledge that it was written by one with exactly St. John's opportunities. So I also am unavoidably biased. What I deplore is the creation of a host of undecided readers whose "according to St. John" is attached to every reference to it, to announce their doubtfulness. For the contents of the Gospel are our concern and, if true, they are of the utmost importance. We may be missing the eternal life which they promise us. The way to either faith or unfaith may be a reconsideration of our theological position; or it may be an examination of the Gospel in order to determine whether it has the compelling authority of St. John's authorship. The latter is our present endeavour.

To begin with, we must not think of St. John and the people he associated with as indigent and ignorant peasants. John was a partner in a firm or syndicate which supported five owners (of whom two at least were married), employed hired labour in addition, and possessed at least two fishing-boats of considerable size. The fishing trade of the Sea of Galilee was well known throughout the Roman Empire. We may be sure that Zebedee and his partners, whether they exported to Greece and Rome or not, looked to the great city of Jerusalem as their most profitable market. They would need some sort of depot or agency there.

In education the Jews were perhaps of as high a standard as any nation of their time. The rabbis of their synagogues held day schools for all boys, if not for all children, and they were expected to make no charge for teaching. The Scriptures were the basis of their instructions, for we must remember that the Law of Moses was the law of the nation, the law administered in the

courts, as well as the moral standard of their religion. All through life they heard it read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. It is also difficult to see how a business like that of Zebedee could be carried on with distant places without some sort of writing and of arithmetic. Moreover, a boy in Galilee would pick up a working knowledge of Greek, and in later life it would be necessary for business purposes. Palestine was definitely bi-lingual. Greek in fact had become familiar to a greater or lesser degree throughout the Mediterranean lands. John would be perfectly prepared to write the simple Greek of his Gospel, and even to attempt a more ambitious style at times, as in xiii. 1-3. He had a very limited vocabulary, although he used it surprisingly well; we find him accurate in his grammar—punctilious, for instance, about using the right tense of verbs; but he is not able to reproduce the beauty of a true use of participles for which Greek is remarkable, nor has he a wide command of participles. He is forced to make the best of those he knows, and becomes guilty of a monotonous over-use of them. He does not at any time write as much like a native of Greece as St. Luke and St. Paul do.

St. John, then, had just about the mental equipment that was necessary for being an Evangelist, but not much over. The hostile critics attack him on another side. Do the other gospels treat him as one capable of becoming the Apostle of Love? Do they not make him rather a rough specimen of humanity? Now Christ did nickname him and his elder brother "Boanerges", which meant "sons of thunder" (Thunderers). Mark says He meant that; but the scholars cannot discover from what Aramaic words it can be derived. That is their business; we can be content to say that possibly the letters have gone astray; but Mark's interpretation is certainly correct. "Thunderers" does not mean that they were talkative. Thunder does not occur often; but when it does come, it is a loud noise. I think Christ means that they were liable, when they lost their tempers, or got unduly excited, to let themselves go with greater forcefulness than was seemly. We have no separate details about James; but John in the early part of Acts is remarkable for standing beside Peter in working a miracle in the High Priest's court, when they were scourged, and not saying a word. Generally a passive, silent man, but meanwhile thinking hard, we may say.

Now that is what the Evangelist was like. He had to be persuaded to write the Gospel, as Clement of Alexandria says, and all of his writings belong to his later years. The Second and Third Epistles report that having much that he could write, he is unwilling to use pen and ink, but hopes soon to see his correspondents face to face. We know the kind of man who makes that excuse. But even in the Third Epistle there is a bit of thunder. He is writing a private letter to Gaius, such as a bishop might send to his archdeacon, and he says: "I wrote somewhat unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Therefore if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words; and not content therewith . . .", and so forth. A wise bishop would add, "Burn this when read." John thunders. In *St. Luke*, ix. 54, James and John cry, "Lord, do you wish us to bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" Thunder certainly; but they know well that Christ does not will the lightning. There is no danger so long as they continue to leave decisions to Christ's judgment. The same may be said of *St. Luke* ix. 49. John said, "Master, we saw one casting out of devils in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us." Christ's "Forbid him not" was sufficient, for this is hardly thunder. It is a love of order and discipline, a dislike of the irregular, and it sounds as if John reported his action to Christ because he already felt a bit uneasy about it. As for the request that they should have the chief places in the Kingdom, their relationship to Christ made it seem natural to their way of thinking. Peter is the only one who has a right to raise an objection, for Christ has already shown that the three have a pre-eminence over the rest in His mind. In fact, Christ charges them with nothing worse than misunderstanding, while it is the ten that He addresses somewhat severely for their jealous rivalry. The attempt to make a fuss over these traits in John only shows how hard up for an argument the opposition is. We must not lose sight either of the fact that a love for Christ underlies each of them.

One other personal matter is John's connection with Jerusalem. All the Apostles dwelt there for a number of years after the Ascension of Christ. Whether it was by His command or by

their own judgment we are not told; but from the first it was their headquarters, from which even Saul's persecution was unable to dislodge them. John was probably the last to leave, and his missionary journeys seem not to have extended beyond Palestine, until the imminence of the Roman War compelled him to realize that Jerusalem's day was over. The geographical knowledge of that city which the Gospel reveals—names like Gabbatha and Golgotha—and also the knowledge of the party strife of Pharisees and Sadducees, the characters of Caiaphas and Pilate, and so forth, might be the result of the later residence. There are, however, two salient facts which prove an earlier familiarity with the life of the city—he had a dwelling which he could call a home, to which he could take the Lord's mother, and he knew individually several of the High Priest's servants and was at his ease, fearing no anger from any of the household, as he waited with them in the courtyard. The well-known story will occupy us in due course.

It seems to me inevitable that Zebedee's firm would have much business in Jerusalem, and that it would need an agency or depot with someone in regular charge. But the owners would have to exercise some oversight, and visits from time to time by one of them would be imperative. If John were the one to whom this side of the business was entrusted, he would use some place (perhaps at the depot) as a home. Moreover, his relations would not be directly with great men like Caiaphas, but with stewards like Herod's steward, Chuza, and those under them. He would, however, claim that he knew Caiaphas, as several tradesmen who come to my door would say they know me. The word is used by St. Luke (ii. 44) to mean one who is a mere acquaintance. This business side is very important. When co-operative butter factories were established in my state some sixty years ago, many of them came to grief through lack of a knowledge of trading. They became mere dependants upon wholesalers in Melbourne. Our Evangelist was a good man of business. I know it from the Gospel by his accurate use of dates; by his generally chronological order and by his knowledge of when to discard chronology; by his custom of recording sizes and quantity; by his observations of minute facts and places, such as the Temple, with Christ now in the courtyard, now in Solomon's porch, now in the Treas-

ury. But, especially, Clement of Alexandria tells us how when John went to Asia Minor he organized the Church, by missionary work, by the foundation of dioceses, by the appointment of bishops when there was a vacancy, all after the Apostolic model of James at Jerusalem and Barnabas at Antioch, with which he had long been familiar. Moreover, when Ignatius of Antioch passed through John's territory, some twenty years after his time, he found the whole church so established, better than anywhere else in the world. The whole tradition holds together and no modern invention is comparable with it. By tradition I do not mean a legend about a time long past. The Fourth Gospel went out into the world as the work of the man who called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved", and the book itself tells us enough to show what his "given" name was.

I am weary of the unbelievers. I shall omit here any mention of the silly tale about John being murdered by the Jews. But there is one story of such educational value that it cannot be omitted.

Papias of Hierapolis started it in the preface to his book about the Gospels. He says that when anyone who had been taught by the Elders came his way, he was accustomed to question him about the personal disciples of Jesus Christ. "I would enquire about what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James or what John or Matthew or what any other of the Lord's disciples." The order of the names is curious, and so is the pairing of some of them. Except for Matthew, they are scattered through St. John's Gospel in the same order, but that seems a coincidence. Papias knew the Gospel but not, I think, with the familiarity which such a use of it would indicate. It is more likely that he was thinking of the districts where the Apostles had laboured. Andrew was reputed to have been the missionary of the Scythians about the Crimea. Peter, as we know from his Epistle, taught in the coastal provinces south of the Black Sea. Philip had been bishop of Hierapolis, home town of Papias. Thomas in East Syria and James the Lord's brother at Jerusalem were to the south-east and south-west of him. The provinces are thus mentioned in geographical order from north to south. These were the provinces from which people would come to Papias most frequently. Matthew was famous only as

an Evangelist, and he is bracketed with John, also an Evangelist. The list is closed by a general remark about any other disciple. So far all is plain. Papias is a sort of gossip-writer, specializing in Apostles who were at rest, but not very careful about his informants; "... when a person came my way who had been a follower of the Elders . . ." is insufficient evidence of trustworthiness.

But the sentence continues: "... and the things which Aristion and the Elder John the Lord's disciples say". The only possible verb to govern this clause is "I would enquire about". Papias should have repeated it, for it is clear that he means that he knows certain things which Aristion and John say, but they raise questions that he wants to be informed about. Unfortunately Eusebius, who has preserved the passage for us, chooses to think that the present tense "say" means that they are still alive and talking. And "at all events he mentions them both by name and records their traditions in his writings", which is quite a different thing from their being still alive. If they were, they must have been well over a hundred years old, as they were the Lord's own hearers. But the Greeks, like ourselves, use the present tense when they quote from written documents. We quote "Shakespeare says", not "said", and it is pretty obvious that the things that Papias knows that Aristion and John "say", but which are questionable, were contained in books written by them. In fact, he adds a sentence which suddenly makes reference to books. "For I did not think that things out of the books would be so useful to me as those from a living and extant voice." He wanted to know what the senior and leading churchmen of his own period thought of the contents of the books. It was not enough, when discussing whether a book was "canonical", that it was written by an Apostle. It must be generally accepted by the Church as worthy to be included in Scripture. Our own sixth article of religion puts it so. "In the name of the Holy Scripture we understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there was never any doubt in the Church." This has always been the rule.

Eusebius fell into error because he wanted to discover a second John to be the author of the Revelation, for he believed on literary grounds that it could not have been written by the same man as the Gospel. It just shows how dangerous wishful thinking can

be. For it is on this wrong and almost impossible perversion of Papias by Eusebius that a belief in the existence of the second John depends. There is absolutely no other evidence for it. In the last century the Germans had the impertinence not only to affirm two Johns, but to reverse their teacher Eusebius and to make the unknown, inferior John the author of the Gospel, leaving anyone who liked to make the Apostle the author of the Revelation, in which they were not much interested. I hope

have made it clear that Papias knew nothing of two Johns. He mentions one man so-called twice—in the first list as an Apostle, of whom oral reminiscences might possibly be discoverable; in the second as the author of the Gospel and the Epistles. Everybody knew who wrote these books; but the question of their canonicity had not been finally determined, or so Papias, a rather stupid man, thought.

The error went a step further. Papias spoke of St. John as "the Elder" in the second list. Therefore, whenever he mentioned a tradition of "the Elder", with or without John added, it meant for Eusebius his second John. But Papias did not mean anything of the kind. If we had only the two lists, we might think that the term "Elder" distinguishes the John of the second from the John of the first. But in fact, it was much more widely used. "Elder", without any John, introduces the paragraph which gives so clear a description of St. Mark's Gospel. It does not refer to any office in the church, but simply to the great age to which the honoured and loved Apostle attained. It is exactly parallel with the usage of the Liberal politicians of the past century, who called Gladstone the Grand Old Man. It became a slang word, and Dr. Grace was the Grand Old Man of cricket. We all fall easily into a habit of saying "Old Man" in affectionate conversation even with contemporaries. But the Apostle became unique, through outliving the others, and the name "Elder" was recognized as fitting him well. In informal letters like the Second and Third Epistles, he used it himself to his loved disciples and assistants.

When, at the beginning of the present century, English scholars went over more or less to the German view, they generally adopted it in the way Eusebius did, only upside down. The

real John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, but the invented second John was the Evangelist, who obtained a great deal from that disciple, but added to it, from his own opinions or from unreliable sources, an undetermined amount of material of inferior value. This contradicts the Gospel, which says that the beloved disciple not only bore witness, but wrote it. The English reversal of form is a very curious phenomenon, and its causes as I remember them are remarkable as well as regrettable.

In the first place, at that time our nation changed its view of Germany. In my boyhood German goods, pianos for instance, were regarded as cheap but nasty. Germans were individually unpopular. If any copies are extant of William Black's novel, *The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton*, they are worth reading as as a faithful picture of prevalent opinion about the other nation. In the nineties all this was changed. (Indeed nobody could find fault with my Zeiss microscope, or my Lipp piano.) Following the shock of the defeat of France in 1871, there was indeed a new respect and a good deal of anxiety about the progress of Germany, which overflowed into the libraries of our theologians.

A second tendency at the beginning of the present century was to deprecate the importance of the questions of authorship. MacGregor's introduction to his commentary (1929) culminates in a quotation that was often heard in those days. "If a great picture attributed to Raphael were discovered to be really the work of an otherwise unknown artist, the world could have not one great picture the less, but one great painter the more." The conflict over the Gospel had been largely a matter of dates. The later the date of its publication, the less reliable its evidence would be, and Baur's date for it was A.D. 170. His followers felt compelled to regard this as an exaggeration, though it was really an essential element in a carefully constructed argument. By 1891 Dr. McGiffert, in a note to his *Eusebius*, could say that prevailing opinion favoured a date early in the second century, and this was defined later as within about ten years before or after A.D. 100. It seemed to many of us that orthodoxy had won the battle of dates, and that the authorship was a secondary matter. The analogy between a painted portrait and a written description, called by a figure of speech a pen portrait, must not be

pressed so far. Even a painting contains a good deal of the painter's personal vision; but a book portraying a man's character is almost entirely the impression made by his subject on the author's own mind. The character and genius of the author are thus of vital importance. St. John was the disciple that Jesus loved because between them there was so much of understanding and harmony. Nobody else could deserve the confident trust which we are entitled to put in him.

To these errors of ours must be added the English love of compromise. The second John theory allowed us to believe that a good part of the Gospel was truly supplied by the Apostle. That would account for every sign of his presence at the events pictured. If difficulties were felt about the other portions, such as the miracles, they could be attributed to the Evangelist. The view ministered to careless, superficial reading. But since there was no test by which to distinguish the two authors, the authority of the Gospel is no stronger than that of the inferior one. The curate's egg, which was allegedly good in parts, was wholly a bad egg.

PART TWO
THE COMMENTARY

INTRODUCTION

Hitherto we have endeavoured to prove that St. John, the Apostle, was the actual author of the Gospel, and the witness to the truth of its contents. Henceforward we shall assume that we are justified in accepting the orthodox tradition. It now becomes necessary to read the Gospel as we may believe that John meant it to be understood. There is still a human element in the problem, as there is in every book of Scripture. Each narrative has a definite point of view for which allowance must be made. John, for instance, is much more interested in Photina, the woman at Jacob's well, than he is in the man healed at Bethesda. He has a feeling for Martha different from that for Mary of Bethany. With all his loyalty to Christ, he has lost nothing of his affection for the Baptist who was his first teacher. He hates Caiaphas but he records that Christ's judgment of Pilate might be mingled with pity. One of the really graphic chapters is the seventh, in which no event of importance happens. We shall be interested in catching the undertones of the narrative as well as the outstandingly important events.

THE ONE FOUNDATION

About one matter there is left no room for doubt, no need for research. The Gospel is written that we may know Jesus as the Christ, as the Son of God, and the Giver of Eternal Life to all believers. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," is the way St. Paul expresses it. Not the teaching of Christ, or His sacrifice or His character, but Christ Himself—the fact of Jesus Christ. Both Apostles repeat the assertion continually. "To live is Christ," says St. Paul, and "If any man be in Christ, a new Creation! Old things have passed away: behold, they are become new. All things are of God. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." St. John's prologue reaches its climax in "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Photina's enlightenment came

by His saying, "I am the Christ, I who am talking to you." The man born blind is left prostrate in worship of Him. St. Thomas owns Him as "My Lord and My God".

It is a thing most wonderful,
Almost too wonderful to be,
That God's own Son came down from heaven,
And died, to save a child like me.

That is St. John's viewpoint, and from it he never wavers. It is almost, but not quite, too wonderful to be. It is the most wonderful event that has found its place in God's creation, in its process, in the revelation of the Eternal Purpose still to be fulfilled. I find it comparable, regarded steadfastly as the action of God, with the stages of the first creation of the not-God universe — of the first lowly life of which all earthly life is the fruit, of the dawn of mind in memory, of the birth of spiritual religion in submission to the ends for which we ought to live or die. Matter, life, mind, spirit, and at last the Incarnation of the Divine, the God-Man, the first indication that, as God was the source from whom it all sprang, so He is to be the Goal to which it all moves. From that revelation within the process which we know, we should be able to know the Eternal Word and Son of God, and in Him to know and see the invisible God.

We shall not reason about the Incarnation since "reason is of things we know". It is sheer atheism to make it the foundation. The true way is not that of the Greeks but that of the Old Testament. What we learn there is that the basis of all things is mystery, and we have not even reached origins until we have come face to face with that. So it was with God, whose name was found to be "I am". The mystery of existence is, we learn, the ultimate depth of all that is mysterious.

The human nature used by God in the Incarnation was perfect. It was without sin; we may say it was man's proper nature, what he should have become, what he may still be destined to become. St. John says, "The Word became flesh". The so-called Athanasian Creed says, "Not by conversion of the God-head into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God." It may be that the contradiction is merely verbal, due to the inevitable misuse of language when it gets beyond its sphere. What we shall notice chiefly is that Christ's Manhood is always

natural when He is engaged in living it; it is unique when He wills to exhibit an ownership or lordship over creation; it is intimately one with the Father in its decisions, sanctions, and intuitions. Yet there is also a dependence on the Father which is only in part the obedience due by manhood. It would seem that it is an element in the Eternal Trinity in Unity. We face mystery. But it is the right mystery, the one that takes possession of the whole world-process, and deals with its needs and opportunities with a sovereign grace and truth. The life that Christ lived would not fit any other time or place. It is our mission to translate it into God's living will for us and our times.

CHRIST THE LORD

It is at this point that we have to face the strong element of tragedy that is so prominent in the Gospels and especially in that of St. John. Christ, the Light of the world, shines in a darkness which is hostile to Him. Coming to bestow on mankind a new and heavenly life which is eternal, He finds the world dead to its truth, beauty, and goodness. Yet He does not shrink from His own task. The blind must be healed that they may see, and the dead must hear His voice that they may live. The work of creating the new age wherein all things are of God is transformed into a work of salvation from the man-made ruin that surrounds Him. Hence, while the most essential aspect is that He has the power to give sight to one whose very nature is blindness, to raise from the dead one who has been buried in complete hopelessness, there is also the conflict with what is not of God. Chapters seven and eight, which tell of it, do not attract us as the rest of the Gospel does, but they also are of its essence. So also for us the life of faith, service and love must be united with a vow of renunciation of the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.

The Christian world is our world. It is a world redeemed by Christ and reigned over by Him. He goes forth conquering and to conquer, and the white-robed armies of heaven follow Him. He has "power o'er this dark world to lighten it and power o'er this dead world to make it live". But it is not yet the end of the process. In St. John the future of it occupies but a small space; but it is simply not true that he disregards it. "I go to prepare

a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am, ye may be also." The High-Priestly prayer is only in its preface an anticipation of the glory of His Ascension. As we read on we hear in it, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them", "I will that where I am, they also may be with Me". His last recorded thought is "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" as the Apocalypse ends with "Amen, come Lord Jesus".

We must avoid thinking of Jesus as a Man who lived for thirty-three years nineteen centuries ago. He is a Divine Manhood who is the Lord of the whole process—of its first creation, of its present tragical operation, and of its final consummation still hidden from our knowledge. There is no way for us to fathom the mystery, any more than the Israel of the Old Testament could fathom the "I am" which is the name of God. We may, however, imitate their reverence for it.

THE PROLOGUE

(i. 1-18)

When John, urged by his friends and inspired by the Holy Spirit, sat down to begin his book, he had one purpose in his mind: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God". Since it was a Gospel that he had been persuaded to undertake, he had one example or model in the Gospel of St. Mark. What, under these circumstances, was the aim of the Prologue? The Apostles themselves came to believe in Christ by being with Him, continually watching what He did, hearing what He said. Some of these experiences were to be John's subject; but a book would be a poor substitute for that which Christ had revealed to him and the rest. Readers would need a guide for their meditations. For that reason, the Prologue is a portrait of Christ, as the Apostles, with their special opportunity, had learned Him to be.

There was a second reason for it. For a generation in Jerusalem and Judea, St. John had not needed to explain what he meant when he spoke of God. His hearers claimed to know the God of Israel, as they had been taught through the Old Testament history. But heathen Greeks, not least if they had been trained in philosophy, had no such foundation. They must be reminded that Jesus was the Son of that God who was "one Lord, and there was no one else beside Him". Heaven and earth, and all that had happened in them, were under His control. He was their Creator; He was a Life in the midst of them. They had no Light to guide them except the Light of His Life which lighteneth every man.

Verses 1-5 of the Prologue tell us about the Eternal Word. He is shown as eternal because at the beginning of all creation He *was*. All through the eighteen verses, the emphatic *was* turns up in contrast with all that was made, came to be, became or appeared. The Word belongs to Eternity, in comparison with which all heaven and earth are incidental. We make things because they will be useful to us—the carpenter's making; or because they will have intrinsic value and are pleasing—the

artist's work; or because we would reproduce ourselves in at first a baby form, the parental impulse. St. John will tell us of created usefulness, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"; of created loveliness, "God so loved the world"; of created sons, in the Prologue, verse 12. This was part of the contents, we suppose, of that Word "towards God" (it is quite English to say, "let me have a word *with* you"), which is the Divine Fellowship within the Unity of God. It is also the only part known to us and our one concern.

A Word may give form to an idea or thought, and so express wisdom; or it may give utterance to a command, and reveal will and energy. In the Old Testament, and therefore here, the second of these is the true meaning. As Dr. E. F. Scott has said, "The Word is regarded throughout as the expression of God's Will and power, the self-revelation of His inward Nature. It does not represent the Divine reason, but the Divine energy. Its sovereign attribute is Life, the life which it derives from God, and transmits to men. . . . John preserves the essential Hebrew conception of the living, quickening Word."

In verse 4 we come to the assertion that, "In the Word is Life." There are two modern descriptions of life in common use. One is Herbert Spencer's, that life is the power of correspondence with the environment. A living body keeps up a continual, or periodic, action on its surrounding bit of world, such as breathing or feeding. It receives also from the world feelings, information, instinctive urgings, and so on. These give-and-take correspondences are the witness to life, sometimes used to test whether it is present or has left its body dead. On the other hand, later books dwell rather on the fact that life is "activity proceeding from within the living creature". The two descriptions come to the same thing. For Spencer has to use the word "power" and so introduces the in-dwelling source; and "activity" in the second form implies action on the environment. It does not, however, suggest the reception of sensations or stimuli from without, which is of course a weakness.

A good illustration of John's statement that in the Word there is life is given in *Isaiah* lv. 10-11, "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and

giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The parallel here described between it and Nature points to both having their source in God. But Isaiah is actually saying that miracles do happen. God sends forth His Word to accomplish something that would not happen in the ordinary processes of Nature. The whole course of the world is controlled and made to work by the ever-present Will and action of God. The Archbishops' Committee "On Doctrine in the Church of England" said very well, "The thought that God is eternal and the thought that He is concerned with and about events of history are both necessary." Notice that "concerned with" means that He is active in our world, while "concerned about" means that He cares whether an event furthers His purpose for it or rebels against it.

Lastly in this section we hear that the Life of the Word is the Light of men. "Light" means the revelation by which we are enabled to steer a right course in our lives. When St. John means the brilliance and beauty or purity of God's self-revelation, he uses a different word which we translate "glory", as in verse 14. It is by the active correspondence of God with our life that we know Him and knowledge of God becomes knowledge of His Will for us and His Will is the only true guide of our behaviour. In his first Epistle (i. 5) St. John seems to make this his whole message. "This then is the message which we have heard from Him and announce unto you, that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all."

(a) Light shines all the time. "The true Light illumines every man." It is possible, however, for us to reject it. We may be blind to it, as the lower creatures are. We may be prevented from seeing it by intervening obstacles. As the sun every night is hidden by the earth, or on occasions by clouds, so we may set our minds on getting what is contrary to the Will of God. We may deliberately close our eyes to the Light, and choose dark paths.

(b) Light is not only visible, but makes the world visible. So to leave God out makes for us a world which is a constant disappointment, enigma, and temptation.

(c) In seeing, it is the Light itself that is reflected from objects

and directed to our eyes. The object is impassive. Thus we are reminded that, for the guidance of life, every soul needs to seek the Lord directly.

Verse 5 suddenly assumes the present moment of writing. "The Light is now shining: the darkness did not overpower it." The tense of the last-mentioned verb would not fit "comprehended it not", which would imply a continuous ignorance. It should refer to a definite past action, and that must be the Crucifixion, by which the darkness tried to destroy the Light of the World.

Verses 6-8. Through Christ's victory "the darkness is passing away and the true Light shineth". The disciples must become His witnesses. But first of all there was the witness of the Baptist. Chronology perhaps, but especially the honour due to his former leader and teacher, makes John mention him now. A man, commissioned by God—his name also John—with a vocation to bear witness and, as the witness to the first Apostles, the primary Evangelist of the Christian world. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that through him all men believe. Of course he was not himself the Light. When John wrote there was no need to tell us that. But the affectionate way he refers to him, the reverent admiration of the farewell in chapter three, the record of Christ's appreciation in v. 33-35, all point to a devotion that at first, before he met Jesus, had made John wonder whether the Baptist might not be the Christ. He is impatient to get on to the witness of John. But he realizes that something must be said about the darkness.

Verses 9-11. John's Greek does become trying at times. What is the connection of thought in these verses? I have separated them from verse 8, but the possibility is that verse 9 is a condensed report of the Baptist's early prophecy of the Coming One, added for explanation to verse 8. I reject it because of the emphatic *was* with which verse 9 begins. From the Creation until the Incarnation the ages are not a blank, as regards the Word which is the Light. As I quoted from Isaiah, He was constantly accomplishing that which was the Father's pleasure, "ever coming into the world". He was indeed the Light which "illumines, enlightens, shines upon every man, whether the man responds or not".

Verses 12-13. John has made a general statement which is not strictly correct though quite justifiable. There are many exceptions to the rejection of Christ which was the national attitude. In these the Word reveals Himself, not only by guidance and power in detail, but by an entirely new stage in human history and in the fulfilment of God's purpose in creation. Those who receive Christ (explained as belief in Him and His revelation), receive authority to become children of God. It is, of course, not by a physical operation, but by a spiritual grace. There is no question any longer of a privileged race, differences of "blood", or of a new development of natural impulse. It is not even a higher aspiration of man at his best. The new status, which is a divine reality, is a gift of God. Because of the new relation with God, an elevation of character, of understanding, of hope, becomes possible, and is indeed the proper fruit of the initial grace. This will be expressed in later passages of the Gospel in various ways. The disciples are born anew of water and the Holy Spirit. They are not of this world even as Christ is not of this world. They possess an eternal life and their destiny is to become like Christ, seeing Him as He is. The world will not recognize them any more than it could know Christ. They will not perhaps walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they have been called. There is in fact a tragedy of Christendom as there was of Judaism, all the more sad because they not only are called, but really are children of God. (*I St. John* iii.1.)

Verse 14. In the picture of those who are in Christ the Prologue reaches its first climax. The second is contained in verse 14. For about two years Jesus "camped" with them—"sojourned" expresses its transitoriness more reverently—and they saw the Word who had become "flesh". Elsewhere flesh means collective humanity rather than a single person. He had become human. No writer emphasizes His humanity so strongly as John does, and that not merely as an observed fact. To confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh is, in the Epistles, the test of a true and informed faith. They saw Him and saw that He was God. As in our friendships we see the body and thereby know the invisible person who gives it meaning, so beyond the human person they knew that He was the Son of God. It is important that in this first and most impressive witness, they do not refer to miracles,

or to the authority of His speech, or to wonders like the Transfiguration. In their daily intimacy they had seen that He was Divine. I believe that the glory of the Son "from beside the Father" (v. 14)—from the presence of the Father—means that too. It is the same as in verse 18, the Son "who is in the bosom of the Father". At meals that position was not a mark of honour but a grant of intimacy, and initiation of fellowship. It is described fully in verses 19-20, where we shall consider it further. The witness here is not to the Incarnation, which they had not in any sense "seen", but to the fact that His life was constantly with the Father, from union in whom He turned from time to time to them for ordinary intercourse or the revelation of truth. The word "glory" means, as I said above, the self-revelation of the Light in its fullness of beauty and truth.

Notice that the great witness is not given as St. John's own view. It was what the Twelve saw and doubtless spoke of to each other. John's silence about himself is not a natural or asserted humility. When he wrote it was no longer possible for him to remain anonymous. The concealment expresses a determination to hand on the witness of the Apostles, which was already becoming the united witness of the whole Church. To that extent at least the Muratorian fragment¹ is a reliable guide.

Verses 15-18. The Baptist appears a second time and still prematurely, for his witness in verse 15 is merely a version of that in verse 30, where the occasion, the presence of Christ, the addition of the baptism of the Spirit, unite to give a concrete event described in the manner of the Evangelist. In the Prologue the "fullness" of Christ is the proper theme. Whether it be the Baptist, with his spirit of prophecy, or the Apostles with their direct sight of Jesus, human teachers are dependent upon that fullness. They are but broken lights reflecting the perfect Light.

The word *charis*, "grace", occurs only in John's writings here and in the Salutation, "grace, mercy and truth", as in Paul's pastoral Epistles. It is, we remember, a very favourite word of Paul. Furthermore, the comparison of Law and Gospel and the view that both are of God, but that the Gospel is greater and more blessed than the Law, are quite Pauline. The hint that St. John used the pastorals, which are based on St. Paul, the

¹ See also p. 215 below.

former Apostle of Asia, for help in his own conduct of Church affairs, is at least interesting. "Grace", we are told, represents the "mercy" of the Old Testament, and it is generally replaced in John by "love"—a natural pedigree. In verse 17 the article is used with "grace" and "truth", referring back (as the grammar book said) to the anarthrous use in verse 14. "That grace and truth which, as I just said, existed in Christ in complete fullness." He does not mean that neither of them existed in other forms and degrees before Christ.

So we reach the third and final climax. I do not think we should change only-begotten Son to only-begotten God, as the Revised Version suggests. The evidence for the latter is considerable, but localized in Alexandria, and it is just the sort of error that Alexandria would jump at. But the addition of "who is in the bosom of the Father" is too human a figure of speech to be suggested by *Theos*.

John would never allow us to think of the Son of God as the supreme conception in our theology. We must not stop at verse 14. "The Son can do nothing except what He sees the Father doing" (v. 19). "The word which ye hear is not mine but the Father's. The Father hath given to the Son to have life in Himself." There is no inferiority. The glory is equal, the majesty co-eternal. There is just secondness, as one expects in One who reveals Himself as the Son.

THE FIRST WEEK OF THE MINISTRY

(i. 19-ii. 13)

Surprisingly, the narrative of Christ's ministry begins like a diary. We are told of seven consecutive days, each with its own event, and linked to the others by "the next day", or "on the third day". There is nothing like it in the New Testament except the story of St. Paul's voyages in the closing chapter of the Acts. It is quite likely that St. Luke did keep a diary, he was that sort of man; but St. John had no need of pen and ink to aid his remembrance of the week which altered his occupation, his religion, and his whole life. The nine days of Holy Week and the Passion are in strong contrast to this first week. We know only from Mark that Christ entered Jerusalem on a Sunday, and John tells only indirectly that He was crucified on a Friday by mentioning that the next day was the Sabbath.

Another surprise is that we can date the first week with a great measure of probability. Dr. J. K. Fotheringham and other astronomers have practically proved that the year of the Crucifixion was A.D. 30. If the Ministry lasted just over two years, the first Passover was that of A.D. 28, which fell on Tuesday, 30 March. Dr. Edersheim assures us that the custom of choosing Wednesday for the wedding of a maiden was so firmly fixed that we can safely date the Cana wedding on a Wednesday, which will be 25 February, thirty-four days (the year being a leap-year) before the Passover. The journey to Jerusalem and an arrival there in good time would leave about three weeks for the visit of "not many days" to Capernaum. We must also notice that the Eastern Church, when it fixed on 6 January for the Epiphany, their feast of Christ's Baptism, must have made the same calculation that we have done. There are forty-two days from 6 January to 18 February, just enough for forty days in the wilderness. Admittedly none of these dates is certain except the Passover. Their credibility depends on the neatness of the result. Nevertheless we shall assume correctness.

Traditionally Christ's Baptism had taken place in the south-

ernmost part of the Jordan, in about the latitude of Jericho. When Christ came back from the wilderness, He would seek the Baptist there. It was necessary for Him to tell John about the plans He had formed, for on the surface, as we shall learn from chapter three, they had the appearance of rival missions. So He continued His journey some forty miles, to "Bethany beyond Jordan". There is no doubt that this is the right reading (*St. John* i. 28), for Origen confesses that, not being able to find a Bethany in the district, he conjectured that Bethabara was meant, and altered the text in consequence. He had no right to do that, and he should have known that in the rough story of Palestine small villages have often disappeared without leaving a trace. Bethabara also has disappeared long since. The position assigned to it in modern maps is inferred from the distance it must have been from Cana. So we look in them for Bethabara and say, Bethany cannot have been far from there, but certainly on the east side of the Jordan.

The description of all this part of the river, called by Arabs the "Ghor" or ravine, is repellent. It is, of course, hundreds of feet below sea-level. There is a winding bed from two hundred yards to a mile wide, the whole of which "in the time of harvest" may be submerged under the river. At other times, when the flood abates, the river occupies only a still deeper ditch, some ninety feet wide; but the whole of the Ghor is covered and darkened with a tangled growth of oleander, broom, cane and tamarisk, among which rank herbs and flowers appear in the spring. There are ugly mud banks, from two to twenty-five feet high, and shingle foul with ooze and slime. Dead driftwood is everywhere in sight. Large trees lie about, overthrown; the exposed roots and the trunks of trees still standing are smeared with mud. It has always been the resort of wild beasts. Lions have not been seen for eight hundred years; but wild boars abound, and there are leopards and a kind of wolf. This description, condensed from George Adam Smith's *Geography*, makes us sure that a worse place for baptisms and open-air preaching would be hard to find. The village itself was on higher ground, and there must have been many tributary streams dashing down from the hills of Basham or Decapolis, which could be used for the baptisms.

At Bethany it is possible (see verse 26) that Christ and the

Baptist had already met and talked, when a deputation from the rulers at Jerusalem arrived to investigate the Baptist's teaching.

THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY

(i. 19-28)

The strength of the Roman Empire lay in its policy of decentralization. Rome was satisfied if a province submitted peacefully to her supremacy, paid sufficient taxes to Caesar, and also maintained a trade providing food and other necessities for the Roman populace. Local government varied from province to province, preserving, where it was safe, a good deal of the customs of their previous independence. Thus the Sanhedrin, or Council of Seventy, at Jerusalem, had real power in Judea, and in matters of Jewish religion all Jews acknowledged its authority. The members of the council were twenty-nine chief priests and forty-one elders, rabbis, or other laymen of distinction. These were mostly Pharisees, while the chief priests were Sadducees; the party differences seem sometimes to have prevented united action upon which they were really of one mind. The Pharisees, according to their lights, were sincerely and actively religious, while the Sadducees were essentially secular. Socially the Pharisees mixed with the populace, took note of whether they lived in obedience to the Mosaic law, and are therefore prominent in their hostility to Christ. We shall find that the Sadducees, who affected an aristocratic aloofness, saw in Christ a political danger, and behaved with the brutality that often goes with fear.

It was the Pharisees who sent a deputation to the Baptist, mainly to discover what he meant by his rite of baptism. That the messengers were priests and Levites (not of course the chief priests but juniors or men of humble status) may be because the enquiry was a ritual one, or merely as a polite acknowledgment of John's priestly rank. When a similar deputation was sent to investigate Christ's teaching (*St. Mark* vii. 1, *St. John* vi. 41, 52), it was composed of scribes because it was a question of doctrine. It is safe to assume that on both occasions the report was passed on to the Council for whatever action seemed requisite.

Who introduced the question whether the Baptist claimed to be the Messiah? The Evangelist is silent about it. No report of an interview or discussion is ever *verbatim*, and this is very true

of our Gospel. I see no reason for the Baptist to speak about the Messiah, but it was the mission of the priests and Levites to do so. They were probably the same sort of men as the Sadducees, of whom Mark wrote in xii. 18-27. There the law of Moses is spoken of flippantly, if not blasphemously, and they show gross ignorance about the Resurrection life. Similarly, here their comrades seem to have introduced the Messiah, and to have done it with a sneer, such as "You do not, we suppose, imagine yourself to be that Messiah whom fools expect to come?" I know that I am not entitled to give free utterance to a guess, but something of the kind would account for the curious sentence John gives us for his namesake's answer. It could be translated, "and he agreed, and did not contradict them; and he agreed that I am not the Messiah". But he may have lost his temper if they really spoke irreverently of the Messiah who "had always been his First of all". His later answers to them are short, and still shorter, and then they in turn get impatient. "Who are you? We have got to take back an answer to the Pharisees who sent us." "I? A voice of one shouting in the desert, 'Make ready the road for the Lord.'—For 'the Lord' is how Isaiah (and I) speak reverently of the Messiah." They change the subject. They would.

The Baptism was for the messengers their most important charge. But the Baptist really tells them nothing about it. He brushes it aside as a mere symbol, and ends the discussion with the information that One infinitely more important is already in their midst, though unrevealed to them, and indeed to all men except himself. In Josephus (a Pharisee himself) we get a similar treatment of the water baptism. "John (the Baptist) was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another, and piety towards God, and so come to Baptism: For that the washing would be acceptable to God, if they made use of it, not for the remission of some sin, but for the purification of the body: Supposing still that the soul was purified already by righteousness." It was so perhaps that the Pharisees (who did not come to John's baptism) deprecated the rite.

FRIDAY, 20 FEBRUARY

(i. 29-34)

This paragraph is the only one which really tells of the Baptist's witness to Jesus as the Christ, apart from the Baptism itself, Mark's account of which is, as usual, assumed to be known. That he was a good man who preached on righteousness would not account for his eminence in the New Testament or for the Church's acceptance of it. We find in the passage two elements. In verses 29-31 the Baptist, on seeing Jesus approach him, introduces Him to his disciples as the Person about whom he has told them under the title of the Coming One. Until he baptized Him John himself had not been able to identify Him, had not indeed known Him at all. Verses 32-43 are in a different key. Instead of the shout of his proclamation, he speaks calmly and rationally about the manner in which God had given him a sign by which he would know the Coming One when He came. It was one of those miracles which I have called unprovable, and we must believe it on John's testimony and by knowledge of its fulfilment. Naturally He who was to baptize with the Spirit would Himself be endued with the Spirit. John the Baptist had conversed with Christ after the baptism, and again during the last two or three days, and he could say from his own experience that while he might have doubted the signs, there could be no doubt about the "the glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father", which the Evangelist learned to know so well, and which the Baptist recognized even at first sight. This second witness may not only have been given later in the day. It may have been spoken only to those disciples who were prepared for it.

One cannot but speculate about what the Baptist meant by calling Christ the Lamb of God. No certain solution of the secret is possible. Does it mean God's Lamb, a Lamb sent from God, or one devoted to God? The Baptist was entitled to seek a priestly life in which sacrifice would be his chief duty, but he seems to have definitely turned away from it. He was a student of Isaiah, and a reference to the suffering servant would be natural. The meekness of Christ's manner, which contrasted with John's expectations as recorded in *Matthew* iii and Luke's parallel, may also be considered. In *Revelation* v. 5-6 the angel draws attention to the lion of the tribe of Judah, and a lion was what Jews

expected; but "I looked and saw a lamb standing, as though it had been slain." There too we have an element of surprise.

SATURDAY, 21 FEBRUARY

(i. 35-39)

For them it was of course the Sabbath. In the morning they had been at the Synagogue service, or if Bethany was too small to have a synagogue, there would be, as St. Paul found at Philippi (*Acts* xvi. 13) a place of prayer by the riverside. By the tenth hour they had completed with the Baptist the less formal prayers "at the ninth hour". There is no hint of the crowd that we generally associate with him. He and the two disciples had no duties to attend to, nor need their conversation be continued. The Sabbath calm breathes in the atmosphere and rests upon them. How much we have lost by abandoning it only quite elderly people can now testify.

Jesus passes by, as the Baptist notes, and with a common impulse the two follow Him. He would not be going further than a Sabbath day's journey. He was in fact going to the lodging-place He had found for Himself, and He invites them to it. They stayed with Him for the remainder of the day, and to as late an hour, we think, as they decently could. We imagine that what Christ said was "the silence of eternity interpreted by love". For us it is an unbroken silence. All we know is that next morning Andrew proclaims "We have found the Messiah", and John assents by characteristic silence.

SUNDAY, 22 FEBRUARY

(i. 41-42)

Although St. John mentions most of his fellow Apostles he tells us very little about them. None the less it is rather surprising that the one thing reported about Peter's introduction to Christ is that Christ gave that name to Simon, son of John. The Evangelist likes to tell of Christ's power to read men's nature, and here it is revealed that Simon ought to be called Cephas, the rock-man, which is generally thought to imply an immobility or steadfastness. In fact that is hinted when, in contrast to the desertion of most of the Galileans, Peter's loyalty stands firm (vi. 68-69). Our usual judgment about him is that he is the

impulsive, impressible man who will cry out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord", or "Bid me to come to Thee, on the water", or "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head". It may be that steadfastness is not what is most in Christ's mind. Most of the New Testament references to rock imply that it makes a good foundation for a building, and symbolizes a character that can be used for establishing the teaching of Christ, or the institution of the Church. "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church." It is built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (*Eph. ii. 20*). Christ sees Peter as being already what he afterwards became, the acknowledged leader of the Apostles, and the exclamations quoted above are quite compatible with it, as are the sleep in Gethsemane, the denial, and the *Quo Vadis* legend.

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.

The new name came into use only after the Ascension of our Lord. The Gospels use it in narrative as soon as they have said that Christ gave it; but Peter when addressed is still Simon, so that we have "He said unto Peter, 'Simon, sleepest thou?'" He had become Cephas in Jerusalem when Paul first knew him there, and so the Aramaic word occurs in *Galatians* and *Corinthians*. But among Greeks he was Peter. Only John with his deep affection for the friend of his youth cannot let Simon go, and his references in the Gospel are to Simon Peter, with Peter only "for short" in the sentences following. This alone may be held to prove that it was John who wrote the Gospel.

MONDAY, 23 FEBRUARY

(i. 43-51)

Christ decided to leave for Cana in the afternoon for the journey would take him more than a day. But first He found Philip and invited him to accompany Himself and the others. Philip was of Bethsaida, the one known as Bethsaida of Galilee. There

had been another on or near the site where the Herods had built Julias. The compound name Bethsaida-Julias seems to be the invention of modern authors. Josephus and probably most people called it simply Julias; but it is not surprising if natives of the district clung to the original name, which meant "fishermen's town". Scholars say there could not be two Bethsaidas because that would lead to confusion, and comparison of the Gospels shows that some confusion really did happen. Living on Port Phillip I am reminded that it made room for Fishermen's Point at Queenscliff and Fishermen's Bend at the mouth of the Yarra. Bethsaida of Galilee may have been a suburb of Capernaum, for that is where Peter's home seems really to have been. Fishermen often congregate in one particular quarter.

It is not clear why our Lord specially needed Philip. John mentions him twice more, both times in connection with Andrew. First, Christ puzzles him with the question, "Whence shall we buy bread?" Later the Greeks who want to see Jesus puzzle him about the propriety of it, and he consults Andrew. In the end he became Bishop of Hierapolis, a good town in Asia Minor, but not a wide enough sphere for one of the Twelve. Perhaps Christ called him because he would hesitate to put himself forward. Perhaps also he consulted Nathanael to get advice for himself rather than to evangelize his friend. It may teach us that Christ has a place for men of such a temperament as well as outstanding personalities like Peter and John.

Nathanael may very well be the proper name of Bartholomew. The identification is early though it does not go back to the New Testament. Christ hails him as an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile. Israel was Jacob's new name when the guile had been purged out of him. Christ's final words in verse 51 are addressed to all the disciples, and they also are founded on the story of Jacob and his vision of the ladder set up at Bethel. The fulfilment of His promise began with that seeing in Him the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, which we have read at 1. 14. But at present it is spoken of as future.

Three or four months later Christ came a second time from Judea, by way of Samaria, to Cana, and He would pass near, if He did not visit, the scene of Jacob's vision. This has suggested to me that it was on that second journey, when His mind was

full of the story, that He met Nathanael. John's custom of preserving the time-sequence would not prevent him from discarding it in order to deal with Nathanael's call along with the others. There is no other place in the Gospel where it could come in so well. John does not actually date Nathanael's coming as he does those of the earlier ones, but it must be conceded that he does not exclude it from the "diary", as he could easily have done. It turns out in *St. John* xxi that Cana was Nathanael's home town, so that (on my view) the fig-tree was in his own garden, and presumably the resort to it for meditation was an element in his home life. Our Lord did not read the character of Nathanael in his face as He did Peter's. It was by a more mysterious awareness of the prayer-life which Nathanael thought was utterly private. This accounts for the shock which Christ's more than human knowledge gave him, even if by June the news of His miracles, including that at the marriage, had become known to Nathanael, as to everybody. It does make all the difference when the miracle comes right into one's own life, as it did for Peter when he cried, "Depart from me." There had, indeed, been no miracle that so penetrated to a man's soul. "Whence knowest Thou me?" The late date also destroys a grave difficulty in the early one. Nobody sits under a fig-tree in the winter, when its branches are leafless, either for shelter or privacy. And that would be the case, even in the Jordan valley, in February. The early date otherwise practically compels us to adopt the theory that the fig-tree is not a real one, but a symbol for a place of meditation, a theory for which I understand there is no evidence.

It is most important to note that the faith in Christ of which the first chapter speaks is one that has not freed itself from what the Jews of the period believed to be foretold in their scriptures. Christ was the Messiah, as Moses and the prophets conceived Him. He was sent from God. He could be hailed as Son of God and King of Israel. But mingled with what was true in that there was much that they still had to unlearn, such as belief that the old revelation was a completed one, and that the traditions of the elders were all correct interpretations of it. We do not all realize how much of untruth had to be washed from their minds. "Now are ye clean, through the word that I have spoken to you", was the conclusion reached at xv. 3.

WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY

(ii. 1-11)

Tuesday was wholly occupied by the uneventful journey; so also were parts of Monday and Wednesday, for from the supposed site of Bethany, the road to Cana is some forty miles. On Wednesday there was a wedding, for Wednesday was the "correct" day for a maiden's wedding. However much we hear about the Jews' legal divorces, the fact is that the rabbis treated marriage with great seriousness and good sense. The law was one thing, but what humanity, love, and high principles bid a man to do was quite different. Some thought that legally a wife might be divorced for a badly cooked dinner, but none approved of the action. On the whole they discountenanced divorce. It was a social duty to rejoice even with the wedding of strangers, when you fell in with the usual procession from the father's to the husband's house, where there were legal formalities and pious assurances of good-will, and, at the end, the feast. Feasting and rejoicing might continue for some days, even a week.

The wedding at Cana seems to have been on a fairly large scale. It is quite wrong to think of the family of Jesus as peasants. They would be in the same position as the "carpenters and builders" of our country towns. Zebedee was the head of a prosperous syndicate engaged upon the chief industry of the lake, with a large export trade. The wedding had many guests besides the ones mentioned. The six large waterpots for purifications indicate that the bridegroom and his friends (who probably lent some of them) were able to "do things properly". The "waiters" (*diakonoi*) were not all servants, but mostly friends, as in our country weddings. It must have been through misadventure that the wine ran short, for they would reckon on having a few extra guests. We discard the modern prejudice against so much wine, if indeed all the water was changed, which St. John does not say but does suggest; John was not interested enough in the detail to avoid ambiguity. There were just two things that he cared about.

(a) "The Mother of Jesus was there." So baldly, as if the bride and bridegroom were nobody, the story begins. Since that Sabbath when he first talked with Christ, He is the one Person about whom he wants to know all he can; and the One who can tell him most is His Mother. That, we must think, was what drew

them together during the day or days at Cana. In many of our lives an acquaintance begun on a sea voyage, or at a holiday resort, has become an enduring and sacred friendship. Something similar, though they were (we think) aunt and nephew, was the bond that strengthened during the next two years, until the scene at the Cross became possible. "Woman, behold thy Son" — "Behold Thy mother." Some have argued how St. John had the right to the privilege before the "brethren" or others. The right surely belonged to the man who could best sympathize with her sorrow, and bring to her ageing years a greater joy. What it meant to St. John is concealed under the veil of those first words, "The Mother of Jesus was there."

(b) By the miracle, Jesus manifested His glory. It means the startling truth of what He is—more than power, more than beneficent love, though it includes both of them. It means also the perfect rightness of the miraculous deed, that it is worthy of Him and characteristically reveals Him. But first there had been a momentary hesitation, as there is also before He works His second sign, and again before He raises up Lazarus, and as He meditates a visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. "My hour is not yet come", until He has communed with the Father. The principle is laid down at verse 19: "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He can see the Father doing", or bidding Him do. The stories of other miracles generally begin at a later stage, when "He Himself knew what He was going to do" (vi. 6).

The Mother understands and bids the "waiters" obey whatever he requires of them. They take the water that is made wine to the "governor of the feast", a rare word which elsewhere means a chief servant, someone like the butler in a large English household. This time the director of the other voluntary helpers is some trusted friend. He is responsible for the quality of the wine used, so he tastes it with surprised appreciation, which he expresses like a true butler. The secrets of the kitchen are not told to the guests, though they become known later. John, though present, writes just as the Mother may have told him, and from her point of view. Only the disciples, believing the miracle, believe in Christ more than before. The quietness with which it is all done adds to the beauty of the miracle.

Verse 12 is outside the week but needs a note. The visit to Capernaum bridges the period of some five weeks between the wedding and the Passover in Jerusalem. For the fishermen this was the busiest time of the year, for they had to catch and cure all the fish they could, which they would sell to merchants who retailed it to the crowds that came from all countries to keep the Passover. For the "brethren" it was a fresh start in their new home at Capernaum. The removal from little Nazareth to the much more important city would be a business advance, and "carpenters and builders" would expect plenty of work.

THE FIRST PASSOVER

THE TEMPLE MARKET

(ii. 13-22)

Apart altogether from the misunderstanding of Mark's arrangement of his Gospel, which I have explained previously, the "cleansing of the Temple", as it is called, certainly belongs to the outset of Christ's ministry. It then becomes an expression of Christ's indignation at the priests' countenance of a practice that brought them gain, but at the same time, as in Eli's day, "caused them to abhor the offering of the Lord". In Holy Week, Mark's position for it, Christ had just used the barren fig-tree as a symbol of the doom which the Jews had brought upon their city and themselves. "Why should they be stricken any more? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." In the first position it is the protest of the perfect Man, who is the Divine King ruling in righteousness: in the second it is no more than a threat of judgment, and even for that it comes too late.

The origin of the market can be traced back to an excessive control of worship by the governing priests. The sacrifice must be offered on a particular day in the one place where men ought to worship. The priests also must determine whether the lamb was without blemish, and they made it depend on small points of criticism. Over-centralization as usual produced monopoly, and monopoly led to extortion. The whole business was hateful to its victims, while the Pharisees hated it more rationally and therefore more bitterly. The scene created by Christ must have been a shocking one in its noisy violence and confusion. Cattle and sheep ran aimlessly, they knew not why or whither. Men shouted and the animals too were vocal. Christ also ran, waving the whip of authority. He overturned the money-changers' tables and sent the coins rattling and rolling every way. The disciples were terribly scandalized, and could only console themselves by quoting from a Messianic psalm, "The zeal of Thy House shall consume Me." We can accept their thought in St. John's account; but if it were done in Holy Week it would seem to us tawdry and spectacular.

Of course Christ was arrested. St. Mark (xi. 27-33) may be correct in dating it next morning; but if He got away for a time it was not to escape responsibility. It is also Mark that says definitely that He had to deal with a formal court, for that is implied in his phrase, "the chief priests and the scribes and the elders". John's description also can mean that, though it is ambiguous, since the "Jews" might have acted informally.

But as usual St. John assumes that his readers know St. Mark's Gospel. The question by the court is in Mark, "By what authority doest Thou these things?" It is expressed so for the sake of the Gentile converts; but St. John corrects it (perhaps feeling rather critical of Mark at the moment) to "What sign showest Thou?" That is thoroughly Jewish and the real form. It leads up to a prophecy which St. John explains in its most natural meaning as a reference to the Resurrection. He would perhaps allow that it could also refer to Christ's mystical body, the Church; for a double meaning is to be expected in a prophecy. To the court, however, it seems nonsense, and even St. John acknowledges that he only understood it when it was fulfilled. Mark's version of the question also has a sequel which must be authentic. This claim to authority, if He makes it, must be supported by a second witness, and there is only one whom He can produce, that is, the Baptist. Mark, supposing that the enquiry is dated after John the Baptist's death, cannot give Christ's reason for naming him, and it utterly spoils his report. Christ is perfectly serious about it, for unless they believe that the Baptist is a true prophet, it will be useless to summon him. The court is afraid to give a decision. Virtually their refusal to do so may be explained by our experience of what our own Ministers of the Crown would say, "The matter is under consideration. Last month we sent to enquire into it. But at this busy Passover season we have not yet had opportunity to come to a decision. It is not lost sight of." So Christ has no supporter available. "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." My account sounds like mere conjecture, but it is necessarily true to account for Nicodemus.

The same is true of Christ's release. Christ's action finds a sympathetic response in the hearts of the multitude, and (what was more serious) in some of the Pharisees of the Council. Caia-

phas does not start a controversy with the odds against him. After all, no permanent effect seems to exist, and the market is again in full swing. "Hush, hush" is the policy. Let the subject be dropped.

THE MIRACLES OF PASSOVER WEEK

(11. 23-5)

That Christ worked miracles from the first, as Mark indicated that he did in Galilee, needed to be stated to show that the people of Jerusalem had equal opportunities with the Galileans, a point that Mark's Gospel would not suggest to them. The truth was (iv. 45) that it was the miracles at the Passover that made the Galileans expect them. In both districts Christ showed distaste at being compelled to use the method, which was in fact abnormal. It was necessary as signifying, "Consider this, ye that forget God", and it was often inadequate because the healing, intended to be a sign, was regarded as an end in itself.

Verse 23. Christ was in Jerusalem, and the Passover dates the paragraph, while still more exactly "during the feast" means during the week following the Sacrifice itself. Many believed in Christ's name—that is, so far as they grasped the revelation of Him; but that was only what they took notice of as implied by "the signs".

Verse 24. In consequence, Jesus manifested a certain reserve towards them; He was not excited; He did not immediately rejoice over them as disciples. He knew too much about them all. The word for "know" here and in the following verse should mean "know by observation, as men get to know each other", and therefore the "all" is better understood as all those about Him, rather than as all mankind.

Verse 25 on the contrary, uses a definite article with the noun "man". It is often understood to imply "each man that He dealt with"—"the" man of the moment. But that is rather beyond St. John's Greek style (if it is allowable as an idiom). The simple grammar book style requires "He did not live in need that someone should bear witness (i.e., give Him information) about Man: for He Himself was gaining knowledge of what Manhood's nature is." He was getting it by experience, first, of those He met; but might it not also be of what He was conscious of in

Himself? Some critics write as if Christ being man had to learn how to be God. But the truth is rather that being God He had to learn how to be man, with all the limitations belonging to man's nature. Does not the reader feel that the miracles and the people are not really interesting? Christ stands out as the subject. Even when he becomes obscure, being an amateur writer, St. John does not vary from that principle.

THE INSTRUCTION OF NICODEMUS

(iii. 1-21)

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of the great Council, one of those called "scribes" by Mark and "lawyers" by Luke, accustomed to undertake the exposition of the Mosaic Law and to hear himself addressed as "Rabbi". Probably he had been one of the judges when Jesus was charged with riotous behaviour in the Temple court. He came to Jesus at night, which needs no comment, since it was customary for rabbis to pay each other long visits in the evenings. It would be more comfortable if Jesus was lodged in a private house, perhaps the one which John used as a home when he visited Jerusalem (see pp. 26-7 *supra*). John, we may suppose, was present at the interview.

Verse 2. Nicodemus introduces himself as a representative of a number of people (*we* know) who have become interested in Christ's teaching as well as His miracles. "Rabbi", he says, with flattering politeness, "we know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for your miracles are of such a kind that they must be wrought in God", a thoughtful and sound opinion for anyone whose knowledge extended just as far as his. Those in whose name he spoke were the other members of the Council who thought as he did, men like Joseph or Gamaliel. They were genuinely impressed. The unknown man had the courage of his opinions; but his methods were as strange as they were bold. What especially was his relation with the Baptist, whose name He had introduced? This matter was still on the agenda of the Council, and therefore important. As members of the Council they knew that, and John, as usual, assumes that his readers are familiar with everything in Mark's Gospel, though he did not himself repeat it. Why did Christ then ask, "The baptism of John—is it from heaven or of men?"

The difficulty of this section is that it consists of great sayings of which the context and the links are not reported. Somehow or other the conversation has worked round to Christ's words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God is not much mentioned in the Fourth Gospel, but it was one of the Baptist's chief themes. In verse 5 we have "born of water and Spirit", also prominent in the Baptist's later teaching. What unrecorded discussion led to this teaching? To be of any use the interview must have been a long one. Nicodemus and his friends are anxious for full knowledge. For Christ the opportunity is one to be used; it is nothing less than an extremely friendly approach from the Jewish rulers. John's few verses fail to give even a good précis of what was said. We meet with similar reports in our newspapers, especially those concerned with religion. Probably both examples have the same cause—complete ignorance and bewilderment. The reporter listens carefully to statements so unfamiliar that he loses the thread of the argument. Now and then a fine sentence strikes him and he makes a note of it, or it sticks in his memory. But his report becomes disjointed and unintelligible. It is so with the Evangelist. Even the learned Nicodemus is at times puzzled. Can we wonder that the fisherman is much more so? He has really known Christ only six weeks, and most of that time he has been full of his own fishing business. We shall never find him so at a loss again. Two months of close intercourse with Christ in Judea will enable him to reconstruct what Christ says to the woman at the well, at which he was not present. When long afterwards he wrote the Gospel he could have filled it in with his usual lucidity, but that he will not do. Such and such are the words Christ spoke to Nicodemus, and which he still remembers. He is right. If we use what we know, and sympathetically add what that implies, we shall get near enough to the truth for our need.

Nicodemus had sought the interview and it was his part to direct its course, at all events in its first stage. He may have asked frankly why Christ asked that question about the authority of John's teaching and baptizing. Somehow he leads Christ to say that the Kingdom of God is for those who are born again, and therefore are a new and different kind of man. John says this in the Prologue (verse 13). The children of God must be begotten

of God. He says it in *I John* iii. 1-3: "We are the children of God, and therefore the world knows us not, as it knew not Christ. We do not know what our destiny will be, but we shall be like Him." That implies that we must sanctify ourselves even as He sanctified Himself. The newness is the present fact to dwell upon.

Verse 4. How can a man be born again? Nicodemus is at least not stupid. He expects us to grant the obvious physical impossibility. In that case Christ is speaking figuratively, and should explain the figure. The stress of the question is on "how". If the stress were on "can" it would mean a contradiction of Christ, namely, that a man *cannot* wipe out from his mental life all established habits of thought, all expression of the past, with its controlling pre-suppositions, any more than his physical organism can become a baby again. Christ's answer in verse 5 does not inform us which way Nicodemus inclined, but its repetition of verse 3 with a hint of the direction in which an explanation should be sought shows that He does not regard the Pharisee as fixed in his opinions and unteachable.

Water means nothing in religion except symbolically, and the Bible, the Church, and indeed the thinking human world, agree that it symbolizes the cleansing of life and character. (There is another symbolism which deals with the water we drink. That will come in the next chapter.) Christ and the Baptist agree that there are two baptisms, with water and with Spirit; but while the Baptist contrasts them and depreciates his own because it cannot do what the Spirit must do, Christ unites them together as co-ordinates in the new birth. Whatever grace is in a sacrament is divine action, but having no part in the material, earthly nature of human beings. It cannot enter into our living activity. To associate an outward sign with the spiritual birth is to unite the latter with human action and the works of the natural man. For these make life as we at present live it. We cannot create the new birth, but we can seek baptism and so seek the birth from God. The religious aspirations and the good deeds done in Christ are still those of an earthly being. They belong to the water as well as to the Spirit. Our spiritual life is a sacrament of what is to come. We receive the earnest of the Spirit while we still await the redemption of our body. The way of salvation is "to confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord" as well

as to "believe in our heart that God hath raised Him from the dead".

Verse 8 is a famous parabolic saying. I think there is no doubt that it is a parable and that we must translate "the wind bloweth" and not "the Spirit breatheth". The wind is mysterious in being invisible, uncontrollable, and yet obviously real. Its sound and its power are known facts; but we know not whence it cometh and whither it goeth. This expression occurs again at viii. 14 and in part at vii. 27 and ix. 29. To know the source and the destiny of anything is to have a fairly complete knowledge. Not to know these creates mystery. But what is mysterious may be real. The obviously strange experience, ideals and hopes of a man born of the Spirit may to the natural man be foolishness, but the facts exist all the same. Notice that it is not the Spirit but the man born of the Spirit who has the wind's mysterious character.

Verse 9 shows us Nicodemus utterly bewildered, but as the verb is "come to pass"—how can these things come to pass?—we hope that he goes away to think seriously about Christ's teaching, even feeling that there is some truth in it.

Verses 10-13 close the discussion. Christ does not hide His disappointment that it has not been more conclusive. Nicodemus came as the representative of a group. He is "the" teacher chosen as such by them. One must admire the spirit in which he listens to Christ. He is an example to debaters. He ought to have recognized that the teaching, though new, harmonized with the old religion. But that is just the root of the evil; the Jewish rabbis were not expecting anything new. "We speak that we do know"—"we" because the second clause, "bear witness of what we have seen", almost a quotation of i. 34, shows that Christ is uniting the Baptist with Himself.

To Christ it seems that He has given only the first elements of His Gospel, things that happen on earth and are in a sense verifiable. For Christian men are really such as He describes. Heavenly things would be His relation to the Father (as in v. 19-30), or the sending of the Comforter. No one on earth has ascended to heaven and had personal experience of such truth. For the present we must believe on the ground of Christ's Truth.

Verses 14-15 are clearly a prophecy of the Crucifixion. That

they are spoken to Nicodemus does not fit in with the finality of the preceding verses, and therefore they must have followed some unreported words of Nicodemus. I conjecture that his farewell was as friendly as the whole interview had been, and took the form of well-meant advice from an old man to a young one. "Be more moderate in action and word lest you get into serious trouble with the Council." Christ's answer is that He knows that well, but He is prepared to die by a Roman crucifixion. We shall find that John's view of Christ's fulfilment of the law includes each detail of it. He is the true Light of the World, the true Pass-over, and so forth. And similarly the brazen serpent will be fulfilled by the Cross. That already is how He accepts His death for the eternal life of man. It may extend to seeing in the old story how God turned the sin and punishment of Israel into an instrument for their salvation.

Verses 16-21 are the Evangelist's postscript to the history of that evening. They have the style of the first Epistle. Especially we note the downright plainness of speech, the firmness of the faith that declares Christ to be Saviour, though His advent involves judgment also. (Dr. Strachan says, "The primary purpose of the Sun is not to cast shadows—but it does.") Further, what becomes the basis of their judgment is not incapacity for faith but straight-out evil deeds. It is a matter of doing wickedness or doing the truth. Most of what is here spoken by John is later (especially in xii. 47-48) attributed to Christ Himself.

SPRING-TIME IN JUDEA

(iii. 22-iv. 4)

Verse 22 begins, "After these things Jesus and His disciples went into the Judean land", and the word for land means not the countryside but a "state", the territory of a people. They were already in Judea at Jerusalem. Therefore the scholars say that there must have been, by some accident, a dislocation of the text. and they venture to rearrange its paragraphs, both here and elsewhere, until it becomes a difficult task to find one's way through their volumes.

The real explanation is quite different and more interesting. It is more the rule than the exception in the Gospels to separate Jerusalem from the Judean land, within which, nevertheless,

they knew the city lay. Some examples are *St. Mark* iii. 7, *St. Matthew* iv. 25, *St. Luke* v. 17, *Acts* i. 8. Jerusalem is more than a city in Judea: it has an entity of its own, a kind of personality, about which a powerful sentiment has gathered. Psalms like xlviii, cxxii, cxxxvii help us to understand it. Christ felt the same or even more, as we know from *Matthew*, xxiii. 37-39, *Luke* xiii. 33-35, xix. 41-44. It was this that led Mark to separate Christ's ministry in Jerusalem from that of Galilee, Judea, and Perea. It may be a specially Galilean habit. Galilee and Judea were sister provinces, but Jerusalem belonged to Galileans as truly and directly as to Jews.

The two or three months in Judea had to be primarily "spent with the disciples" (verse 22), for already Christ intended them to be leaders, though the organization of the Twelve came later, and iv. 2 shows that He already employed them in administration of a baptism like John's, which probably continued until, with the sending of the Holy Spirit, it passed on into the Christian Sacrament. It was at first so nearly identical with John's that to some Christ seemed to be a rival of His forerunner. The Baptist had left Bethany beyond Jordan because the tributary of Jordan used hitherto for baptism had dried up and had made Aïnon his station because there was much water there. His disciples' complaints against Christ caused him to utter the saintly defence in verses 27-30. Using the old figure of Messianic prophecies he reminded them that Christ was the Bridegroom of Israel. His own part had been to be the go-between who helped to unite them. His joy was to listen to the Bridegroom's voice as He talked to the Bride. Though only thirty-two years old his life-work was complete: "He must increase but I must decrease."

The Evangelist does not try to conceal that leaving his first teacher had been an unforgettable wrench, but the Baptist himself had counselled it, and he as usual was right. He was the flower of humanity; but He that came from Heaven was unique, and even as Man He was the flower of the humanity of the future which He came to create. When the world on the whole rejected His witness the Baptist received Him. I take verse 33 to refer to the Baptist and interpret it as the Evangelist's final tribute to him, not only because his witness to Christ was right, but

because God from whom He came manifested His faithfulness. "He continued faithful: He cannot deny Himself."

So verses 34 - 36 are a doxology to Christ and also look back to the Father who has given Him the completeness of the Spirit, and therefore has given all things in His hand. Just as there was not anything made without Him, so without Him no one attains the goal of his creation in eternal life.

PHOTINA AT THE WELL

(iv. 5-42)

Christ pretty clearly left Judea because the Pharisees were taking too much notice of the crowds He was attracting to His teaching. The Gospel says He had to go through Samaria, and the chief advantage of that route was its shortness. The danger of hostile action may therefore have been greater than John actually says. What is most clear is that the Galilean ministry, which superficial readers think of as the chief fact about Him, was thrust upon Him.

Verses 5-9. So He comes, during the second day's walk to Sychar, now Askar, and a mere ruin of the old village. Some five furlongs from it was Jacob's well, and there, tired from the journey in the hot summer sun, Jesus rested while the disciples went on to buy food in the town. John writes as if he were speaking and could reproduce by a gesture His remembered attitude. "Thusly", he says, or "As we can easily picture Him." There comes a woman from Sychar to draw water and He asks her for a drink.

We know the story well enough to picture her as Jesus watched her coming, her waterpot balanced on her head. She is going to show too much vitality of body and mind to be past middle-age; but she is not young either, for we must allow time for five husbands and another man. Probability guides us to believe that most if not all of her marriages ended by divorce rather than death. That means that she was exceptionally attractive to men, but could not hold them. I think it must have been physical beauty joined with something adverse to married happiness—childlessness, or even that she was too rare and good for human nature's daily food. There is not the slightest reason to accuse her of unfaithfulness to any of them, or even to him who was not a husband. We count that one immorality, as Christ of course did; but in the social arrangements of her own day what else was open to her? Even if she solved the economic problem, there were others. Loss of status leads to loss of self-respect. When

nobody cares what becomes of you, you are apt to take the easiest road. The law of Moses allowed divorce of a wife practically for anything that made life with her uncomfortable. Jewish rabbis tried to give a woman some protection as a counsel of humanity; but we do not know that she had even that safeguard in Samaria. This woman may have been guilty of nothing worse than bad housekeeping or undue loquacity. We may suspect the former; there is no doubt of the latter, and at verse 42 we discover that it is her general reputation. We shall not be surprised if her husbands found her wearisome and the more so if her conversation was on a higher level than their own, as the story at least suggests. She is mentally alert, with a sense of humour (which might be at her man's expense), is interested in her nation's history and especially in the scriptural religion which they borrowed from the Jews. That is a good list. In one word, she has personality, and a person deserves a name. I shall call her Photina, the name the mediaeval church invented for her.

Photina talked easily and could not grant Christ's request in silence. Standing over Him to hold the pot to His lips, she felt the dominance of her pose, and enjoyed it. Jews and Samaritans were not often on such familiar terms with each other, though the English translation of John's explanatory note by "have no dealings" is an exaggeration. What he wrote was that the two nations were not desirous of friendly intercourse. They would buy and sell from each other but, like Jew and Gentile, they would not eat together, drink together, or pray together. So Photina is exceptional when she gloats over Christ's predicament and sees in it a good opening for conversation. "It is queer that a Jew, with presumably a Jew's affectation of superiority, must ask a favour of a Samaritan—and a woman, too."

Verses 10-12. If Christ had shown the least sign of contempt for her nation, Photina would have been as ready as anyone to resent it. But He speaks of a quite different superiority. "If you knew what gift God has for you, and the authority to give it which is mine, you would have been the asker and I would have given you Living Water." Self-assertion of that sort justifies His quiet confidence; but we must not miss His confidence in her also: Only ignorance stands between her and the gift. He understands her already too well to say, "You might have asked," or

"You would be wise to ask." She would have if she had known the truth, and He would have given her the Living Water.

Photina has experienced the shock of surprise and, as usual, being a chatterbox, has plenty to say about it. "Sir (with a new touch of respect), "you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. You cannot get it from the well. Whence can you get the water? Do you claim to be greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well he had digged in his own need. It was good enough for him to drink and for his sons and his cattle." My plan has led me to expand on her chattering, but the bare text contains enough to reveal in what mind she speaks. A slight asperity is evident. For the well is her pride and she will not have it despised. There is more value in it than most of her acquaintances know, and she values also the fact of her seeing it. She claims, and she has now so little that she can claim, her patrimony in the Books of Moses, the stories that go back to our father Jacob. His was no light task, but the gift of a great man to his posterity. The well, by the way, seems to the commentators superfluous because there are two good streams at Askar; but they know it cannot have been dug for amusement, and talk about possible geological changes. From verse 15 we learn that Photina wanted the water only for drinking. Did she dislike to drink from the stream where the women were washing clothes? Or was there for her a sacrament of unity with past history, in the spirit of ancestor-worship? Or a sentiment like David's when he longed for water from the well at Bethlehem, and the three mighty men broke through the enemy's host to get it for him. Somehow, but not magically or in any technical sense, it was for Photina a sacred well.

Verses 13-15. Jesus surprised her again. The Water He offers is truly better than that in the well. He that drinks it will thirst no more for ever. It will be an ever-ready spring within him, springing up as though with an exuberant life, to lead him to eternal life. Of course Photina does not understand. If it means anything it must be sorcery, which was quite credible to her. Anyhow, she is not afraid to prove the truth of the promise. "Sir, give me this Water," would have been enough; but she runs on—"that I thirst not neither keep coming all the way over

here to draw." (The Greek present subjunctive in the sentence justifies an emphasis on duration or repetition, or both.)

As we shall hear no more in this story about the Living Water, we may pause to think it over. But first how could John, who more or less failed in reporting Nicodemus, be so successful this time although he was not present? Photina hardly understood enough to give a clear report, though I think the greater part of it came from her, and that during the next two days she talked about it most of the time. A second aid was that he came a little under the spell of her attractiveness. One can generally feel when he is specially interested. He cares more about Martha than about Mary. The courage of the man born blind and his own discovery of the Resurrection are other examples. But Photina stands out, and possibly there is a trace of intentional artistry in his reproduction of her flow of language. But the chief cause of his success is that during the last two months he has listened to Christ making disciples. Even the symbol of Living Water may have become familiar to him, for there was no reason for Christ's introduction of it here that would not apply to many others. The whole of the spring-time chapters are Christ's "Coming with the Water".

The Living Water is not the new birth of water and the Spirit, for Christ would have given it immediately if she asked for it, and John insists that the gift of Holy Spirit to Christians belongs to the time after the Ascension. Yet he connects the two gifts in vii. 38-39. The Living Water is not water for cleansing, but here and generally henceforth for drinking. In vii. 37 it is for the thirsty, and similarly in *I Cor.* x. 4, *Rev.* xxii. 17, etc. Now, whether or not we learn differently in physiology, our drink is not just part of our food. In a literary sense and in common life its special use is refreshment and revival. The two parts of a meal are typically bread and wine, for (first) strengthening, and (secondly) refreshment. The Living Water, our spiritual drink, is not the fullness of the Spirit, but "joy in the Holy Ghost".

The days of the Gospels were an advance on the old covenant but not yet the ratification of the new. They were for instruction addressed mostly to mind, not the direct awareness which the Spirit gives of union and fellowship with God. Teaching such as

Christ gave to Nicodemus and Photina—if not also to Andrew and John—awakens a person to his own spiritual nature, its needs and its joys. Life becomes more and more concerned with truth, beauty, and goodness, and much that to the natural man seems indispensable ceases to rule our energy and to give contentment. “Be not anxious” becomes a rational precept; “In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer” is seen to be possible. Photina was thinking of physical thirst; but she was really to receive power to rise above temporal distress, to endure in a sad world as seeing Him who is invisible, the joyous buoyancy of “life in herself”, a life that knows in hopefulness the fullness and depth of eternity.

Verses 16-18. We left Photina at the point when she unintentionally confessed what Christ had more or less known from the beginning, that she was miserably unhappy. It came out when she spoke so bitterly of her task, which after all was the lot of most women. Perhaps they did not go so far to fetch the water, but that was partly, we think, her own choice. If we hear a housewife complain of the everlasting cooking and cleaning, we guess that, unless she is working beyond her strength and towards a breakdown, there is something seriously amiss in her home-life, and (as Christ did) that her husband is the clue to the trouble. That is how I understand His bidding her, “Call your husband and come back here with him.” He wanted to see whether the husband accounted for the unexplained sadness of one to whom He wished joy. But the chatterbox suddenly becomes laconic. She has but three words (four in English)—“I have no husband”. The whole meaning of them lies in the expression of her voice and face, which John does not try to describe. What Christ heard and saw we can only infer from His answer. She might never have married, which in her day would be expressed as disappointment. She might be a widow and manifest desolation. She might show resentment at a husband who ill-treated her. Christ learned that none of these was her affliction. From later words we know that Photina felt that her whole life was an open book, unveiled for those wonderful eyes, before which for a moment hers fell. Whether Christ really spoke of the number of her husbands does not matter. It may have

been Photina's over-revealing report; but we do not set limits to Christ's possible knowledge.

I do not think she was overmuch ashamed for the absence of the marriage rite. She knew nothing of the Holy Matrimony which Christ was to invent, and that is ours or possible for us. She did know the natural mating, which, after all, is the most that many of us attain. She was entirely ashamed of the man who owned her and would not acknowledge her. Bring him to Christ? She will bring the whole village to Christ; but she rules him out. And he stays out. Yet her relation with him is the measure of how complete a failure she has been in the one vocation of a woman. Twenty or more years ago she had the whole village at her feet when first she married. It was good to be alive, so gloriously alive, and the world promised her good. Then one after another came the divorces. She was a failure, notoriously, but never so much a failure as now, listening to the quiet awful words of the Stranger. I think there was silence. Perhaps there were tears.

Verses 19-20. Then she bravely pulls herself together. With that wonderfully quick mind of hers she grasps the situation and faces it. "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet. It is religion that you have talked about. But in religion we have no common ground. We reject each other's foundation. On this mountain we built a temple, and you Jews destroyed it, so that now we must worship in the open air. You say that in the Temple at Jerusalem is the only place to worship God." It reminds me of a Protestant and a Roman Catholic whose conversation takes the religious turn, and one says, "I am a Protestant and you are Catholic. Let us agree to differ, for if we argue we may wound each other's souls, and we shall end just where we began." Commentators say Photina was frivolous, or that she resented Christ's reference to her past life. She had never been more serious, and if she had wanted to change the subject she would have done it in a moment. She was not "awakened to a sense of sin". People misjudge Photina. It does not occur to them that from her heart she believed in her religion, that she knew too much of how the Jews had treated it, and what they still thought of it, to desire any closer acquaintance with them. At this moment she would

stand up for her own worship if it were necessary. But with this Jew it was not necessary. She would rather part friends than quarrel. She will say farewell, hating that she must do so. She has almost forgotten what it is to find a true friend.

Verses 21-24. Christ will not let her go. He is neither disappointed nor offended, as He might well have been if the scholars were right. On the contrary, His respect for her deepens. For the first time He uses a personal address, the same as He uses for His mother, and His earnestness increases. "Woman, believe Me," He says. "What you say is true, and our Temple also is on the way to destruction. But religion is a personal relation; it looks not to places but to God. Our quarrels are like those within a family. For the nature of God is Fatherhood. His purpose includes a seeking for His children's worship."

So great is Christ's confidence in Photina that He honours her by adding the whole unwelcome truth. "You worship a stranger: we worship a God whom we know." The tradition was that the foreigners planted in Samaria had borrowed from Israel a priest and the Law of Moses. They had kept it well. But He adds, "God made no covenant with you. His saving purpose for the world will be accomplished through the Jews. And there is Truth higher than that. God is Spirit and even now, but much more in the future, He will create in man the power to have fellowship with Himself, Spirit with Spirit."

Verses 25-26. Of course Photina is entirely out of her depth. The new message is too wholly new to awaken any response. Spirit and the communion of spirits, and spiritual worship—after centuries of teaching how little we know of their reality! Does it seem then that the Prophet has no solace for her? She must go her lonely way to pick up again the fragments of her ruined life. We may imagine with what a wistful sigh she abandons the effort to understand. Suddenly the miracle happens. She replies to the one sentence that she grasped, "You worship One whom you know not." With some resentment she says, "I do know that the Messiah will come. When he does He will make it all clear to us." Did anyone else ever answer Christ back like that?

You may know G. F. Watts' picture of Hope, bending over a broken lyre of which one string still holds. The Samaritan hope in a Messiah must be based on *Deuteronomy* xviii. 15-18, a prophet like unto Moses, the Messenger of a New Covenant. Photina has that unbroken string in her lyre. There was only one answer possible—"I am He, I that speak to thee." Her one hope has come. It was as a well of Living Water unto eternal life. Photina means full of light, "as when the Light-Bearer, with one flash as of lightning, doth lighten her" (*St. Luke* xi. 36).

Verses 27-38. At this moment the disciples return, with their conventional ideas about the impropriety of a rabbi talking to a woman by the wayside. Wisely they keep their thoughts to themselves. There are times, and this is one of them, when the "glory of the only-begotten" is so obvious as to demand a reverent silence. He still watches Photina as she hastens away. It is a new Photina that traverses the tiring road, which she will use three times this afternoon with no sense of weariness. She is once more a woman with a purpose and life is no longer a burden to be endured. "Come and see a Man that told me truly all things I ever did. Dare we think He is the Christ?" She was irresistible in her holy excitement, and one after another the men rose from their siesta in the shadow of their houses and followed her across the fields.

It did not take long to prepare the simple meal, but while the disciples began to eat it, Christ takes no notice of what they set near Him. He sits looking across the valley where Photina disappeared, waiting to see what harvest she will bring Him. They dare not disturb His meditations till one (it may be John that is veiled under the plural "disciples") begs Him to eat. Then, as He too begins His meal, He begins also to speak, seeing what He has watched for. That is indeed, as He explains, true food for His soul. "My food is the doing of His will who sent Me, until I make His work complete." He quotes a proverb, "Four months and the harvest will come," the equivalent of our "Rome was not built in a day." "He displays", says Godet, "a heavenly joy, and we venture to say that it takes even the character of gaiety." Pointing to the men approaching He says, "This time there is an exception. Sowers and reapers rejoice together." For the

more cynical saying has some truth—"One sows for another to reap. I have made you for the present reapers, not sowers, and here is an instance. While you were away we laboured, I and Photina, and now you come in time to be reapers with us." The playful style that marks His happiness is worth noting, for it is often overlooked.

Verses 39-42. Curiously, but in a style that is his own, John ends the episode in a matter of fact prose. Sychar was a small place, and what had happened had no effect on history except as a result of John's report. The faith of the villagers is sincere, but we have no means of judging its constancy. They promptly put Photina in what they consider her proper place. "Now we believe, not because of your chattering, for we have heard Him ourselves." Poor Photina! But she knows that Christ has accepted her service. She has been His first missionary and, in St. Paul's phrase, a fellow-labourer with God.

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

(iv. 43-54)

After two days at Sychar Christ went on to Cana. The withdrawal from Jerusalem is regarded as an illustration of the proverb that a prophet has no honour in his own country. The Synoptists record that Christ Himself used it of the rejection at Nazareth, where He was brought up. St. John's idea that it was fulfilled by His retreat to Galilee is less natural, but it expresses his constant conviction that the real tragedy was the rejection by the rulers in the name of the chosen people of God. There was a widespread defection in Galilee later, but that was a matter of individuals. What occurred in Jerusalem, at present only a danger, became a national apostasy.

Christ must have spent some time with His friends at Cana, so that the news of His being there became known at Capernaum. Galilee was interested in Him because those who had attended the Passover returned with stories of His miracles. There was a child lying sick of fever, always prevalent in summer-time in the deep valley of Jordan, and it was suggested to his father that for his healing the Prophet might be induced to hasten His journey from Cana. Relatives were already at Capernaum and Christ was expected to join them there, but the matter was too urgent to be delayed. The father, who is not named, was a *basilikos*, which means "a King's man". The English translators call him a nobleman, but he was not like a feudal magnate and the name means more than a modern title of honour. They thought apparently of men like Sir Walter Raleigh or the Earl of Essex, for whom the modern name is "courtier". Josephus uses *basilikos* with that meaning, but elsewhere, of Herod's bodyguard, ordered to torture and execute certain rebels. We may suppose that it is wide enough to include any one whose position brought him into personal contact with Herod, either a courtier or an official, military, like the guards, or civil, like Chuza, Herod's steward.

There is just one point in the story that makes me think that he had a humbler position than Chuza. After being assured by Christ that all was well with the boy, he remained in Cana till

next morning, and that was what his household expected him to do. That of course shows his faith, but does not agree with his deep love. The simple explanation, and the only one that satisfies me, is that he had walked from Capernaum, over twenty miles, and was physically unable to return till he had a night's rest. The alternative is a donkey, and I am told that the little Syrian donkeys do not go much faster than a man's walk, but can keep up that pace indefinitely. The man had over five hours, at least, before sunset, but he could not face the journey. Therefore he walked, and the fact colours the whole narrative. Let us try to picture it on that supposition.

He started early in the morning as the sun rose over the southern hills of Bashan across the lake. It was pleasant enough at that hour among the scented oleander flowers and the homes of many friends. At Magdala he turned his back on the lake and began the long, stiff climb that in the next six miles or more would carry him up 1,600 feet, out of the sultry gorge of Jordan. The road, built by the Romans or in imitation of them, was good; but as he ascended the shadeless hill, covered only with thorny scrub, the sun beat even hotter on his back, and worse than bodily discomfort were the anxieties that filled his mind. As he neared Hattim a rise of five hundred feet in half a mile had forced the roadmakers to make a detour to avoid it, but, having surmounted that, half of his journey was accomplished and he had come to its highest point. Henceforth his way lay along the watershed that separates the tributaries of Jordan on his left from the valley which gathers the streams of the western slope into its long descent to pour them into the Kishon River, not far from the coast at Haifa. There may be shade from oaks and terebinths, and little tinkling streams from which to drink. At least the air at this height is fresh, and he can hope for a damp breeze from the distant Mediterranean. But the load upon his soul remains. Is the Prophet still in Cana? How will his daring request be received? Beyond those surmises was the thought of the boy as he left him in the morning, restless and muttering in his delirium. Was he even now alive? Might not the Prophet, however kindly, however powerful, be too late?

At last, agitated and weary, he was making enquiries at Cana. Yes, the Prophet was there. Yes, they could point out the house.

He was probably having His midday meal. It would be wise to wait a while, and the father was glad to rest and pull himself together.

It was almost the seventh hour, 1 p.m., as John says with his usual carefulness about time, when they met, and the story was quickly told. The first words of Christ must have been like a blow, but they were not meant to be discouraging. The plural shows that Christ was not directly addressing the father. "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." Christ is thinking aloud. The Galileans ought to accept the Gospel without miracles, but it appears that they will expect them. At the moment there seems to be a divided duty. How far is He to adapt Himself to the conditions they would impose upon Him? From such thoughts the father recalls Him to the immediate need of a decision. His agonized heart has no room for anything save his child's life. The delay is torture.

"Sir, come down ere my child die!" What a love this father has. Is it not the first chapter of the Gospel He must preach? "We must worship the Father", was what He said to Photina. "The Father seeketh such to be His worshippers. This man is a living parable of the Father, and the will of the Father is the perfecting of love." "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The man looks Him in the face, reads there it is a promise, knows moreover that Christ is the Truth. After a deep salaam he turns and goes away.

So certain is the message that his soul finds peace, but it will be almost a day before his eyes are gladdened too. There was abundant need of patience in the days before the telephone and the telegraph. A long afternoon and, maybe, a wakeful night, full of imaginations of what is being done at home. We also may try to picture it.

The mother, watching the fevered child, listening to his meaningless words, doing what she can to ease him. A servant looking in, and going again to report to the rest that he still lives. One o'clock comes, and a change. A quietness, a new glow as of health, and the boy sits up, wondering why he is lying there with the sun high in the sky. It is some time before they can believe it to be true, and trust it to be a permanent restoration. He must have food, too.

Then the mother's heart turns to her husband, and his discipline of patience, which must be shortened. The servants shall go early to meet him with the news. But he started still earlier if that "going down" where they meet is the same as the tiring climb of yesterday.

As all had been joined in a common sympathy, so all are united in a common joy and faith: "He believed, himself and his whole house."

The story belongs to the "Coming with the Water" and at v. 54 John unites it with the wedding at Cana to make that clear. There is the same brightness, the same freedom of movement, the same bringing of joy. There will be no more of these in the Gospel until after the Resurrection. But the tragedy will be told with even deeper love and power than this beautiful first part.

GATHERING CLOUDS

THE BETHESDA MIRACLE

(v. 1-18)

Verses 1-3. It does not matter whether the pool was Bethesda or one of the two or three other names assigned to it in good manuscripts. Nor does it matter which of the possible positions for it is the right one, nor whether the word "for the sheep" by which St. John tries to identify the site means the sheep-gate mentioned by Nehemiah, or the sheep-market which (one thinks) must have existed. The fact is that Jerusalem was so thoroughly destroyed and had to wait so long for its final rebuilding that no local tradition of its topography has been preserved. Moreover, as the surface of the first-century city is buried under forty to sixty feet of later deposits, it can only be revealed by excavations too extensive to be allowed in the midst of an inhabited city. When St. John wrote there were still many who remembered it, and he speaks as though the pool and at least the remains of the porches were still there as he might naturally expect. It is not likely he had visited the ruins, and if travellers talked about them, they would dwell on the massive walls, the Temple, Herod's palace, and other lost splendours, not on shelters erected for poor sufferers round the pool. Certainly benevolent builders of these may have made them beautiful after the manner of the peristyles of Greek houses, but they would not be noticed where there were so many more important buildings to mourn over.

In a limestone country underground caves, streams, and springs are not rare. Bethesda was an intermittent spring, whose water bubbled up at intervals to form a pool. Except at the point of emergence, the pool would be paved and its margin built up with masonry. There are still such pools at Jerusalem, but not all of them retain their water-supply. One of them, the Virgin's Well or Fountain, is certainly very old, and may be Bethesda. In the first century it may have had more water than at the present time, but Godet gives some details of what a traveller of his day recorded, which help to make concrete the sort of thing that happens.

Sometimes the basin was quite dry; at other times the water was just oozing up amongst the loose pebbles. On one occasion it rose six or seven inches in twenty-two minutes, after which it returned in two minutes to its former level. Another time it rose a foot in five minutes. The visitor was told that at the end of winter this might be repeated two or three times a day, but in summer not more than once in two or three days. The mechanism of intermittent springs is now well known, and can be read in any text-book of physical geography. To the old Jews it seemed miraculous, and the flow was attributed, as was usual when the natural seemed supernatural, to the action of an angel. In this case they did not expect the angel to be visible; only the troubling of the water betrayed his presence.

Verse 4 is not part of St. John's text, as we know by its absence from most of the great manuscripts, and because in the one verse no fewer than five words are used which are not elsewhere used by St. John. It is somebody's note in the margin, which crept into the text from about the fifth century, and it preserves the Jewish theory of what used to happen. The statement that only one patient could be healed each time is an addition to their explanation, founded on verse 7. It does not concern us any more than the rest of what has been said so far, since Christ never refers to the supposed virtues of the spring, and there is no sign that a flow of water occurred while He was present. His miracle was independent of it, and it is nothing but the scenery of the story. We shall see presently why He chose to perform a miracle in that particular place and with that background.

More important than the place is the date of Christ's visit to Jerusalem. St. John tells us that it synchronized with a feast which, in our text, he does not name—an omission quite unlike St. John and not at all helpful. Almost every Jewish feast has at least one advocate among the scholars, even Purim, which is the right one. Against Purim two foolish arguments are adduced. The first is that people did not go up to Jerusalem to keep Purim, but kept it as the Book of Esther commands (ix. 19-28), in all their towns and villages. They do still. One of our newspapers reported in 1947 that the young people of Tel-Aviv had been keeping it with processions and other festivities. But the Gospel

does not say that Christ went to Jerusalem to keep the feast. I have no doubt that St. John's intention in mentioning it was to fix the date, though he also knows of circumstances that made it a fitting date. Originally—like vii. 2, "the feast of the Jews, (called) of Tabernacles was at hand"—it would read, "After these things there was the feast of the Jews (called) Purim." For some good reason, of which two or three occur to me, St. John or some later custodian of the manuscript struck out the name. Now there is a second not-so-probable text, which by the retention of one letter of the original reads not "a" but "*the* feast of the Jews". It seems to me that the corrector had omitted or left doubtful this omission, and therefore some scribes retained it. I know it all seems mere surmise, but it is based on the facts that St. John always does date his more important passages, and that on the contrary he does not indulge in useless or superfluous remarks.

The second objection to Purim is that Christ would not countenance such a feast, which was national rather than religious, a kind of annual "victory day", and was kept with excessive eating and drinking and much boisterous amusement. Of course the first objection answers the second; Christ could not avoid the feast wherever He was at the time in the Holy Land. But the Pharisees did their best to redeem its secularity. Special synagogue services were held with readings about its origin from the Book of Esther. They also emphasized the direction that the days should be "days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor". The social side was like our keeping of Christmas.

What Christ had in view was that He must offer Himself to the Jewish nation as their Teacher and Lord. The rejection which He knew would come, must come from them. Even in Galilee His chief work was to train the Apostles as leaders for the remnant that would be the Israel of God. But that was not enough. To the rulers of the nation He must reveal the error that was hindering their acceptance of Him. At bottom it was their conviction that the Mosaic law was the complete and final revelation of God to man. The truth was that the new age must have a new covenant, a new priesthood, a new ethics, a new worship, a

new evangelism. Only through its appointed leaders could the nation, as a nation, accept or reject the coming new age. Therefore the Lord had a controversy with the rulers of the people, and it must be faced. Christ chose as the arena for the fight their interpretation and development of the Sabbath law. He would break through their regulations in the presence of the Jerusalem Pharisees and openly claim that for so doing He possessed the authority of God.

It was for this purpose that Christ went up to Jerusalem and Purim was the best time for it. At the feast a multitude of the afflicted would assemble at Bethesda, as St. John observes. For Pharisees also would certainly be there for the alms-giving which they lavishly practised, even if they were too ready to choose a public place "that they might have glory of men". In this year, A.D. 29, the first day of Purim was on 19 March, and that was a Sabbath day. All was set for the healing of someone when Christ's hour came. He was unattended, for it was exactly then that the Apostles were absent on their preaching tours. We can on this occasion trust St. Mark's placing of it, for it is not a mere incident, but a stage in the frame of his "catechism". If Christ returned to Capernaum immediately after He had accomplished His purpose, the excited days described in *St. Mark* vi. 30-31 would be just time enough to let Christ see that a retreat for rest was necessary, and the feeding of the five thousand would follow, as St. John says and St. Mark suggests, before the Passover at the next full moon.

Until this time the Sabbath question had hardly arisen. The healing of St. Peter's mother-in-law was a family affair. The casting out of a devil in the synagogue (*St. Mark* i. 23-28) might be pardoned as a necessity for the sake of reverence. At all events it made no stir. Many other sufferers came that day, but they waited until the Sabbath ended at sunset. The action of the Apostles in plucking the ears of corn was probably later than Purim, for that feast would be some considerable time before the harvest was ripe, but near enough to ripeness to be tempting. The man with the withered hand (*St. Mark* iii. 1-6) was certainly later, because it led straight away to the plot to stir up Herod against Christ, which must be dated some months after Passover. The

rest of the seven healings on the Sabbath are certainly later still. It was the Bethesda cure and Christ's defence of it that raised the storm.

Verses 5-9. The feast-day being also on a Sabbath, was observed by Christ "as His custom was", but in the afternoon He went to Bethesda. It was not, by the way, His custom to seek for people to cure, but on this particular day He needed the services of one whom the Father would choose for Him. The patient turned out to be a poor specimen. For a long time (thirty-eight years, as St. John learns later) he has suffered from partial paralysis. He was not like the man in *St. Mark* ii. 1-12 who was carried on a litter by four friends, entirely unable to walk. In verse 7 he says that always "as he was coming" another gets in front of him. He could hobble about, but slowly and with difficulty. Christ's question, "Do you want to become cured?" was not unnecessary. If he were cured he would be expected to work, and since the cause of his infirmity may have been in infancy, he may not have been past middle-age.

Christ does not receive a direct answer. The man feels himself blamed, and makes a grumbling excuse for not even trying the effect of the water. He tried in the past often enough, but he never got through the crowd in time, and he lost hope and gave up the attempt. He has accepted the life of a professional beggar, which he finds sufficient to bring him a sustenance wage of food and clothing and a lodging somewhere near, though he may do some chores to earn that. He comes to Bethesda now for the sake of social intercourse with people like himself. Christ sometimes asked for faith in His applicants; this time it is hope that is lacking. He is reconciled to idle poverty, though he will not acknowledge that he prefers it to work, for that might deprive him of the alms he expects to receive. The external malady is but the sign of the spiritual one, and its unfortunate cause, though it should not have been an effective one. He is really a pitiful object, but he need not have shown so much self-pity or been so unmanly, self-centred, incapable of purpose and will, and indeed without personality. Instead of effort on his own part he deploras that he has no one to bustle him through the crowd, and throw him, or rather pick him up and deposit him, in the pool. His

scheme suggests that he is under-sized, the victim of an invalid childhood. Undoubtedly Christ is filled with pity, as we are ourselves—perhaps more. Suddenly He cries, "Rise up, pick up your bed, walk." That is exactly what psychiatrists sometimes do with equal success, apparently because of the shock of the sudden command. To think of Christ, however, as a psychiatrist almost two thousand years before his time would be more blasphemous even than to deny His power to heal, since it would make Him a mere man of unnatural and unknown kind.

Verses 10-15. Christ's plan begins to work. The Jews, represented by important Pharisees, remind the man that by carrying his rug he is breaking the Sabbath law. He throws the blame on his Healer, and there is sense in the argument, though he should have been manly enough to acknowledge that his will was free to judge. It seems that his will, mind and conscience are still very much as they were. "Who is this Man?" they ask. He does not know, had not thought of asking, not recognizing any further obligation to Him. Jesus had slipped through the crowd unnoticed. His plan was endangered, but it had been necessary to compel the man to act for himself and be responsible for his actions. He does not look for Christ, unless we think that was his reason for entering the Temple. Jesus finds him. His warning "Sin no more" should be translated "Cease from your sin". It indicates that the sin is a present and continuous danger, not (as some suppose) an old sin which caused the paralysis. Of that there is no trace in the story. The sin is the helplessness, hopelessness, and lack of moral energy that we have noted in him. It must be fought or it will grow upon him. "Give up your sin lest a worse thing befall you." He can now give Christ's name to the Pharisees, and possibly Christ bids him do so, for otherwise His primary purpose fails. The man goes out of the story and we pass on to consider Christ facing the charges which the miracle in the first instance brings upon Him.

Verses 16-18. These verses are of very great importance. They tell us of the period of conflict with the Jewish rulers which was the outcome of the miracle. Most of the verbs are in the imperfect tense, and therefore denote duration of time and habitual or repeated actions. To bring this meaning out we must have a

translation that slightly stresses it. "And therefore the Jews began a persecution of Jesus, because He used to do such things (as the Bethesda miracle) on the Sabbath. And His defence to them was, 'My Father worketh even to this moment and I too am working.' So for this cause the Jews became all the more desirous to kill Him, because He not only used to break the Sabbath, but also persisted that God was in a unique sense His Father, so making Himself equal with God."

THE SELF-DEFENCE OF CHRIST

(v. 19-47)

The period so clearly summarized lasted from Passover A.D. 29 until after Tabernacles in October of the same year. Most of it was spent in Galilee or in retirement in the province still further north. The Jews of the Council did not leave Him alone; hostile Jews from Jerusalem were listening to Him (*John*, vi. 41, 52). St. Mark also speaks of them at vii. 1 and in a parenthesis, iii. 22-30, given prematurely. Those who plotted with the Herodians to kill Him (iii. 6) were probably the same set of spies. This is the first place where His death is contemplated. It is still because of His Sabbath-breaking, but that implies disloyalty to the whole law of Moses. We must notice that it is only this section of St. Mark which St. John does not treat as sufficient. He does not assume that his readers have already learned from St. Mark all that they require. He covers the same ground as St. Mark, namely, the fact that true religion cannot be fully expressed by moral or ritual regulations. It must have "inwardness"; it must be a relation between man's spiritual nature and God who is Spirit. If we compare *St. Mark* vi. 31 and viii. 30 with *St. John* vi, we shall find that St. Mark dwells almost entirely on the insufficiency of the externals of religion, the negative side of the matter, but St. John dwells mainly on the living relation to us of the Father, and of the Son who is sent by Him as the Bread from Heaven and offered Himself a sacrifice for us. This is the positive side, without which St. John does not think St. Mark is complete.

But before St. John embarks on that tremendous teaching he gives us an introduction in v. 19-end. At the beginning he gave

us a prologue to the Gospel as a whole; here he gives us a second prologue to the most difficult part of it. This time, however, he gives it as far as possible in the words of Christ Himself, though I cannot (I doubt if anyone can) distinguish the verses that are Christ's words. It is easier to observe, first, that although he writes as if it were a discourse by Christ, he introduces it in verses 17 and 19 by a tense of the verb "to answer", which technically is used to mean "answered an accusation", or rarely, "answered a false report", and is always so used in the New Testament. We may translate it "Jesus defended Himself by saying". A second point is that verses 19-30 sound like deep teaching, which few except the Apostles would grasp; 31-40 speak of the witnesses which support Christ, implying an audience who can be convinced by argument; 41-47 are addressed to men who are regarded as unable to believe.

Verses 19-30. These few verses are among the most profound in the Gospel. The reason is that the Hebrew mind had discovered that the foundation of truth is mystery. The Greeks, and Europeans generally, seek truth through the clearness of their conceptions and the certainty of their facts. The Hebrew knows that we reach it, not by logical argument, but by revelation. The name of the God of their fathers, who must also be their own God, is "I AM". So they founded religion on the ultimate truth, the mystery of Being.

The Father and the Son (v. 19-30)

The revelation of God and of His relation to us can only be expressed by figures of speech mainly derived from human relations within our experience of one another. For these also have their basis in mystery. What gives to the relation between father and son its unique quality? It is not exhibited as a fact of necessity; it is rarely if ever exhibited in its perfection; it is indefinable but quite recognizable, unprovable but certain. We can analyse it as in part the result of heredity, or of the dependence of the son in his first formative years or of the father's conscious training, the prospect of partnership, and so forth. But we feel that none of these even touches the truth, which is already more fully our familiar knowledge than analysis can make it. We can deal similarly with the husband and wife relation, which is still more

mysterious and as a rule creates a stronger bond, as no longer two but one flesh. It is an interesting observation that Shakespeare in early plays makes the mutual attraction of lovers a work of the fairies, makes it a fancy in Juliet, a duty not unpleasing in Portia, a hero-worship in Desdemona, suggestion from others in Beatrice, contiguity in Imogen, and in the end comes round again to Ariel. It is a mystery. Besides these there are a number of fellowships, less extensive in range, less secure, and less emotional. The New Testament uses the Father-Son bond as the symbol of truth about God in Himself, and marriage as the symbol for the union of Christ and His Church. Why does it make precisely this choice of symbols? Father and Son are one because the Son has his origin from the Father. In God there was no beginning of the relation, but there was the dependence of the Son on the Father, whatever that means, which is the sequel in human sonship. The unity of Christ and His Church comes from the Will of Christ, responded to by those whose faith receives Him (*St. John* i. 12). Like marriage, it has an origin in time as a contract, or covenant, and an eternal destiny.

All through *St. John's* picture of the Father and Son relation he stresses the dependence of the Son on the Father. Verse 19 says the Son can do only what He sees the Father doing. Yet that implies that the Son does know whatever He ought to be doing for the Father, and verse 20 frankly says that the Son knows everything. The Father has no secrets from Him, so perfect is their unity. As the Father raises up the dead and makes them live, so does the Son. Verse 23 says the Father sent the Son. Verse 26 adds that the life possessed by the Son is given to Him by the Father. It is also from the Father (verse 27) that the Son has authority to be Judge over the living and the dead. Verse 22 has made the curious statement that the Father does not judge anyone, but has committed all judgment to the Son, and verse 27 adds that this is because He is the Son of Man. It looks as if the details of all that God does within our bourn of time and space are entrusted to the Son—who shall receive life, who shall be judged, what the judgment shall be. I think that implies too much separation between the Father and the Son to be in agreement with the rest of the passage. At all events, I suspend judgment. In both the miracles at Cana and, as we

shall see later, at two or three other times, Christ seems to hesitate before working the miracle. To His mother He says, "My time is not yet come." Is He really thinking it out as we do, or is it wholly to hold communion with the Father?

There is one more point of some importance. There is a difference of the figures used between the fellowship of the Father and the Son in verses 19, 20, and the fellowship of God and man in verses 24-29. In the former the Son sees the deeds of the Father and the Father shows everything to the Son. In the latter men hear the message or the voice of the Son. The knowledge that we obtain by hearing a speaker, or reading a book, comes to us as a succession of facts about some subject. The message has been constructed in the mind of the informer and we receive it by a similar mental process of our own. It is built up by the addition of details and may attain completeness. The knowledge given by sight, on the contrary, is granted to us as a whole, and with the speed of photography, which is the speed (or almost) of light. We may, it is true, concentrate our attention on the various aspects of the object in succession and get the same kind of knowledge as by hearing; it is knowledge *about* the object rather than *of* the object. The contrast between "eye-witness" and "hearsay" illustrates the distinction that is in my mind. When a speaker's words are a satisfactory exposition of his thought, we may say to him, "I understand what you say", but we are far more likely to say to him, "I see what you mean." If I am told of a charge against a friend, I may reply in defiance of all evidence, "I still can't see him doing it." If I am told of a deed characteristic of his normal behaviour I may say, "Can't you see him doing it?" Hence it is that in verse 19 St. John describes the knowledge that the Son has of the Father as a seeing, and the Father's fellowship as a showing. But in verse 24 the first steps of a man on his way to faith are a hearing of the voice of God. It is worth while to notice, as we read, which of the two images is used.

The Witnesses for Christ (v. 31-39)

This part of Christ's defence must be addressed to people whose minds are still open to argument, for otherwise it would

be useless to adduce witnesses. From verse 40 onwards it is asserted that they have reached a state of mind which is incapable of receiving instruction. Hence we make a break at that point to mark that there must be an interval of time, and also a change in Christ's treatment of the controversy.

Verses 31-32. Christ does not claim to be believed on the ground of unsupported assertions. There is a second witness, as Jewish (and all decent) jurisprudence demands. He adds that He fully accepts the Father's witness. All the witnesses mentioned are really expressions of the Father's witness to them, so that they become His instruments.

Verses 33-35 refer to what the Baptist says in i. 26-27, 32-34. He could have said more, but the rulers' refusal to acknowledge him as sent from God made it useless to call him. St. John and his readers, we must remember, are familiar with *St. Mark* xi. 28-33. A human testimony that is not "from heaven" would be unacceptable to Christ, but He quotes the Baptist for the opponents' sake that they may be saved. The word should be given the present meaning it has in the miracles of healing, as "Thy faith hath saved thee." He would save them from embarking on a wrong course against Himself. The encomium on the Baptist has no ulterior motive. It is rather silly to say that it contains a warning against honouring him over-much. The stories in *Acts* of people who knew only the baptism of John mean that they knew only the Ministry period and not the organization of the Church which followed the Resurrection of Christ. All the people with only this imperfect knowledge were glad to learn more and to join in the catholic fellowship.

Verse 36 says all that need be said yet about the miracles. They, like the Baptist, were the Father's witnesses. He gave them to Christ to perform.

Verses 37-38 refer to a direct operation of the Father's presence and power of which Christ was conscious, and in which His disciples in all the centuries have more or less partaken. But the Jews have not that knowledge, either by the hearing or the seeing method. They were dead to the message of the Father's voice, like foreigners who do not understand a language. The Word has no dwelling-place in their spirits. It is like the hard ground of

the Sower parable, one that has no recognition of the Divine Gift of Christ. We shall postpone further explanation till we have read vi. 44, vii. 17, x. 26-27, xiv. 5-11.

Verses 39-40. The difference between the people of the Book and the disciples of the Man from God is one to ponder over in our superficial period. Bible knowledge that is not made subservient to a fellowship with Christ has no power to give eternal life.

The Exposure of the Scribes (v. 40-47)

St. Paul, the Pharisee who became an Apostle, tells us of what the scribes in this passage made their boast. They were Israelites. Theirs was the adoption to be the people of God. Theirs were the Divine Services and the promises. Theirs were the Shekinah and the Covenants and the gift of the Law. Theirs were the Fathers of old and the Messiah who was to come (*Romans ix. 4-5*).

The basis of it all was the creed-like Shema. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy might." To these scribes Christ declares, "I know that you have not the love of God in yourselves. I am not seeking popularity from you or anyone. I am not seeking my own honour, but speak in the Name of my Father, and you are not interested. If a man came advertising himself as a learned scholar, a prophet with a new vision, a devout keeper of the law in all strictness, a man mighty in the scriptures, what a welcome he would get from you! You seek the praise that your fellows give you, you are their rivals, you are concerned about your reputation, and you forget God. You have no thought of what His Judgment on you may be. You are of this world; I am not of this world. The gulf between us makes you inevitably reject Me. I will not accuse you to the Father for what you mete out to Me. Your accuser will be Moses and he will charge you with misrepresenting his law, with teaching what he never taught, with ignoring what he did teach about the prophet like himself who was to come. You ascribe to it a completeness, a finality, and therefore a permanence which it does not possess." Moses could have led them to Christ, but their perversion of his religion excludes Christ. That is the theme that underlies all John's story of the conflict between Christ and the Pharisees.

THE BREAD OF LIFE AND ITS REJECTION

(vi. 1-71)

Christ must have returned to Capernaum as soon as it was clear that the Jews at Jerusalem had determined to oppose and persecute Him. For there was only one lunar month between Purim and Passover and before Passover came the Feeding of the Five Thousand. The Apostles also returned from their missions. The week after Purim may have been fixed by Christ as the date for their reassembling. Six simultaneous missions in a country as small as Galilee must have seemed a general call to the population. We do not hear (*St. Mark* vi. 15, viii. 28-29) that they hailed Jesus as Christ; He might be Elijah or the Prophet "like unto Moses"; their periods were the two in the Old Testament when miracles abounded and Christ's miracles might be so explained. *St. Mark* mentions one fact only, that "Herod heard of Christ for His Name had become well known". His view was that the Baptist had risen from the dead. The plot of Pharisees and Herodians in conjunction seems to belong to this time. *St. Mark* can hardly have mentioned Herod because he was proud of the stir they were making. It must be because henceforth the Tetrarch would be a danger, for he might try to deal with Christ as he had done with the Baptist.

For the present the result was a greater popular excitement than at any time in the Ministry. *St. Mark* vi. 53-56 describes a real commotion, and even before that (vi. 31) tells of so many coming and going that they had no time even for their meals. The people of course came to question Christ; but it looks as if the Apostles also were kept busy with the visitors, having become famous to some extent like their Master.

It seems natural enough that Christ took them away to the open fields across the lake for spiritual calmness as well as bodily rest. We know that they were not yet liberated from Jewish errors about the Kingdom of the Messiah. It would be strange if some of these did not mingle with the teaching they gave. After the miracle, *St. Mark* says Christ had to compel them to go away to the boat while He got rid of the crowd, who, *St. John*

says, were ready for immediate action to make Him King. It does look as if the Apostles sympathized with them.

THE MIRACULOUS MEAL

(vi. 1-21)

The Feeding of the Five Thousand introduces the teaching of the period which St. Mark makes the third of the four parts of his "catechism"; its theme is "Inwardness". St. Mark himself deals chiefly with the evil of externalism in religion. St. John adds the positive necessity of the spiritual food which Christ gives. St. Mark tells of the difficulty which Christ had in teaching this to the Apostles, but in the end He succeeded, when most of His Galilean followers deserted Him. St. John gives us discourses addressed to all who would listen. Their teaching is the same. It is clear that they supplement each other and that for that very reason St. John deals fully with that part of the Galilean Ministry instead of assuming that we know enough from St. Mark. In the story of the miracle, however, he does assume that we know St. Mark. Hence there is nothing about the gathering of the crowd, for verse 2 speaks of their customary following to see the miracles, which would not apply to this particular crowd; and verse 5 can only mean that more and more men arrived, until the crowd became very large, for obviously that is what would happen; they did not arrive in a body like an army on the march. The sentence is quite correct, though not well expressed, and this explanation removes a supposed contradiction between the two Evangelists. That the Apostles arranged the crowd systematically and distributed miraculous food is also omitted, and still more strangely there is a finale so abbreviated that Christ's retreat to the hill could be understood as undignified flight, leaving the Twelve with the crowd until in the evening they also decamped. This is practically impossible. St. John must assume that we shall remember St. Mark when reading his own additions.

The chief reason for the differences which we have mentioned and for others which are to follow, is the different degree to which the story is made to illustrate the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Church is sure that there is a connection, since the Eucharist is sacramentally the means by which we receive the Body

and Blood of Christ, which are the food of eternal life (*St. John* vi. 53). But Mark's original story of the miracle does not dwell upon it. On the other hand, his story of the four thousand is founded upon it. The Jews were familiar with a symbolism of numbers which made many of them suggest real facts of experience. Three was the divine number, and to be with Christ for three days meant that they had been in the presence of God and concerned with Him, whether arithmetically it was three or some other number of days. Four is the number of space, and therefore of the world. Four thousand means that the food was for all mankind. Twelve, God in the world, is the Church number, that of the Patriarchs and the Apostles, and of several groups in the Apocalypse. Seven is the number of completeness, perfection. Therefore the food given is sevenfold, whether five loaves and two fishes or seven loaves with omission of the fishes, which have no meaning in the Eucharist. The more the Sacrament is signified the less the fish are stressed. Mark in the four thousand version (cviii. 1-10) does not mention them until the story of the blessed loaves is finished, and they are not blessed. John adopts the same plan. He gives fish, which are not said to be blessed, to all, "as much as they would", as if they were quite optional. Whoever it was that changed the original into a second miracle, he was careful to alter the facts as little as possible. If Mark said "about five thousand" it would be harmless to say "four thousand". He reduced the amount of fragments to seven baskets, to teach that the spiritual gift of the seven loaves is not lessened by using, as love increases by loving. But he also changes the baskets to larger ones. The importance of the four thousand version is that very early, even before the first of the Gospels was written, the miracle had become a symbol of the Eucharist. John, however, does not desire to dwell upon this. He wants in the first place to tell the story of the miracle exactly as he remembers it; in the second place, he believes it to symbolize the greater fact that Christ Himself, in His Incarnation and in His offering of Himself as the true sacrifice, is the Food of our Eternal Life. The true meaning of the Sacrament is parallel with this, but it is not for the sake of explaining the sacramental meal that Christ gave the miraculous food.

EXPANSION OF ST. MARK

(vi)

Verse 1. The city of Tiberias, called after the reigning emperor, was still quite new when the Gospel was written and Christ is not said to have visited its predecessor, if it had one, but already John has become acquainted with the new name for the lake. Jesus went across (Greek *peran*) the sea, that is to the east side. There is no ambiguity any more than in "Bethany beyond (*peran*) Jordan" in i. 28. The province on the east side was called Perea, from the same word *peran*, just as in modern times we have called it Transjordan. Scholars have invented an ambiguity to support a foolish idea that chapter six originally preceded chapter five, which throws the whole sequence of events into confusion.

Verse 2. The multitude was in the habit of seeking Christ to see miracles; but it was not likely that He would perform any striking ones out in the fields. Their motive this time must have been the expectation that He might explain the "forward move" which from the Apostles' missions seemed to be imminent.

Verses 3 and 4. The mountain is the high ground of the great limestone ranges which in most parts come within a mile of the lake, but in its N.E. corner they are farther back and leave space for a good deal of pasture land. The mention of Passover is due simply to John's fondness for dates. The crowd was definitely not on its way to Jerusalem, but had come to Jesus. If the date had special appropriateness for John it was as the Christian Easter rather than the Jewish feast.

Verses 5-9. The meaning of the first words is that the crowd which had been coming for some time had now become a large one, and was still growing. That is necessarily what happened if it behaved like any crowd that gathers. John's sentence is awkward, but quite possible for an amateur. Christ, then, having learned, as v. 19 says He had to, that the miracle is the Father's Will, "knows what He is about to do". Naturally none of the Apostles foresaw the miracle. Towards evening what they had in mind was that Christ had been teaching for a long time, and that He should now give the crowd a chance to go to the nearest villages and get food for the evening meal. They did not propose

that they should be sent home, which is an alteration made by the four-thousand version, which also changed the compassion of our Lord because they were as sheep without a shepherd into one for their bodily hunger. The original version, the five thousand, does not suggest anywhere that there was any great need for the miracle on that ground. Christ's question therefore took Philip completely by surprise, and he saw no reason for spending two hundred pence, at a low estimate, on becoming hosts to the whole five thousand. The problem in Christ's mind was, of course, quite different. It may be expressed as "How are we to make all these people, and the Apostles too, aware of their need of spiritual food, and teach them that Christ is Himself the Bread from Heaven, that a man may eat of that unto Eternal Life?" They have not the slightest idea of what He means by Living Bread. The miracle is intended to give them a first conception of the mystery that He means to reveal to them. One supposes, with Godet, that Christ smiles, if He does not laugh outright, at Philip's response. It is so genuine and yet so hopelessly wide of the mark. Perhaps that is what makes Andrew also speak humorously: "The youngster here has five barley loaves and a couple of small fish—what can we do with them for so many men?" We are not told whether the boy was one of the crowd or one of their own party. Since the food is spoken of as if it were their own, he may have been there to help Peter with the boats.

This curious incident replaces *St. Mark* vi. 38, a statement which no other Gospel copies; it seems to the others too trifling and in fact rather senseless, for why should the exact amount of their obviously inadequate store be ascertained? John's exposition of what really happened is a welcome one.

Verses 10-13. Verse 10 marks the immediate preparation for the seemingly impossible meal. Mark dwells on the orderly arrangement of the multitude which will be helpful for the big task before the Apostles. They will all be needed, and most likely they will get others from the crowd, some of whom they know personally, to bear a hand. According to the best text, John speaks as if Christ Himself distributed the food. He does not forget that only He can give the Bread of Life to anyone. If He had been thinking of the Sacrament, he would have stressed

the Apostles' share in the matter, but he seems rather to minimize that. They can organize the crowd and collect the leavings, but the gift is not theirs to give, as the Eucharist in a sense is. Yet John actually changes Mark's word for "bless" (*eulogein*) into "give thanks" (*eucharistein*) at verse ii. Probably he is following Mark's other story (*St. Mark* viii. 6) which uses *eucharistein* for the bread but *eulogein* for the fishes. John also avoids an actual use of the former word for the fishes. No hint of the Eucharist comes from them. "As much as they wished" may mean till they are satisfied, but might also mean "if that is their desire", making the eating of the fish a purely voluntary question of taste.

According to the other Gospels the loaves were broken, as has always been the custom at the Eucharist. John omits it because he remembers that it was not done. Convenience dictated distributing them whole as long as possible.

Verses 14-15. Nothing is said about dismissing the crowd. In fact, a superficial reading of verses 22-24 has led many to suppose that John thought they all remained at the scene of the miracle, but that is an error. He also omits that it was for prayer in the crisis that Christ went up to higher ground, and also that He compelled the Apostles to go down to the boat. There is, however, no contradiction of Mark. What Mark wrote is as necessary for understanding John as is his own gospel.

One of the charges brought against the Fourth Gospel is that the author intensifies the miraculous nature of the miracles he reports. In this instance the scholars accept his story rather than Mark's on the ground that he removes miracle from it entirely, since the preposition (*epi*) used in verse 19 for "on" the sea may be translated "by" the sea. It is a good example of a subjective judgment. John and Mark use the same ambiguous preposition; but if John intended to correct Mark, surely he would not retain the ambiguity. So interpreted, as it has been by many scholars, the story would not be worth telling. A statement that they picked up Christ at the appointed spot would have been ample. Nor would the sight of Christ walking on the shore have caused them to be afraid. The truth is that John tells the same story as Mark, but independently.

Verses 16-18. While Christ was praying on the hillside the disciples by His command were waiting in the boat, and John gives their reason for starting without Him, leaving Him to walk home next morning. They knew that sometimes His prayers lasted all the night. It was already dark, not at sunset, but later when the moon, still in its first or second quarter, had gone down behind the Hattim hills on the western side of the lake. One of the sudden storms which were familiar to them sprang up from the south-west; the waves were getting boisterous and there was danger of their being driven aground. In the circumstances Peter would feel safer at sea, and he could steer by the stars since in April there would be no heavy rain-clouds. He set a course right into the wind to lessen the danger of being swamped, and so in the end they landed on the plain of Gennesaret. Similarly the little boats of verse 23, not daring to fight their way home to Tiberias, chose the alternative of running before the wind, which naturally brought them, on a parallel but reversed course, to the scene of the miracle.

Verses 19-21. The disciples had rowed about three or three and a half miles when they saw Christ. They would not see Him till well on in the fourth watch, at the earliest dawn, before sunrise. They were panic-stricken, thinking (Mark says) that it was a phantasm, perhaps His ghost; but His voice reassured them. They were willing to take Him on board. "Willing" is a strange word unless it means that they still found the apparition uncanny. In the Greek translation of Old Testament, a Hebrew word meaning "delight in" is so translated; *Psalms* xxii. 8 is quoted in *St. Matthew* xxvii "Let Him deliver Him, if He delighteth in Him." Here we may say, "they were glad, or delighted, to take Him into the boat". "Immediately" does not necessarily mean instantaneously, any more than our "presently" does. "They were presently at the landing place for which they were making."

I do not pretend to know why Christ came miraculously to them. Mark suggests that if they had understood the miracle of the loaves they would not have been so frightened. The connection seems to be that both showed Christ's divine power over the natural creation.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

(vi. 22-59)

We should not regard this long passage as being a single discourse. After an introduction (verses 22-27) there are three separate addresses. Verses 29-40 are addressed to those who asked for a sign to confirm His teaching about Himself. In verses 41-51 there are a number of "Jews" in the audience who are the scribes from Jerusalem of *St. Mark* vii, i, etc. Here they question His claim to have come from Heaven, on the ground of His supposed natural parentage. The third address, verses 52-59, was delivered in the Synagogue, the "Jews" being still present. There is a distinct development in the series though the main subject is the same and two points are found in all three—the contrast between the manna tradition and Christ's Bread of Life and the promise of resurrection at the Last Day. This is quite different from the systematic arrangement of the discourse in chapter five. It represents a period of months (extending, in fact, to St. Peter's confession of faith) during which Christ repeatedly endeavours to lift the Galileans into the atmosphere of the spiritual life.

In the corresponding section of *St. Mark*, the third block of his "catechism", there is the same demand for understanding the "inwardness" of true religion. The great difference is, as we have seen, that *Mark* tells us about the inadequacy of a religion which is only obedience to an external system of law. *John* tells us of the promise of a spiritual food which Christ is and gives, to change our inward nature into a higher one that can have fellowship with God.

If we add to chapter six the weeks of retirement to the country north of Galilee, at which *John* only hints in vii. 1-4, we obtain a fairly connected account of Christ's last six months in Galilee from the Passover to Tabernacles in A. D. 29.

Verses 22-27 relate that some of the crowd refused to return to their homes until the morning, when they were saved a walk by getting a passage in the boats from Tiberias. That *John* is interested in this reveals how his memory delights in picturing how events happened. His language, however, is involved, and does not gain much if we call verse 23 an interpolation, which is probably an error. We cannot suppose that a very large number of little boats took part in the miniature "Dunkirk" or that the

passengers were more than a very small fraction of the five thousand. Those who genuinely looked on Christ as a leader, even if they mistakenly thought it would be in a rebellion, would naturally obey His first command to them. Those who disobeyed were the self-willed ones who drew on themselves the severe rebuke of verse 26, as the least intelligent and most fleshly of the multitude. They had still to learn that Christ had a higher motive than the feeding of their bodies. A man should at least be conscious of a mental and moral hunger that demands satisfaction more insatiably than the body does. But beyond that there is offered to them the Bread of Life which Christ, with the authority of God's seal, could give them. We may pause here to point out the naturalness of Christ's imagery. Everywhere man has used the sense of taste and the need of receiving food to provide himself with images for describing mental life. Even in the infancy of language there appear phrases such as sweet songs, bitter trials, or disgusting sights. We still browse over a book, chew upon a problem, make a digest of a speech. We understand, "Hearken diligently unto Me and eat ye that which is good and let your soul delight in fatness." The "Jews" had not grown wholly out of the old belief that a man's food has a direct influence upon his life. It lay at the root of the old laws of hospitality towards those who had eaten of your food; it accounts for totems and taboos and even cannibalism. Jews were vigorous in maintaining the distinction of meats, the veto on blood and food offered to idols. It should not have been hard for them to follow Christ's teaching. The way was open to speak to them of that which maintains and develops spiritual life as the Bread of Life — of that which is only ours by the Grace of God as Bread from Heaven; of Christ Himself as the Living Bread. As He gives Living Water that we may rejoice in the refreshment of our souls, so He is Living Bread that strengthens our spiritual life and makes it increase in knowledge and love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Verses 29-40. This is the first of the three addresses. What those whom Christ has rebuked do about it we are not told. Perhaps they continue to listen, but the address is primarily for those who had realized that the miracle was not a mere meal, but a sign. Their question in verse 28 was truly of a religious sort.

They see that Christ is speaking of a spiritual gift from God and that an appropriate behaviour may be necessary for its reception. Accustomed to a law of ten thousand precepts (as Micah puts it) they speak of works in the plural. Christ's answer is that one thing is needful—to believe in Him whom God has sent, who is, as they understand, Himself. Now it is essential to Old Testament religion that God's *Logos* or Word is not merely a persuasive reason convincing human minds, but a command to action, and also that one who claims to possess the authority of God must show some sign to justify it. Therefore the "Jews" ask for a sign while the Greeks seek after wisdom. Verses 30-31 imply that the people accepted the miracle of the loaves as a sign, but not as an adequate one. Moses at least gave food that was mysterious in its nature and source, while Christ's bread, mysteriously provided, was common bread—and not good at that, being barley bread. The rabbis indeed taught that the Messiah would give manna identical or comparable with that of Moses.

Verses 32-34 Our Lord refuses to discuss the miracle or to take notice of what they believed it to suggest. Whatever Moses gave to the fathers, neither He nor anyone gives it to them. God, the true Giver of the manna, offers them now a more wonderful sign and a more adequate food. It is not just a symbol, but the Truth of which all signs and sacraments are symbols. It is a real descent, from God in heaven, of a gift that will give real life. It is, besides, a boon for all the world and indicates a new period in the world's history. Christ in our Gospel often manifests, as it were in passing, His cosmic significance. Ignorantly no doubt, they ask for the obviously desirable food. Possibly they do see that in some way it will confer a power to live for more than earthly ends. Thus the main theme of the address is reached.

Verses 35-36. Here Christ first announces that He is the Bread of Life; He who would live thereby must come to Christ and continue believing in Him. The first act in feeding is to get and take food, the second is the work of assimilation. We must give a complete allegiance to Christ, and accept thereafter a life of discipleship and service. We may think of this first address as a description of living *for* Christ. No longer is self our number one; we have died to self and our life is centred in Christ. It is like falling in love.

Christ promises in verse 35 that we shall find it a life of satisfaction and joy; the parallelism of the two halves makes it poetical to the Hebrew mind. Verse 36 means that although they have seen Him they do not believe. Christ has said it somewhere before and the scholars are annoyed that they cannot identify the former occasion. Sometimes they forget that it is Christ, not John, whose words they are looking for. It is said quite clearly in *St. Mark* (viii. 17, 18), where it is the theme of the whole period: "Having eyes see ye not, and having ears hear ye not, and do you not remember?"

Verses 37-40 disclose the breadth of Christ's vision. The believers are the whole company of those whom the Father in His providence gives to Christ, a point to which He returns in the second address. That He undertakes to accept and preserve them is guaranteed to us by the perfection of His obedience to the Father's will, for that precisely is the Father's will. Not only in this life, but after death we shall be His, and He will raise us up at the Last Day. The promise is repeated in each address, and this first time it is given twice, not only for emphasis but to repeat what He requires of us. Besides the first seeing and coming there must be a continuous beholding and believing. It will be Christ who grants us resurrection. "I am the resurrection and the life" (xi. 25).

Verses 41-51. The Scribes from Jerusalem begin to make objections. They do not interrupt or interject. They argue that He is obviously a human being. How can He say that He came down from Heaven? That they have opportunity for this shows that there was an interval between the two addresses. The scholars say, "How can they know all about His parentage?" To that we reply that they had come to Capernaum to find out all they could about Him, and they repeat what they have discovered. Christ's answer to their objection is not given till the end of the second address, but the whole of it leads up to that.

In verse 45, since He is speaking primarily to men learned in the scripture, He quotes, after their manner, from the prophets: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (*Isaiah* liv. 13). This is how the Father draws them to Christ, that which He has said is indispensable. Many will disbelieve because they have not His Word abiding in them (verse 38). But everyone who has

heard from the Father and learned the truth of what he hears, does come. Only there is a handicap. No one of them has seen the Father. Hearing does not give the clear, direct, comprehensive knowledge that seeing does. As in chapter five, where the difference between the senses is first pointed out, seeing shows the whole nature of a person, while hearing is satisfied to know about him. Its highest gain is faith and the believer has thereby eternal life. But Christ "sees" the Father; that is, has a complete fellowship with Him. The address goes on to recapitulate what we have already heard about that, but here it reaches a new climax. "The Bread of Life that I give is My flesh for the life of the World." Through the Incarnation the Son of God makes possible a real seeing, and if not with bodily vision such as St. John had, yet a fellowship of nature, comprehension, sympathy, that can be akin to seeing. Then, at last, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Thus the second address adds fellowship to faith. We live with Christ as well as for Him. The Eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us in order that we may become His fellows and His friends.

Verses 52-59. In the third address Christ introduces an unusual and difficult thought. The individual loaf which becomes our food has been consumed and no longer exists. But Christ turns from this individual loaf to deal with its substances of flesh and blood. These do not simply disappear. The assimilated portions begin to live a new life as the components of the eater and, maybe, especially if we still think of a human eater, they are now employed as the instruments of a higher life. They enter into that body which serves the genius of the poet, the power of the king, or the worship of the saint. But the condescension of the Son of God is seen in that He stooped from the glory of God to take upon Him the likeness of the servants and obedience even to the death on the Cross, that He might become, figuratively, the food of eternal life in them. As Godet says, "There is no figure of speech except in the expressions of 'eat' and 'drink', but the communion with Him is perfectly real and must be taken literally." "We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones (*Eph.* v. 30) said an Apostle who is not suspected of materialism." Godet says also that "as the grains in the ear of wheat are but the reappearance of the grain of the seed mysteri-

ously multiplied, so will believers, when sanctified and raised from the dead, be but the reproduction in millions of living specimens of the glorified Jesus". It is towards this destiny that from the first the believer must be striving and advancing. I have been led to quote *Philippians* and *Ephesians*. If I am to use *Colossians* I must quote from the whole Epistle. These later epistles of St. Paul are strikingly different from his earlier ones, and a study of them throws much light on our chapter of St. John. Is there not a likelihood that the source of Paul's later style was the effect of conversations between the two Apostles, for John could hardly be two years in Jerusalem while Paul was at Caesarea without some such intercourse?

We can understand falling in love and a fellowship of comprehensive and familiar sympathy. We can understand, then, the first and second addresses; but in the third we find mysticism and from that many of us shrink. To the Jews the drinking of blood was unlawful and abhorrent. The individual life which we feed on perished. Blood was forbidden apparently lest the personal life which is in the blood should become ours, just as cannibalism is said to be practised with that very intention of obtaining the fighting power, for instance, of a foeman worthy of one's steel. The drinking of the blood may have been the chief cause of the offence given (verse 62) by the synagogue address. But Christ accepts not only the eating of the flesh but the absorbing of the whole personality. In verse 57 He changes to "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him." This is an expression characteristic of St. John and means a real union of two persons who (remaining two) become identified with each other. It can be applied to God. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" What was said in chapter five about the relation of the Father and the Son is the foundation of what is said in chapter six about our relation to the Son. "The true God, the living Father, gives Himself to one alone, but *in* Him to all who feed upon This Holy One" (Godet).

It may help us to understand the life "in Christ" if I quote a prayer of the Rev. E. A. L. Clarke, intended to help communicants: "Embrace and penetrate my will with Thine exceeding grace. Be Thou, hereafter, more than ever before, the sole

master of my life, the counsellor of my thoughts, the director of my conscience, the ruler of every choice, the controlling centre of my affections, the goal of my actions, the foundation of my being, the boundless satisfaction of my desires."

For me to live is Christ. If He bore the burden of the world's sin, it must also be a burden to me. If He offered Himself a Sacrifice to the Father, no earthly motive or occupation must hinder my life of fealty to God. It must be a life of intense action "for the glory of this mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory . . . that we may present every man perfect in Christ; whereunto I labour also, striving according to His working, which worketh in me in power" (*Colossians* i. 27-29).

Summing up the whole marvellous series of discourses we find that it offers to us a life for Christ, with Christ, in Christ. It is worth while to compare the threefold way of the spiritual life mapped out by Saint Ignatius Loyola. Though the name Purgative Way suggests only the negative side, the abandonment of self-centredness, there is also a positive side, the acceptance of God as Master and Lord, and this alone is what Christ sets forth as the basis of His own Incarnate life and of that which He creates in us. This is the meaning of the first address.

The Illuminative Way is fellowship with Christ as our Friend. "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you" (xv. 15). If the first address is on the passage from death to life, this one is the translation from the power of darkness to the realm of light.

The Unitive Way is that which the third address sets forth as a dwelling in Christ and He in us. "If a man love Me he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto Him and make our abode with Him" (xiv. 23).

REJECTION OF THE BREAD OF LIFE

(vi. 59-71)

Verses 59-62. "Severe is this teaching. Who can hear Him?" This may refer to the third address especially, but the whole chapter is a unity. The modern language of rejection says that it is too idealistic. Was that the difficulty for the Galileans? Wait,

Christ may have meant, till you see me ascend to My former home, the throne of glory.

Verse 63. It sounds more like John's than Christ's word, but that is probably a false path to follow. The clearest statement I know is that of Marcus Dods, following and explaining Westcott, as he often does. "It was therefore the spirit animating the flesh in His giving of it which profited; not the external sacrifice of His body, but the spirit which prompted it was efficacious. The acceptance of God's judgment of sin, the devotedness to man and perfect harmony with God, shown in the Cross, is what brings life into the world; and it is this spirit men are invited to partake of. It is therefore not a fleshly but a spiritual transaction of which I have been speaking to you." There is, however, no direct reference to the Cross here, though what Dods says of that is also true, but the "Unitive Way" that causes Christ to speak as He does of "the Spirit men are invited to partake of". The whole of it, as Westcott had put it, belonged to the realm of spirit.

Verse 65 refers to vi. 44.

The desertion recorded in verse 66 must have been very considerable. Christ did in fact cease to wrestle with the Galileans' lack of understanding and transferred Himself to Judea and Perea. There is no reference in the New Testament to a Galilean Church, except in *Acts ix. 31*, which does not imply more than a number of disciples there who suffered in Saul's persecution. *St. Luke x. 11-16* is the final and very stern rebuke which Christ pronounces on the Galilean cities. But from St. John's account also the defection must have been serious for Him even to suggest the possibility of its extension to the Twelve—not only to Judas.

Verses 67-71. The occasion is too solemn, as in St. Mark's account also, for it to have been repeated twice. It marks a definite stage in the Apostles' career. The differences are due to St. John's customary expectation that his readers will combine St. Mark's Gospel with his own. It is curious that his alone makes it natural for Christ to say, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church." Peter had stood like a rock in the crisis, but rocks do not receive special revelations, as St. Mark's history of the event records.

AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

(vii and viii)

The first thirteen verses of chapter seven are an introduction through which we are made aware of the excitement which now prevails about Christ at Jerusalem. He Himself is somewhat uncertain about going to the Feast. When He does go He speaks aggressively, as in verses 14-24. The remaining twenty-eight verses contain only three short sayings of Christ. Twenty-two verses are given to the contending views of the people and the rulers about Him, and to the failure of a proposal to arrest Him.

We omit eleven verses at the beginning of chapter eight which interrupt the story, are not in John's style, and are only slightly supported by the manuscripts. Nevertheless this paragraph, the story of a sinful woman, is commonly held to be a true tradition.

The verses following, i.e. viii. 12-59, are almost wholly devoted to sayings of Christ, many of them expanding the first and second of the three in chapter seven. Verses 31-59 report a complete breach between Christ and members of the Council, and end with an attempt to murder Him.

The strange absence of any report of Christ's teaching during the Feast seems to be explained by vii. 10, which says that He went to the city "not publicly but as it were in secret". Of course He was at once recognized, but He did not surround Himself with an escort of disciples, as great rabbis were accustomed to do, nor did He allow any demonstration like that of Palm Sunday. The Apostles were in Jerusalem; they mingled with the crowd and overheard discussions and gossip about the actions of the Council; but they were warned not to appear with their Master and thus did not hear His addresses except through the general talk.

When the pilgrims had gone home and the Jerusalemites had returned to their normal duties, the Apostles rejoined Christ. The danger of a tumult no longer existed. In chapter eight nothing is said about a multitude. The "Jews" are represented by casual groups of Pharisees of which only the last seems to be a large one. What Christ said to them was a continuation of what John gathers was the substance of His speeches during the feast.

JERUSALEM A DANGER SPOT

(vii. 1-13)

Verse 1 of chapter seven cannot follow chapter five, because the latter ends with Christ in Jerusalem, and chapter seven would have had to begin with "Jesus returned to Galilee", whereas it actually says "Jesus continued to walk in Galilee", the natural attachment to the end of chapter six. So the reversal of the order of chapters five and six advocated by the "jig-saw" people is impossible.

Verses 2 to 5. The attitude of the "brethren" agrees closely with the Synoptic reports. Christ, they see, has lost much of the hold He had seemed to possess over Galilee and, besides, He had absented Himself in the northern country for some weeks, perhaps for two or three months. The brethren think this is very bad tactics. They are not unfriendly, however, and perhaps support what they believe to be His programme, which was much the same as the Galileans supposed it to be. *Verse 5* calls this unbelief. They think that it would be only proper for Christ to visit Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, especially as He had not been to Passover that year. There He could inaugurate His forward move, or at least revive the interest of those who had been disciples by doing miracles as in the previous year. "Nobody keeps himself in the background when he aspires to be a public character. Let Him seek a wider field for His words even a world-wide one." All of which is worldly wisdom, and good advice if Christ had worldly aims.

Verses 6 to 9 are easy. Jerusalem, the world that at the moment they wish Him to deal with, already hates Him. The fitting time for direct action has not arrived. The emphasis in *verse 8* upon this feast may mean that Christ already thinks of the crisis at the next feast, the Passover of the Crucifixion.

Verse 8 should be interpreted in accordance with Christ's principle of "seeing the Father do it". The intimation has not yet come. Christ's present belief may be (for some manuscripts omit "yet") that it is not the Father's will. In the end He knows that He is to go "but as it were in secret", and also that the crisis will not come at "this" feast. He will not be stoned or arrested. That may account for a frankness that is a defiance in the next few verses.

CHRIST DEFIES THE RABBIS

(vii. 14-24)

The teaching mentioned in verse 14 is not reported, but its effect was to amaze the "Jews". These would be the Pharisees of the Council, for the Sadducean priests did not mix with the crowd nor did they take much interest in the kind of learning which Christ displayed. The teaching that follows in this section may be taken as illustrating that which surprised the Pharisees. It was quite in their manner of using the Old Testament text. They wondered at its effectual use by one who had not been through their course of study. But the situation has changed greatly since Christ's visit at Purim. There was not then any intention to murder Him. Even if chapter five represents a view of the whole history of Christ's defence, as I have interpreted it, this passage cannot be removed and connected with its close. Anger and not admiration would be the emotion of those who came under the reproofs of v. 41-47.

Verses 16-18 have none the less a connection with the earlier passages, but in a different manner. Virtually Christ says that in being chiefly interested in the ability He showed in expounding the Scriptures, the "Jews" were revealing a wrong attitude, namely, the seeking of their own glory, as in v. 15-44. They should have been considering whether His teaching was consistent with the will of God. Those for whom the will of God is their object and their joy will compare every additional teaching with that standard. The teacher also, if he is only expressing himself, is really seeking glory for himself. If he has no such self-interest, but cares only that God be glorified, his teaching will be true in proportion to his knowledge of the God he serves.

Verses 19-24. This reference to the Scribes among the audience justifies the charge that they were seeking His death. The pilgrims who were present did not know of this, though some residents in the city speak openly of it at verse 25. It is a very mixed crowd, and throughout the chapter they continue to display divided opinions. Something of the same confusion appears in John's report of what Christ said, perhaps a sign that he received it from members of the crowd. The murderous intention is introduced and yet immediately dropped. Christ goes back to the one miracle which he performed at Purim and which is

the starting-point of the "Jews'" hostility. That was what led to the scribes' visit to Capernaum and to the conspiracy with the Herodians in *St. Mark* iii. 6. For this reason Christ says (verses 22-24)—as if it were provided to give Him an argument—the law of Moses made the Sabbath law secondary to the law that circumcision was to be done on the eighth day of the baby's life. When he returned after Purim to Galilee He would give other examples of a justifiable law-breaking because of exceptional situations (see *St. Mark* ii. 23-28, iii. 4-5). He leaves room for an argument about whether some particular situation does not justify the infringement of a law; but the Scribes did not allow for any exceptions, and therefore there was no need to discuss them.

VOICES OF THE CROWD

(vii. 25-52)

Verses 25-52 need very little comment. We can divide them into three sections, at verses 31 and 37. In each of the three there is a short saying of Christ, a willingness of some in the crowd to accept Him, and a difficulty about it which postpones any decision. That the Council is taking no action is a problem for some, at verse 25. At verse 32 there is a definite order to the Temple police to make the arrest. The phrase, "the chief priests and Pharisees", is John's way of speaking of a formal meeting of the Council or, as here, of a decision made at such a meeting. The police, however, are so greatly moved by Christ's teaching that they venture to disobey their orders. The interposition by Nicodemus, at verse 50, is another interesting incident. The Council does not make the mistake of saying that there has never been a Galilean prophet. The speech intended to silence Nicodemus means, "Enquire into the matter and you will see that this case is not one of the arising of a prophet out of Galilee."

Verses 37-39, as they stand in the English text, say that the believer in Christ becomes a Fountain of Living Water—that which was first Christ's gift to him flows thereafter from him to bring happiness to others. In spite of this widely accepted interpretation, which is in keeping with a beautiful Christian experience, I think that here we do not go beyond the initial gift. John's own interpretation in verse 39 speaks of their receiving it. not of their possession and use of it, and as they were not yet

believers, the promise is still for the future and conditional. By removing the full stop after "let him drink" we shall get a correct sentence, "If anyone thirst let him come to Me, and let him who is a believer (habitually) drink, in fulfilment of the Scripture, 'Out of His (Christ's) body shall flow rivers of living water'." This recalls vi. 35, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." They agree in thought, in language, and in poetic parallelism. The other alternative is to leave the faulty sentence as it is, without altering its meaning; but although John can write an ugly sentence, there is no other quite as bad as this even in his third epistle. We should remember that John did not hear Christ speak, but picked it up from the confused conversation of the crowd; but it may be going too far to suggest that he deliberately retained their confusion.

The most striking feature of the celebrations at the Feast, says Godet, was the daily procession of a priest, escorted by the multitude, to the Pool of Siloam. There he filled a golden pitcher with water which he carried back to the Temple, amid the shouts of the people and the sound of cymbals and trumpets. At the great altar he poured it out as a libation, while the people sang, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (*Isaiah* xii. 3). On the last day of the Feast the booths were removed, and the people signified that they had reached the Promised Land by returning to live in their houses! It is doubtful whether the procession and libation, which marked the other days, were repeated on the eighth. But the reference to it was appropriate whether it made use of the void caused by its absence or followed upon a last occurrence of it. The rite was a symbol (as the whole feast symbolized the forty years in the wilderness) of the water springing from the rock when Moses struck it with his rod. Christ did not compare Himself with the ceremony but with the rock itself.

Godet adds in a note that in *St. John* ii. 19 Christ is the true Temple; in iii. 14 He is the true Brazen Serpent; in vi. 32 the true Bread from Heaven; in this passage the true Rock; in viii. 12 the true Pillar of Cloud and Fire; in xix. 36 the true Passover Lamb. Thus the whole history of the Exodus is fulfilled in Christ. It would be difficult to express more impressively that Israel was to

find its explanation and destiny in Him. Chapters seven and eight are by no means an appeal to individuals to come out of the nation into His band of disciples. They are a call to the nation, in spite of its unbelief, to repent at this last opportunity and return unto the Lord.

THE TRAGEDY OF JUDAISM

(viii. 12-59)

The story of the sinful woman in viii. 2 must be omitted from St. John. The manuscript known as D stands alone among the great manuscripts. Its vocabulary differs from that of John. It destroys the connection of viii. 12-20 with the Feast of Tabernacles. The story itself was known earlier and may have been originally in the Gospel of the Hebrews. Jerome says he found it in many manuscripts, and his inclusion of it in the Vulgate was the means of its general acceptance. There is a possibility that its substance is true though not Scripture.

In contrast with chapter seven, this next one consists almost wholly of the words of Christ, spoken not to the multitude but to the "Jews", and not to them in a formal gathering or court of law, but to a group or groups of them who get into controversy with Him. The customary aloofness of the chief priests leads us to suppose that they were Pharisees (see i. 13) of the other element in the Council. We shall not catch the spirit of the chapter unless we bear in mind that Christ was still pleading with the nation and that John also is Jewish by birth and loyalty and is dealing with the blindness that brought about the downfall of his own beloved nation.

ON SEEING THE LIGHT

(viii. 12-20)

At the end of the paragraph we are informed that the conversation in this section took place in the treasure-chamber where donations to the Temple were received (*St. Mark* xii. 41-44) and other business of the place attended to. The teaching would be in the large court, but afterwards, or in an interval, Christ looks into the office and finds there a few of the "Jews". They are not perhaps members of the Council, but underlings or pupils. Christ has that day, or a few days before, spoken of Himself as the Light of the World, or at least of all who are willing to follow His guidance. No doubt the reference is to the pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness, symbolized during the Feast by two

great candlesticks. The Feast, however, is over. There is no large multitude in chapter eight. But Christ's claim, even if made after the lights were removed, is for these Jews a good excuse for nagging at Him. It would have been, they think, more seemly to leave such a statement for others to make, or at least He should have a supporting witness.

The first answer of Christ (14-16) is that clearly He has puzzled them, but He is no puzzle to Himself. He knows whence He came and whither He goes. He came, in fact, from God, and His destiny was to be glorified by the Father with the glory which was His before there was a world. There was no mystery about it to Himself. But since they know not either His source or His destiny He was to them a wonder, as all the Gospels say He frequently was. Where there is mystery it calls for investigation, but their opinion limits itself to the everyday world. It is "according to the flesh" and that dooms it to failure. He is not blaming them or anyone for their ignorance. When He does pass judgment it will be the true judgment, not simply an opinion, because it will also be the judgment of God.

This leads to the second part of His explanation. Verses 17 and 18 declare that at no time is He a single lonely person, for He and His Father are always conjoined in that fellowship of which he had already spoken (see chapter five, 19-20, and elsewhere). So there are the two witnesses which their law demands. Now they ought to have known by this time that by His Father He means God, and therefore their last objection is frivolous and can only bring upon them a dignified conclusion of the discussion. The question, "Where is Thy Father?" is only a further sign of ignorance. "If you knew Me, you would know My Father also." The Pharisees subsided, finding themselves without the basis for an argument. Christ's hour had not yet come.

THE THREATENING DEATH

(viii. 21-31)

The second section is an address given in the Temple courts, as verse 59 reveals by mention of the loose stones ready to hand; the "Jews" are still the part of the audience mainly addressed, for they are treated as responsible for what will be done in the name of the nation. The many, in verse 30, who believed, dis-

appear in a way that suggests that they were in a minority; the total number present is therefore considerable.

Christ repeats, to begin with, verses 21-22, what He had said during the Feast, that His time with them would not last much longer; then He would go where they could not follow. It was a thought much present to Christ's mind from this time onward, and for the "Jews" it was a serious outlook because it meant that their day of grace was short. On the former occasion it was the "Jews" who wondered if He would go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, because as rulers they were concerned about His plans as well as His present actions. Now a darker thought echoes, their still undisclosed intention, His death. Would it be by death that He would escape them?

The impending separation would exhibit the already deep-set contrariety between Christ and the Jews. But on either side there was death. He foresaw for Himself death and resurrection, to save the world; for them the death of the nation in their sin of unbelief (verse 24), but that does not appear again. We are reminded that the Holy Spirit "convicts the world of sin because they believe not in Me". The cause of the unbelief lay partly in their nature and partly in the environment they had built up. They were from below; Christ was from above. They were of this world with its pleasure, its cares, its ambitions. They would perhaps not recognize the picture, but secularism exists under many disguises.

In defining the faith they lacked, Christ used (verses 24, 28) a strange phrase, "Unless ye believe that I am." It is obviously easy to supply such words as "what I claim to be". But "I AM" meant far more than that. It was the name of Israel's God, a name that was so sacred that it was not to be uttered. It does occur (though in reading it would be pronounced *Adonai*, our Lord) in *Deuteronomy*, xxxii. 39, *Isaiah* xli. 4, xliii. 10, 13, and other places; and in our present chapter, verse 58, it is the final utterance which roused the Jews to stone Christ. Many other instances are given by Bernard to show that at the time when the Gospel was written it was "the style of the deity", intended to claim divine nature or powers. In view of the effect produced at verse 58 we must notice the previous verses where it is used. In verse 24 it only prompts the question "Who art

Thou?" marking a new suspicion of blasphemy. At verse 28 it introduces an explanation which by its complete subordination of the Son to the Father reconciles many to a dubious belief in Christ.

Christ's answer in verse 25 is also difficult. Most scholars follow the Revised Version margin, "How is it that I speak to you at all?" Bernard, however, translates, "To begin with, exactly what I am saying to you", i.e. either the title "I AM" or the whole of verses 23, 24. Practically that comes to a declaration that He adheres to His language and all that it implies. The former opinion is at least easier. It is what a teacher is often inclined to ask when his pupils show invincible ignorance. We must not attribute it to petulance for it reveals a terrible despair.

If Christ said all He could say and criticized all that He disapproved, it would be a long business for which He has no mind (verses 26-28). The one thing to which He devotes Himself is the publication to the world of the Gospel which the Father has given Him to declare, and that is that "the work of God is to believe in Him whom He has sent". What stood in the way was (verse 27) that they had not understood, or rather had not learned because they refused to learn, that He was speaking to them of the Father. Verses 28 and 29 reaffirm in language that is now familiar to us that when they have crucified Him they will get to know that He was right all the time. It is not necessary to trace the manner in which at Pentecost and afterwards, by conversions or by penalties such as have fallen on the nation, the prophecy has been fulfilled. The immediate effect was that apparently because, while using the title "I AM" and speaking of His mission from God, He expressed as fully as possible His subordination to the Father, many believed in Him. They not only believed but made some confession of their belief. They were not like those mentioned in xii. 42, who did not confess because of the Pharisees, lest they should be excommunicated. But this extreme threat was not yet published. Christ was quite aware that they would have to endure persecution and He plainly urged them to perseverance. "If you continue in My teaching you will be truly My disciples, and you will learn the full truth which I proclaim and attain to the liberty of soul which at present you do not possess." Nothing is told us about their future.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE JEWS

(viii. 33-59)

All that follows in this chapter is addressed to the hardened majority. It is impossible to withhold some admiration for their claim to freedom. "We are the Seed of Abraham and have never been enslaved by anyone." They could not deny the bondage in Egypt, the Babylonian captivity, or the Roman tyranny; but they hold fast their birthright and face their conquerors with an invincible pride, as their descendants have done even to the present day. In their souls they are free.

Verse 34 must not be understood in the sense of that bondage which sin has for St. Paul, because the sin thought of is different. St. Paul spoke mainly of fleshly sin and the service of self and the power of these to become dominant. The Jews were not more subject to these than other men. They might claim that in most respects they were better. The Pharisees must have endured much in endeavouring to establish their own righteousness. Their sin was a false religious principle which made God a despot and His service an obedience to a legal code. They disbelieved Christ because they were in bondage to their past and incapable of conceiving a further revelation of God. *Verse 35* makes a comparison of their bondage with that of a domestic slave whose master is the lord of a household. Their status differs from that of a son because it depends solely on the lord's will and because while it pledges them to obedience it does not guarantee a knowledge of the lord's business or his will, or give them a fellowship in the family such as the sons enjoy. The Son is so one with the Father that He can confer emancipation upon them to the fullest extent. Notice that in *verse 38* the contrast between seeing and hearing is the same as in the address of chapter five. Here the question of freedom gives place to a different one—whether a son's life will in a general way reproduce that of the father. The true seed of Abraham will behave like Abraham. It will do so not only because the father trains them, nor simply because they will imitate him, but because they start with a similar nature. In seeking to kill Him, and especially to do so because of His teaching, they are totally different from Abraham, and betray the nature of another father. *Verse 40* is remarkable for reducing His claim on them to a minimum. He is at least a man, and He is

teaching what He has heard and learned. He puts aside the fact that He is also more than man and has the higher knowledge of seeing. So gentle with them He is.

The Jews (at verse 41) drop the reference to Abraham which has proved so inconvenient and so embarrassing, and claim that spiritually God is their Father. The figure of adultery is of course derived from the prophets. They were not spurious Israelites. The emphasis on "we" makes the next clause include Christ, we and you have one Father, namely, God. You are making too much of your Sonship. In verse 42, Christ comments, with irrepressible humour, that He does not find them very brotherly. Where is their brotherly love? Where is their interest in His mission which according to them should exist within the family life? There is no such community of understanding between them; and that is why as listeners they are so continually at cross-purposes with Him. There shall be no misunderstanding this time! With one burning sentence (verse 44) Christ sets before them the horrible truth. If the son's life at all reveals his parentage, they are the children of the devil, for their whole attitude towards Him is that of the murderer and the liar, the traditional activities of the devil. Verse 45 declares them as hostile as the devil to truth. Verses 46-47 challenge them to bring any charge of untruth against Him. If this is translated "convicteth Me of sin", it must still be understood as a charge against Him of wilful misrepresentation of God's words in His teaching. To introduce a reference to his entire sinlessness and not to dwell further upon it is too great an improbability. The climax of the passage is still, "You do not accept My teaching because you are not of God."

The difficulty of the last part of the chapter, verses 51-59, arises from a refusal to take seriously Christ's gospel of eternal life. Those who believe it will never experience death. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died; and their departure was accounted to be their hurt, and their journeying away from us to be their ruin; but they are in peace" (*Wisdom*, iii. 1-3). The Christian Church has accepted this teaching as literally true. In *St. Mark* xii. 26-27 Christ gives it His sanction: "God said to Moses, I am the God of Abraham, and

the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead but of the living: ye do greatly err." Here He says the same about Abraham and the prophets and also about His opponents who, like the Sadducees, greatly err. There is no question of what He makes Himself, as He has constantly told them. It is not a matter of a difference of opinion but of receiving with simplicity the self-revelation of God. Their God is quite different from His Father, of whom they have no accurate knowledge. Abraham is alive. Moreover, he has knowledge of "Christ's day", that is, of what Christ is doing in His incarnate being. He has seen it and exulted about it. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is so thoroughly Jewish in its language and its picture that we must take it as adapted to their thought, which differed from Christ's. When Christ reveals the full truth, His teaching about Abraham is unique in the light it throws on the living ones whom we call the dead, as in the passage quoted above from *Wisdom*. Perhaps we should dwell on this when we read the story of the Transfiguration rather than on the change in His appearance.

The text of verse 57 does not reproduce Christ's words exactly, but it does not matter, since from the Jews' point of view the real meaning is simply that they cannot have seen each other. Christ has said that Abraham saw His day and He now implies that because of His divine nature, "I AM", He can see Abraham as he now lives in death.

To the Jews it is unblushing and criminal blasphemy, and they pick up some loose stones—the result of repairing or building work—to kill Christ; but Jesus was hidden (R.V., "hid Himself") from them and went away. As He came straight to Jerusalem from Galilee (at the Feast of Tabernacles), and as we shall hear that from December He made Bethany beyond Jordan (i.e., Perea) His centre, we shall naturally suppose that from October to December was the period of His Judean ministry. John tells us no details, and neither Mark nor Luke give many; but much in Luke's chapters ten to seventeen, inclusive, was probably learned by him when he was attending St. Paul at Caesarea. Resemblances between Luke and John may be due to the former having learned much from those who, between 30 A.D. and 60 A.D., had been disciples of St. John.

THE MAN BORN BLIND

(ix. 1-41)

The story of the man born blind is of greater importance than appears on the surface. This is because it directly leads to the teaching about the Good Shepherd. The few words of Christ in chapter nine also deal with great themes. Moreover, the story itself shows the Narrator at his best and discloses his personal interest in its hero. Verses 1-7 deal with the miracle: 8-34 tell of the man's bold confession and able defence: 35-41 show how Christ dealt with him, and illuminate the miracle's meaning by His comments.

THE MIRACLE

(ix. 1-7)

The blind baby has grown to manhood, but is still young and living in his parents' home. Blind men were plentiful and most of them had to beg. Apart from accidents and the failure of sight in old age, the commonest cause of blindness is some infantile inflammation, but a blind child must always be pathetically noticeable, even in a country where adult blindness is, and always has been, common. This man, then, has for years been a familiar sight in the city, and is an object of pity. If we may judge from the story, his conversation has been freely uttered, and appreciated as that of an alert and thoughtful mind. By the opportunity so given, he has also become well posted in the city gossip and has been interested in "the man who is called Jesus", a phrase in which the article found in the best texts shows his previous knowledge of Christ as a real topic of the day.

It has become notorious that he was born blind, and even the Twelve, or at least St. John, have heard it. They raise the old problem of their nation, the connection between unusual suffering and some exceptional sin. In this case, was it his own sin, or his parents'? One of them—and since St. John leaves him unnamed, it may be himself—puts the question to their Master. But Christ answers that there is a third possibility, which is indeed the true one. It is that the works of God may be made

manifest in him. This cannot be merely synonymous with the other saying, that God may be glorified.

The plural "works" implies that he will become an example of God's general attitude towards evil. It is something to be removed, a suggestion that illuminates all suffering. For although miracles are made use of to make manifest the mind of God, which we too easily forget, the normal working of His will in the world does increasingly have that result. Out of the evils of nature, and the ignorance, apathy, and folly of man, out of all the imperfect adjustments of the world to us, and of us to the world, God can and does bring good. Both history and the longer history which is evolution are the scene of His active working towards that end. "What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more."¹ There is really on a broad view a connection between sin and suffering, but the Bible is on the side of a faith that God can and will deal with both. The triumph of good over evil is at the heart of the Gospel of the Cross.

Verse 4 makes it the law of all good life. "We", not Christ only, must do the works of Him who sent Christ, and that without idleness or procrastination while the day of opportunity lasts. The night cometh, in one form or another, and finally by death, when no man can work. The text which says "we", not "I", is justified by its unexpectedness. It follows that there is real progress in our own constant and successful war against disease; in the discovery of beneficent forces awaiting us in nature; in the continual watchful improvement of social customs and national laws; in the individual fight for a more complete and unified personality. Done for the furthering and expression of the Divine purpose, all such energies of man may be made a religious service of God.

Verse 5, "when I am in the world", should be compared with xvii. 11, "Now I am no more in the world." But "when" has a suffix of indefiniteness, like "whenever". It suggests that the Presence manifest to the disciples will indeed end, but not so as to give place to absence. He has been present in other modes (as in i. 10), and still others will come. Whenever, wherever, however He is present, He is the Light of the World.

Verse 6. The method Christ used in His miracle (cf. *St. Mark*,

¹ Robert Browning, "Abt Vogler", ix.

viii. 23) was one that was in use in those days in the belief that it would effect a cure. St. John does not think it necessary to say that they told the man who Christ was, and how He was acting, but they would of course do so. The use of spittle encouraged faith by its agreement with prevalent ideas, while the command to go to Siloam tested the faith by requiring his co-operation. St. John adds a note that Siloam means "Sent". It was an artificial pool to which water was sent (using a different metaphor we should say "was led") from the Virgin's well. So Christ, sent from the Father, sends the man to the pool which also is "sent". It is a pleasant fancy that John thinks not insignificant.

A MAN OF TRUE VISION

(ix. 8-34)

The facts of the second section extend into the next few days. The man has to accustom himself to a world he has never seen, and only dimly and, we may guess, erroneously imagined. But in the Gospel the subject is the reception his new world gave to him. First we hear of the excitement of his neighbours, who can hardly believe their own eyes. No doubt his expression and demeanour had been changed by the gift of sight, and the conclusions of those who knew him varied with the degree of their past intimacy with him. He was himself quite frank about his cure and how the Man called Jesus had effected it. Where Jesus might now be found, he does not know. Whether he had tried to find Him we are not told, but they have not met.

Under any circumstances the Pharisees would soon have heard the story; but the people made a prompt report, especially because the miracle had been wrought on the Sabbath. That news diverted the Pharisees' interest to the problem of dealing with Christ, and those who expressed faith in Him. Since the Feast of Tabernacles the Council had been active. They had proclaimed that anyone who confessed Christ as Messiah would be excommunicated. The verb used in verse 22 does not mean more than that they had agreed to this policy, but the context proves that a new regulation had been published and was widely known. The usual course in such a case was to suspend the offender temporarily from religious privileges. If the offence continued or was repeated, a more severe punishment was inflicted, and finally

an obstinate offender would be excluded from every sort of social relations in the same way as lepers were treated.

We have seen that the Pharisees of the Council, with, maybe, others of their sect, were accustomed to act in concert, but independently of the formalities of the Council, in investigating religious matters. The deputation that waited on the Baptist, the Scribes from Jerusalem who opposed Christ in Galilee, and the group who sent Nicodemus to Christ, were all of that nature. The meeting about the blind man in verses 13 to 16 was similar. In the discussion it emerged that there was a diversity of opinion. Some quoted the orthodox interpretation of the Sabbath Law, while others were impressed, as Nicodemus was, by the miracle which seemed to prove that "God was with Him".

It is not generally noticed that the word "again" in verse 17 indicates a different scene. It often means "at another time" or "at a later stage", as in viii. 9, 21, and x. 7. It cannot here mean that they repeated a question about the man's opinion of Christ, for there has been no such question. Also the word "Pharisees" is dropped and "Jews" is used instead, which in this context must mean the Council or a committee acting in its name. Further, the atmosphere of the narrative changes: it becomes formal and introduces a phrase with a legal background, and the "Jews" speak as having authority to pass a sentence. Verses 17-34 are therefore the report of a trial.

Verse 17 is the equivalent of the "pleading" in our courts by which the charge is definitely stated and the accused given the choice of confessing or denying it. But in form it is not identical, but more like a police interrogation. "What do you deduce about this person from His power to give you sight?" The answer, "He is a Prophet," is from their point of view blameworthy; but it does not make Him subject to the new regulation against calling Him Messiah. Further evidence must be sought. The Pharisees up to this point have assumed that the man was born blind and that the miracle is genuine, but a court does not act upon what everybody says but upon evidence formally given. That at this late stage the parents are called to identify the accused and to vouch for the fact of his blindness, is the final proof that we are in a regular court, which on such a charge is indeed the Supreme Court. The parents speak clearly about the facts and the

limits both of their knowledge and their responsibility. They are indeed excellent witnesses. The man is recalled and bidden to "give glory to God". This is a Jewish legal formulary found in the story of Achan (*Joshua* vii. 19), after the solemn casting of lots has revealed his guilt. In *Jeremiah* xiii. 16, it follows the sentence, "Be not proud for the Lord hath spoken." It seems to mean "Praise the Lord that He has intimated to us His judgment on the matter." The truth is out. In St. John's use the words that follow are the court's judgment, "*We*, in the exercise of our authority and in God's name, pronounce that Jesus is a sinner." This is not merely an opinion. The man is expected to submit to it and to abandon any further defence of Christ's action. Instead, he refuses to concern himself about Christ's character or to accept their judgment, but rests upon the undoubted fact of his cure.

The court (verse 26) makes a tactical blunder by asking for a repetition of the evidence. For this reopened the case which it has just declared to be closed. The man's reply stings, as he meant it to, and all dignity is lost in their resort to mere abuse. He takes no notice of this, but boldly declares that all the facts are against them. He wins the argument and the court falls back upon their power to use force, which is always the abandonment of authority. They cast him out.

Scholars who do not realize that we are dealing with a court case tell us that the words mean only that they drive him from their presence. In itself that might be so, but the context shows that the first step to excommunication, the temporary loss of status, has been taken. Otherwise, the man escapes the consequences of avowing that Christ is a prophet sent from God. Christ in the following verses does not treat him as one who has achieved a legal victory but as one sorely in need of help. As we understand it, he must deny Christ altogether or expect the greater excommunication.

CHRIST CLAIMS THE MAN FOR HIMSELF

(ix. 35-41)

Christ seeks the man out. There is no hint that He finds him in the Temple, where probably he would not be allowed to remain. Christ hails him with a question which from its form obviously

expects an affirmative answer. We may express it as, "So *you* believe in the Son of Man, do you?" in spite of the unbelieving court and its threats. But the man is too thoughtful to assent too easily. He must by now know Jesus as his Healer, but how much does that imply? To the sensible question he receives a clear and full assurance. Thou hast seen Him (by His gift), and now I reveal Myself orally to thee as the Son of Man! He said, "I believe, Lord"—just that—and he worshipped Him. We are told that the title, Son of Man, was not definitely Messianic among the Jews. How much the man has yet to learn is hidden from us, but the prostration always means divine worship. As usual in the miracles of the Gospel, the man disappears.

We are assuming that the text followed by the Revised Version is correct. If John wrote "Son of God" the result is the same, even if its expression would be more clear to one trained in Judaism.

The wider importance of the issue is that one whom the Jewish authorities cast out as no longer one of the People of God is claimed by Christ and received into His Flock. The rebellion of an individual against the *de facto* government of his nation is always a serious matter. It is doubtful whether it can be formally justified except on the ground that the government does not possess, or has lost, the right to occupy its position and wield authority. Still more positively we may say that nobody has the right to separate another from his Church unless it has forfeited the right to be his, or anyone's, church. But that is exactly the position in which Christ finds Himself. His action foreshadows, and even inaugurates the schism between Christianity and Judaism, which took years to develop but was inevitable from the first, unless indeed the Jews abandoned their disbelief in their Messiah.

Christ sums up the situation in verse 39. His coming into the world creates (automatically so to speak) a Valley of Decision. Its object is to give light to those who sit in darkness. Its actual effect may be, if men believe that they already dwell in all the light there is, to blind them to the true Light of the World.

In verse 40 certain Pharisees, always hovering round Him, raise in shocked accents the question, "Surely you are not calling us also blind?" The reply of Christ was devastating. If they

were blind, pity rather than judgment should be theirs. But in their claim to see and know the judgment of God, even to administer it in His name, they had renounced any claim to the blindness that would have been an excuse. Their sin remains and is a full burden of guilt. This, however, is not Christ's last word. There is no pause at the end of chapter nine. At least the first seven verses of chapter ten follow immediately, and in the allegorical form of the Good Shepherd the Pharisees are taught why judgment rests upon the rulers and the national jurisprudence of Israel. For Christ would fain be their Saviour, not their Judge.

THE DIVINE SHEPHERD

(x. 1-42)

The tenth chapter begins with the group of parabolic sayings about shepherding, but extends beyond them into a passage which discards allegory and foreshadows Christ's death and resurrection; this teaching, with its effect on the Jews to whom it was addressed, occupies verses 1-21. It is followed by a strange attempt to obtain from Christ a more explicit claim to Messiahship, which He tells them should not be necessary. Staggered by His saying that "I and My Father are one", which they take in the fullest sense, they threaten stoning (verses 22-33). He repels them by a reference to Psalm 82, which speaks of rulers, and not estimable ones, as "gods". The interpretation being quite in their own style seems to make them scared of their purpose of violence. The rest of the chapter is dated as happening at the Feast of Dedication in December. But the entire chapter and by consequence chapter nine also, is so closely connected that it seems best to regard the whole as belonging to a visit to Jerusalem at that feast, the first we know Christ to have made since the one at the Feast of Tabernacles. His reason for making it is not given, but it suggests that the Good Shepherd is unwilling to abandon His lost sheep, who will become His murderers, without one more effort, "that He may by all means save some". At all events those addressed are still Pharisees of the ruler class. There is no mention of the multitude.

SHEPHERDS AND THEIR FOLDS

(x. 1-6)

There is in these verses no mention of Christ, nor of His opponents. The parable, like that of the Sower, pictures a normal practice which the audience at once recognizes, though they fail to see its applicability to the situation described at the end of chapter nine. The Shepherd is the chief character. The sheep are His, and presumably so is the fold. It is true that Palestine flocks mingle with each other and that each one knows the voice of its own master, so that each can disentangle itself from the rest.

Many writers have dwelt on this surprising attachment to their shepherd, but it does not come into the picture except for the merest hint in the phrase "His own sheep". The size of our flocks in Australia prevents our sheep from behaving similarly, but I have known a small one of about thirty which knew their owner's voice and followed him when called. Some of them had been given individual names and answered to them. The picture is one of genuine fellowship. The shepherd knows his sheep and makes the care of them his continual occupation. The sheep know their shepherd and have a complete trust in him which they give to nobody else. But there is another aspect almost as familiar. There are robbers whose only interest in the sheep is as things that can be used for their own profit. The door does not open to such men. They must enter by force, overcoming the obstacle that law and decent order have provided by climbing over the wall.

An illustration of the blindness of the "Jews" is that they do not grasp the purpose of Christ in using the parable. Yet they know their Scriptures and have found there the same illustration of the relation between rulers and subjects. It has been specially applied to their own Israel, not only in psalms which speak of the Divine Shepherd, but in passages, of which *Ezekiel* xxxiv is the most outstanding, rebuking the tyranny of selfish and self-seeking rulers. Their blindness is not an excuse. It reveals the ingrained hatefulness of their selfishness. It is the totalitarian conception of government against which Christ sets His own principles of fellowship and love and service. The Pharisees especially should see themselves in the wall-climbers. No law of God, no constitutional action, has put them in the place of power. They have interpreted the word of God according to the lusts of their own base hearts. They have converted the general principles into a mass of details to be administered by their gang of autocrats as if it were from God. They have, for instance, given to the priests an intricate web of what makes blemish in a Passover lamb. They have done the same for themselves with the Sabbath rest, with the corban, with the law of meats. Government by regulation is always dangerous, but its tyranny is most clearly revealed in Pharisaism.

Laws are necessary. For their own sake, sheep must at the right

season be shut up in the fold. Men can live in relative safety only when they belong to a community, which involves restraints and discipline and yet may leave them real liberty and a bond of fellowship between them and their law-givers. The shepherd also is free, because if he comes to a closed door it will open to just authority though not, we should ensure, to political trickery.

THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

(x. 7-10)

"Jesus therefore said to them" is rightly understood to mean that because they did not understand He gave them the second parable. This compels us to think of the thieves and robbers as the same men as were meant in verse 1, that is, as the Pharisees and chief priests. To make them false Christs, as some do, does not fit the present tense "are". They came before Him, He found them in office, and they are still rulers though robbers. But Christ is not only the door of the fold, the obstacle to such rulers, but the door of the sheep and for their good. The fold is for security, but safety is not the only necessity. They need, even more, freedom to find pasture. "By Me if any man enter in he shall find safety, in a state of salvation." He shall go in and go out in freedom and have life and abundance. It is like St. John to think most about the doctrine of life rather than of salvation in St. Paul's sense. There will be, however, something said about that in the third parable. The abundance which He gives, or with which He gives—the two forms do not differ much—points to a new fullness of life for each sheep and not only continuance of what he has. The sheep looks for no more; but the Gospel says that through Christ the disciple has access to a higher than the natural life. That was in the Prologue. Elsewhere we have found that the natural life is, by contrast with the fuller one, to be esteemed death. For the believer receives as a gift from God the life of a child of God. In the parable there was no need to give more than a remembrance of this by the word "abundant".

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

(x. 11-21)

The word for "good" implies the goodness that awakens our love for the beautiful, and our pleasure that such goodness does

exist. The careless modern Englishman would probably say the "ideal" shepherd. He gives His life for the sheep.

It may be care for an untypical minority among the Pharisees that led Christ to introduce into the picture the figure of the hireling. He is not a thief or a robber, but a very ordinary man. Jewish law expressly provided for the limitation of a shepherd's responsibility. He might be expected to fight a wolf but not a pack of wolves, one thief but not an armed gang. Similarly, though the Pharisees, claiming that they could see, had no excuse for their sin of unbelief, there was also real blindness among them. Not all could fairly be called thieves and robbers; there were hirelings, well disposed but not heroic, faithful servants of truth according to their light, but without vision of the Truth. Was there not a young Saul of Tarsus, thinking in himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the "name" of Jesus of Nazareth—which also he did? Must there not have been others known to us or unknown? Christ thinks of them with moderation and pity. We get a glimpse of "the meekness and sweet reasonableness of Christ".

Verses 14-15 explain that as the Good Shepherd He knows His own and His own know Him. The parable begins to dissolve, though its terms are still used in verses 15-16 and again in verses 26-28. The consciousness of Himself as the Good Shepherd becomes lost in the more direct consciousness of Himself as the Son of God, and of the disciples whose destiny is to be like Him. We must explain the true human love by divine love and not vice versa. We love and are loved with the direct awareness that characterizes the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son. "We love because He first loved us" (*I John iv. 19*). Such love belongs to our spiritual life. It may become evident even in what William James, the psychologist, calls the Wider Me, which includes everything that a man can call his own. In their well-being He rejoices and in their sorrows, failures and death, He suffers. In Australia we have no wolf to fear, but many men have braved flood or fire to save their sheep and from time to time one of them has lost his life. It is not done simply because sheep are valuable property but because of that bond of fellowship which one can have even with animals, or rather because a man acts instinctively in the crisis "when the soul declares itself—to wit,

by its fruit, the thing it does". The image of the Creator, however blurred, is not wholly lost by the natural man.

Verse 16. The thought of the Shepherd laying down His life leads to that of the wideness as well as the divine quality of Christ's love. In xi. 52 the Evangelist by the same sequence contrasts the narrowness of the outlook of Caiaphas with the broad view of Christ. We must read "one flock, one shepherd", not "one fold". The fold is a necessity of administration with a view to the safety of the sheep, and because of the existence of a hostile environment. A shepherd with so large a flock in a world-wide pasture might well have more than one fold; but if he does, unity will be preserved because they are all his, provided by his one loving purpose, and usable by any of his sheep when he moves them from one place to another. As applied to the Catholic Church the figure justifies local or national churches with independent features and organization, but not schismatic divisions. Even so, we must notice that Christ hints only at many folds by speaking of other sheep which are not "of this fold", and of a unity still to be created. Unity is His concern.

Verses 17, 18. Here figurative language gives place to mysterious but direct truth. The teaching is repeated by St. Peter (*Acts* ii. 23, etc.) in his early preaching on the great Pentecost and afterwards. "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up." Behind the persistent malignity of the Jews, the judgment of Pilate and the deed of the soldiers, Christ sees the will of the Father that He should die, but only in order that so He shall be made perfect (i.e. reach the final completeness of the Manhood He had assumed) by the Resurrection. He died and rose again in obedience to the Father's commandment, which was His authority for not fleeing when His hour came. Thus it was a voluntary self-dedication to the experience of death (as formerly to the experience of birth) and at the same time complete obedience to the Father.

When we remember that the audience was well instructed in their religion, we can understand that some would think this, in conjunction with Messianic claims, sheer madness. Others, even if they thought it disposed of His Messiahship, would recognize the tones of the highest Old Testament heroism. He might yield

Himself to death for some hidden purpose of God, as Isaac had done. It did not savour of madness, which did not match well with His miracles.

THE BLINDNESS OF THE JEWS

(x. 22-42)

The rulers, then, are genuinely puzzled. It does not occur to them that the solution demands an entire reconsideration of their own conception of the Messiah. Based theoretically on Scripture, it seems to them to have the authority of God; in reality it is a misinterpretation of Scripture and a tradition that has the authority only of the Elders who promulgated it. They encircle Christ in a spirit of hostility, as if to prevent Him from escaping till He answers them with a plain Yes or No. He answers that His works are already sufficient answer; they have all the facts necessary to answer their own question. The difficulty is that their presuppositions are too contrary to the truth to allow of any sympathetic understanding of Him, still less of any submission to His leadership. They will not have Him for their Shepherd because they are not His sheep; the obstacle is in their own minds. Verses 27-28 should be punctuated as three couplets, since they summarize the three parables of the Shepherd section.

My sheep hear my voice: and I know them.

And they follow Me; and I give to them eternal life.

And they shall never perish: And no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

The first echoes verse 3, the second verse 10, the third verse 12. Then, as if He were afraid that He would be thought to be doing something "from Himself", He adds that His confidence is not in Himself but in the sovereignty of His Father who has given Him the sheep. Then, as naturally as possible, as if it were the utterance of an obvious truism, He concludes, "I and the Father are one." The context does not compel us to understand more in the words than "It does not matter which way I put it," or "Whether My hand or the Father's, it comes to the same thing." Verse 38 contains a clearer statement of the unity, but here also we have but to remember that the Father is God Almighty, to see that the claim is one of real divinity; in Christ's self-consciousness He knows Himself as God.

It is in this sense that the Jews take up stones to cast at Him, and in so many words accuse Him of blasphemy at its worst. He being a man makes out that He is God. But with the immediate readiness which is characteristic of Him, He quotes to them the 82nd Psalm. God is the speaker in it. "I said, ye are gods and all of you sons of the Most High." If God spoke like that of a number of unrighteous rulers, may it not be possible for a man to use at least the second half without blasphemy? The argument, whatever we say about it, was quite in their own style and therefore effective. They cannot reject it without consideration. Is there really an analogy between those spoken of in the Psalm, and Christ's view of Himself? Arguments of that kind are familiar to them; they seem to have found solid ground under their feet. Their violence is stilled, and as verse 39 says, they seek to arrest Him in the normal manner.

If they took the trouble to read the whole Psalm (as my readers also should) they would find that Christ was not merely relying on a verbal quibble. It would teach them that national rulers do not hold office to force their subjects into acceptance of their policy. They are themselves under a law. It is theirs to do justice to the afflicted and to rescue the needy from the power of the wicked. When they tyrannize, men walk to and fro in darkness. "The whole civil order was disturbed, public confidence destroyed, and all social and commercial relations were unsettled by the injustice of these governors" (Briggs, *Commentary on the Psalms* (I.C.C., ii. 216). When God arises to judge the earth, "they shall die like men and fall like one of the princes". As when Christ spoke the parable of the wicked husbandmen, they should recognize that He is speaking against themselves.

We may return here to a point in verse 24. The passage in verses 22-39 belongs to the Feast of the Dedication, instituted to commemorate one of the times when God arose to judge. Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. had desecrated the Temple. Judas Maccabaeus drove out the Syrians, and restored and rededicated the Temple. The event was commemorated annually in December. It was then that the Jews surrounded Christ saying, according to the usual translation, "How long dost Thou make us to doubt, or hold us in suspense?" Hoskyns points out that just before, at verse 18, Christ has used the same words with the

meaning, "Nobody taketh My life from Me", and he proposes to give that here, too, "How long dost Thou take away our life?" It will now be a direct reference to verse 18. Nobody will take your life, you say, but it is you that are taking away ours. In St. John's style that would need an emphasis on the pronouns which we do not find. Yet it would be more natural if it were a complaint that Jesus is creating an unrest that may lead to a rising of the people, and finally to the destruction of the government and of national life. Government by fear, like that of the Jewish Council, is a two-edged weapon. The government becomes at times afraid of its subjects' actions. Indeed, that "they feared the people" is nearly as obvious in the Gospels as that the people feared the Pharisees. Fear is as often a cause of violence as arrogance is; it is fear that stirs up Caiaphas in the next chapter.

We see that in chapter ten, as in chapter eight, St. John speaks only to the rulers, and the whole atmosphere has a tang of politics. Christ also thinks of Himself as a Ruler. He is owner and master of the sheep. He has no purpose except their welfare, for the sake of which He is willing to lay down His life. Thus He is truly Messianic, the Royal Shepherd, or the Shepherd King, and much more truly than David a man after God's own heart. His final word (verses 38-39) is that, believing in Him as His works reveal Him, they may yet learn and keep on learning, know more and more, that the Father is in Him and He in the Father. It is not only unity of purpose, or substance or character only, but unity of Persons, after the manner of the Spirit, the fruit of perfect love and entire understanding.

Christ went away, not only from the Temple. He left Judea and made His headquarters at Bethany beyond Jordan, where He had found the Baptist at the beginning of His ministry. The place is not named, but it was at Bethany that he first witnessed to Christ. The people came to Him there and they confessed that the witness which the Baptist gave to Him has been proved true. What there was of ministry to Perea we are not told. He was still at Bethany beyond Jordan when, shortly before Passover, He received word of the sickness of Lazarus in Bethany of Judea.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

(xi)

Our knowledge of death and of the conditions under which a dead man lives (for of that we are assured by our religion) is too meagre to justify definite statements on the subject. Those who believe that the daughter of Jairus died and was resuscitated have no great difficulty in accepting that the same was true of Lazarus. Those who do not sincerely believe either story can more easily explain away the former one and therefore tend to reserve their attacks for the latter. I do not propose to discuss the question. But something must be said about the critics who take up the position that John contradicts the history of the Synoptists about the sequence of the events that lead up to the Crucifixion.

The claim is that St. Mark, followed as usual by the other two, represents the decision that Christ must die as arising from the cleansing of the Temple, while St. John attributes it to the danger that the Council feared would arise from the miracle on Lazarus. Of course the real cause lay deeper than any single event, and was the cumulative effect of many forms of disbelief. It is true that St. John says in xi. 53, that from that day forth they took counsel that they might put Him to death. But from chapter seven onwards we have been reading of that counsel as already in operation, twice on the eve of being effected by assassination, and openly proclaimed by the destined victim. To confess Him the Messiah renders a man liable to social and religious ostracism. We cannot make St. John so crudely inconsistent with himself as these critics do. The raising of Lazarus seems to be merely the last straw, but nevertheless it was very effective. In modern phraseology the determined policy was now on the agenda for Council meetings. Verse 57 tells us Christ had actually been outlawed. Any man who knew His whereabouts must report to Council, that He might be arrested. That step at least was due to the miracle, and Ephraim near to the wilderness and the border of Samaria was really a hiding-place for the few days that remained before Passover.

The Synoptists on the other hand do not suggest that the cleansing of the Temple had anything to do with Christ's death. Christ was questioned about His authority to do such things, as He was also in Galilee about His teaching. But the two paragraphs are not directly connected. Mark refers to His being questioned by the "chief priests and the scribes and the Elders", which should mean a meeting of the Council, but his account is incredible if it is attributed to Holy Week. The real truth is that the only cleansing took place, as St. John says, nearly two years earlier, and that Mark and Luke, if not Matthew, knew that, but had reason for placing it where they did.

The critics also say that the Synoptists' silence about the miracle can be explained only by their ignorance of it, and that this makes its reality at least doubtful. As a matter of fact the raising of two other dead people is told by them quite incidentally, with no sense of climax. Luke alone has obtained somewhere the beautiful story of the widow of Nain. The Jairus story is wedged between two rejections of Christ, like a canticle between two lessons. If Mark makes any kind of healing more important than another it is the healing of the senses, which he seems to regard as symbolical of mental and spiritual deadness. Our feeling for the unique importance of Lazarus is due to John's wealth of detail, but that has nothing to do with the miracle. He has nothing to say about Lazarus. We do not even know whether he lived with Martha or had a separate home hard by. John is not personally interested in him; it is the sisters that he loves. Of course there was something in him that Jesus loved. Granting the fact of the miracle, we shall naturally believe that John was present, but no disciple is mentioned. The visit would certainly be as short and as private as possible. Christ did not visit Jerusalem, or before the miracle even the village, and He apparently would have preferred to be without Mary's comforters. He probably set out for Ephraim the same day, and it is much more likely that He appointed that, or some place on the road to it, as a rendezvous with the Apostles than that they all accompanied Him to Bethany. It may be that John was the only witness present. It may also have been through John that Jesus first became acquainted with the sisters, as through a disciple of John, Luke may have heard the other story about them. To the

other Synoptists the raising of Lazarus duplicated the story of Jairus' daughter; and there was no place in their plan where it could be fitted in without being an intrusion. It would have added something but not much, and they had no knowledge of what it meant to St. John. Their omission of it is not really remarkable.

We may accept the story with confidence and read it as one of the most pleasant chapters in the Gospel. There are four parts in it: (a) verses 1-16 are about the sickness of Lazarus; (b) verses 17-32 are about Christ's meeting with the sisters; (c) verses 33-44 describe the miracle; and (d) verses 45-57 deal with the action of the Council.

THE SICKNESS OF LAZARUS

(xi. 1-16)

The first verse is hopelessly bad composition. Lazarus is introduced as a fellow-townsmen of Mary and Martha. In verse two we discover him to be their brother, and that verse which, with hardly any evidence, has been branded as a later insertion, is really indispensable, because otherwise we should not hear of the relationship until verse 19. ("The sisters" in verse three would mean sisters of each other.) Mary's name and description identify the Bethany as the one close to Jerusalem, and not the place beyond Jordan where Christ then was, as the immediately preceding verses (x. 40-42) told us. The reference to Mary's action would be understood although Mark did not mention her name. The story was widely known, and the narrators had probably supplied the name before the date of the Gospel. John's own disciples would know it anyhow. At the beginning of a new subject John often wrote these confused sentences, as at i. 6; iv. 1; vi. 1, 22; vii. 14; xi. 1; xiii. 1. It feels for a moment as if he was too conscious of doing an unaccustomed task, but when he gets into the swing of it he loses himself in his subject and writes well and beautifully.

The message was simply, "He that thou lovest is sick, but the messenger would supply more." Martha was content to leave the next move to Jesus, such was her trust in Him. The friendship is one that invites consideration. That the family was far from poor follows from the costliness of the ointment which the youngest member possessed. Such things go with a roomy and

well-built house, with some sort of grounds about it. Even a private grave was in place there. The family was also rich in friends. Among them were "Jews", and there is no reason to suppose that John departed here only from his custom of using the word, unless in a purely geographical sense, to distinguish the ruling caste. After the miracle "many" believed in Christ, but "some" reported it immediately to the Pharisees, i.e. hostile "Jews". All of them had come as friends to comfort the sisters, especially Mary. Such visits were formally necessary in Jewish society, but these formed a multitude and by action as well as waiting showed themselves truly sympathetic. We must remember that class distinctions in Palestine did not imply social isolations. The close friendship of Martha's family with Christ and His disciples, or at least with John, was not hindered nor would it be thought singular. But it is interesting that it existed. It led also to that which was really remarkable, that Christ met some of those who planned His death at the grave of a mutual friend.

Martha had been able to send a messenger to Christ and to hear how He received it. Christ reminds her at the tomb of the words that He used. The death was not unto death, but for the glory of God and of Christ. That was also how she was able to tell Him when they met that "even now" God might give Him something to do about their trouble, though it is hard to imagine what was in her mind. The disciples possibly expected that Christ would heal Lazarus without going to him, as others had been healed. For two days nothing happened. Then they were startled by His proposal to go to Judea again. It seemed a mad running into danger. Nearly three months had passed since the attempt on His life at the time of the Dedication festival, but nothing had occurred to make a change in the Council's purpose. Christ's answer is in a form that is habitual both in Christ and in John. You can travel safely while you have Light to guide you. It is curious that Christ attributes everything to the Light and not to any seeing of the path or the dangers in it. It is scientifically true, of course. In seeing, the light of the sun falls on the scene, is reflected from the things there in various degrees and "colour" selections, and reaches the spectator's eyes, which it enters to affect the retina. Seeing is all the gift of light. Safety in our walk through life is the gift of God who is Light. Christ knows

that God would have Him go to Lazarus, and therefore he must go. In verse 11 He tells the disciples that the sick man has fallen asleep and He will awaken him, and even then they do not understand. To think of death as a sleep is not actually confined to Christians, but it is characteristic of them. Soga, the Solomon Islands chief, once a head-hunter, but after his conversion a ruler comparable with our King Alfred, died also like a Christian; and his son's report was, "It was not the death that we used to know; it was like falling asleep." Thomas voices the minds of the others too, though they may not be able to see as clearly and to face as boldly the likelihood that they will die with Him.

From one Bethany to the other would occupy in walking about three days. If Martha's "four days" were inclusive, as time was usually measured, the day when Christ decided to go to Judea was that on which Lazarus died. It raises queer thoughts about telepathy, a subject that we may learn something about in the future. A gentleman who was in England during World War I wrote to his wife in Melbourne that he had been thinking all day about a friend of his in that city. When the letter arrived a comparison of dates showed that on that day the friend had died. Was it mere coincidence or something else? Without connecting the Father's intimations to the Son too closely with our own experience, we may think that they are not entirely unrelated. Christ knew that He was to heal the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter when she exhibited her mind to Him and He said, "For this saying go thy way: the demon is gone out of her." The story of the "nobleman's" son is similar. The reality of Christ's human consciousness must be respected. Some intimations may have come to Him while praying, or like those above in the presence of something that stirred His sympathy. In verse 41 Christ speaks of the raising of Lazarus as an answer to prayer.

CHRIST AND THE SISTERS

(xi. 17-32)

Christ did not at first enter the village (verse 30). He wished to avoid the many friends who would certainly be with the sisters. Such attentions were observed as a religious duty and in accordance with conventional rules. Hired wailers were engaged and

the friends also wailed, with loud cries more or less meaningful, in praise of the departed one and as consolation for the bereaved. At Martha's home there was in fact a multitude of friends, and among them representatives of the hostile Jews. They might be dangerous to Christ, but His chief reason for waiting outside was doubtless to see the sisters privately. To Martha's sorrowful greeting she adds that even now she is still sure that whatever He asks of God, God will give Him. She is not expecting the raising of the dead, as we know from verse 39. From the fourth day gradual relaxation of the wailing marked the abandonment of any such thought, because the departed spirit was believed no longer to haunt the tomb. "Even now", when all is hopeless, the comfort can, one thinks, be only some vision of the lost one.

"Thy brother shall rise again", says Christ. "Oh yes, at the resurrection on the last day." She is very tired of that sort of sympathy. Yet it may not be so dim and far off to her as it seems to Christians of our day. When St. Paul uses it to the Thessalonians (*I Thess.* iv. 13-18) he thinks of himself and most of his readers as those that will be still alive at Christ's Second Coming. For Christ had seemed to promise it to that generation. Martha might have thought similarly, but the pain is in her heart today. To ease that Christ speaks of a life that is present, safe, and eternal. "He that believes in Me, even if he die, will be living; and everyone so living, so believing in Me, will certainly never die for evermore." It is the same view of death that He revealed for Abraham in chapter eight, and that He defended to Mark's Sadducees. It is life at its next higher stage. All is well with the Saints in death as in the life on earth, but it is the Communion of Saints, their fellowship, that death attacks.

He puts our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

The true comfort for that is the first sentence of Christ's teaching. "I am the Resurrection and the Life. It is from Me, it is controlled and watched over by Me, it is in Me and blessed by Me." The same trust that Martha has shown for Christ's love and care for Lazarus on earth, is needed for her in her bereavement. "Believest thou this?" He asks. "Yes, Lord, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, living here in the world as Man." Such

faith is not the kind that believes that everything will come right in the end. It is already right because it is in the keeping of Eternal Love, even if the surface of it is quite wrong.

So she goes away to Mary, for the Master has asked for her as they talked, and Mary jumps up quickly and goes to Him. We know her best by Luke's story and specially by her anointing of Christ with which John began, by reminding us that she is known by that. A brother and two sisters do not make a proper family; their lot is to found new ones if that may be. How and when they lost their parents we do not know. Martha is some years older than Mary, and for some of the time had mothered her, if not also Lazarus. She is especially the house-mother, the hostess of her friends, the one who must be thoughtful, foreseeing, practical, for their sakes. An honoured guest means more serving, even if He is easily contented. But she is no mere housekeeper. Mary ought to wait her turn and leave her for a while with Christ. It is all extremely true and her due. Christ does not rebuke her for being so busy, but would have Mary unhastened into adult burdens. The age just above adolescence can, at its best, display what we see in her.

The anointing of Christ is the fact that was best known. It was, in its usual form, quite commonly used in the circles which Mary frequented and to which she seems to have belonged. If Mark's account were correct it would hardly have attracted notice. It is pretty certain that, as John says, she anointed His feet. To use the small quantity that could be poured on His head without distressing Him would not have been charged with such extravagance as it was, even by Judas; nor would the room have been filled with the odour. Besides all this, as He lay at the table, she would come first to His feet, and that, we may say, was her accustomed place. Luke says she sat at His feet to listen to Him; when she met Him in her grief she fell at His feet weeping; the anointing of the feet was to her natural. She knew it was extremely unusual, but to treat Him with more abandonment than an ordinary guest was her desire. She was young and unaccustomed to her task. She poured more, in her agitation, than she intended, more than a little handkerchief could mop up. She used her loosened tresses. It was not done in good circles, but the

reason for thinking it improper never entered her head. One of our poets who knew it sang, "When I lie tangled in her hair Or fettered to her eye"; but Mary was as innocent as a child of sexual matters. That at least is how I read the story.

So I see her in her first womanhood, receptive to Christ's teaching, impulsive in action, loving Christ with more passion than she knew, as innocent as a child. Luke's story of the sinful woman has nothing to do with it, unless it was confusion with some account of it, originally derived from St. John, that he thought referred to the other incident.

It is in the light of such a self-revealing event that I read the eleventh chapter. Her haste, her wailing, her prostration are all in order. Her one utterance echoed Martha's for she was not mistress of herself enough to speak from her own mind. It was especially for her sake that the comforters came (verse 45), for she was the type that calls forth the protectiveness and tenderness of her elders.

Though St. John honours and probably loves Mary as if she were his own sister, he is still more attracted by Martha. He is drawn to her motherliness, her good order, her shrinking from foulness (as at the grave). She too believes in Christ with a deeper faith than anyone else described by him. She does not hesitate to give Him His full title, whatever the Council says. But though she rises to the heights, as John also does, she also, like him, has her feet always on solid earth. She has a practical grasp of each turn of the situation and a readiness in articulation. It is because of Martha that the story is fully told, for it is the picture of a rare home life that John leaves with us, rather than the miracle itself, and he seems to feel that while everyone must love Mary, not everyone can see how splendid Martha is. "And Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." So did John, and in the same order.

THE MIRACLE

(xi. 33-44)

The first thing noticeable about the actual miracle is the emotional disturbance of Jesus. It became manifest when Mary was prostrate at His feet and she and her companions filled the

air with their wailing. He objected to the customary cries in the house of Jairus, and later on the *via dolorosa*. It was too conventional, and besides it implied a wrong attitude to death, as if it were altogether a final defeat and destruction. He Himself at two points in the story of Lazarus uttered involuntary groans. The word used generally implies displeasure. The first time it showed, in the midst of His deep sympathy, a discordance between the others and His own more understanding grief. The second time, at the tomb, the discordance may be due to the evidence of their anxiety to get rid of the dead body and to ensure by the stone that nobody should ever see it again. Of course that was commonly necessary, but on this occasion it was adverse to the truth in His own mind. The stone was to Him an obstacle and must be removed. Similarly at His first groaning He "troubled" His own physical impulse, forcing it to give way to His purposed action, initiated by asking "Where have you laid him?" He pulled Himself together. This translation seems the opposite of the usual meaning of the word, which means to create confusion or disturbance, but to trouble Himself was to disturb His inward disturbance. Alford gave this explanation long ago, and he added, "What minister has not when burying the dead in the midst of a weeping family felt the emotion and made the effort here described?" As in preparing to give sight to the man born blind, the concern of God with evil is to remove it.

The gentler weeping, a silent weeping, on the way to the tomb was quite different from the wailing. The comments of the Jews have given rise to much discussion by those who do not sincerely accept the simplicity of the truth. They are in fact natural and commonplace.

Christ's order that the stone be removed shocked Martha, with the same naturalness. He reminds her that from the first He has promised that the event shall not end with the dying. What she shall see is not what she fears, but the glory of God. He turns to the Father with thanksgiving, not as He did four days ago with prayer. The bystanders are to learn that in the miracle He and the Father are One, as at all times. So Lazarus comes forth, seeking no assistance but full of life. The commentators dally with the grotesque thought that he has been bound up like a mummy. Certainly the body would be completely covered with the grave

clothes, into which the usual spices were introduced as the manner of the Jews was to bury. The head is bound round the face (which is not covered) with what John calls a "sweat-rug", a separate smaller cloth. But the feet and hands are also separately mentioned and therefore the limbs are separately bound too. The idea of a mummy is not present. He can walk naturally. "Loose him and let him go away"—from the crowd—is the decent and reverent thing to do for him.

THE COUNCIL ACTS

(xi. 45-53)

The Pharisees as usual soon heard of the miracle, and had a special meeting called. They were in a panic, fearing the people. Miracles were getting too common. This last one was stupendous and Lazarus was a well-known man. Even "Jews" were acknowledging faith in Christ. The next thing would be an insurrection to make Him King, and then the Romans would come and destroy the Holy Temple and the whole framework of the nation.

Caiaphas, high priest A. D. 18-36, has not hitherto been prominent against Christ. It was a religious question and he had in full measure the secular spirit of the Sadducees. Mark's account of the Sadducees' tale of a woman who had had seven husbands illustrates this spirit, for it makes fun of the law of Moses, in order to raise a difficulty for those who, like the Pharisees, believed in the resurrection of the dead. Their political and financial rivalry with the Pharisees was to them made more important than the Christian problem, as we see in *Acts* v. 33-39 and xxiii 6-9. The raising of Lazarus would be a victory for Pharisaism, and that alone would annoy Caiaphas, but a possible rebellion against Rome would ruin him and his party. The danger must be treated as urgent and no scruples must allow its quashing to be deferred. The tone of Caiaphas was contemptuous. "You Pharisees, with all your boasted knowledge, are ignorant of the art of government. You do not even understand that Christ's death will benefit you personally. Whether He deserves death or not, He must die for the sake of our national safety."

John sees an infinitely greater truth in the words than Caiaphas intended. That often occurs in the utterances of prophets, and the high priest is officially a channel through which God may

speak. The same idea lay in John's description of the language of the Baptist about the Lamb of God. Unwittingly Caiaphas speaks of Christ's words that can proclaim Him the Saviour of the world.

From that day, we are told, the decision was made to kill Christ. Such is the importance of the decision of a representative governing body. In the same way the agreement on the Nicene creed and the Nicene Council's issue of it were epoch-making for the church. The new action taken against Christ was to proclaim Him an outlaw. Anyone who knew where He might be found was bound to report it to the government. Christ, however, was already at Ephraim with the Apostles, and in the wilderness close by could find a hiding-place. Actually He needed it only for a short time, for the miracle was still "news" when the pilgrims began to assemble in Jerusalem for the Passover.

HOLY WEEK

St. John's account of Holy Week begins with two of St. Mark's paragraphs, but the story of the feast at Bethany is placed (correctly, we shall agree) at the Sabbath preceding Palm Sunday. St. Mark's plan makes it necessary to postpone it to the Wednesday because it is only from then onwards that he begins his chronological history of the Passion. Like St. John he connects the anointing by Mary with Christ's death. There is no need to say any more about this than was said at page 142 except to note that an animus against Judas is characteristic of John, probably because of the clearness of his memory of the betrayal. John also adds three verses to tell how Bethany was resorted to by the multitude who were waiting for the Passover that they might see both Jesus and Lazarus. The Sadducean portion of the Council wanted to kill Lazarus also, but did not. Presumably the Pharisees prevented the outrage. The multitude also had become excited enough to be really dangerous, and for some days Jesus appeared in public in spite of the decree making Him an outlaw.

PALM SUNDAY

(xii. 12-19)

One of St. Mark's characteristics is his fullness in describing each scene and of how it was prepared or came about. It was he who decided for all the Evangelists that the Gospel must begin with the Forerunner's preparation, and there are several minor examples of this style. Here, there is a detailed account of how the ass colt was obtained for the procession and later there will be another of how they made ready for Christ to eat the Passover. That Mark had anticipated him was sufficient reason for John's cutting short both passages. He also makes the circumstances more distinctly the impulse of the crowd, which is more natural because he has reported how excited they were. These people were the pilgrims, who had no set business to attend to. Those who had witnessed the miracle were content to spread the story abroad. The pilgrims did not merely cast leaves and

branches on the road, but waved palm fronds in triumph. The entrance of Simeon Maccabaeus into the city had been similar (*I Maccabees* xiii. 51). Reference to palms is found also in the well-known passage in Revelation, chapter seven. Many of the pilgrims, it is likely, thought they were heralding a Kingdom according to their own mistaken idea of it. It was only after the Resurrection that the Apostles understood its true meaning (verse 16). Then they realized that Christ had permitted the loud hosannas because the time had come for Him to present Himself to Jerusalem as the veritable King of Israel. The Pharisees, however (verse 19), were more alarmed than ever. All they could do availed nothing. They were beaten and they knew it. They must follow the lead of Caiaphas and, though they did not yet know it, profit by the treachery of Judas.

THE GREEKS

(xii. 20-26)

At some unspecified time in Holy Week some Greek proselytes approached Philip asking for an interview with Jesus. Most likely they were proselytes of the gate, uncircumcised, and more or less on sufferance in the Temple but restricted to its outer courts. We must remember that in Galilee there was a considerable Greek population, which may have been of a mixed descent, but used the Greek language and adopted a Greek mode of life. The Apostles, like other Galileans, found it necessary to learn Greek also, if only for business transactions. Philip was shy of taking all the responsibility of an unusual request, and asked advice from Andrew, as in chapter one he may have consulted Nathanael. Andrew, with a more alert mind, sees that they may at least report the matter to Christ. What happened for the Greeks is hidden in John's rather provoking way of concentrating wholly on Christ, in accordance with his primary purpose.

To Christ, the Greeks were the forerunners of the Gentile Christendom, and the imminence of His death filled His mind. His hour was come. The figure of the wheat-grain presents it not in the unique glory of the Resurrection and Ascension, but in the wider result of an abundant fruitfulness. There is to arise a new humanity of those who are called by God to be His children. The new race, also, will spring up through the sacrifice of

Christ and be united with Him as His Mystical Body. It is perhaps the only place where He speaks of Himself under a figure of apparent insignificance. Yet in *Luke* xxii. 27, He says, "I am among you as one that serveth." The maxim of verse 25 has always been His ethical principle. That of verse 26 is a promise of eternal life to those who serve Him and under Him and will be partakers of His glory from the Father.

THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL

(xii. 27-36)

But now, in contrast to that future, there is an hour of spiritual turmoil to be passed through. The most intelligible description of it is (rather curiously) in *Hebrews* v. 7, that He prayed with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and was heard for His godly fear, i. e. for His loyal and obedient fidelity. To be saved out of death must mean, since the prayer was heard, that He was saved through the whole experience to partake of the glory beyond it. For the agony in Gethsemane, John thinks Mark's account sufficient, but too isolated and sudden. Earlier in the week, and again at the supper and on the way to Gethsemane, the travail was in His soul and could be observed. The German philosopher Eucken said that it could not have a place in the soul of one who knew Himself the Son of God. He could not know man's heaviest burden, the doubt and uncertainty, the groping and wandering, and the way that all his doings were swallowed up in an impenetrable world. Now it is perfectly true that little, if any, of such distress is reported of Christ during his ministry. We are impressed by His readiness in an emergency, His adequacy in meeting opposition, His solving of problems, His assurance and cheerfulness. But Eucken did not picture His dying. From the time it became imminent the Gospels say that He displayed exactly what the philosopher says He could not. It is truly in His death that He becomes complete in His humanity. The Cross is the consummation of the Incarnation. And it is after the Resurrection that He fully acknowledges His brotherhood. "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." The passage in *Hebrews* ends with the words, "having been made complete He became unto all them that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation."

"Now is My soul troubled; and what am I to say?" The question in verse 27 is certainly real. What follows is a first answer, "Father, save Me out of this hour"—the preposition has the same meaning as in *Hebrews*. But the fuller answer is not prayer for His own "salvation", but "Father, glorify Thy Name", i.e., complete the revelation of Thy glory. There comes a voice from Heaven, not for that assurance that He showed at Lazarus' grave—"I know that Thou hearest Me always"—but as an evidential miracle for the sake of the hearers. "I did glorify it, and I will glorify it again." The Jewish rabbis believed that many of their great ones had believed the Bath Kol, the daughter voice—so called to avoid too coarse an anthropomorphism—but they realized that it must not be accepted too easily. That there might be a physical sound without a previous physical cause, but miraculously created, is no more and no less credible than the other miracles of nature. The other three occurrences reported in the Gospels have the same solemnity of character to guarantee their reality. This one, Christ declares, marks a universal crisis. The devil shall be cast out. The true King shall win all men to Himself.

The crowd were puzzled because He spoke of being lifted up, which they rightly took to mean some kind of removal. Yet the Messiah was to have an everlasting Kingdom. There is no time to preach about it, only opportunity for a warning. Their day of grace was not for ever. It was their moment for decision.

These things Jesus said and He went away and was hidden from them. That ends the story of the Ministry, simply, even lamely. It is incredible that this Gospel was written by a learned "littérateur".

CLOSING COMMENTS

(xii. 37 - 50)

Yet a comment by the Evangelist is added to the story. First, the unbelief of the Jews must not be thought of as a failure of the message. On the contrary, it is the fulfilment of prophecy. Secondly, the unbelief was also the result of a misdirection of their lives. Their minds were set on earthly things, and success was to be measured by earthly judgments, the attainment of that which excites the admiration, praise, and envy of men. The true end of

man is to glorify God, to be fruitful in service, and to further His purpose for the world.

Thirdly, that is the Gospel. It is what Jesus cried for all to hear. The conclusion, verses 44-50, is given in the form of remembered words of Jesus. They contain no new teaching, but echo what has been already taught. There is, yet, a kind of climax in verse 50. "The things therefore which I speak, even as My Father hath said unto Me, so I speak."

THE LAST SUPPER

(xiii and xiv)

The story of Christ's ministry to Israel has ended, but there are still nine chapters of the Gospel. They are (ostensibly at least) the history of the four days in which He laid down His life that He might take it again. The problem of chapters fifteen and sixteen will be treated later.

The Last Supper was not the Passover Meal; for many years it has been increasingly understood that it could not be. The Passover Lamb was slain in A.D. 30 on Good Friday and the meal was eaten during the first hour of the ensuing Sabbath, as St. John says.

The final proof of this is due to Dr. Fotheringham, a distinguished English astronomer, and he obtained it by observing a very simple fact, namely, that for the new moon to be visible it is not sufficient that it should be above the horizon when the sun sets. If it is so near to the sun that it is in that part of the sky which is still receiving brightness from the sun, its thin crescent of light is overpowered by the stronger light from the now invisible sun. Fotheringham's plan was to map the successive positions of the young moon, and he found that a curve could be drawn with the sun as its centre. Whenever the moon was within the curve, that is, towards the sun, it was invisible; but if it was on the outer side of the curve it was visible. A large number of observations were available, made by living astronomers or recorded by Babylonian ones of ancient times, and they invariably agreed with Fotheringham's conclusions. It must now be regarded as certain that A.D. 30 is the year of the Crucifixion. A full account is given by another Fotheringham in a small book called *The Date of Easter* (S.P.C.K.).

The Last Supper, however, was not an ordinary one. It was a custom among the Jews, from pre-Christian times, to form small groups of friends who, besides performing acts of piety and charity, bound themselves to meet on Friday afternoons for social and religious fellowship and the organization of their other activities. At sunset they blessed a single cup of wine and all partook

of it in the same way as in our old ceremony of the "Loving Cup". The language used was of thanksgiving for the creation and the day of rest, and it was known as a sanctifying of the Sabbath and named Kiddush. The blessing of a loaf was added to the cup in early times. The same ceremony was enacted on the eves of festivals and we are specially concerned with the Passover Kiddush, which by Christ's use of it became the forerunner of our Holy Communion, in the same sense as John's baptism preceded the Christian Sacrament. Thus Christ did not link His forms of worship with the official system of Jewish sacrifices, but rather with unauthorized expressions of the real religious sense of the chosen people.

The form, as Christ would have used it, begins with a quotation of *Genesis* ii. 1-3, followed by words said over the cup, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who created the fruit of the vine." Then comes an important thanksgiving: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King Eternal, who hast chosen us from all peoples, and hast exalted us above all tongues, and has sanctified us by Thy commandments. And Thou hast given us in love, O Lord our God, Sabbaths for rest, and appointed times for gladness, festivals, and seasons of joy; this Sabbath day and this Feast of Unleavened Bread, the season of our freedom." At the end comes the blessing of the bread.

The two thoughts of creation and redemption from bondage were always combined. So they are in properly constructed Eucharistic Thanksgivings, the passage from one to the other being marked by the *Tersanctus*. This goes back to the first century, for chapters four and five of the Revelation of St. John are exactly typical of it, only glorified and, as it were, elevated into the scene and atmosphere of heaven. The *Tersanctus* at iv. 8 is followed by the appearance of the Lamb in the midst and the "new song" of redemption in v. 9.

The connection of the Eucharist with the Kiddush ceremony also explains Mark's incorrect language. It was the Passover Kiddush and created a Passover atmosphere. The guest-chamber was obtained for the meal that actually did not take place, but it was also borrowed a day before the meal required it, in order that the Kiddush also might be held there. Oesterley is probably justified in saying that popular usage would regard it as the first of

the preparatory actions of the Passover Feast, just as the casting out of leaven from the houses was. But apart from the astronomical evidence, Mark himself shows that the meal on Thursday was not the Passover, since neither the lamb nor any other feature of that feast is mentioned; what was ordered for Friday could not be done on Thursday without being grossly illegal, and it is not explained how an annual celebration would give rise to the weekly one of the Eucharist. One would suppose that these points were obvious to Mark, and that he knew as well as we do that his language, though customary, was inexact.

INTRODUCTORY

(xiii. 1-3)

We now pass on to consider the details of the Last Supper. The story begins with a remarkable introduction, remarkable first for the ugly piling up of phrases. Every word is Johannine, but the grammar is unusual for him. There is not even a date, except that it was before the Feast. That Christ was crucified on a Friday follows only as an inference from xix. 14, 31. John mingles together the unity of the Father and the Son, the knowledge that His hour had come, that all that was to occur was in His own hands, that Judas had submitted to Satan, that what we are to hear manifests Christ's love for His disciples, and that, whatever the day, the hour was supper-time and they were at the table. And yet because of John's complete knowledge, clear remembrance, and vivid portraiture, the whole scene and the invisible majesty of it live for all his readers.

THE FEET-WASHING

(xiii. 4-20)

The relative position of the disciples mentioned necessitates that the table was the classical triclinium. The narrow boards are arranged as three sides of a square, the fourth being open to the servants who minister within it. Those who partake recline on low divans, lying on their left sides, with their feet projecting outwards. The host occupies the middle position of one side, with the most honoured guest to his left, so that the host can give his attention to him by a slight backward movement of his head to lay it near or on his breast. This is also the position in the story

of the sinful woman in *Luke* vii. 36-50. She could reach Christ's feet from behind Him. The Pharisee can talk easily to Christ, as just described, but he need not. Disgusted with the woman, he keeps his face the other way. When Christ desires to address him He has to call his attention. "Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee." Of two side by side at the table the one on the right has thus the initiative, though the honour goes to the one on the left. At the Last Supper it is John who is on the right of Jesus. He is the one who can talk at will, and privately, to Christ. Thus "lying on the Lord's breast" is the place of greatest intimacy, though not of highest honour. Peter is somewhere where John can see him, and he can make signs to John. It would be quite contrary to the teaching of history to suppose that any of the Twelve had a fixed place of superiority; but on this occasion the one on the left of Jesus seems to be Judas, for he was where Christ could give the "piece" to him. If it were the Lord's arrangement it is curious to note that it was also the place where He and Judas were most invisible to each other except by purposeful action. Was that what both of them preferred?

Christ rises from the table and lays aside His "garment". It was the same one that He resumed and wore at Gethsemane, in the house of Caiaphas, before Pilate. It was the garment that the soldiers admired and would not tear. It was seamless, woven from the top throughout by some woman who wanted to please and honour Him. We do not think that Christ wore it every day; perhaps He had donned it for the sake of the Passover Kiddush, for there had been no opportunity to change. Whoever saw the vision of Christ in the first chapter of the *Revelation* also stresses a garment that may have been suggested by the actual one. It would be somewhat like an alb, but not a vestment in our sense.

There is, however, a queer tradition that three people, James the Lord's brother, John the Apostle, and Mark, did wear an official ornament, described as similar to that of a Jewish high priest. The commentators, or some of them, would make out that they performed Jewish rites, but that is absurd. It is not impossible that they did also wear some special symbol at Christian services, perhaps suggested by that of the high priest. There is no connection with later vestments, which have quite a different origin; but special dress was prevalent for officials through-

out their civilization, and as James presided over the Church at Jerusalem, John in Asia Minor, and Mark perhaps at Alexandria, the tradition may have a basis in fact.

What Christ did at the supper was to dress for the role He chose, and assume the outer appearance of a domestic slave; and the disciples took it so and were scandalized. The washing-pot had been placed there for the expected Passover. Christ did not think of His action as a ritual cleansing. The custom of washing bare or sandalled feet was for bodily cleanliness and comfort. It had not been used on this occasion, which was not so formal as a Passover meal would have been. Christ wanted possibly to teach humility, or more certainly to teach that no service degrades anyone, if it is truly beneficial and helpful. But especially, as verse 1 says, it was the proof that His love for them was unlimited; that it extended to the uttermost. It extended, indeed, to dying for them, even to the death on the Cross. True love is glad not only to serve, but to reveal itself. There may be a good reason for an anonymous gift, but it misses the fullness of love.

The same pot was used for all, but it was made with a lid that was itself concave and perforated so that the water ran into the pot and each man had his own clean water. You may see the same principle on a small scale in some soap-dishes. The refinements of classical civilization can sometimes give points to ours. But like us they also had their conventional affectations. To wash the feet of another was the degrading task of a slave.

Verses 6-10. John is rather fond of naming the Apostles when they say or do something individual, but he does not really tell us much about his companions. From this point, right to the end, Peter proves to be an exception. So far in the Gospel he has spoken only once; but he does now in each of the three paragraphs. He acts again in Gethsemane and in the High Priest's courtyard; he is the first to enter the empty tomb, and the whole of chapter twenty-one is about him. Not long before the Passion, John and James asked for themselves the first places in Christ's Kingdom. As Christ had already given some prominence to Peter and the brothers, this was virtually sacrificing Peter to their ambition. And yet from that time John puts Peter in the lime-light at every opportunity, and their close fellowship continues in the early chapters of *Acts*. It reminds me of a couplet my

father quoted at times in my boyhood, "The falling out of faithful friends, Renewing is of love."

So He cometh to Simon Peter, having already given others "some part with Himself" (verse 8). Peter cries, "Thou! wash *my* feet?" Christ replied, "What I am doing you do not comprehend just yet; but you will learn later on." Peter says, "You shall never wash my feet, not to the world's end." Christ replies, not with a threat, but gently and perhaps with a smile at the simplicity of his self-will, "If I do not wash you, you make yourself an outsider to Me." Peter's answer means, "Don't take it up like that. If you want to, don't stop at my feet, take my hands and my head." Then perhaps Jesus laughs at him, "Do you want to have a bath? He that has taken a bath does not need washing except his feet, but is clean all over. And you are clean, though not all of you." In chapter fifteen (v. 3) He repeats that they are clean because of the word He has spoken to them. All through, His thought is that His teaching has been successful except for Judas, and it has made them clean. He had cleansed their minds from the aspects of Judaism which would be for them foulness, the contentedness with the externals of religion, the falsity that the Old Testament was the final revelation, the narrow vision of "love your friend and hate your enemy", and everything of that sort. They were ready for the newness of the Gospel and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, clean because of His word, and He loved them all to the uttermost. I hope readers will not object to my introduction not only of a close but colloquial paraphrase of the Greek, but of a little playfulness. I am assuming that there would be still, what we found at iv. 31-38 and vi. 5-10, and may see, somewhat more slightly, in chapter twenty-one—a delightful informality in their fellowship.

Verses 12-20. These verses give an outline of the teaching of Christ about His symbolical act of washing of the disciples' feet, and its bearing upon the nature of the fellowship in Christ. The act was, first, an example. If Christ was truly their Lord and Teacher, the objection which Peter had made, and others may have felt, was baseless. For no difference of status, knowledge or character among the disciples could be compared with the pre-eminence which exalted Christ above them all. This must be obvious, and if they knew its truth they would be approved and

congratulated to the extent that they acted accordingly. Verses 18-19 seem to interrupt the course of the teaching, and the fact that they do, as verse 11 had done already, betrays the agitation which the presence of Judas among them caused in Christ. "I know those whom I called, each one of them, and there is one who will behave like the man in Psalm xli. I mean to tell you from this time other things besides this before they happen, and when they happen you will realize that I am what I am in My unity with the Father within the one Godhead."

So with solemnity He reaches the climax of their part in the new age, their fellowship with the Father. The wonder of it is reflected in the varied language of the Evangelists. In *Matthew* x. 40, it is, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and He that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." But in xviii. 5, it is, "Whosoever receiveth one such little child in My Name receiveth Me," and in xxv. 40, "In as much as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me." In *Luke* x. 16 it is, "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me." Similarly, in *John* xii. 44-45, "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me but on Him that sent Me. And he that beholdeth Me beholdeth Him that sent Me." The clearest statement, however, is in *I St. John* i. 3, 4, 11. "What we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write that our joy (i.e. ours and yours) may be fulfilled." It is a fellowship so comprehensive that it includes a child or a prisoner and yet reaches to the throne of Almighty God. Its principle of unity—its sign, means, and pledge—is Jesus Christ. It is an eternal life which we receive, here and in time, with all the vigour and the joy that belongs to life.

TREASON UNMASKED

(xiii. 21-30)

Already Christ has made two references to Judas in the midst of His explanation of the foot-washing. At verse 10 it is a passing allusion, which St. John explains. At verses 18-19 the betrayal is more definitely mentioned and connected with the familiar

friend of Psalm xli. Christ also assures them that He knows Judas as indeed He knows all the disciples. The motive also of His prophecy to the disciples is revealed. He made it and intends to make others henceforward, so that when His words are fulfilled they will "believe that I am". The solemn form, using the ineffable name of God, means that they will be led to apprehend the full divinity of His person. That Judas so occupied His mind witnesses to the growing agitation which could no longer be repressed.

St. John, whose implacable animosity against the traitor is always awakened by the thought of him, gives the story of his unmasking in greater detail than the Synoptists, the differences between whom build up a tradition not unlike St. John's. The full account indicates as we have seen that John reclined on the right hand of Christ. The word represented in the Revised Version by "as he was" is literally "thus", i. e. "as he would" or "as you can picture him". A similar use of the adverb occurs in iv. 6. In an oral account it might be expressed by a gesture, and John, much more accustomed to oral than to written teaching, allows it to escape twice even in writing.

The giving of the sop would, after the event, accentuate the reference to the Psalm in which the traitor "eateth My bread", but at the moment it would attract little attention, being according to their table manners a not unusual act of courtesy and fellowship. St. John makes it clear that none of them, not even himself, understood it as a sign that the betrayal was imminent. He had nothing of St. Peter's impulsiveness (see xx. 5-6 and xxi. 7), and it was safe to let him know part of the truth. To make it really public would have led at least to turmoil. On the other hand, that Judas should know that his treachery was discovered by Christ harmonizes with Christ's saying that no man took His life from Him but He laid it down of Himself. The actual signal was given when Christ said "Act more quickly" (verse 27), that is, "get about the business without delay". Some find in the dismissal a hopeless last appeal before Satan has led Judas to the final fateful decisions. At least Christ found suspense hard to bear, and He had much to say which was not the concern of Judas.

As this paragraph is the first occasion when St. John calls him-

self the disciple whom Jesus loved, we may give attention to the title. It is the chief reason that commentaries give for denying that he wrote the Gospel. They think it "hardly modest" of St. John to record a preference, the propriety of which they do not trouble to deny. His habitual concealment of himself in the Gospel may, it is true, have a different motive, and in the Synoptic Gospels and his Epistles there is a good deal to make us doubtful about his "modesty". But the charge is not only puerile; it is a mare's-nest. It assumes that John invented the name. The Synoptists make it plain that at the end of Christ's ministry, when the disciples got an idea of approaching glory, there was much jealousy of each other, and in particular of James and John. Probably they gave John a nickname, just as schoolboys would to one of them of whom the teacher thought highly, or employees in a business to a comrade who seemed to be a favourite of the manager. What it was we are not told, but translated into literary Greek it was "the one whom Jesus loved". We know of many instances of such names—Peter and Boanerges, Barnabas, Marcus, Dorcas and so forth—mostly based on affection. So was the name "the Elder" given to John himself in his old age and even used by him when he wrote familiarly to Gaius and the elect lady. But Aquila, the Eagle, might have been given for his pugnacity or for his Jewish nose. Still, the nickname does not matter so long as we realize that the phrase "the one whom Jesus loved", was truly used. In his latter days, when he wrote the Gospel, John needed a word to single out his own reminiscence unmistakably, without saying "John". The old nickname (which he remembered long after everyone else had forgotten it, because of a surviving resentment) came into his mind and it fitted well. He dropped it in describing Peter's denial where his part was a minor one, and "another disciple" would do. But at the Cross when Christ said, "Behold thy mother", it was, having been once recalled, inevitable. And the other two instances in chapters twenty and twenty-one followed as a matter of course. But he would never have used it as a title in his correspondence, as he used "the Elder".

I am inclined to think that it became a word of thanksgiving. All the other Apostles were dead, some if not all by martyrdom, after lives of labour, wandering, conflict, such as he had never

known. The long lists that St. Paul could give of his trials had nothing comparable in his. Tradition tells only of a banishment to Patmos (if it were not a withdrawal from danger), and less credibly about his coolness in boiling oil. Now he possessed "all that should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends". Was he not indeed specially treated throughout his life, as the old jibe said, as being the one whom Jesus loved? There may be many disciples still who feel that, sheltered by temperament from many temptations, and protected from most of the tragedies that have darkened other lives, they have reached an undeservedly peaceful asylum in which they may contentedly "crawl towards death". If St. John had not made the words so fully his own that they defy imitation, such people might well call themselves "disciples whom Jesus loved".

THE FIRST LEAVE-TAKING

(xiii. 31-xiv. 31)

Verses 31-32 of chapter thirteen are attached to the dismissal of Judas. Hence the glorification is that chiefly of the Son of Man, and His experience of death which Judas has gone to secure. The "straightway" at the end marks the fact that death will have no power to hold Him; not only will He rise again but as in all things He has the pre-eminence (*Col. i. 18*) His resurrection will not be delayed till the last day. We shall find, in chapters twenty and twenty-one, not only the glory of His divinity but the completeness of His humanity as the Son of Man. It is especially in this latter aspect that He will straightway be glorified. God will be glorified thereby, not only because it will be a perfect obedience and a transcendent sacrifice, but it will also be a triumphant accomplishment of the Father's purpose in His incarnation, and thus a glorifying of God. Therefore God will glorify Him in Himself. It seems to me quite possible to understand this of the glory described in *Philippians*, "God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name, that in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow." But it also is, as in *xvii. 5*, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. The words "in Himself" are ambiguous in the original as in English, referring either to the earlier "Him" or to "God". He can hardly have expected that the disciples would

yet understand all this, but He desires to awaken their minds by the revelation of the mystery that He is conscious of approaching.

Verses 33-35. The mystery will involve the ending of the fellowship with the disciples as they have hitherto known it. His farewell to that must be spoken. His one legacy to them is the New Commandment. It is new in being only attainable within the fellowship that He described, before the interruption of dealing with Judas. The motives, ideals, and discipline of the fellowship of Christians are only possible in Him; nor are Christians capable of them apart from the grace which is His active presence. It is new also in being "as He has loved them", with a love that is only expressible to them who possess it. It is also new to the world and staggering to the world's mind, and so becomes the special mark of Christianity. The reign of love is indeed intended to supersede, by fulfilment, the reign of law.

Verses 36-38. It is naturally Peter who responds, but only to the announcement of Christ's leaving them. As Mark says, he speaks what is in the mind of each of them. First it is a tidings of dismay, and when Christ foretells their scattering and Peter's denials it becomes an incredible and apparently undeserved charge. Nevertheless, they will find it to be a needed warning, for it is proved true. The New Commandment is ignored in the sorrow and bewilderment caused by His foretold departure, but John's Epistles show how completely it became the law of their lives.

Almost the whole of chapter fourteen is occupied with Christ's endeavour to console the disciples. It is one of the most loved passages of the whole Scripture; but we do not always give it the detailed study that it deserves. We must not hesitate to analyse it. Verses 1-3 give consolation by promising that the separation will be only temporary, a very old and to most people an inadequate comfort. "I shall go to him", said King David, "but he shall not return to me." On Christ's lips the words have a far deeper truth, founded on what has been revealed as the purpose of the Father and the Son, to be accepted by men through faith. "Believe in God" that His purpose involves your resurrection. "Believe in Me" who has been proclaimed the Resurrection which as Jews you already in part believe. Assuredly I would

have corrected it if it were not well founded. The new humanity of the children of God in His eternal mansions has always been in Christ's mind. He was not content to be like a grain of wheat whose life is alone, by itself (xii. 24). He longed to draw all men by His death to Himself, that where His home is there He will make theirs to be. Therefore in His unseen living for them He will be preparing their eternal home. The thought that some preparation is necessary suggests that the final destiny of believers is truly a resurrection of the flesh, though not in the crude way that the later Church pictured it. Creation will still exist though after a glorious transformation, and in it we shall have "bodies", that is, some part of creation that is made peculiarly our own, to be the link with the whole, the means by which we act on it and are acted on by it. This at least seems to be the way St. Paul pictures it in *Romans* viii. 18-25. The life we have now is a dying life; the activities of the body imply its wastage; it is in a bondage of corruption, under the still unfinished condition of what we call Nature. But Nature shall, in the end, partake of the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Both it and we shall be spiritual and in harmony together. As St. Paul concludes, we do not yet see all this. "We hope for that which we see not, and do with patience wait for it." For the consummation of all creation there will be what must be called a Second Advent. "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." Not only St. John says that, but the Synoptists and the Universal Church.

Verses 4-7. The Kiddush meal might be accompanied by addresses like those of Christ, but it also gave freedom for conversation. "Whither I go ye know the way." Here we meet first the notion of life's pilgrimage. Thomas, combining too closely the figure and the fact, transfers the pilgrimage from the disciples to Christ. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, how know we the way?" Place images are even more dangerous than those of time. There may be indeed some limited space for finite spirits, but the mystery of it is unrevealed. We distinguish Heaven from God.

Lead us to Heaven that we may share
Fullness of joy for ever there:
Lead us to God, our final rest,
To be with Him for ever blest.

The goal for Christ and for us is God the Father, and to come to Him Christ Himself is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. So the pilgrim cannot be truly separated from his Guide, nor lose touch with Reality, nor fail by lack of vitality, if he is in Christ. Where Bunyan disappoints us is in the absence of the great Companion and because He is one with God and the revelation of the Father; already on our journey we have known, and are learning to know, the Father and even seeing Him in Christ. Beyond the faith which comes from hearing is the conviction of experience, as seeing Him who is invisible. It was so (v. 19-30) that Christ spoke of his own experience, under earthly conditions, of His dependence upon and unity with the Father. Photina also had been taught to look beyond all service of God and forms of worship. "God is a Spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Verses 8-14. Philip seizes on the last words of verse 7, "and have seen Him". If Christ can show us how to see the Father, we shall be satisfied. He has probably not altogether emerged from the Judaism which thought of a Messiah, the Servant of the Lord, but not one with the Father in God. Christ's response is one of disappointment. There is pathos too in His divulging that the two years of the Ministry seem to Him a long time. The same yearning for the release from its accompaniments is seen in *Mark ix. 19*. But from Philip He wants recognition of the unity that is implied in His being in the Father and the Father in Him. We say of those who have in some measure a life centred in another—the mother and her child, the man and woman who are in love, even the followers of a leader—that they are wrapped up in each other (see the notes on v. 19-30). To St. Philip, as to a child, Christ uses concrete words to express the fellowship. "The words of My teaching do not originate in Myself but in the Father who dwells in Me. Through Me He does His own works." Then in verse 11, He changes to the plural. "All of you learn", He says, "the same truth that I spoke to Philip." Use your reason: Have not the works I do the quality of the Deity?

When Christ ascends to Heaven (verses 12-14) the disciples will be doing greater works than His—not more remarkable miracles, but a more extended and outspoken preaching of His Gospel, a

greater conquest over both Jewish and Gentile minds. They will confess that it is Christ who through them adds thousands to His flock. They will disclaim any power or godliness in themselves. They will take it all as His answer to the prayers they make, as they associate themselves with Him for doing His will and for the salvation of His world. In this tremendous prophecy Christ clearly announces His spiritual Rule of Three: "As the Father is to the Son, so is the Son to the Church. As the Father sent Me even so send I you."

Verses 15-17. As Christ speaks of the future work of the disciples, made possible because they are the chosen agents of His own working, He can hardly avoid a first reference to the gift to them of the other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. There are two such references in chapter fourteen and two more later on. It will be best to consider them together in a separate note. Here we may observe that in the first one the modern sense of Comforter, as Consoler, fits quite well. He will encourage them to overcome the sense of separation which daunts them. The verb which corresponds with the noun *parakletos* is used in that sense several times in the Old Testament, and familiarity with these would lead the disciples to understand it so. A good example is *Isaiah* lx. 1, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people", and the rest of the verse.

Verses 18-26. The main subject is the speedy return of Christ to the disciples, and that in two ways not clearly distinguished. The first, "Yet a little while", here as well as in xvi. 16, means the return on Easter Day. The word for "manifest" in verses 21, 22 is also a prosaic or commonplace one, most naturally used of physical vision, and in *Acts* x. 41 of the post-Resurrection appearances. So Judas not Iscariot (also called Thaddeus) seems to understand it. It is to his credit that he does not like the prospect of a limited prerogative for disciples. Is not Christ to be the Saviour of the world? It is a spiritual objection that makes us want to know more of him. But it shows that he has not grasped the whole meaning of Christ's words. There will be a fellowship of Christ with us of an invisible sort, a communion made possible because He lives and we live also, so that mutual recognition and co-operation follow naturally. The privilege is not merely a sort of reward for obedience, but the obedience is the

The goal for Christ and for us is God the Father, and to come to Him Christ Himself is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. So the pilgrim cannot be truly separated from his Guide, nor lose touch with Reality, nor fail by lack of vitality, if he is in Christ. Where Bunyan disappoints us is in the absence of the great Companion and because He is one with God and the revelation of the Father; already on our journey we have known, and are learning to know, the Father and even seeing Him in Christ. Beyond the faith which comes from hearing is the conviction of experience, as seeing Him who is invisible. It was so (v. 19-30) that Christ spoke of his own experience, under earthly conditions, of His dependence upon and unity with the Father. Photina also had been taught to look beyond all service of God and forms of worship. "God is a Spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Verses 8-14. Philip seizes on the last words of verse 7, "and have seen Him". If Christ can show us how to see the Father, we shall be satisfied. He has probably not altogether emerged from the Judaism which thought of a Messiah, the Servant of the Lord, but not one with the Father in God. Christ's response is one of disappointment. There is pathos too in His divulging that the two years of the Ministry seem to Him a long time. The same yearning for the release from its accompaniments is seen in *Mark ix. 19*. But from Philip He wants recognition of the unity that is implied in His being in the Father and the Father in Him. We say of those who have in some measure a life centred in another—the mother and her child, the man and woman who are in love, even the followers of a leader—that they are wrapped up in each other (see the notes on v. 19-30). To St. Philip, as to a child, Christ uses concrete words to express the fellowship. "The words of My teaching do not originate in Myself but in the Father who dwells in Me. Through Me He does His own works." Then in verse 11, He changes to the plural. "All of you learn", He says, "the same truth that I spoke to Philip." Use your reason: Have not the works I do the quality of the Deity?

When Christ ascends to Heaven (verses 12-14) the disciples will be doing greater works than His—not more remarkable miracles, but a more extended and outspoken preaching of His Gospel, a

greater conquest over both Jewish and Gentile minds. They will confess that it is Christ who through them adds thousands to His flock. They will disclaim any power or godliness in themselves. They will take it all as His answer to the prayers they make, as they associate themselves with Him for doing His will and for the salvation of His world. In this tremendous prophecy Christ clearly announces His spiritual Rule of Three: "As the Father is to the Son, so is the Son to the Church. As the Father sent Me even so send I you."

Verses 15-17. As Christ speaks of the future work of the disciples, made possible because they are the chosen agents of His own working, He can hardly avoid a first reference to the gift to them of the other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth. There are two such references in chapter fourteen and two more later on. It will be best to consider them together in a separate note. Here we may observe that in the first one the modern sense of Comforter, as Consoler, fits quite well. He will encourage them to overcome the sense of separation which daunts them. The verb which corresponds with the noun *parakletos* is used in that sense several times in the Old Testament, and familiarity with these would lead the disciples to understand it so. A good example is *Isaiah* lx. 1, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people", and the rest of the verse.

Verses 18-26. The main subject is the speedy return of Christ to the disciples, and that in two ways not clearly distinguished. The first, "Yet a little while", here as well as in xvi. 16, means the return on Easter Day. The word for "manifest" in verses 21, 22 is also a prosaic or commonplace one, most naturally used of physical vision, and in *Acts* x. 41 of the post-Resurrection appearances. So Judas not Iscariot (also called Thaddeus) seems to understand it. It is to his credit that he does not like the prospect of a limited prerogative for disciples. Is not Christ to be the Saviour of the world? It is a spiritual objection that makes us want to know more of him. But it shows that he has not grasped the whole meaning of Christ's words. There will be a fellowship of Christ with us of an invisible sort, a communion made possible because He lives and we live also, so that mutual recognition and co-operation follow naturally. The privilege is not merely a sort of reward for obedience, but the obedience is the

mark of love and the love conditions the fellowship. Christ's reply to Judas emphasizes that there will be a real revelation both of Himself and the Father, and it will not be only for the forty days but a continuous abiding with them. So much He can tell them now, but the Comforter will teach them all that can be taught, bringing to their minds the whole teaching of Christ.

The comforting of Christ thus includes the promise of a resurrection, of an eternal fellowship with Christ in Heaven, of much for them to do in Christ's name and by his grace, of an assurance of Christ's own speedy Resurrection and Ascension, of a continual experience of the Presence of Christ and thereby of the Father, and an abundant outpouring of the Spirit, surpassing all records and prophecies of the old religion.

Verses 27-31. After that comforting He can repeat His opening words, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He can give them a promise of a peace like His own. He can urge them to regard His departure to the Father as an advantage, an Ascension to more abundant glory and transcendent as well as immanent power.

Meanwhile there was no time to say more. He must grapple with the arch-fiend, between whom and Himself there was nothing but hostility. Therefore "Arise, let us go hence", and He went out to Gethsemane and to Calvary.

THE APOCALYPSE OF CHRIST

THE PROBLEM OF THE TWO CHAPTERS

There is no doubt about the existence of a problem. The closing words of chapter fourteen do not demand an immediate sequence of the departure described in chapter eighteen. On the contrary, "Arise, let us go hence", might very well be a call to prayer, since for that standing was a usual attitude. To conclude the evening by permitting the disciples to hear precisely such a prayer as chapter seventeen seems just what we should expect.

The intervention of chapters fifteen and sixteen does need explanation, for it is hard to see how an interpolation could more clearly reveal itself. There is not the least sign of a different author, and John's style is as characteristic in it as elsewhere. But we must resist the natural but erroneous assumption that it is a single interpolation, or rather, that it existed outside the Gospel as a single address. It consists in fact of three quite independent paragraphs. The first, xv. 1-17, deals with the relation of disciples to Christ and is calm and encouraging. The second, xv. 18 to xvi. 15, deals with the hostility of the world to Christ and therefore to the disciples, who are forewarned of their prospect of persecution and martyrdom. The third, xvi. 16-33, comes right back to the evening in the Upper Room and speaks of the triumph of that evening and has no direct connection with the first and second insertions. The favourite explanation of the older commentators was to retain the order of the Gospel and therefore to suppose that the two chapters were the theme of conversation during the walk to Gethsemane, but this did not really picture the environment. The two first addresses are necessary for the whole band of disciples. They are indispensable instructions and not a mere conversation. Nor could eleven men be effectively addressed as they threaded their way through narrow streets, even though we grant that at that late hour there were few, if any, abroad. I shall point out presently that the third interpolation might well belong to the time of that walk. The first one I shall suggest was earlier, perhaps weeks before. The second remains a problem. Its references to the Paraclete are

much more full than those in chapter fourteen, which also seem to be a first mention of the subject. This suggests a date later than the Supper, and therefore after the Resurrection. Against that is the fact that none of Christ's interviews during the forty days stress the militant character of the Church, while the Synoptists report a good deal about persecution spoken in the latter days of Christ's Ministry. It may be that we shall be forced to regard this paragraph as itself composite like the address in chapter five.

There is no place in the Gospel where the chapters would fit any better than they do where we have them. The jig-saw puzzle theory, that is to say, the idea that by some means the pages of the Gospel became disarranged and that we can discover a different and original order, may be dismissed as a nightmare. There is not a single place of which this is true. Nor can we accept Dr. Strachan's suggestion that the two chapters are alternative narratives, both of which John finally decided to keep. They are addenda perhaps, inserted as Matthew built up his chapter ten. It is enough to say that in John's judgment they ought to be included and he could find no better place for them. It may be that the first addendum is particularly attached to xiv. 12-15, and the second to the mention of the Prince of the World in xiv. 30. Both prepare the disciples for the time after Christ ascended to heaven, and therefore the time and place when the teaching was spoken seemed unimportant and were omitted, together with any comments or questions of the disciples.

FRUITFULNESS—A GRACE, A DUTY AND A JOY

(xv. 1-17)

In the Old Testament Israel is not infrequently likened to a vine, but the references generally point to tragedy. It seems that, as in the same countries in modern times, the vines were allowed to grow without support, a symbol of waywardness and disloyalty. See for this *Ezekiel* xvii. 1-10. Psalm lxxx. 8-19 gives a similar picture of a vine that filled the land, covering the mountains with its shadow and sending out its branches to the sea; but the parable is explained as a call to penitence and a theme for prayer. It is only the image that Christ owes to the Old Testament. His use of it is all His own.

A vine bears its fruit on the new branches, the growth of the same season, and to secure their fruitfulness not only must useless ones be cut off, but those that remain must be drastically pruned to encourage a growth of new ones. Our own rule is to shorten them to the two lowest buds, from which two young branches will emerge. In consequence a properly pruned vine becomes almost like a dry stump. It would be in late winter that Christ notices this in the vineyards at Bethany beyond Jordan, or in His travels along the roads from it, and took it as a symbol of Himself. Most of His disciples in Galilee had fallen away from Him and, what was still more serious, the rulers of Israel had definitely rejected Him. Among the chosen Twelve there was a traitor, and others, whose loyalty was undoubted, had only in part grasped what loyalty would mean for them. Outwardly, as men measure, He seemed almost completely to have failed. But His own courage did not fail nor His faith and submission to the Father. "I am the true Vine and My Father is the husbandman." The removal of the unfruitful and the discipline of the fruitful were in His hand.

The use of the symbol might be dated immediately after He saw it or any time up to the Last Supper. The pruning, or "cleansing" as we translate it, is virtually complete. "Ye are clean, because of the Word which I have spoken to you." What they had chiefly needed was the pruning away of Jewish presuppositions and of the individualism of the natural man which underlay their rivalries. The positive surrender to Christ had come readily (see i. 41); but the negation of what was inconsistent with it had been a slow process. That it was now complete was true only for Him who reads the heart.

Verses 4-6. The personal experience of pruning which Christ placed first was not His main concern. As the branches are in the vine the disciples must be in Him and continue in Him. Spiritual union, however, differs from physical union in being mutual. Christ will dwell in them as they must dwell in Him, that the unity may be organic and living. This is the main usefulness of the vine symbol.

Verses 7-8 contain a striking statement that those who are in Christ may ask whatsoever they will and it shall be done unto them. The units who compose the corporate fellowship of the

Church do not lose their individuality. They are still persons with wills, purposes, and destinies proper to each one. That is what makes plant life an even better symbol of the truth about them than St. Paul's use of the human body in *I Corinthians* xii. Their fruitfulness has as its ultimate aim the promotion of the Father's glory, and yet it remains a fruitfulness which is their own. It involves their own activity. It is what they themselves will. They become perfect in discipleship, not by an absorption but by co-operation with Christ and likeness to Him. Their prayers are for the power to attain this, though at the same time they are for an attainment which they consciously feel to be the perfecting of themselves.

Verses 9-10. The language of the spiritual life was at first as unfamiliar to the Apostles as it is to us. When we are taught, as we must be, that Christ asks for our total surrender to Him, many of us are prone to say, like Peter, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For like Tennyson's Guinevere, "I thought I could not live in that fine air, That pure severity of perfect life." So Christ adds that it is just a matter of love. It is indeed as natural as what we call "falling in love". The young man who for love's sake offers himself in marriage, knowing that he is putting into the girl's keeping most of his success in life and practically all his happiness, is making a surrender of the same nature and uses the same language. All life is summed up in the phrase, "for thee". So the Christian does in love for Christ, and the love exhibits itself in keeping a watchful eye upon giving effect to Christ's will; for that is the exact meaning of "keeping" His Commandments. When we so live we may be confident of abiding in His love, that is, of being everlastingly within the sphere of His love for us. To love us, says verse 11, is a joy to Him and it is increasingly a joy to us.

Verses 12-15. Since all right living can be summed up in love, our relation to our brethren in Christ must also be one of love. The First Epistle of St. John is almost founded on that. "You cannot have fellowship with the Light and walk in darkness" (i. 6-7). "He that loveth his brother is in the light and does not stumble" (ii. 9-11); "Every one that doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (iii. 10); "The message is from the beginning and abides" (iii. 11; iv. 2, 3, 21).

Christ has given us the true pattern of love by laying down His life for His friends, and calling us to be His friends. He treats us as such in that He makes known to us all that the Father in His love makes known to the Son.

These verses may be taken as expanding and defining the new commandment given in the supper room (xiii. 34-35). It may be that the fuller explanation was given earlier, and the short account in chapter thirteen is merely a reminder of it. It is not an obscure commandment to be gradually unfolded, but a startling one when given, as it is here, in its fullness. Its atmosphere of the glory of the hereafter and the joy of love does not seem to match the agitations of the Upper Room when the Passion had actually begun.

THE WORLD'S HATRED

(xv. 18-xvi. 15)

There is no need to dwell on this section, except for the foreshadowing of the Comforter, which will be our next subject. In the light of subsequent events and the centuries of history, the world's hatred is all too evident. That rejection of Christ implies a wrong conception of the Father, or even total ignorance of Him, has been said more fully in the controversial chapters, seven and eight, and for those who are leaders of the Church in chapter ten.

The only other point is that the section can hardly have been spoken where it seems to be placed. Chapter thirteen pictures the Apostles as dismayed by the fear of loneliness and the sense of helplessness. Chapter fourteen and the first part of fifteen show with what earnestness and love Christ tries to give them comfort. It is inconceivable that He should at the same time add to their burden by dwelling so fully upon the hardness of their future lives. That their minds should be prepared for it is reasonable and loving. It might have been earlier, even several weeks earlier, if it were not for the most detailed of the four paragraphs about the Comforter. The easiest way out of that difficulty is to suppose that the teaching was given at various times, some of it perhaps even after Christ's Resurrection. We must accept uncertainty.

THE PROMISED COMFORTER

The four passages (xiv. 15-17; 25-26; xv. 26-27; xvi. 7-15) are the fullest teaching we have about the Holy Spirit from the lips

of Christ Himself. When He spoke them to the Apostles they would understand them in the sense of their Old Testament knowledge. When St. John included them in his Gospel, he had in addition an experience of life in the Spirit, that of the Church and that of his own person. To what extent, if at all, this has affected his language we cannot say, but it would not be done consciously. A curious expression in his Second Epistle (verse 9) seems to be a warning. "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God." A fuller Christianity than that of Christ was to him, if we so interpret his words, a grievous heresy. Yet if he made a selection from Christ's teaching, what would seem most important would be that which had later become matter of experience.

In the Old Testament the Spirit of the Lord means chiefly the divine energy which we believe to be manifest in the world and in ourselves. Even the heathen Melanesians thought of "Mana". But in the Old Testament it is under the direction, and is therefore the manifestation, of the personal God in whom Israel believed. In the earlier writings it is the cause of Samson's strength, Bezaleel's artistry, Joshua's generalship, and so forth. Later it appears more restricted to intellectual and religious life. Rarely the Spirit, being Holy, is the source of high character (Psalm li), or grieved by wickedness (*Isaiah* lxiii). He speaks by the prophets to make possible that revelation of the nature and the attributes of God which is the glory of Israel. He will rest in complete fullness on the Messiah. An unusual idea is that of Joel, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." It should be noticed that the prophet's mind is itself active. The Spirit comes upon him to elevate, enlighten or give force to his whole religious and spiritual life. The Spirit is still divine but the prophet is himself in his response to it. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but man spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (*II Peter* i. 21).

There is acknowledged besides this, an operation of the Spirit beyond Israel and even beyond man. At the Creation, the Spirit of God moved on the waters, which justifies *Veni Creator Spiritus*. From this point of view the meaning of Pentecost might be that the newly created Christian dispensation came under the same guidance and inspiration of the Spirit that the older one

had enjoyed. That would, of course, be only one aspect of His descent.

Old Testament language may be largely due to the same reserve in claiming direct actions of God, which led the Jews to substitute "Word of God" for "God" in the narratives. They found a difficulty in ascribing to God Himself the innumerable details by which He did His will. The same difficulty still troubles simple minds, and perhaps even more than in ancient times. The Jews found a refuge in a free imaginative use of their belief in angels, which may be the best way for some people today. The mischief that befell the Jews was a failure to build up a faith in an ever-present, everywhere present, Spirit of the Lord, a failure which diverted them from the true line of development just when it was about to be most important. Yet the *Wisdom of Solomon* teaches that the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world; and that which holdeth all things together hath knowledge of every voice. Archbishop Whateley's admittedly poetical lines have helped some of us :

I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man that thou shalt meet
In lane, highway, or open street:
That he and we and all men move
Under a canopy of love
As broad as the blue heaven above.

It is at least more effective than Keble's :

The glorious sky embracing all
Is like the Maker's love.

The sacramental figure is always more powerful than a simile.

We may not make for ourselves visible symbols of God Himself. The fourth chapter of *Deuteronomy* holds good. "On the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb . . . the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form. Only a Voice!" Everything that St. John tells us about the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is in our experience a matter of hearing. Whether the Paraclete speaks words of consolation, or of encouragement, or of enlightenment or of conviction, He is "only a Voice". If He is our advocate against the hostile world, or our Teacher, recalling us to the words of Christ or a Witness enabling us to witness, the activity

some kind of speaking. It is curious that the Greek word which we translate as "proceeding" from the Father (unless it means literal bodily movement) is always that which means "issuing from the mouth". "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that *proceedeth* out of the mouth of God." "That which *proceedeth* out of the heart of man (evil thoughts, etc.), that defileth man." "There went *forth* a rumour about Him." "Out of His mouth *proceeded* a sharp two-edged sword." "Out of the Throne *proceed* lightnings and voices and thunders" as on Sinai. So in *St. John*, chapter sixteen, the Comforter who convicts the world and exposes its errors about sin and righteousness and judgment, and guides us into all the truth, does it all by speaking. "He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever things He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." Only a Voice is what Christ here reveals about the Comforter, but it is the Voice of God. As Psalm xxix says:

The Voice of the Lord is upon the Waters:
The God of glory thundereth,
Even the Lord upon many waters.
The Voice of the Lord is powerful;
The Voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

As the Paraclete His activity is within the Church, but the conviction of the world may be an activity directly upon the unconverted, an aspect of His universal presence, of His holding all things together, as "the Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness". In the *Wisdom of Solomon* (xii. 1-2) we hear, "Thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things. Wherefore Thou convictest by little and little, them that fall from the right way, and putting them in remembrance by the very things wherein they sin, dost Thou admonish them, that escaping from their wickedness they may believe in Thee, O Lord." As St. Paul puts it, "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance". Some of us think that at the great Pentecost it was within the crowd's minds that the words of Christians became "in our own tongue wherein we were born". At all events, "preventing" and converting grace have always been affirmed by the Church.

It is important that we should not separate the voice of the

spirit from "the truth as it is in Jesus". He is not a second way of salvation, but glorifies Christ, bringing to remembrance what He said and bearing witness to Him. We are right, it seems, to suppose that the voice of the Spirit in our hearts leads to better understanding of Christ, and enforces us to attend to Him. But "He takes of mine and declares it unto you." Moreover, this is true because of Christ's unity with the Father. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine." It is on that ground that Christ had said, "He shall take of Mine" (*St. John* xvi. 13-15). That the Father is the Fount of Deity is never forgotten by *St. John*. We believe in a Trinity of Persons; but Israel's creed is ours too. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God."

THE RESURRECTION FORETOLD

(xvi. 16-33)

Our conclusion is that the long passage which *St. John* inserts into the story of the Last Supper (xv. and xvi. 1-15), really consists of a general view of the teaching given by our Lord to prepare the disciples for their ministry after His Ascension. It is therefore comparable with the "defence" in v. 17-47. The two passages agree in the total absence of background. The audience is not specified except by inference, and there are no comments from its members. The passages agree also in betraying composition by the Evangelist from what Christ must have spoken at different times. Yet both have a logical sequence that gives them a marked unity. There is even an internal chronological sequence, for xv. 1-16 is earlier than the actual Passion, and the full treatment of the "convicting" power of the Comforter implies a later stage than the references in xiv. 15, 26.

But xvi. 16-33 is not part of the insertion. It carries us back to the history of the eve before Christ's arrest and to the atmosphere and style of chapter fourteen. *St. John* begins with what is more probably his quotation of xiv. 19 than Christ's repetition of it. Verses 17-18 relate the effect of it on the disciples. They are chiefly puzzled by the phrase, "a little while", though they also discuss Christ's departure to the Father. They talk to each other freely, which the arrangement of a triclinium would hinder, but they do not question Christ as they have previously been doing,

This implies the breaking up of the supper setting and Christ's signal for departure, so that such questioning would be interference. Though, as we have seen, the old idea of the whole insertion as being in fact conversation along the road must be abandoned, it is likely that xvi. 16-33 belongs to that time. The band of disciples would most likely break into two's and three's. John and perhaps someone else became Christ's companions, and primarily the verses were addressed to them, or spoken by them.

Verses 19-28 are Christ's answer to the question the disciples wish to ask. Verses 29-30 are given as the disciples' response to it, and I think there is no doubt that it expresses excitement and indeed exaltation. Christ had raised them to a higher belief in Himself than they had previously been capable of. John says (xv. 29) it was due to His plain speaking and the knowledge He displayed of their unspoken minds. But that alone was nothing new to them. John spoke of it early at ii. 25. Most of Christ's signs revealed it. There was no longer anything exciting about it. We must therefore suppose that John's emotion was stirred rather by the glory of what Christ revealed than by the mere fact that He was able to reveal it.

What Christ's words contain is, first, that the "little while" means a short time of grief deepening into agony which may be illustrated by the parable of the pain and peril of childbirth. John knew enough at the time to understand this as an attack by the Jews in which Christ would lay down His life. In verse 20, "wail and lament" are the usual words for those who bewail a death. Secondly, the short grief would be succeeded by a joy that would be intense and secure. Nobody could take it from them. It would be inaugurated by an act of Christ. "You will see Me again" gives place, in verse 22, to "I will see you again." Thirdly, in their joyous future they would enjoy a more intimate fellowship with the Father. In the great intercession of chapter seventeen Christ will commend them to the Father's protection and love, as a relation that replaces His own care of them during the past two years. For the Father Himself loves them. Christ uses the same phrase about them as He used of Himself in v. 20.

The Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all that He Himself doeth." Lastly, the Evangelist says, verse 30, that the disciples now believe that "Thou camest forth from (*apo*) God". In verse

27 and elsewhere he uses a different preposition, *para*, which means "from beside" or "from the presence of". He uses *apo* (apart from the everyday sense of "from some place or time") to mean "source". What Christ taught was not "from Himself", but "from Him that sent Me". In xvi. 13 the Paraclete will not speak from Himself but what he hears (from God) He will speak. There are about fifteen of such phrases which may be considered characteristic of St. John. So here, not only the Son's word or judgment, but Himself in his nature has His source in the Father. It is a confession of faith in the Incarnation. Well may the writer show exultation, for he has grasped the foundation facts of Christianity.

Christ's answer, verses 31-33, while still full of comfort like all of chapters thirteen and fourteen, questions whether they all do believe so fully. That night they will all be scattered and leave Him alone, except that St. John to the utmost of his opportunity clung to Him. Throughout the Gospel the disciples are commonly spoken of, and to, as possessing a bond of fellowship. "Will you also go away?"; "I am the Vine, you are the branches." But their reply or comment is mostly given by one. Peter professes faith in the name of all. Thomas asks, "How do we know the way?" for them all. There are places where it seems likely that there was one speaker but the name is not given. "The disciples say to Him, 'Rabbi, eat'" (iv. 31), or "'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents?'" (ix. 2). It may be that in some of these the actual speaker was St. John, who conceals himself behind the plural word, and that I believe is especially likely to be the case in the sixteenth chapter. It would be only he that believed so fully. On the other hand, when Christ proposed to go to Lazarus all of them would join in protests, "because the Jews of late sought to stone Thee", and the suggestion of reference only to John at this stage is only worth making because it fits the narrative. John knew well enough that he could not conceal his authorship; he did not use anonymity from modesty; he wanted his Gospel to be treated as having the authority of the Church.

The closing paragraph this time contrasts with that of chapter twelve. Its frankness is undoubted, but its confidence that the victory is as good as won is still more remarkable. A strange coincidence is the farewell of Iphigineia in the version of Euripides;

as she goes to offer herself in sacrifice for her country she says, "Lo, I go to give to the Greeks a victory-bringing deliverance." But the poet's human imagination could not extend to actual death. By a sudden miracle Iphigineia was caught up to the gods, leaving a white hind to die in her place.

THE HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

It is known as the High-Priestly Prayer because it is almost all an intercession. Westcott called it the prayer of consecration. Although the Evangelists frequently mention Christ's prayers, we have no report of any length except this one. Those quoted are not much more than brief ejaculations, though they reveal much. When I was a boy my father used to omit chapter seventeen from our family prayers, because, as he told us, we were too young to understand it or to listen with the reverence to which it is entitled.

The only difficulty that I still find in it is that John was able, after hearing it once, to reproduce it, although in the Upper Room he was still a prey to mental confusion and apprehension. Then, and for a while longer, he can hardly have been capable of finding words of his own to eke out what he remembered of Christ's. There were other occasions when a similar prayer would be fitting, especially when He revealed Himself in the afternoon of Easter Day, when the Apostles received from Him the Holy Spirit for their final ordination, and also at His appearance for His Ascension. There may have been others unrecorded. He may have repeated much of what the chapter tells us. In that case John would become sufficiently familiar with the language as well as the substance of the prayers of their High Priest at that period.

The arrangement is a natural one. It is in fact the same as we find condensed into a miniature form in a Latin Collect. A collect begins with adoration of the Father as in xvii. 1-5. It then recites what is the immediately necessary petition. In xvii. 6-19 this is an intercession for the Apostles. But a collect generally passes from that to the wider purpose for which the intercession is offered, the ultimate purpose. Here in xvii. 20-26 it is the extension through the Apostles to the whole fellowship of Christ's Church and the perfecting of it in the life to come. The collect for purity at the beginning of our Communion Service may be used as an example.

THE GLORY FOR WHICH CHRIST YEARNS

(xvii. 1-5)

We are as much in the environment of eternity as we were in the first five verses of the Gospel. Christ yearns for that, for the glory that is entirely from the Father, for its resumption at the Father's side. Twice He speaks of His sense of exile, in *St. Luke* xix. 41 and when He lets us know that His two years of ministry seem a long time, *John* xiv. 9. The Father has given Him authority over all flesh, and over those from among mankind to whom He has been able to give eternal life. St. John adds in verse 3 a note on eternal life, in his own words, but derived from Christ's teaching. The Father had given Him a work to do which He has now accomplished. Therefore He may pray for the glory which is eternal.

TRIALS OF THE APOSTLES

(xvii. 6-19)

Verses 6-19 are within the earthly environment and deal with the immediate crisis. But first, with thankfulness, He dwells on what is already done. The disciples were given to Him by the Father. As in vi. 44, "No man can come to Him, unless the Father who sent Him draw him." This includes all the instances of what I have called unprovable miracles, a real action of God upon our lives, which to one who receives it is assuredly from God. The disciples would say (verse 8) that they have learned much from Christ, which is of course true, but they have also learned that His teaching is really from the Father, who is the source of what Christ has taught.

Verses 11-12 deal with the crisis. No longer will Christ's constant watchfulness and the guardianship of His love be given on the human earthly level. They will lose this at His Ascension and for them it is perilous. Therefore He comes to the Father by means of His prayer, as also in verse 13, "speaking these things in the world" in His intercession. What the Apostles still need is a Father's care and guidance which is what they have had from Christ, but now He commends them to the Father that it may be given directly by Him. This we already read in xvi. 26-27; now it is said plainly, "Holy Father keep them in thine own Name." Holy is only ethical as a corollary. Its primary meaning is "consecrated to God", as it must mean if we are to speak

of holy places, books, or days. In this verse the Father is called Holy because He never falls short of the perfection of His divine nature. Christ consecrates Himself to the Father in all ways, but here the outstanding fact is that He does so for the sake of His chosen men. His relation is not only divine at its best; He is always and completely divine. For He is one with the Father and the Father with Him.

There was a passing reference to Judas. It is like St. John not to omit it. What he wishes to point out is that the failure of Judas was not a failure in Christ. Judas perished because he was a perisher; it was his nature.

INTERCESSION FOR THE CHURCH

(xvii. 20-26)

We move on to think of the Christian Church, won to Christ by the Apostles in the first place. Christ prays for its unity but not in the same sense as we talk of church re-union. He prays for the same unity that unites the Father and the Son, with the result of its extension to the whole world. What that unity involves we saw in the notes on v. 19-20. What is sought for the Church is also the love which is like that of Christ, as in xiii. 34-35, with the same sacrifice of self and the same issue in a believing world. When verse 23 speaks of our being perfected into one, we realize, with Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, that this is a great work of God Himself, and not merely the result of our planning and endeavour. In St. John's Epistle (*I John* iv. 12-17) creation reaches its goal and climax by the love of God being made perfect and complete in us who love one another; all creation may be for the sake of creating love.

Verses 24-26 pass on from the Church on earth to become entirely eschatological. We are shown heaven, where Christ dwells, and behold face to face the glory which is His, and the Father's love for Him before the world was. There is no more than a hint of a world that is liable to judgment. The disciples of Christ will partake of the Father's love for Christ and be fully united with Christ who dwells in them.

On the subject of this prayer Sir Edwyn Hoskyns' *Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*, though it needs patient study, deserves it fully.

THE ROAD TO THE CROSS

JOHN'S OMISSION OF THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE

The critics dwell upon this in an endeavour to widen the difference between John and the Synoptists by suggesting that John has idealized his picture of the Passion in accordance with the basic view that it was the glorifying of Christ. As a matter of fact the earlier Gospels portray the royal majesty of Christ as clearly as St. John does. St. Luke is actually much more emotional and stirring than St. John, and his account has the greatest fullness and gives the most enlightenment of the four. By comparison St. John is the most individual and domestic in its biographical aspect. He does not omit the Agony because he rejects St. Mark, but because he accepts it without criticism.

On the contrary, he tells of the arrest in order to correct Mark in several details. Nor does he omit the main theme of the Agony, which is the human abhorrence of death and especially of such a death. To accept it was a supreme act of His perfect obedience, as complete as "Not as I will but as Thou wilt." That He was disappointed to find the Apostles asleep when He could have wished to feel their sympathy is also very human, but St. John gives more than one parallel with it in the story of the Upper Room. Moreover, we must not overlook the troubling of His soul earlier in the week or His agitation at the presence of the Traitor. John does record His exclamation, "The cup that My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" That He could say, "My peace I give unto you", does not contradict the recurrence of trouble in the dreadful hour of inactive waiting for Judas.

But the continuation of the two stories throws light upon the three chapters which John has inserted. We see them now as a warning against exaggeration of the torment which the Synoptists record. These incidents are true but they are not what we may call the normal mind of Jesus towards His Passion. The pruning of the true Vine, accepted for Himself and the Apostles from the Father's hand, the toil of lifelong effort after fruitfulness, the enmity of the world, the need of the Spirit's consolation

and witness, and the intercession, enshrined within what is really a hymn of triumph and a revelation of its issue in eternal glory — all this, which at first sight was a mere disorder in the continuous narrative, is seen to be a most necessary unfolding of the true nature and meaning of Christ's (and Christianity's) relation with the world of time. The three chapters are the true "Apocalypse of St. John the Divine."¹

THE ARREST OF CHRIST

It is a sign of the truthfulness of the Gospels that when dealing with a confused incident their differences become more marked. This is so in the matter of Christ's arrest. Mark and Matthew agree that Judas kissed Christ, as he had arranged, but Luke tones this down to "drew near in order to kiss Him", and John omits the kiss altogether. They seem to regard it as too great an insult to chronicle, but it may be that John's account is correct. The kiss was not really given because Christ's free offering of Himself anticipated it.

John alone tells of the presence of a cohort of Roman soldiers as well as the Temple police and others under the control of the Council. It would not be the whole cohort, any more than we mean the whole police force when we "call in the police". But it had to be sufficient not only to capture Jesus but to make resistance absurd; and because the commanding officer knew that the business must be done quietly, quickly and effectively, he took charge of it himself. The first sign of their approach came, says St. John, from their lanterns and torches; then, as the light was reflected from their armour and weapons, the military were disclosed. Christ could have found a hiding place among the trees,

¹I have a fancy that it helps us to understand how the book which claims that name got so easy, though not unquestioned, acceptance as the work of the Apostle. It is modelled on Jewish apocalypses and like them furnishes itself with a pseudonymous author. The Vision of Christ, the letters to the Churches and the glorification of the Eucharist would not have passed muster unless they echoed real addresses or letters of St. John. If it goes off into weird symbolism of an entirely un-Johannine kind it does set forth the two most prominent expectations of his mind as it is revealed in his Epistles. The world lay in the lap of the Evil One. All that was in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, was adverse to God. Many Antichrists had gone forth and would go forth. On the other hand, that the final triumph of God was certain is the writer's confident faith. I can imagine the book therefore as a valedictory memorial of St. John at the time of his death, or even as his final weakness prepared men for its imminence. I include this as merely confessing a supposition which is in my mind in any reference to the book.

but instead He came forward. In the confusion that followed John notices Judas skulking behind the soldiers; it is the final contemptuous mention of his name. Christ had used the majestic, or rather the divine name "I AM". The Jewish members of the crowd drew back, pushing each other so that some fell down. Christ repeated the words, and added a request that the Apostles should be unharmed. So He began to make good His claim that He had lost none of them. Their liberty was a parable of their destined salvation. The whole story as John tells it rings true.

So does St. Peter's foolish show of resistance, which the Synop-
tists report but leave anonymous. Matthew adds a bit about
legions of angels. Luke speaks of Christ's healing of the man's
wound, perhaps to account for Peter's being left unpunished.
Christ's apparently indignant speech was, according to Mark and
Matthew, spoken to the crowd attacking Him. Luke sees that it
should be addressed to their masters, but he is probably wrong
in bringing the rulers on the scene. They had greater things to
attend to. John's correction is better. He omits the reproach here
but in different words includes it as spoken later to the Sanhed-
rin. The whole story is, as I said, confused. It seems to have ex-
isted in various more or less dubious forms; St. John's account
alone is both free from suspicion and much more full in its de-
tails. It is the story of one who was present.

Mark, we think, was also there, but only for minutes, as the
youth who followed from his father's house. He seems to have
been awakened by the soldiers, and to have been very curious
about their errand. He was fond of soldiers (it was through that
that several Latin words got into his Gospel) and the name "Mar-
cus" was perhaps derived from a favourite one. It is a pre-
nomen, the one he was called by his intimates. The soldiers tried
to arrest him but did not persevere. All they cared for was to
prevent his spreading the story. They had probably recognized
him and knew where he could be found and silenced in the
morning.

THE EXAMINATION BY CAIAPHAS

(xviii. 12-14, 19-24)

Christ was led away, first to Annas, says St. John. He was not
the high priest, as he makes clear in verses 13 and 24, but, ac-
cording to John, his father-in-law. He was now an old man, not

in office, but very influential and full of guile and schemes. The critics make much of the later statement in verse 24, that, as the Revised Version says, "Annas therefore sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." It is quite like John to omit even an important detail, and insert it when he realizes the omission: examples are iv. 2, and x. 22. It is also a common Greek idiom to use an aorist tense in a narrative, like "sent" where English uses a more careful pluperfect, "had sent". An example is *John* v. 15, "for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in the place"; the meaning there is that when the healed man looked round for his benefactor, He had already disappeared; yet the verb is the aorist "conveyed", not "had conveyed". Similarly here, there is no doubt at all that we should translate, with the Authorized Version, "Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." It was simply a slip that the statement was not made after verse 13. To translate it as the Revised Version does, confuses the whole passage. It makes it seem to divide Peter's denials between the two houses, in contradiction to the Synoptists as well as St. John, and in spite of common sense. It also makes the reference to the high priest in 19-23 refer to Annas, though John has been specially careful to tell us that the only high priest at that time, the only one who can be charged with the death of Christ, was Caiaphas.

The correct translation, however, involves no less than three questions. (1) What brought Annas to John's mind at this point? He has been telling us of Christ's question, which the other Evangelists place in the garden—Why had they not acted sooner? A servant chooses to think the question disrespectful to Caiaphas, and strikes Christ in the face. The emphasis in the answer to the cowardly blow lies on the word "bound". Because Annas had sent Him on to Caiaphas without removing whatever answered to our handcuffs, Christ could do nothing to ward off the blow. John was simply shocked to hear of it, and with one word hands it on to shock us. (2) Why does John mention the stop at Annas' house if he has nothing to tell us about it? Because he remembers that it was so. It seems that the Apostles did not get an entrance there. Perhaps John did not happen to know the servants as he knew those of Caiaphas. They waited outside in the cold, wondering what was going on and how long

they would have to wait. It was not easy to forget. (3) Why was Christ first sent to Annas? Because Caiaphas had to find out how the matter was proceeding. Had the capture been successfully made or not? When should he send word to the Council members to come at once? There was need of haste, there was still more need of secrecy. Arrangements with Pilate would be already made, and the Council had been warned to be ready, but they might not be wanted till morning. Judas knew that Christ had discovered his purpose. He might have warned Caiaphas that it might fail. Anyhow, it was best to keep Christ, when arrested, away from the stir at the high priest's house until they were ready for Him. That is at least a possible answer. We are dealing with very crafty men.

After all, we know very little of what happened that night. At sunrise it was lawful to hold a formal court. St. Luke and St. John abbreviate the story of it, but they support the longer account in St. Mark, which should be compared with theirs, as St. John expects his readers to do.

THE LAPSE OF ST. PETER

(xviii. 15-18, 25-27)

The three Synoptic Gospels are based on St. Mark, whose report should be an accurate reproduction of St. Peter's own tale. The three questions and the three denials are preserved, as the prophecy of Christ demands, and the third is based in all of them on Peter's Galilean dialect. There are, however, slight differences in the distribution of the words used, which may be due to local traditions but are insignificant. Both the others also agree to omit Mark's first cock-crowing; and perhaps they did not understand it. It can hardly mean that there was only one cock which uttered a single crow, twice at considerable intervals. Rather it means the two cock-crowings of which R. L. Stevenson gives a good description in *Travels With a Donkey*. "There is one stirring hour of the night, unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere and all the out-door world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows, not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep change to a new lair among

the ferns; and houseless men open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night." The first time I heard the unforgettable stir I was walking soon after midnight from Hawthorn to Brighton across what was then waste-land along Gardiner's Creek. This, I think, explains Mark's identification of the important crowing, as the second one, and it does not contradict the others' notes of time. St. Luke's statement, that the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, has caused many debates on what must have been the topography of Caiaphas' house. But I regret to say that it seems to me a mere reminiscence of such language of the Psalms as "Turn Thou unto me and have mercy upon me."

In St. John's Gospel a second and independent narrative meets us. There was another disciple present. The two are from the first bracketed together. Elsewhere in the Gospel an individual but unnamed disciple always means St. John. The author of the Fourth Gospel exhibits an independent knowledge of Peter's denials, which he has overheard. He takes no other part in the incident. The word for his being known to the high priest is Luke's way of speaking of mere acquaintances of Joseph and Mary (ii. 44). He shows on the contrary a personal knowledge of the servants, the girl at the gate, Malchus and his kinsman. It is exactly the knowledge he would have if he were St. John and if he had done business with Caiaphas for his firm. To turn the man in the Gospel into an important personage who, seeing Peter standing irresolutely outside the gate, for no assignable reason obtained entrance for him, is a mere perversion of the text, and cannot be considered honourable. Recognize that we are hearing about St. John, and the story goes smoothly and without any difficulties.

The two separate accounts dovetail into each other. The girl who first asks, "Were you, like John, with that Nazarene, Jesus?" was the doorkeeper, though Mark does not say so and John does not actually say that the question was put at the gate. Having allowed her friend John to enter, she admits Peter also. John, we notice, accepts some responsibility for getting Peter into a difficult situation about which he is already nervous. As he enters (or later at the fire, as Mark says), the girl puts her question innocently from curiosity and a desire to be friendly. Peter, however, feels that he is on enemy ground among strangers. The

lie slips out. He gets more and more uncomfortable and wanders away towards the gate, half inclined to make his escape. The girl is again on duty, surrounded by some of the idle men, as was natural enough. She tells them Peter is a disciple of Christ, not that they care, but to start a talk with the fine young fisherman—not a bit like his pictures in our church-windows. Peter thinks he was safer at the fire, and returning, tries to join in the conversation there, which betrays his Galilean accent and increases the suspicion that he was lying. John does not vouch for what may have happened at the porch, which he did not hear, nor does he speak of the provincial accent. The men are not credulous, and presently one of them thinks he remembers Peter's face in the garden, for he is a kinsman of Malchus and had taken a good look at the man who attacked him. So John gets his required three denials. The cocks crow, and Peter realizes that he has been false to his loved Master. There is now for the first time real danger, but he manages to get away before they make up their minds what they will do to him for Malchus' sake. St. John lets him off too without noting his temper or his bad language. When we next hear of him he is an inmate of the place John calls home in Jerusalem (xx. 2). I see no difficulty about that interpretation, a much more simple and human one than any the critics have been able to invent.

THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

Mark's story of this episode is unsatisfactory, and Matthew makes no improvement on it. The three additions made by him, the remorse of Judas, the dream of Pilate's wife, and Pilate's own washing of his hands, are unimportant to the history, even if they are found credible. But much has happened prior to the Gospel story. The Evangelists all note that it began early in the morning; that is to say, much earlier than one would expect a court to be held. This was necessary to the mind of the Council, since Christ must die before sunset. Pilate, all through, shows a good deal of complaisance, mingled with self-assertion and regard for the law. He quite understands why the Council urges haste and he humours them. He also understands why the Jewish authorities want to remain outside his house. He thinks it foolish, but he is accustomed to their scruples. It is only John who

makes this point, but the others seem to imply that the accusers with the crowd are in the open air. The formalities and proprieties of a Roman Court must be observed. John's account of the queer result of the negotiations is thus more credible than it seems at first sight. Pilate goes out to hear what the hostile witnesses have to say, and to deal with the crowd which gradually assembles. Caiaphas would take care that his dependants come in force, and come early to the most prominent positions. It is they who will represent the whole populace to Pilate, and they may be the majority of the crowd, for the imminent Passover must be prepared.

Mark and the others also omit any details of the first accusations, and only report that Pilate put the question, guilty or not guilty, to which Christ (who is also outside) answered with the curious words, "Thou sayest it." When Christ was asked by Caiaphas whether He was the Son of God, He answered plainly and with solemnity, "I AM." It is perhaps to avoid the Holy Name that Matthew changes it to "Thou hast said it." But that is still a definite affirmative, compared with Christ's answer to Pilate, "Thou sayest it", or "So you say". When we are asked to say "yes" or "no" to a question it may be unavoidable to use the colloquialism, "Well, yes and no." It was so for Christ; King of the Jews was Pilate's word, not His. It demands the explanation which John attaches to it, and from which the governor understands that, so far as he is himself concerned, Christ is innocent, or claims to be, of any disloyalty or obnoxious teaching.

The history is just beginning to make sense when, according to Mark, an interruption occurs. Some man or group of men calls to Pilate to release the prisoner, as he was accustomed to do at Passover. For that an opportunity would be afforded by a movement of Pilate to adjourn the trial. I think we can agree to that surmise. It might be only because it was Pilate's breakfast-time, but Luke gives a much stronger reason. He says that amid many charges, Pilate caught a remark that Christ had first taught in Galilee. That he could transfer the trial to Herod is most improbable. It would be like appealing from the Commonwealth High Court to a State court. Besides, any evidence available would deal with what He had said and done in Judea. Nor does it all agree with Luke's story, since it would not heal the enmity

between the two rulers. If Pilate had sent to Herod for a report, it would be an acknowledgment of Herod's able government of his province and of the soundness of his judgment. As the report tallied fairly well with Pilate's own opinion (though not with his sympathies), he would be pleased, as he shows clearly, with Herod.

We have reason to think that we know where Luke got the story which the other three Evangelists do not know. He had met Joanna, who joined the other women at the Cross; her husband was Chuza, Herod's steward, and they would be billeted at his palace; what she reports is what she heard—most of what could be heard—but nothing of what there was to see, since she would not go into the midst of the rabble; after upwards of thirty years she did not even mention the cruel crown, but the gorgeous robe she knew well.

The colour of the robe should be noticed. Mark said it was purple; Matthew noted that a soldier, even an ordinary officer, would not have a purple robe, and changes it to scarlet. This was not a matter of vestiary law, but simply of expense. A purple dyed with the so-called mollusc was much more expensive than one dyed with cochineal. The rich man in Luke's parable wore purple and fine linen habitually. John, the eye-witness, knew that it was purple, and not too faded to be recognized, but gorgeous, as Luke says. For Herod was noted for his extravagance. That, with the superficial curiosity about Christ's miracles, the spitefulness against one who called him a jackal, the triumph over the defeat (as he thought) of one he had feared in the past, the lack of dignity in joining with his "men of war" for the dressing up, and the cruelty of the crown from the thorn-bush, make up a striking portrait of Herod's character.

John confirmed Luke on one point, that when Pilate brought Christ out after the adjournment, He was already crowned with the thorns and wore the purple robe; he goes further on another point, for he believes that Christ has already been scourged. Herod's men had dealt hardly with Him, beyond what Joanna's "set Him at nought" implies. John has always heard Mark's account, which has become traditional if not canonical, of the scourging and mockery. He uses its language in telling of it

himself. Mark's chronology, he thinks, is at fault again. He does not see the larger error and the scourging becomes an unexplained enigma. Still, He looked as though it might have been inflicted. It may be that whatever Herod had done to His flesh, the torture of His Spirit had broken Him down more. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And we hid our faces from Him, as it may be John did. But if he had known Luke's story he would not have left his own as we have it, unintelligible. That is of importance whenever we compare the Gospels. St. John did not know our Gospel of St. Luke.

It is really St. John's Gospel that binds together the different stories of the Synoptists. Only he begins by reminding us of the difficulties with which Caiaphas had to contend in effecting his evil design, and of the cleverness and craft by which he surmounted them. Even though Pilate refused to become a tool in his hands by a formal sentence of death on the assurance Caiaphas gave him of the Sanhedrin's sufficient trial, he found himself drawn step by step into that very position. It is St. Luke who says that Pilate first heard of Christ's ministry in Herod's province, and that He actually belonged to the Galilean Kingdom, from the charges the chief priests made against Him. Trustworthy evidence was what Pilate at this stage desiderated. He did not know that the "Jews", as Mark reports, had an entirely different grudge against Christ from the charge they brought. For envy they had delivered Him up (*Mark* xv. 10), that is, for the progress His teaching seemed to be making among the people. The charge of rebellion was merely a shield of the true one. Herod, Pilate thought, was the man who could help him. So he adjourned the court and went into the palace. There, while the visit to Herod was being arranged, he called Jesus aside and repeated the ostensible offence, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Sayest thou this of thyself or did others tell it thee?" He meant, "Am I to take your desire for information as prompted by your personal interest in Me, or do you want merely a fuller answer to My accusers than my 'Thou sayest'?"

Pilate's answer goes beyond the arrogance of a bureaucrat

It reveals contempt for the conquered, and therefore inferior, nation whom it is his task to keep in order. Their private concerns are not his. We can believe St. Luke's report that he was contentedly ignorant about Christ's previous career, which otherwise would be dubious. Nevertheless, Christ gives him the information which is his present need. His Kingdom was not one of the kingdoms of this world, nor did He seek to win it or protect it by force. He had followers, but Pilate can easily assure himself that they were making no effort for His defence. "Force", said a second-century Christian writer, "is not an attribute of God." "So you are a King of a sort?" "Yes", Christ answers, "I was born for that", or more properly, "Lest you take the birth for My beginning, I came into the world in order to bear witness. All who have the love of truth as I truly teach it, voluntarily become My people." Pilate cannot believe that "the truth" is a discoverable acceptable reality. "This is truth to me and that to Thee." How can anyone proclaim that such and such is "the Truth"? One thinks that he will never be one of Christ's disciples, though the possibility that he may have become a new man when he was disgraced and banished, has occurred to some who have the Christian virtue of Hope.

Meanwhile Mark's special point of the release of a prisoner in honour of the Passover must receive attention. It must have been suggested, we think, when the court was first adjourned and Pilate turned to enter his house. It also seems likely that the first calls were for Christ to be released. There are always some ready to advise compromise. Pilate comes out again, having sent Christ to Herod, and adopts the suggestion of the crowd. But their answer is not conclusive. At least that seems the only reason for deferring any action. Those who vote for Christ begin to melt away. The chief priests are busy with their own adherents, and when Pilate puts the question again, it seems to him that the whole vote is for Barabbas. "What shall I do with Jesus?" he asks quite needlessly; for about Christ the matter stands where it did. The crowd has no right to decide that. But the chief priests raise the cry of "Crucify Him", and they have drilled the crowd to follow their lead. Henceforth no other voice can make itself heard.

At last Christ comes back from Herod. Pilate is shocked to see

how He has been treated. Dressed up to express mockery of His claim he has also been cruelly beaten. This would not be the scourging which was commonly inflicted on those who were to die upon the cross, but it may have been in anger at the dignified silence which St. Luke says He preserved, for the torturer failed to move him. The mockery is Herod's report, probably accompanied by a letter or message. It means that Christ had tried to be made King—so the desire of the five thousand in chapter six was misrepresented—but he had missed his chance. His adherents had mostly left Him (the only truth in the tale), and nothing need be feared from Him.

Pilate, according to St. Luke, said twice, "Having given Him His lesson I will release Him." The participle in this sentence is ambiguous as to the time. It may, in its commonest use, mean, "Now that, as you see, I have given Him His lesson." It is however taken by the commentators to mean, "When I have first given Him His lesson." In either case the reference is to the scourging which preceded crucifixion. In the later translation this is a purpose still to be carried out; in the former Pilate claims, as his own sufficient punishment of Christ, all that Herod and his soldiers have done, and of course he had brought it about by sending Him to Herod. That seems a possibility in the man who asked, "What is Truth?" It implies, however, that Luke, having discovered the real truth, puts it into Pilate's mouth, but that is quite credible. Greek historians claimed the privilege of expressing a truth in the form of a speech made by one of the characters in their history. Xenophon and Thucydides as well as later authors did this, and Luke is Greek enough to adopt the practice. If we can take this view, omitting all reference to the visit to Herod, we shall naturally, like St. John, accept Pilate's claim that he had been responsible for the ill-treatment Christ had received.

The remainder of the story of the trial is a mere picture of mob violence disgraceful to humanity, save for the one sentence which breaks the now continuous silence of Christ. Some of the chief priests, as the time passes and little progress has been made, venture to reveal the true motive for seeking His death, which Caiaphas had carefully kept in the background. "We have a law and by that law He ought to die, because He made out that He is the

Son of God." Pilate, full of superstitious fear, follows the new trail. He seeks a private interview, but Christ refuses to say a word. Pilate, in surprise that no value seems to be set on his repeated refusals to condemn the prisoner, bids Him consider that with himself lies the decision between death and life. It is well meant so far, but it needs correction from every point of view. In Christ's mind "from above" means from God. Pilate has been drawn into the mysterious operation of God's aim towards the perfection of His Creation. "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the Jews by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" (*Acts* ii. 23). But Pilate could not understand that, being complete in secularity. Even so, he was not a supreme ruler but an officer under the authority of Rome, and his first duty was a loyal obedience to Caesar. Moreover, if he had known himself, he would have to confess that weakness, not power, was his characteristic. He had yielded to Caiaphas and was about to discover that in him there was a stronger and more unscrupulous will than his own and a deeper wickedness. Therefore Christ breaks His silence. It is one of the clearest instances of His kindness that He cannot hear without a protest Pilate's acceptance of total responsibility for the most awful of sins. We see the "meekness and sweet reasonableness of Christ", as Matthew Arnold translated St. Paul.

Meanwhile Caiaphas has corrected the mistake of his gang. Christ must be accused of rebellion against Caesar and nothing else. "If you let this Man go you are no friend of Caesar." Pilate too may be put on trial before Caesar, and he knew that they could find sufficient charges to bring about his ruin. Obstinate to the last he persisted in calling Christ their king. The chief priests themselves sealed more than their hostility to Christ. "We have no King but Caesar" was open apostasy from God.

There is a discrepancy between Mark and John about the hour of the Crucifixion. Mark says it was at the third hour. John says that Pilate's judgment was given about the sixth hour. The Crucifixion would follow closely upon the sentence, especially as we suppose that a second scourging would not be imposed. The hours were only roughly measured. Sir William Ramsay shows that third hour is not more definite than our "forenoon" would be. Similarly John's sixth hour means "about noon", but John

is more exact than common usage demanded; he has mentioned the intermediate hours, the seventh and the tenth. In this case we may call it a mistake, but a natural one. He had been awake all night, troubled in spirit, helpless for action, weary of watching. Anyone who has experienced such a time knows how much later than the truth the hour seems to be till we check it.

ST. JOHN AT THE CROSS

(xix. 17-42)

Nowhere in the Gospels is the difference between St. John and the Synoptists more evident than in this chapter. It is the difference between a history and a verbal portrait. If we wish to realize what the bystanders saw and heard on 7 April A.D. 30, we must read St. Mark and combine him with St. Luke. St. John's story, omitting the reviling of the Jews, the long agony, the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?", the darkness, and the centurion's witness, would by itself be a misleading account of a scene that was terrible to behold. As usual, he accepts on the whole Mark's story and expects us to know it. On the other hand, St. Mark, even with St. Luke's enlargement, fails to represent Christ as more than an heroic and self-forgetting martyr. It is St. John who shows us the simplicity and majesty of Christ's humanity and the Divine Glory which shines through it. Especially he makes it clear how the Son glorifies the Father on earth by the fulfilment of the Father's purpose as the Old Testament prefigured it. He is the human son who must provide for the human mother. He must be thought of as bearing His Cross for Himself, for He expects that which the Cross typifies from every true disciple. He must solicit the help of man by making known his thirst and proclaim with relief and satisfaction the completion of His task on the plane of earth. But at every turn where it is possible we are reminded that what He endures belongs also to eternity and, through the centuries, has been announced by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit. St. John has taught us to seek for this in the history of Israel's religion, and now he weaves it into the picture of the Messiah's Coming "with the blood" by quoting, when he can, fulfilments of the language of the Old Testament.

Verses 17 and 18 do not contradict St. Mark in their insistence that Christ bore the Cross for Himself, for they only met Simon on the road, coming from the country. His position with a criminal on either side recalls *Isaiah* liii. 12: He was numbered with the transgressors.

Verses 19-22. The title (St. John uses the technical term) was a board on which the name or the offence, or both, were inscribed. Other instances are known of its repetition in various languages to ensure wider knowledge. Christ, we are to remember, is crucified to be the Saviour of the world. Pilate shows obstinacy that is characteristic of weakness rather than strength. It shows itself in spitefulness towards those who have got the better of him.

Verses 23-24 tell us of another prophecy fulfilled. St. John is quite justified in making the Psalmist mean "garments" and "vesture" as two different things. Commentators sometimes point out that in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry the two halves of a verse often mean the same thing in different words, as "riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass". It is enough to note that they do not always do so. Psalm civ. 18, "the high hills are a refuge for the wild goats: so are the stony rocks for the conies", does not mean that goats are rabbits.

The seamless robe was too valuable to divide. It was probably woven by some woman disciple as a present, and used by Christ on special occasions, such as the Passover Kiddush. Christ had no opportunity to change after the Last Supper, nor would he wish to, for it seems to be fashioned in the style of the high priest's vesture and therefore signified that His giving up His life for men was a Sacrifice to God.

The use of special forms of dress was common enough in the Roman civilization for official or prominent people, and in particular for priests.

Verses 25-27 stand alone. There is no supporting reference to the home which John made for the Mother of Jesus, neither is there any reason to doubt it. What I said about it on ii. 1 will suffice to explain how it was that Christ commended her to St. John rather than to the "brethren" with whom she apparently lived for two years at Capernaum. It is not likely that she wished to go back there, for her only association with it known to us is anxiety for her Son (*Mark* iii. 21, 31-35). It seems also that the Apostles all remained in Jerusalem for some years, not without anxieties of their own. John himself suffered imprisonment and flogging. Throughout the persecution in which Stephen was martyred they seem to have been tolerated, Saul of

Tarsus confining himself to attacking the Hellenists, who were the "left wing" of the Church. Then followed the death of Caiaphas, the banishment of Pilate, and a new Emperor, Caius or Caligula, with a new policy. Herod Agrippa was made king, at first of the northern tetrarchies and three years later of the whole area over which his grandfather, Herod the Great, had ruled. Agrippa was the most respectable of his family, and sincerely devoted to the Jewish religion. He risked his life to dissuade Caius from setting up a statue of himself in the Temple, and this must have been gratifying to the Christians also. As a Jew, however, he was opposed to Christianity, and he was guilty of beheading James the brother of John and proposing to do the same to Peter. Meanwhile Saul, having been converted, visited Jerusalem and was coldly received by the Church. He says he saw none of the Apostles except Peter and James the Lord's brother. As he stayed only a fortnight, John may have been temporarily absent, but there is no evidence that he differed from the majority. Thus the home of John and the Lord's Mother, with all its inward peace and happiness, was set in the midst of stirring events, mostly hostile to them. No doubt the home, the first founded on Christ, was marked by a spiritual beauty that was new to our world, but there would be a good deal of the daily round, the common task, both in the home and in the Church life in which they would engage. About A.D. 46 John joined Peter and James the Lord's brother in giving the right hand of fellowship to St. Paul, who came with Barnabas as the accredited representatives of the Christian Church at Antioch. A severe famine had fallen upon Palestine, and they were bringing corn for its relief to the Jerusalem Christians. Later legends say that about this time the home was broken up by the calling of the Mother "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better". There follows a blank of twenty years in our knowledge of St. John. We can be sure that he continued to preach Christ, and there are reasons to suppose that his work was chiefly in Judea.

Verses 28-30 are St. John's account of the last moments on the Cross. Whether the word "thirst" belongs to the same occasion as Mark's or not, does not seem important. That Christ said it makes it agree more closely with the prophecy of Psalm lxix. 21,

and also expresses a dependence on human help, like the need of human sympathy which He felt in Gethsemane. Whatever else the bearing of our sins means, Christ's human fellowship was intensified by His death and the pains which preceded it. It may be said that it was Death that completed His Incarnation. Before the Passion His normal attitude was that of a visitor to us from a higher world, not seeking to be ministered to but to minister to our infirmities. Now He knows the incapacity of the individual to stand alone. Of course He had always known the superficial dependence of every-day seeking help, as when He asked Photina for a drink of water or Peter for the use of his boat. What death brought to Him was the "sense that all His doings were swallowed up in an impenetrable world". So Eucken wrote, because he could not think that the Son of God could have such an experience. What the Gospels show is that Eucken looked in the wrong place, in Christ's life of divine power and not in the weakness of human dying.

That the Messiah would undertake to be weak for our sake was an aspect of the Divine purpose, partly realized in the prophets who were before Him and therefore more or less closely reflected in their words. So it was also in their yet more imperfect knowledge of God. But they knew enough to say, "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit", which according to St. Luke was quoted from Psalm xxxi. 6 in Christ's last saying. St. John does not go quite so far but (partly by the bending of His Head) he says that Christ surrendered His Spirit with the same mind as that recorded by the Psalmist. "It is finished" is in the original not so strong a word as that just used for the accomplishment or fulfilment of Scripture. The difference is no more than between "it is finished" and "it is complete", i.e. the former looks back upon the past with relief that it is ended, while the latter triumphs in the fact that the work has been well done. The commentators, and still more the preachers on Good Friday, emphasize the second and point to its being a cry with a loud voice of which the Synoptists tell us. They make it a shout of victory and triumph, and so it may be. But for all that, John says nothing about the loud voice. I see no reason why there should not be a mingling of the two contrary feelings; but in reading St. John by itself it seems wrong to miss the aspect of relief.

Verses 31-37. There is no need to dwell on the *crurifragium*, the breaking of the limbs with a heavy mallet, which generally brought about a speedy death, and to that extent was merciful. Another reason, however, was to get rid of the bodies if their presence was specially offensive. The Jewish law required them to be removed before sunset, especially if the following day was a Sabbath, and even more if it was a great feast-day. The later request of Joseph of Arimathea to be given Christ's body for burial was also one that Pilate could grant. Those who were liable to be crucified perhaps rarely had friends able to undertake to bury them, but in this instance Joseph wanted to make it a sign of honour, and Pilate probably found it equally acceptable to himself.

St. John witnessed an act performed to make it quite certain that Christ was dead—the piercing of His side with a spear. It was to the Apostle of supreme interest and importance because it fulfilled the prophecy which he quotes. The omission of the *crurifragium* was more important because it fulfilled the Pass-over law that no bone of the Lamb should be broken. It was a Token that He was the true Paschal Lamb, just as in chapter seven He was the Rock from which the water flowed and in chapter eight He was the Light of the World. It is to these fulfillments that John's asseveration of the truth of his history refers. He says so quite plainly. About the flow of blood and water from the wound he says nothing, and some texts of Matthew have a similar note and the same silence about it.

The issue of blood and water from the wound of the spear did not in fact fulfil any Old Testament and Messianic prophecy nor, by the way, is it referred to as profuse in quantity. It did not therefore make an immediate impression on the Apostle, but in later days he found it full of interest. It became to him in several ways a description of Jesus Christ's person and action as he had himself witnessed them. For this thought he needed the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit which was bestowed on him and the other Apostles when Christ breathed on them on the afternoon of Easter Day. First of all, the three signs spoke of the three outstanding days of his intercourse with Christ. The first time was that recorded in the first chapter when he and Andrew learned to say, "We have found the Messiah." It was by the Jordan, to

which they and many others had come for baptism. It was a coming with the water. The second day was, of course, Good Friday, but perhaps even more for the shock of the sight when Pilate said, "Behold the Man", than even when he watched Him on the Cross. The third day was that on which he saw Him risen and received from Him the Holy Spirit. Those three marked the supreme revelation of Christ.

But besides that, he noted that it could describe, in Mark's now traditional manner, an earthly sojourn which was first a ministry and secondly a sacrifice. The four chapters at the beginning of the Gospel are full of the coming with the water, not only on the first day, but at the Cana wedding when the water was made wine, and in the teaching of Nicodemus, in the Baptist's need of searching for plentiful water, and finally the gift of Living Water to Photina. The ministry, however, was continued in the chapters which lead up to the sacrifice, and in it there are Bethesda, the walking on the sea, the figure of the Rock, the Pool of Siloam: a series of events that remind us of the water as we draw nearer to the coming with the blood that will be the propitiation for our sins, and not ours only, but for the whole world. That brings us to the First Epistle and its full outburst: "This is He that came with water and blood, not with the water only but in the water and in the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is the Truth." Through Him the water and the blood are understood as witness, so that all three bear witness and "the three are unto the one", one harmonious revelation, one way of salvation, one unity of the Holy Trinity who is God.

Verses 38-42 are John's story of the burial of Christ. At the back of his mind Isaiah's fifty-third chapter may be reminding him that Christ was "with the rich in His death". Apart from the mention of Nicodemus the story is the same as the Synoptic one. There are a few details added, some of which, as in preceding chapters, are also in St. Luke. The amount of spices and myrrh used has troubled some readers, but "about a hundred pounds" is a round figure perhaps over rather than under the exact amount. It may suggest that Christ was of a more generous frame than later artists imagine. But we need not raise questions. To the Jews it was a mark of honour or love to be

lavish about the amount used. The Rabbi Gamaliel's body is reported to have received eighty pounds of spices.

In the Synoptic stories we hear that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James (the less), and Salome were at the Cross, and the same three were there on Easter morning, but only the first two beheld where He was laid. If John's story of the Mother is correct and Salome was, as he seems to say, her sister, absence at this hour suggests that she was with the Mother, giving her the sympathy she needed.

EASTER DAY

St. John tells the story of the Resurrection very much in the same way that he dealt with the Crucifixion. Assuming that his readers are already quite familiar with Mark's Gospel, he contents himself with adding a few more facts with which he was personally concerned. His account of Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb is perhaps the most beautiful paragraph in his book.

We hear almost nothing about the Apostles from Thursday night until Sunday morning except St. Peter's denials and St. John's presence at the Cross, but by inference we can obtain a good deal. The flight of the Apostles from Gethsemane must not be exaggerated into a hopeless return to their Galilean homes. Christ's prophecy that they would leave Him in loneliness refers only to His lonely dying (*St. John* xvi. 32). Nor did they necessarily scatter singly. At least Peter and John kept together for some hours, and John was as near to Christ as possible until He died. They fled to whatever temporary lodging they had found, if they had found any, and it was a natural and wise action. Had they remained together they would have been liable to easy arrest whenever the Jews desired. They believed themselves to be in great danger, but that they were allowed to flee from Gethsemane was in itself reassuring. We should assume that they still regarded themselves as a chosen company, destined to continue in union and to be fruitful for the Father as Christ had told them. Probably they intended from the first to use the rendezvous in the Upper Room. They were expected there to eat the Passover on Friday evening, and so much of the preparation for it had already been made, and so important was the sacrifice that it is somewhat daring to assume that they did not celebrate it. It was probably at the same room that they met on Sunday afternoon for a meeting at which, according to St. Luke, food was provided.

THE EMPTY TOMB

By this time the situation had been completely changed. John was awakened very early by the sound of running footsteps

approaching the fishing firm's place of business, if that is his home, to which Peter also had access, and to which the Mother had been brought on Good Friday. It was Mary Magdalene, who knew of no other place where an Apostle could be found at that hour and who, panting from her run, gave her inaccurate message. "They have taken away . . . the Lord . . . out of the tomb . . . and we know not where they have laid Him." In any ordinary circumstances that would have been the explanation of the tomb being open and empty. The Marcan account of it is again assumed. John begins by telling of the stone removed, a point that Mark emphasizes. Mary's "we" makes her one of the group of women who saw the young man in white raiment, and heard his message of the Resurrection. She disbelieved it and therefore must also have doubted his being an Angel of God. The others had probably doubted also, perhaps more confidently. They told nobody about the Vision, "said nothing to any", says Mark, "for they were afraid of . . ." and there our Gospel of St. Mark suddenly ends. Mary had not been silent except about the Angel, and her words do not only omit him; they dispose of him entirely. St. John's account however must have Mark as background, even though at first disbelieved.

The story of the two Apostles' visit to the tomb is related with graphic details which need no explanation. What apparently struck them was the absence of disorder. The grave cloths in some way suggested something more mysterious than a raid upon the tomb. Peter perhaps did not reveal his thoughts. John says that there and then he believed that Christ had risen. For this he had been prepared by his full acceptance of the revelation reported in xvi. 29-33. He was thus the first to believe, the only one recorded as believing before he saw the risen Lord.

THE MISSING DOCUMENT ON THE RISEN LORD

Our Gospel according to St. Mark ends too abruptly at verse 8 to be complete. The final twelve verses as they stand in the English versions are too unlike St. Mark to belong to his original Gospel. They are also in great part unsuitable for use in the catechism which was taught to children and converts. Modern scholars generally hold that the true end of St. Mark was lost by some mischance or accident. It might be that the Evangelist

was unable to finish his book. It might be that the original text suffered mutilation and so forth. Now chance and accident are not effective powers. To attribute anything to accident means simply to attribute it to some cause which is totally unknown to us. Admitting that we have no certainty about Mark, is there no possible cause that is much more probable than the rest?

It appears that the second generation of Christians found the catechism unacceptable in some respects; they did not like to hear that Christ was stern towards anyone; they did not approve of stories about the Apostles' occasional stupidity or unworthiness or rivalry. Matthew and Luke, writing for their own times, are prone to omit or tone down such passages when they occur, as they often do in Mark. A comparison of the Synoptic Gospels will reveal a number of examples. Now, when we study the stories of the Resurrection we find a good deal about the unbelief of those who first were faced with them. It is just the kind of subject which the later Evangelists, without discussing the truth of it, reject as unsuitable reading in the congregations. Mark's ending may have been purposely omitted from the services; it may then have become customary to omit it from new copies made for that purpose. We are perhaps not altogether ignorant of how it disappeared.

But a second event may have been that someone who thought the silence about the whole forty days too severe a penalty wrote a new ending to give a story that would offend nobody and make a worthy climax to the Gospel; in other words, the twelve verses of the appendix may really be a somewhat "bowdlerized" version of Mark's original of which some parts were thought worthy to be retained.

Another alternative is suggested by Mr. Taylor's discovery that we should treat St. Mark as a text-book or collection of *chreias*, with some expansion that would be useful to Catechists. The twelve added verses do not actually give us any story of the appearances of Christ. They provide a list of the stories which should be included in the teaching. They are a table of the contents of the great climax to it; but the substance of them must be obtained from other sources. Matthew's Gospel makes hardly any attempt to do this, but St. Luke must have been guided by the twelve verses or something very similar. It is true that he

does not mention Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene, but unless xxiv. 12 is a later insertion, he knew something of St. John's account. Then come the appearance of Emmaus and the return of the two disciples to Jerusalem, where they hear that Christ had appeared to St. Peter. Christ then appears to the whole gathering of the Apostles, who are at last convinced. Both the twelve verses and St. Luke recount an instruction showing Old Testament prophecy of Christ's death and resurrection, and a fresh commission to the Apostles to go forth to all nations preaching the gospel of salvation. Both end with the Ascension. Not only Luke but St. Paul (*I Corinthians* xv) is in line with the twelve verses. St. Paul shortens it because his immediate concern is to assert that his teaching about the risen Christ is identical with that of the original Apostles. But he also mentions a meeting with more than five hundred brethren at once, because large numbers in their own way also have authority. It seems that the twelve verses really determined the form of the authoritative tradition of the Church, but it was only after the fourth century that their independence of St. Mark was entirely forgotten.

MARY MAGDALENE

To dilate on the much-loved story of how Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene is like talking about the technique of a glorious picture, but it must be done. According to St. Matthew all the women saw Christ as they returned from the tomb, in which case Mary was only one of the group; but this is contrary to St. Luke (xxiv. 24), whose report is that Christ had not been seen when the two set out for Emmaus. As usual, St. John's version is the correct one. The angels whom Mary saw were curiously ineffective. They were messengers without a message. Indeed, all through the Easter narrative angels accomplish nothing, since they were not believed. St. John is not interested in these supernatural forms, and refers to them only in i. 51, where Christ uses Jacob's angels as a parable, and in xii. 49, where some bystanders wrongly attribute the voice from heaven to an angel. This is one of the strong arguments against assigning the Book of Revelation to the author of the Gospel. Mary, after answering these kindly questions, turns her face away as if she had seen enough of them, and the greater truth quickly over-

shadowed them. According to Greek grammar the form used by Christ, "Touch Me not" means "Cease to touch Me". Mary had thrown herself at Christ's feet and clung to them. For Christ had still to ascend to heaven, and the interval of forty days was a transitory presence which claimed already the reverence of His Ascension. Similarly, St. John habitually speaks of the Risen Christ as "the Lord", as in xxi. 12: "None of the disciples dared to ask Him, 'Who art Thou?', knowing that He is the Lord." On the other hand, Christ spoke in a very human way of the disciples: "Go, tell My brethren" (*Matthew* xxviii. 10), and (*John* xx. 17), "Go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God'." Before He died it had seemed to Him a great thing that He could call them friends, and to the Jews he said, "My Father of whom you say that He is your God." The message He entrusts to Mary speaks of a much closer fellowship and more human consciousness than these. The experience of death and resurrection may be said to complete, with a spiritual reference, the condescension of the Incarnation.

THE ORDINATION OF THE APOSTLES

Late on Easter Day the Apostles met again in the upper room. Conference was necessary because of the various rumours which had reached them, and which they still more or less disbelieved. They were careful to close the door lest anyone should notice the light in the room and disturb them. Only in St. John is there any reference to fear of the Jews after the first panic in the garden, and as the hours passed they must have begun to realize that no immediate persecution was contemplated.

The meeting was the most important of Christ's appearances. The repetition of the salutation, "Peace to you", might indicate that two appearances have been merged together, but when John gives the explicit date, it must be respected. It is therefore more probable that Christ means to divide the one meeting into two quite unlike parts. The first was granted in order to establish their faith, and it corresponds with what must have been in the original *Mark* and still exists in the twelve verses and in *St. Luke* and also in St. Paul's list. About this part St. John records only that Christ showed them His hands and His side, the latter

pecially important because it was unusual. We may be sure that the evidence was necessary, since Luke describes it as evidential and Thomas seizes on it as the one thing that would convince him. So the disciples rejoiced when they had seen the Lord. He can now turn, with a second salutation of satisfaction, to His second object, the commission to go forth into the world in union with His own mission from the Father, to become, that is, both fellow-labourers with Him and reapers of the harvest for which He had sown. For this vocation they received a definite ordination, "Receive Holy Spirit", accompanied by the outward sign of breathing on them. We must not confuse this with the gift of the Spirit at the ensuing Pentecost. That was a gift to the whole Church, and may be compared with the laying on of hands as the final action in Baptism, now treated by us separately as Confirmation. What the Apostles received was the grace of leadership and office in the Church, for Christ adds special gifts of teaching and government. It is an echo of what he prayed for them before the Passion. It is thoroughly Johannine that the witness of the Apostles was to be ethical, a matter of forgiveness or judgment. For him religion is a fellowship of love, more even than a doctrine of God or a way of salvation. In his Epistles it is when we love one another that the love of God becomes perfect and complete in us, though it is through our faith that love wins its victory, triumphant over the world. The power of absolution is rightly emphasized in the Anglican ordination of priests; but St. John must not be limited to a pastoral dealing with individuals. He is thinking more of the principles which underlie absolution, of conduct rather than organization, truth of doctrine or manners of worship. That is his difference from Matthew's binding and loosing (*Matthew* xvi. 19, xviii. 18), which includes all these and therefore fails to give love its due supremacy.

THE FAITH OF ST. THOMAS

Presumably the Apostles remain in Jerusalem, as the custom was, for the week of unleavened bread; they were still ready to meet on the next Sunday and so leave us with an impression that every Sunday was to become a day for solemn "convocation". Christ appears again, mainly for the sake of Thomas. Whatever

had been the cause of his previous absence, sorrow that he had missed so much (becoming indeed somewhat of an outsider among them) must have been his continual companion. There is no need to lay stress on his doubts. None of the others (except St. John) had believed without seeing Christ alive from the dead. He sought only what had been offered to them. Disappointment may have put an edge on his asseverations, as a week of meditation may have prompted the fullness of his confession of faith.

Christ counts them happy and to be congratulated who without any witness from sight attain to faith. It is not reproof so much as prophecy. He knew that future generations must believe through the word or testimony of the Apostles. Yet so far they could not believe one another, for not yet had they become "one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee". It may be that in the mutual and justified faith which Christ so praises there is an explanation of what seems to be so strange—that He did not appear first to the Apostles on Easter Day. He gave them an opportunity, if they had stood the test, to earn His congratulation. But they could not accept the word of the Angels, or of Mary, or of Peter, or the two from Emmaus.

The warning is still needed. For men even now ask to see Christ in the world before they will believe His word. There must be results. There must be statistics of success. There must be miracles. So there really are, but unbelievers will not listen to witnesses. The Resurrection was already judged impossible, and so now is the Incarnation.

Therefore John writes his Gospel, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His Name."

THE EPILOGUE

BREAKFAST AT THE LAKESIDE

On the whole it seems true that St. John at first intended to end his Gospel with the fine statement just quoted. In the additional chapter he allows his readers to become almost as interested in the two chief Apostles as they are in Christ. Yet even here Christ is really the dominant figure and the guide of the whole action. No date is given or needed except that it was during the Forty Days. According to St. Luke Christ appeared from time to time to teach the Apostles final lessons about the Kingdom of God. He would explain the purpose of God which was being fulfilled, and their relation to it. There would be more of the theological than the ecclesiastical, for the latter would be their charge under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, because to a great extent it would be progressive and dependent on circumstances. What St. Peter learned is illustrated by his Pentecostal sermon.

There was nothing wrong in Peter's decision to go fishing in his old boat. While waiting for the signal to resume their work for Christ there was no reason for idleness. Work for their self-support was better. The sons of Zebedee would assist him as of old; but one thinks the man from Cana was no fisherman, and the others might not have been. Unseen by them, Christ was guiding the whole event into a likeness of their first call to become fishers of men. That night they caught nothing. In the early morning they saw Him on the shore without knowing who it was. "Boys, have you caught anything?" He called, and followed it up by a direction to try on their starboard side. There was not necessarily any miracle about that, for one on the higher ground could see the movements of a shoal of fish that at their level was invisible. Fishermen in Port Phillip know that trick. But the miracle was that He was guiding the fish, and the success that ensued on their obedience brought back in a flash to John that morning some two years before. "It is the Lord", he said. Christ is calling them a second time. Still they are to be fishers of men; still they are to remember that apart from Christ they can do nothing. They will not have Him in their boat, but

they will experience His power and guidance and they will do greater things than they saw Him do because He goes to the Father. Meanwhile, impulsive Peter dashes into the sea, wading in haste to get to Christ, with his garment girded round his chest. It is all a memory and no imaginary picture. We recognize the fisherman in John's language. They could not haul the net with so great a catch into the boat lest it should capsize, so they trailed it (towed it, as we say) after the dinghy which bore them from the big boat to the shore, where later Peter, standing on solid ground, could haul it out. The details ring true.

Then on the land they find that Christ had done for them exactly the right thing, after their sleepless and laborious night and the special effort at the end of it. He had prepared breakfast for them. It was a somewhat silent meal, for they were awed, especially by His waiting on them. Nobody asked, "Who art Thou?", that is (as at i. 19), "What are we to think of You? How shall we behave towards You? In what relation to You shall we stand?" For they knew He was the Lord.

What we understand by it all is that the risen Lord is that same Jesus, yesterday, today, and forever, most absolutely our fellow-man, most utterly divine.

THE DESTINY OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

For two reasons recent comment on this final paragraph is extremely unsatisfactory. In the first place it persists in holding that the primary meaning of it is the reinstatement of Peter in the Apostolic status which he is supposed to have lost by his denial of Christ. Now, whatever rebuke and pardon he needed must have been given when Christ appeared to him alone, as Mark implies and Luke affirms. If the original Mark contained a confession of its contents by St. Peter, it was probably characterized by a frankness which ensured its disappearance. The most that can be said about it now is that Christ's conversation with him warned the hearers to drop the subject as Christ did, for the plain truth is that He says not a word about it, directly or indirectly.

What He does say is that what He seeks in Peter is love, without which he cannot hope to be a fruitful minister for Christ as

a shepherd of Christ's sheep. Not the denials but the self-centredness that caused them must be abandoned. Nobody needs to learn that lesson more than a ruler of men, for if he is not a shepherd ready to lay down his life for the sheep, he will be a tyrant ready to force them to submit their lives to his will and aims.

The second error of the critics is the refusal to make sense of Christ's questions about love by recognizing a difference between Christ's word for love, *agapan*, and Peter's word, *philein*. If we use "love" to translate *agapan*, we may use "to be fond of" for *philein*. Christ says, "Lovest thou Me?" and Peter answers, "Yes, Lord, you know I am fond of you." The second question is similar, Peter sticking to his weaker word, but when Christ, at the third, changes to it, asking "Are you fond of Me?" Peter is grieved. I cannot understand how anyone can miss the point of it. Peter thought he was being humble about his love for Christ; but the third question, far from appreciating that, expresses doubt whether even what he thinks he can claim is true. No wonder that it troubles him. I do not feel that "be fond of" is a good version of *philein*, but I cannot think of a better.

The real difference is that there are two ways of speaking about love. I may love you because love is characteristic of me, or I may love you because you are lovable; I see so much in you which pleases me. For the former the correct Greek word is *agapan*, for the second it is *philein*. *Agapan* occurs in the New Testament about 140 times and *philein* about 25. In each case half the occurrences are in St. John's writings, because he is rightly called the Apostle of love. In Greek literature *philein* is very common, while *agapan* is comparatively rare. *Agapan* is generally the right word for heavenly or religious love, of which Scripture says so much. In contrast, without meaning any condemnation we may call *philein* secular love, the love for particular people or desirable things in our everyday life. Christ says love (*agapan*) your enemies, but He could not use *philein*, nor could St. Paul have used it for the love which Christ showed when, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. About 90 per cent of the *agapan* uses in the New Testament refer to religious love while of the *phileins* there are only six that have that

reference. For instance, there is John xvi. 27, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth (*philein*) you because you have loved Me and believed that I came forth from the Father." The Father's love is founded, in this verse, on what He finds lovable in them. Similarly, in v. 20, the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all that He Himself doeth, *philein* is used to express the intimate fellowship of the Father and the Son in which there are no secrets.

When Christ asked Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" (*agapan*), He meant "Are you a great lover? Is love the foundation of your life?" Peter thinks that would be too much to claim, but he does find Christ very lovable (*philein*) and he says so. It is not quite a straight answer, but it is a good beginning, the making of an efficient Catechist. Therefore Christ says, "Feed My lambs." A little later He asks again, Peter having had time for consideration. But he sticks to his own word. Again Christ, in His own love's fullness, gives him due credit, this time for his determination. He is the Rock man on whom Christ means to build His Church, and He replies, "Shepherd My sheep", the most comprehensive words He could use. Yet he remains dissatisfied. Does Peter really see something more than humility in the choice of his word? Does he truly see in Christ the supremely lovable One, to whom he can surrender himself, for whom he will lay down his life? Does he for Christ totally deny Self? Does he perfectly love (*philein*) Him? Peter still feels that he does, and Christ is comfortable about what he will become. When he was younger, he was so confident about himself that he donned the guise that he thought appropriate, and lived according to his own will. It grew upon him, and there is plenty of it in his present character. But his destiny is clear to Christ. He will be true to his Lord, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Him, until he will crown a life of ministry with a death of martyrdom following Christ even to the shame of crucifixion and, according to legend, claiming to the last humility, in the presence of the perfect pre-eminence reserved for Him.

So much for Peter, but like him we are ready to cry, "Lord, and this man John, what of him?" We saw that the nickname of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is occasionally used of him by John

himself, and that he may have used it in later years in his Gospel to express his thankfulness to God for his relatively peaceful life. St. John could use either of the words for "loved" with propriety, but except in one instance he uses *agapan*, and thus makes it allude to Christ's lovingness without raising any question about his own deserts. In xx. 2 that would have seemed to exclude Peter from the Lord's love. He wants to distinguish himself from Peter only by the special marks of intimacy and confidence which he has been relating in chapters xiii and xix. So he uses *philein*, the word which suggests lovable-ness. Christ has behaved towards him in ways that it would be sheer ingratitude not to recognize. These indicated that He had found special characteristics in him which drew out a special attraction to him. Of this disciple Christ in chapter xxi only says, "If I will that he remain where he is till I come, what is that to thee?" It leaves the future uncertain, with a suggestion of a lengthy but uneventful life on earth.

Even this is unlike the rest of the Gospel. We should like to know if Photina really became a Christian saint, and whether the man born blind retained his faith. Did the chief priests accomplish their threatened murder of Lazarus and what became of his sisters? All this is denied us, that the Gospel may preserve the purpose of St. John to make it a pen-portrait of Christ, of what He is through what He said and did. In the end, however, the "anecdote", as it had been humorously called, of advancing years prevails. This is not enough to make doubtful, it rather confirms, St. John's authorship. Whether he wrote it immediately after chapter xx is less certain and not important. Its content and style are as good as a signature.

The last two verses, on the contrary, are not his. The singular "I" betrays the actual writer; the "we" means those in whose name he writes. The usual opinion is that these were Elders (of Ephesus probably) who had charge of the original text. It may be so. There is, nevertheless, a manuscript fragment, called Muratorian after the man who rescued it from oblivion, which is a partly mutilated list of the New Testament books with comments on some of them. It is in bad Latin and thought to be dated near the end of the second century; but it shows itself to be

a translation from the Greek, and the date of the original is not known. It is tantalizing in being too late to be absolutely reliable and too early to be disregarded. Its story about St. John is that St. Andrew and other Apostles and leaders in Asia Minor tried hard to get St. John to publish the Gospel he had so long and so wonderfully preached. In the end he consented to write it as his own, if the others would certify that it represented the Church's general belief. Probably some such reason caused him to write anonymously but he must know that it would be a basis, for he was the only surviving Apostle who could do it, and very widely known. But he trembled at the thought of a Gospel relying on his own authority, as if he could be a second founder of the Christian faith. That is what the last two verses of the Gospel reveal, according to the Muratorian fragment. There is a great deal to be said for it.