

## John

The apostle and evangelist, John, seems to have been the youngest of the twelve. He was especially favoured with our Lord's regard and confidence, so as to be spoken of as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was very sincerely attached to his Master. He exercised his ministry at Jerusalem with much success, and outlived the destruction of that city, agreeably to Christ's prediction, ch. 21:22. History relates that after the death of Christ's mother, John resided chiefly at Ephesus. Towards the close of Domitian's reign he was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he wrote his Revelation. On the accession of Nerva, he was set at liberty, and returned to Ephesus, where it is thought he wrote his Gospel and Epistles, about A. D. 97, and died soon after. The design of this Gospel appears to be to convey to the Christian world, just notions of the real nature, office, and character of that Divine Teacher, who came to instruct and to redeem mankind. For this purpose, John was directed to select for his narrative, those passages of our Saviour's life, which most clearly displayed his Divine power and authority; and those of his discourses, in which he spake most plainly of his own nature, and of the power of his death, as an atonement for the sins of the world. By omitting, or only briefly mentioning, the events recorded by the other evangelists, John gave testimony that their narratives are true, and left room for the doctrinal statements already mentioned, and for particulars omitted in the other Gospels, many of which are exceedingly important.

## Chapter 1

### Chapter Outline

The Divinity of Christ.	(1-5)
His Divine and human nature.	(6-14)
John the Baptist's testimony to Christ.	(15-18)
John's public testimony concerning Christ.	(19-28)
Other testimonies of John concerning Christ.	(29-36)
Andrew and another disciple follow Jesus.	(37-42)
Philip and Nathanael called.	(43-51)

### Verses 1-5

The plainest reason why the Son of God is called the Word, seems to be, that as our words explain our minds to others, so was the Son of God sent in order to reveal his Father's mind to the world. What the evangelist says of Christ proves that he is God. He asserts, His existence in the beginning; His coexistence with the Father. The Word was with God. All things were made by him, and not as an instrument. Without him was not any thing made that was made, from the highest angel to the meanest worm. This shows how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation. The light of reason, as well as the life of sense, is derived from him, and depends upon him. This eternal Word, this true Light shines, but the darkness comprehends it not. Let us pray without ceasing, that our eyes may be opened to behold this Light, that we may walk in it; and thus be made wise unto salvation, by faith in Jesus Christ.

### Verses 6-14

John the Baptist came to bear witness concerning Jesus. Nothing more fully shows the darkness of men's minds, than that when the Light had appeared, there needed a witness to call attention to it. Christ was the true Light; that great Light which deserves to be called so. By his Spirit and grace he enlightens all that are enlightened to salvation; and those that are not enlightened by him, perish in darkness. Christ was in the world when he took our nature upon him, and dwelt among us. The Son of the Highest was here in this lower world. He was in the world, but not of it. He came to save a lost world, because it was a world of his own making. Yet the world knew him not. When he comes as a Judge, the world shall know him. Many say that they are Christ's own, yet do not receive him, because they will not part

with their sins, nor have him to reign over them. All the children of God are born again. This new birth is through the word of God as the means, [1Pe 1:23](#), and by the Spirit of God as the Author. By his Divine presence Christ always was in the world. But now that the fulness of time was come, he was, after another manner, God manifested in the flesh. But observe the beams of his Divine glory, which darted through this veil of flesh. Men discover their weaknesses to those most familiar with them, but it was not so with Christ; those most intimate with him saw most of his glory. Although he was in the form of a servant, as to outward circumstances, yet, in respect of graces, his form was like the Son of God His Divine glory appeared in the holiness of his doctrine, and in his miracles. He was full of grace, fully acceptable to his Father, therefore qualified to plead for us; and full of truth, fully aware of the things he was to reveal.

#### **Verses 15–18**

As to the order of time and entrance on his work, Christ came after John, but in every other way he was before him. The expression clearly shows that Jesus had existence before he appeared on earth as man. All fulness dwells in him, from which alone fallen sinners have, and shall receive, by faith, all that renders them wise, strong, holy, useful, and happy. Our receivings by Christ are all summed up in this one word, grace; we have received “even grace,” a gift so great, so rich, so invaluable; the good will of God towards us, and the good work of God in us. The law of God is holy, just, and good; and we should make the proper use of it. But we cannot derive from it pardon, righteousness, or strength. It teaches us to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, but it cannot supply the place of that doctrine. As no mercy comes from God to sinners but through Jesus Christ, no man can come to the Father but by him; no man can know God, except as he is made known in the only begotten and beloved Son.

#### **Verses 19–28**

John disowns himself to be the Christ, who was now expected and waited for. He came in the spirit and power of Elias, but he was not the person of Elias. John was not that Prophet whom Moses said the Lord would raise up to them of their brethren, like unto him. He was not such a prophet as they expected, who would rescue them from the Romans. He gave such an account of himself, as might excite and awaken them to hearken to him. He baptized the people with water as a profession of repentance, and as an outward sign of the spiritual blessings to be conferred on them by the Messiah, who was in the midst of them, though they knew him not, and to whom he was unworthy to render the meanest service.

#### **Verses 29–36**

John saw Jesus coming to him, and pointed him out as the Lamb of God. The paschal lamb, in the shedding and sprinkling of its blood, the roasting and eating of its flesh, and

all the other circumstances of the ordinance, represented the salvation of sinners by faith in Christ. And the lambs sacrificed every morning and evening, can only refer to Christ slain as a sacrifice to redeem us to God by his blood. John came as a preacher of repentance, yet he told his followers that they were to look for the pardon of their sins to Jesus only, and to his death. It agrees with God's glory to pardon all who depend on the atoning sacrifice of Christ. He takes away the sin of the world; purchases pardon for all that repent and believe the gospel. This encourages our faith; if Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not my sin? He bore sin for us, and so bears it from us. God could have taken away sin, by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world; but here is a way of doing away sin, yet sparing the sinner, by making his Son sin, that is, a sin-offering, for us. See Jesus taking away sin, and let that cause hatred of sin, and resolutions against it. Let us not hold that fast, which the Lamb of God came to take away. To confirm his testimony concerning Christ, John declares the appearance at his baptism, in which God himself bore witness to him. He saw and bare record that he is the Son of God. This is the end and object of John's testimony, that Jesus was the promised Messiah. John took every opportunity that offered to lead people to Christ.

#### **Verses 37–42**

The strongest and most prevailing argument with an awakened soul to follow Christ, is, that it is he only who takes away sin. Whatever communion there is between our souls and Christ, it is he who begins the discourse. He asked, What seek ye? The question Jesus put to them, we should all put to ourselves when we begin to follow Him, What do we design and desire? In following Christ, do we seek the favour of God and eternal life? He invites them to come without delay. Now is the accepted time, [2Co 6:2](#). It is good for us to be where Christ is, wherever it be. We ought to labour for the spiritual welfare of those related to us, and seek to bring them to Him. Those who come to Christ, must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant to him, like a stone, solid and stedfast; and it is by his grace that they are so.

#### **Verses 43–51**

See the nature of true Christianity, it is following Jesus; devoting ourselves to him, and treading in his steps. Observe the objection Nathanael made. All who desire to profit by the word of God, must beware of prejudices against places, or denominations of men. They should examine for themselves, and they will sometimes find good where they looked for none. Many people are kept from the ways of religion by the unreasonable prejudices they conceive. The best way to remove false notions of religion, is to make trial of it. In Nathanael there was no guile. His profession was not hypocritical. He was not a dissembler, nor dishonest; he was a sound character, a really upright, godly man. Christ knows what men are indeed. Does He know us? Let us desire to know him. Let us seek and pray to be Israelites

indeed, in whom is no guile; truly Christians, approved of Christ himself. Some things weak, imperfect, and sinful, are found in all, but hypocrisy belongs not to a believer's character. Jesus witnessed what passed when Nathanael was under the fig-tree. Probably he was then in fervent prayer, seeking direction as to the Hope and Consolation of Israel, where no human eye observed him. This showed him that our Lord knew the secrets of his heart. Through Christ we commune with, and benefit by the holy angels; and things in heaven and things on earth are reconciled and united together.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Outline

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| The miracle at Cana.                                   | (1–11)  |
| Christ casts the buyers and sellers out of the temple. | (12–22) |
| Many believe in Christ.                                | (23–25) |

### Verses 1–11

It is very desirable when there is a marriage, to have Christ own and bless it. Those that would have Christ with them at their marriage, must invite him by prayer, and he will come. While in this world we sometimes find ourselves in straits, even when we think ourselves in fulness. There was want at a marriage feast. Those who are come to care for the things of the world, must look for trouble, and count upon disappointment. In our addresses to Christ, we must humbly spread our case before him, and then refer ourselves to him to do as he pleases. In Christ's reply to his mother there was no disrespect. He used the same word when speaking to her with affection from the cross; yet it is a standing testimony against the idolatry of after-ages, in giving undue honours to his mother. His hour is come when we know not what to do. Delays of mercy are not denials of prayer. Those that expect Christ's favours, must observe his orders with ready obedience. The way of duty is the way to mercy; and Christ's methods must not be objected against. The beginning of Moses' miracles was turning water into blood, [Ex 7:20](#); the beginning of Christ's miracles was turning water into wine; which may remind us of the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. He showed that he improves creature-comforts to all true believers, and make them comforts indeed. And Christ's works are all for use. Has he turned thy water into wine, given thee knowledge and grace? it is to profit withal; therefore draw out now, and use it. It was the best wine. Christ's works commend themselves even to those who know not their Author. What was produced by miracles, always was the best in its kind. Though Christ hereby allows a right use of wine, he does not in the least do away his own caution, which is, that our hearts be not at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, [Lu 21:34](#). Though we need not scruple to feast with our friends on proper occasions, yet every social interview should be so conducted, that we might invite the Redeemer to join with us, if he were now on earth; and all levity, luxury, and excess offend him.

### Verses 12–22

The first public work in which we find Christ engaged, was driving from the temple the traders whom the covetous priests and rulers encouraged to make a market-place of its courts. Those now make God's house a house of merchandise, whose minds are filled with

cares about worldly business when attending religious exercises, or who perform Divine offices for love of gain. Christ, having thus cleansed the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it, to prove his authority for so doing. He foretells his death by the Jews' malice, Destroy ye this temple; I will permit you to destroy it. He foretells his resurrection by his own power; In three days I will raise it up. Christ took again his own life. Men mistake by understanding that according to the letter, which the Scripture speaks by way of figure. When Jesus was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered he has said this. It helps much in understanding the Divine word, to observe the fulfilling of the Scriptures.

**Verses 23–25**

Our Lord knew all men, their nature, dispositions, affections, designs, so as we do not know any man, not even ourselves. He knows his crafty enemies, and all their secret projects; his false friends, and their true characters. He knows who are truly his, knows their uprightness, and knows their weaknesses. We know what is done by men; Christ knows what is in them, he tries the heart. Beware of a dead faith, or a formal profession: carnal, empty professors are not to be trusted, and however men impose on others or themselves, they cannot impose on the heart-searching God.

## Chapter 3

### Chapter Outline

Christ's discourse with Nicodemus. (1–21)

The baptism of John of Christ John's testimony. (22–36)

### Verses 1–8

Nicodemus was afraid, or ashamed to be seen with Christ, therefore came in the night. When religion is out of fashion, there are many Nicodemites. But though he came by night, Jesus bid him welcome, and hereby taught us to encourage good beginnings, although weak. And though now he came by night, yet afterward he owned Christ publicly. He did not talk with Christ about state affairs, though he was a ruler, but about the concerns of his own soul and its salvation, and went at once to them. Our Saviour spoke of the necessity and nature of regeneration or the new birth, and at once directed Nicodemus to the source of holiness of the heart. Birth is the beginning of life; to be born again, is to begin to live anew, as those who have lived much amiss, or to little purpose. We must have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new aims. By our first birth we were corrupt, shapen in sin; therefore we must be made new creatures. No stronger expression could have been chosen to signify a great and most remarkable change of state and character. We must be entirely different from what we were before, as that which begins to be at any time, is not, and cannot be the same with that which was before. This new birth is from heaven, ch. 1:13, and its tendency is to heaven. It is a great change made in the heart of a sinner, by the power of the Holy Spirit. It means that something is done in us, and for us, which we cannot do for ourselves. Something is wrong, whereby such a life begins as shall last for ever. We cannot otherwise expect any benefit by Christ; it is necessary to our happiness here and hereafter. What Christ speak, Nicodemus misunderstood, as if there had been no other way of regenerating and new-moulding an immortal soul, than by new-framing the body. But he acknowledged his ignorance, which shows a desire to be better informed. It is then further explained by the Lord Jesus. He shows the Author of this blessed change. It is not wrought by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power of the blessed Spirit. We are shapen in iniquity, which makes it necessary that our nature be changed. We are not to marvel at this; for, when we consider the holiness of God, the depravity of our nature, and the happiness set before us, we shall not think it strange that so much stress is laid upon this. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is compared to water. It is also probable that Christ had reference to the ordinance of baptism. Not that all those, and those only, that are baptized, are saved; but without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be subjects of the kingdom of heaven. The same word signifies both the wind



and the Spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth for us; God directs it. The Spirit sends his influences where, and when, on whom, and in what measure and degree, he pleases. Though the causes are hidden, the effects are plain, when the soul is brought to mourn for sin, and to breathe after Christ. Christ's stating of the doctrine and the necessity of regeneration, it should seem, made it not clearer to Nicodemus. Thus the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man. Many think that cannot be proved, which they cannot believe. Christ's discourse of gospel truths, ver. #(11-13), shows the folly of those who make these things strange unto them; and it recommends us to search them out. Jesus Christ is every way able to reveal the will of God to us; for he came down from heaven, and yet is in heaven. We have here a notice of Christ's two distinct natures in one person, so that while he is the Son of man, yet he is in heaven. God is the "HE THAT IS," and heaven is the dwelling-place of his holiness. The knowledge of this must be from above, and can be received by faith alone. Jesus Christ came to save us by healing us, as the children of Israel, stung with fiery serpents, were cured and lived by looking up to the brazen serpent, [Nu 21:6-9](#). In this observe the deadly and destructive nature of sin. Ask awakened consciences, ask damned sinners, they will tell you, that how charming soever the allurements of sin may be, at the last it bites like a serpent. See the powerful remedy against this fatal malady. Christ is plainly set forth to us in the gospel. He whom we offended is our Peace, and the way of applying for a cure is by believing. If any so far slight either their disease by sin, or the method of cure by Christ, as not to receive Christ upon his own terms, their ruin is upon their own heads. He has said, Look and be saved, look and live; lift up the eyes of your faith to Christ crucified. And until we have grace to do this, we shall not be cured, but still are wounded with the stings of Satan, and in a dying state. Jesus Christ came to save us by pardoning us, that we might not die by the sentence of the law. Here is gospel, good news indeed. Here is God's love in giving his Son for the world. God so loved the world; so really, so richly. Behold and wonder, that the great God should love such a worthless world! Here, also, is the great gospel duty, to believe in Jesus Christ. God having given him to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, we must give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. And here is the great gospel benefit, that whoever believes in Christ, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and so saving it. It could not be saved, but through him; there is no salvation in any other. From all this is shown the happiness of true believers; he that believeth in Christ is not condemned. Though he has been a great sinner, yet he is not dealt with according to what his sins deserve. How great is the sin of unbelievers! God sent One to save us, that was dearest to himself; and shall he not be dearest to us? How great is the misery of unbelievers! they are condemned already; which speaks a certain condemnation; a present condemnation. The wrath of God now fastens upon them; and their own hearts condemn them. There is also a condemnation grounded on their former guilt; they are open to the law for all their sins; because they are not by faith interested in the gospel

pardon. Unbelief is a sin against the remedy. It springs from the enmity of the heart of man to God, from love of sin in some form. Read also the doom of those that would not know Christ. Sinful works are works of darkness. The wicked world keep as far from this light as they can, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. Christ is hated, because sin is loved. If they had not hated saving knowledge, they would not sit down contentedly in condemning ignorance. On the other hand, renewed hearts bid this light welcome. A good man acts truly and sincerely in all he does. He desires to know what the will of God is, and to do it, though against his own worldly interest. A change in his whole character and conduct has taken place. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, and is become the commanding principle of his actions. So long as he continues under a load of unforgiven guilt, there can be little else than slavish fear of God; but when his doubts are done away, when he sees the righteous ground whereon this forgiveness is built, he rests on it as his own, and is united to God by unfeigned love. Our works are good when the will of God is the rule of them, and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake; to him, and not to men. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a subject to which the world is very averse; it is, however, the grand concern, in comparison with which every thing else is but trifling. What does it signify though we have food to eat in plenty, and variety of raiment to put on, if we are not born again? if after a few mornings and evenings spent in unthinking mirth, carnal pleasure, and riot, we die in our sins, and lie down in sorrow? What does it signify though we are well able to act our parts in life, in every other respect, if at last we hear from the Supreme Judge, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity?"

### Verses 22–36

John was fully satisfied with the place and work assigned him; but Jesus came on a more important work. He also knew that Jesus would increase in honour and influence, for of his government and peace there would be no end, while he himself would be less followed. John knew that Jesus came from heaven as the Son of God, while he was a sinful, mortal man, who could only speak about the more plain subjects of religion. The words of Jesus were the words of God; he had the Spirit, not by measure, as the prophets, but in all fulness. Everlasting life could only be had by faith in Him, and might be thus obtained; whereas all those, who believe not in the Son of God, cannot partake of salvation, but the wrath of God for ever rests upon them.

## Chapter 4

### Chapter Outline

Christ's departure into Galilee.	(1-3)
His discourse with the Samaritan woman.	(4-26)
The effects of Christ's conversation with the woman of Samaria.	(27-42)
Christ heals the nobleman's son.	(43-54)

### Verses 1-3

Jesus applied himself more to preaching, which was the more excellent, [1Co 1:17](#), than to baptism. He would put honour upon his disciples, by employing them to baptize. He teaches us that the benefit of sacraments depends not on the hand that administers them.

### Verses 4-26

There was great hatred between the Samaritans and the Jews. Christ's road from Judea to Galilee lay through Samaria. We should not go into places of temptation but when we needs must; and then must not dwell in them, but hasten through them. We have here our Lord Jesus under the common fatigue of travellers. Thus we see that he was truly a man. Toil came in with sin; therefore Christ, having made himself a curse for us, submitted to it. Also, he was a poor man, and went all his journeys on foot. Being wearied, he sat thus on the well; he had no couch to rest upon. He sat thus, as people wearied with travelling sit. Surely, we ought readily to submit to be like the Son of God in such things as these. Christ asked a woman for water. She was surprised because he did not show the anger of his own nation against the Samaritans. Moderate men of all sides are men wondered at. Christ took the occasion to teach her Divine things: he converted this woman, by showing her ignorance and sinfulness, and her need of a Saviour. By this living water is meant the Spirit. Under this comparison the blessing of the Messiah had been promised in the Old Testament. The graces of the Spirit, and his comforts, satisfy the thirsting soul, that knows its own nature and necessity. What Jesus spake figuratively, she took literally. Christ shows that the water of Jacob's well yielded a very short satisfaction. Of whatever waters of comfort we drink, we shall thirst again. But whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the gospel, shall never want that which will abundantly satisfy his soul. Carnal hearts look no higher than carnal ends. Give it me, saith she, not that I may have everlasting life, which Christ proposed, but that I come not hither to draw. The carnal mind is very ingenious in shifting off convictions, and keeping them from fastening. But how closely our Lord Jesus brings home the conviction to her conscience! He severely reprov'd her present state of life. The

woman acknowledged Christ to be a prophet. The power of his word in searching the heart, and convincing the conscience of secret things, is a proof of Divine authority. It should cool our contests, to think that the things we are striving about are passing away. The object of worship will continue still the same, God, as a Father; but an end shall be put to all differences about the place of worship. Reason teaches us to consult decency and convenience in the places of our worship; but religion gives no preference to one place above another, in respect of holiness and approval with God. The Jews were certainly in the right. Those who by the Scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God, know whom they worship. The word of salvation was of the Jews. It came to other nations through them. Christ justly preferred the Jewish worship before the Samaritan, yet here he speaks of the former as soon to be done away. God was about to be revealed as the Father of all believers in every nation. The spirit or the soul of man, as influenced by the Holy Spirit, must worship God, and have communion with him. Spiritual affections, as shown in fervent prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings, form the worship of an upright heart, in which God delights and is glorified. The woman was disposed to leave the matter undecided, till the coming of the Messiah. But Christ told her, I that speak to thee, am He. She was an alien and a hostile Samaritan, merely speaking to her was thought to disgrace our Lord Jesus. Yet to this woman did our Lord reveal himself more fully than as yet he had done to any of his disciples. No past sins can bar our acceptance with him, if we humble ourselves before him, believing in him as the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

#### Verses 27–42

The disciples wondered that Christ talked thus with a Samaritan. Yet they knew it was for some good reason, and for some good end. Thus when particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves that all is well that Jesus Christ says and does. Two things affected the woman. The extent of his knowledge. Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions, of all the children of men. And the power of his word. He told her secret sins with power. She fastened upon that part of Christ's discourse, many would think she would have been most shy of repeating; but the knowledge of Christ, into which we are led by conviction of sin, is most likely to be sound and saving. They came to him: those who would know Christ, must meet him where he records his name. Our Master has left us an example, that we may learn to do the will of God as he did; with diligence, as those that make a business of it; with delight and pleasure in it. Christ compares his work to harvest-work. The harvest is appointed and looked for before it comes; so was the gospel. Harvest-time is busy time; all must be then at work. Harvest-time is a short time, and harvest-work must be done then, or not at all; so the time of the gospel is a season, which if once past, cannot be recalled. God sometimes uses very weak and unlikely instruments for beginning and carrying on a good work. Our Saviour, by teaching one poor woman, spread knowledge to a whole town. Blessed are those who are not offended at Christ. Those

taught of God, are truly desirous to learn more. It adds much to the praise of our love to Christ and his word, if it conquers prejudices. Their faith grew. In the matter of it: they believed him to be the Saviour, not only of the Jews but of the world. In the certainty of it: we know that this is indeed the Christ. And in the ground of it, for we have heard him ourselves.

**Verses 43-54**

The father was a nobleman, yet the son was sick. Honours and titles are no security from sickness and death. The greatest men must go themselves to God, must become beggars. The nobleman did not stop from his request till he prevailed. But at first he discovered the weakness of his faith in the power of Christ. It is hard to persuade ourselves that distance of time and place, are no hinderance to the knowledge, mercy, and power of our Lord Jesus. Christ gave an answer of peace. Christ's saying that the soul lives, makes it alive. The father went his way, which showed the sincerity of his faith. Being satisfied, he did not hurry home that night, but returned as one easy in his own mind. His servants met him with the news of the child's recovery. Good news will meet those that hope in God's word. Diligent comparing the works of Jesus with his word, will confirm our faith. And the bringing the cure to the family brought salvation to it. Thus an experience of the power of one word of Christ, may settle the authority of Christ in the soul. The whole family believed likewise. The miracle made Jesus dear to them. The knowledge of Christ still spreads through families, and men find health and salvation to their souls.

## Chapter 5

### Chapter Outline

The cure at the pool of Bethesda.	(1-9)
The Jews' displeasure.	(10-16)
Christ reproves the Jews.	(17-23)
Christ's discourse.	(24-47)

### Verses 1-9

We are all by nature impotent folk in spiritual things, blind, halt, and withered; but full provision is made for our cure, if we attend to it. An angel went down, and troubled the water; and what disease soever it was, this water cured it, but only he that first stepped in had benefit. This teaches us to be careful, that we let not a season slip which may never return. The man had lost the use of his limbs thirty-eight years. Shall we, who perhaps for many years have scarcely known what it has been to be a day sick, complain of one wearisome night, when many others, better than we, have scarcely known what it has been to be a day well? Christ singled this one out from the rest. Those long in affliction, may comfort themselves that God keeps account how long. Observe, this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections. As we should be thankful, so we should be patient. Our Lord Jesus cures him, though he neither asked nor thought of it. Arise, and walk. God's command, Turn and live; Make ye a new heart; no more supposes power in us without the grace of God, his distinguishing grace, than this command supposed such power in the impotent man: it was by the power of Christ, and he must have all the glory. What a joyful surprise to the poor cripple, to find himself of a sudden so easy, so strong, so able to help himself! The proof of spiritual cure, is our rising and walking. Has Christ healed our spiritual diseases, let us go wherever he sends us, and take up whatever he lays upon us; and walk before him.

### Verses 10-16

Those eased of the punishment of sin, are in danger of returning to sin, when the terror and restraint are over, unless Divine grace dries up the fountain. The misery believers are made whole from, warns us to sin no more, having felt the smart of sin. This is the voice of every providence, Go, and sin no more. Christ saw it necessary to give this caution; for it is common for people, when sick, to promise much; when newly recovered, to perform only something; but after awhile to forget all. Christ spoke of the wrath to come, which is beyond compare worse than the many hours, nay, weeks and years of pain, some wicked men have to suffer in consequence of their unlawful indulgences. And if such afflictions are severe, how dreadful will be the everlasting punishment of the wicked!

**Verses 17–23**

The Divine power of the miracle proved Jesus to be the Son of God, and he declared that he worked with, and like unto his Father, as he saw good. These ancient enemies of Christ understood him, and became more violent, charging him not only with sabbath-breaking, but blasphemy, in calling God his own Father, and making himself equal with God. But all things now, and at the final judgment, are committed to the Son, purposely that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father; and every one who does not thus honour the Son, whatever he may think or pretend, does not honour the Father who sent him.

**Verses 24–29**

Our Lord declared his authority and character, as the Messiah. The time was come when the dead should hear his voice, as the Son of God, and live. Our Lord first refers to his raising those who were dead in sin, to newness of life, by the power of the Spirit, and then to his raising the dead in their graves. The office of Judge of all men, can only be exercised by one who has all knowledge, and almighty power. May we believe His testimony; thus our faith and hope will be in God, and we shall not come into condemnation. And may His voice reach the hearts of those dead in sin; that they may do works meet for repentance, and prepare for the solemn day.

**Verses 30–38**

Our Lord returns to his declaration of the entire agreement between the Father and the Son, and declared himself the Son of God. He had higher testimony than that of John; his works bore witness to all he had said. But the Divine word had no abiding-place in their hearts, as they refused to believe in Him whom the Father had sent, according to his ancient promises. The voice of God, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, thus made effectual to the conversion of sinners, still proclaims that this is the beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased. But when the hearts of men are full of pride, ambition, and the love of the world, there is no room for the word of God to abide in them.

**Verses 39–44**

The Jews considered that eternal life was revealed to them in their Scriptures, and that they had it, because they had the word of God in their hands. Jesus urged them to search those Scriptures with more diligence and attention. “Ye do search the Scriptures,” and ye do well to do so. They did indeed search the Scriptures, but it was with a view to their own glory. It is possible for men to be very studious in the letter of the Scriptures, yet to be strangers to its power. Or, “Search the Scriptures,” and so it was spoken to them in the nature of an appeal. Ye profess to receive and believe the Scripture, let that be the judge. It is spoken to us as advising or commanding all Christians to search the Scriptures. Not only read them,

and hear them, but search them; which denotes diligence in examining and studying them. We must search the Scriptures for heaven as our great end; For in them ye think ye have eternal life. We must search the Scriptures for Christ, as the new and living Way, that leads to this end. To this testimony Christ adds reproofs of their unbelief and wickedness; their neglect of him and his doctrine. Also he reproves their want of the love of God. But there is life with Jesus Christ for poor souls. Many who make a great profession of religion, yet show they want the love of God, by their neglect of Christ and contempt of his commandments. It is the love of God in us, the love that is a living, active principle in the heart, which God will accept. They slighted and undervalued Christ, because they admired and overvalued themselves. How can those believe, who make the praise and applause of men their idol! When Christ and his followers are men wondered at, how can those believe, the utmost of whose ambition is to make a fair show in the flesh!

**Verses 45–47**

Many trust in some form of doctrines or some parties, who no more enter into the real meaning of those doctrines, or the views of the persons whose names they bear, than the Jews did into those of Moses. Let us search and pray over the Scriptures, as intent on finding eternal life; let us observe how Christ is the great subject of them, and daily apply to him for the life he bestows.



## Chapter 6

### Chapter Outline

Five thousand miraculously fed.	(1-14)
Jesus walks on the sea.	(15-21)
He directs to spiritual food.	(22-27)
His discourse with the multitude.	(28-65)
Many of disciples go back.	(66-71)

### Verses 1-14

John relates the miracle of feeding the multitude, for its reference to the following discourse. Observe the effect this miracle had upon the people. Even the common Jews expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a great Prophet. The Pharisees despised them as not knowing the law; but they knew most of Him who is the end of the law. Yet men may acknowledge Christ as that Prophet, and still turn a deaf ear to him.

### Verses 15-21

Here were Christ's disciples in the way of duty, and Christ was praying for them; yet they were in distress. There may be perils and afflictions of this present time, where there is an interest in Christ. Clouds and darkness often surround the children of the light and of the day. They see Jesus walking on the sea. Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance often are so mistaken, as to become the occasions of fear. Nothing is more powerful to convince sinners than that word, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;" nothing more powerful to comfort saints than this, "I am Jesus whom thou lovest." If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, though the night be dark, and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves, we shall be at the shore before long.

### Verses 22-27

Instead of answering the inquiry how he came there, Jesus blamed their asking. The utmost earnestness should be employed in seeking salvation, in the use of appointed means; yet it is to be sought only as the gift of the Son of man. Him the Father has sealed, proved to be God. He declared the Son of man to be the Son of God with power.

### Verses 28-35

Constant exercise of faith in Christ, is the most important and difficult part of the obedience required from us, as sinners seeking salvation. When by his grace we are enabled to live a life of faith in the Son of God, holy tempers follow, and acceptable services may be done. God, even his Father, who gave their fathers that food from heaven to support their

natural lives, now gave them the true Bread for the salvation of their souls. Coming to Jesus, and believing on him, signify the same. Christ shows that he is the true Bread; he is to the soul what bread is to the body, nourishes and supports the spiritual life. He is the Bread of God. Bread which the Father gives, which he has made to be the food of our souls. Bread nourishes only by the powers of a living body; but Christ is himself living Bread, and nourishes by his own power. The doctrine of Christ crucified is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was. He is the Bread which came down from heaven. It denotes the Divinity of Christ's person and his authority; also, the Divine origin of all the good which flows to us through him. May we with understanding and earnestness say, Lord, evermore give us this Bread.

#### **Verses 36–46**

The discovery of their guilt, danger, and remedy, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, makes men willing and glad to come, and to give up every thing which hinders applying to him for salvation. The Father's will is, that not one of those who were given to the Son, should be rejected or lost by him. No one will come, till Divine grace has subdued, and in part changed his heart; therefore no one who comes will ever be cast out. The gospel finds none willing to be saved in the humbling, holy manner, made known therein; but God draws with his word and the Holy Ghost; and man's duty is to hear and learn; that is to say, to receive the grace offered, and consent to the promise. None had seen the Father but his beloved Son; and the Jews must expect to be taught by his inward power upon their minds, and by his word, and the ministers whom he sent among them.

#### **Verses 47–51**

The advantage of the manna was small, it only referred to this life; but the living Bread is so excellent, that the man who feedeth on it shall never die. This bread is Christ's human nature, which he took to present to the Father, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; to purchase all things pertaining to life and godliness, for sinners of every nation, who repent and believe in him.

#### **Verses 52–59**

The flesh and blood of the Son of man, denote the Redeemer in the nature of man; Christ and him crucified, and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption; pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the way to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life. These are called the flesh and blood of Christ, because they are purchased by the breaking his body, and the shedding of his blood. Also, because they are meat and drink to our souls. Eating this flesh and drinking this blood mean believing in Christ. We partake of Christ and his benefits by faith. The soul that rightly knows its state and wants, finds whatever can calm the conscience, and promote true holiness,

in the redeemer, God manifest in the flesh. Meditating upon the cross of Christ gives life to our repentance, love, and gratitude. We live by him, as our bodies live by our food. We live by him, as the members by the head, the branches by the root: because he lives we shall live also.

**Verses 60–65**

The human nature of Christ had not before been in heaven, but being God and man, that wondrous Person was truly said to have come down from heaven. The Messiah's kingdom was not of this world; and they were to understand by faith, what he had said of a spiritual living upon him, and his fulness. As without the soul of man the flesh is of no value, so without the quickening Spirit of God all forms of religion are dead and worthless. He who made this provision for our souls, alone can teach us these things, and draw us unto Christ, that we may live by faith in him. Let us apply to Christ, thankful that it is declared that every one who is willing to come unto him shall be made welcome.

**Verses 66–71**

When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the words and works of Jesus, we enter into temptation, which, if the Lord in mercy prevent not, will end in drawing back. The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion for offence, which is matter of the greatest comfort. Our Lord had, in the foregoing discourse, promised eternal life to his followers; the disciples fastened on that plain saying, and resolved to cleave to him, when others fastened on hard sayings, and forsook him. Christ's doctrine is the word of eternal life, therefore we must live and die by it. If we forsake Christ, we forsake our own mercies. They believed that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to their fathers, the Son of the living God. When we are tempted to backslide or turn away, it is good to remember first principles, and to keep to them. And let us ever remember our Lord's searching question; Shall we go away and forsake our Redeemer? To whom can we go? He alone can give salvation by the forgiveness of sins. And this alone brings confidence, comfort, and joy, and bids fear and despondency flee away. It gains the only solid happiness in this world, and opens a way to the happiness of the next.

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## Chapter 7

### Chapter Outline

- Christ goes to the feast of tabernacles. (1-13)
- His discourse at the feast. (14-39)
- The people dispute concerning Christ. (40-53)

### Verses 1-13

The brethren or kinsmen of Jesus were disgusted, when they found there was no prospect of worldly advantages from him. Ungodly men sometimes undertake to counsel those employed in the work of God; but they only advise what appears likely to promote present advantages. The people differed about his doctrine and miracles, while those who favoured him, dared not openly to avow their sentiments. Those who count the preachers of the gospel to be deceivers, speak out, while many who favour them, fear to get reproach by avowing regard for them.

### Verses 14-24

Every faithful minister may humbly adopt Christ's words. His doctrine is not his own finding out, but is from God's word, through the teaching of his Spirit. And amidst the disputes which disturb the world, if any man, of any nation, seeks to do the will of God, he shall know whether the doctrine is of God, or whether men speak of themselves. Only those who hate the truth shall be given up to errors which will be fatal. Surely it was as agreeable to the design of the sabbath to restore health to the afflicted, as to administer an outward rite. Jesus told them to decide on his conduct according to the spiritual import of the Divine law. We must not judge concerning any by their outward appearance, but by their worth, and by the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in them.

### Verses 25-30

Christ proclaimed aloud, that they were in error in their thoughts about his origin. He was sent of God, who showed himself true to his promises. This declaration, that they knew not God, with his claim to peculiar knowledge, provoked the hearers; and they sought to take him, but God can tie men's hands, though he does not turn their hearts.

### Verses 31-36

The discourses of Jesus convinced many that he was the Messiah; but they had not courage to own it. It is comfort to those who are in the world, but not of it, and therefore are hated by it and weary of it, that they shall not be in it always, that they shall not be in it long. Our days being evil, it is well they are few. The days of life and of grace do not last

long; and sinners, when in misery, will be glad of the help they now despise. Men dispute about such sayings, but the event will explain them.

**Verses 37–39**

On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, the Jews drew water and poured it out before the Lord. It is supposed that Christ alluded to this. If any man desires to be truly and for ever happy, let him apply to Christ, and be ruled by him. This thirst means strong desires after spiritual blessings, which nothing else can satisfy; so the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit, were intended by the waters which Jesus called on them to come to Him and drink. The comfort flows plentifully and constantly as a river; strong as a stream to bear down the opposition of doubts and fears. There is a fulness in Christ, of grace for grace. The Spirit dwelling and working in believers, is as a fountain of living, running water, out of which plentiful streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit we do not expect, but for his more common and more valuable influences we may apply. These streams have flowed from our glorified Redeemer, down to this age, and to the remote corners of the earth. May we be anxious to make them known to others.

**Verses 40–53**

The malice of Christ's enemies is always against reason, and sometimes the staying of it cannot be accounted for. Never any man spake with that wisdom, and power, and grace, that convincing clearness, and that sweetness, wherewith Christ spake. Alas, that many, who are for a time restrained, and who speak highly of the word of Jesus, speedily lose their convictions, and go on in their sins! People are foolishly swayed by outward motives in matters of eternal moment, are willing even to be damned for fashion's sake. As the wisdom of God often chooses things which men despise, so the folly of men commonly despises those whom God has chosen. The Lord brings forward his weak and timid disciples, and sometimes uses them to defeat the designs of his enemies.

## Chapter 8

### Chapter Outline

- The Pharisees and the adulteress. (1-11)
- Christ's discourse with the Pharisees. (12-59)

### Verses 1-11

Christ neither found fault with the law, nor excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did he countenance the pretended zeal of the Pharisees. Those are self-condemned who judge others, and yet do the same thing. All who are any way called to blame the faults of others, are especially concerned to look to themselves, and keep themselves pure. In this matter Christ attended to the great work about which he came into the world, that was, to bring sinners to repentance; not to destroy, but to save. He aimed to bring, not only the accused to repentance, by showing her his mercy, but the prosecutors also, by showing them their sins; they thought to insnare him, he sought to convince and convert them. He declined to meddle with the magistrate's office. Many crimes merit far more severe punishment than they meet with; but we should not leave our own work, to take that upon ourselves to which we are not called. When Christ sent her away, it was with this caution, Go, and sin no more. Those who help to save the life of a criminal, should help to save the soul with the same caution. Those are truly happy, whom Christ does not condemn. Christ's favour to us in the forgiveness of past sins should prevail with us, Go then, and sin no more.

### Verses 12-16

Christ is the Light of the world. God is light, and Christ is the image of the invisible God. One sun enlightens the whole world; so does one Christ, and there needs no more. What a dark dungeon would the world be without the sun! So would it be without Jesus, by whom light came into the world. Those who follow Christ shall not walk in darkness. They shall not be left without the truths which are necessary to keep them from destroying error, and the directions in the way of duty, necessary to keep them from condemning sin.

### Verses 17-20

If we knew Christ better, we should know the Father better. Those become vain in their imaginations concerning God, who will not learn of Christ. Those who know not his glory and grace, know not the Father that sent him. The time of our departure out of the world, depends upon God. Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor can our friends delay it any longer, than the time appointed of the Father. Every true believer can look up and say with pleasure, My times are in thy hand, and better there than in my own. To all God's purposes there is a time.

**Verses 21–29**

Those that live in unbelief, are for ever undone, if they die in unbelief. The Jews belonged to this present evil world, but Jesus was of a heavenly and Divine nature, so that his doctrine, kingdom, and blessings, would not suit their taste. But the curse of the law is done away to all that submit to the grace of the gospel. Nothing but the doctrine of Christ's grace will be an argument powerful enough, and none but the Spirit of Christ's grace will be an agent powerful enough, to turn us from sin to God; and that Spirit is given, and that doctrine is given, to work upon those only who believe in Christ. Some say, Who is this Jesus? They allow him to have been a Prophet, an excellent Teacher, and even more than a creature; but cannot acknowledge him as over all, God blessed for evermore. Will not this suffice? Jesus here answers the question. Is this to honour him as the Father? Does this admit his being the Light of the world, and the Life of men, one with the Father? All shall know by their conversion, or in their condemnation, that he always spake and did what pleased the Father, even when he claimed the highest honours to himself.

**Verses 30–36**

Such power attended our Lord's words, that many were convinced, and professed to believe in him. He encouraged them to attend his teaching, rely on his promises, and obey his commands, notwithstanding all temptations to evil. Thus doing, they would be his disciples truly; and by the teaching of his word and Spirit, they would learn where their hope and strength lay. Christ spoke of spiritual liberty; but carnal hearts feel no other grievances than those that molest the body, and distress their worldly affairs. Talk to them of their liberty and property, tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses, and they understand you very well; but speak of the bondage of sin, captivity to Satan, and liberty by Christ; tell of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare, then you bring strange things to their ears. Jesus plainly reminded them, that the man who practised any sin, was, in fact, a slave to that sin, which was the case with most of them. Christ in the gospel offers us freedom, he has power to do this, and those whom Christ makes free are really so. But often we see persons disputing about liberty of every kind, while they are slaves to some sinful lust.

**Verses 37–40**

Our Lord opposed the proud and vain confidence of these Jews, showing that their descent from Abraham could not profit those of a contrary spirit to him. Where the word of God has no place, no good is to be expected; room is left there for all wickedness. A sick person who turns from his physician, and will take neither remedies nor food, is past hope of recovery. The truth both heals and nourishes the hearts of those who receive it. The truth taught by philosophers has not this power and effect, but only the truth of God. Those who

claim the privileges of Abraham, must do Abraham's works; must be strangers and sojourners in this world; keep up the worship of God in their families, and always walk before God.

#### **Verses 41–47**

Satan prompts men to excesses by which they murder themselves and others, while what he puts into the mind tends to ruin men's souls. He is the great promoter of falsehood of every kind. He is a liar, all his temptations are carried on by his calling evil good, and good evil, and promising freedom in sin. He is the author of all lies; whom liars resemble and obey, with whom all liars shall have their portion for ever. The special lusts of the devil are spiritual wickedness, the lusts of the mind, and corrupt reasonings, pride and envy, wrath and malice, enmity to good, and enticing others to evil. By the truth, here understand the revealed will of God as to the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, the truth Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed.

#### **Verses 48–53**

Observe Christ's disregard of the applause of men. those who are dead to the praises of men can bear their contempt. God will seek the honour of all who do not seek their own. In these verses we have the doctrine of the everlasting happiness of believers. We have the character of a believer; he is one that keeps the sayings of the Lord Jesus. And the privilege of a believer; he shall by no means see death for ever. Though now they cannot avoid seeing death, and tasting it also, yet they shall shortly be where it will be no more forever, [Ex 14:13](#).

#### **Verses 54–59**

Christ and all that are his, depend upon God for honour. Men may be able to dispute about God, yet may not know him. Such as know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ, are put together, [2Th 1:8](#). All who rightly know anything of Christ, earnestly desire to know more of him. Those who discern the dawn of the light of the Sun of Righteousness, wish to see his rising. "Before Abraham was, I AM." This speaks Abraham a creature, and our Lord the Creator; well, therefore, might he make himself greater than Abraham. I AM, is the name of God, [Ex 3:14](#); it speaks his self-existence; he is the First and the Last, ever the same, [Re 1:8](#). Thus he was not only before Abraham, but before all worlds, [Pr 8:23](#); [Joh 1:1](#). As Mediator, he was the appointed Messiah, long before Abraham; the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, [Re 13:8](#). The Lord Jesus was made of God Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, to Adam, and Abel, and all that lived and died by faith in him, before Abraham. The Jews were about to stone Jesus for blasphemy, but he withdrew; by his miraculous power he passed through them unhurt. Let us stedfastly profess what we know and believe concerning God; and if heirs of Abraham's faith, we shall rejoice in looking forward to that day when the Saviour shall appear in glory, to the confusion of his enemies, and to complete the salvation of all who believe in him.



## Chapter 9

### Chapter Outline

Christ give sight to one born blind.	(1–7)
The account given by the blind man.	(8–12)
The Pharisees question the man that had been blind.	(13–17)
They ask concerning him.	(18–23)
They cast him out.	(24–34)
Christ's words to the man that had been blind.	(35–38)
He reproves the Pharisees.	(39–41)

### Verses 1–7

Christ cured many who were blind by disease or accident; here he cured one born blind. Thus he showed his power to help in the most desperate cases, and the work of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those blind by nature. This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him. And if we know or apprehend anything of Christ, it is because we were first known of him. Christ says of uncommon calamities, that they are not always to be looked on as special punishments of sin; sometimes they are for the glory of God, and to manifest his works. Our life is our day, in which it concerns us to do the work of the day. We must be busy, and not waste day-time; it will be time to rest when our day is done, for it is but a day. The approach of death should quicken us to improve all our opportunities of doing and getting good. What good we have an opportunity to do, we should do quickly. And he that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against, will leave many a good work for ever undone, [Ec 11:4](#). Christ magnified his power, in making a blind man to see, doing that which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Human reason cannot judge of the Lord's methods; he uses means and instruments that men despise. Those that would be healed by Christ must be ruled by him. He came back from the pool wondering and wondered at; he came seeing. This represents the benefits in attending on ordinances of Christ's appointment; souls go weak, and come away strengthened; go doubting, and come away satisfied; go mourning, and come away rejoicing; go blind, and come away seeing.

### Verses 8–12

Those whose eyes are opened, and whose hearts are cleansed by grace, being known to be the same person, but widely different in character, live as monuments to the Redeemer's

glory, and recommend his grace to all who desire the same precious salvation. It is good to observe the way and method of God's works, and they will appear the more wonderful. Apply this spiritually. In the work of grace wrought upon the soul we see the change, but we see not the hand that makes it: the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, which thou hearest the sound of, but canst not tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes.

#### **Verses 13–17**

Christ not only worked miracles on the sabbath, but in such a manner as would give offence to the Jews, for he would not seem to yield to the scribes and Pharisees. Their zeal for mere rites consumed the substantial matters of religion; therefore Christ would not give place to them. Also, works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath rest is to be kept, in order to the sabbath work. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel on the Lord's day! how many impotent souls cured on that day! Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging comes from men's adding their own fancies to God's appointments. How perfect in wisdom and holiness was our Redeemer, when his enemies could find nothing against him, but the oft-refuted charge of breaking the sabbath! May we be enabled, by well-doing, to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

#### **Verses 18–23**

The Pharisees vainly hoped to disprove this notable miracle. They expected a Messiah, but could not bear to think that this Jesus should be he, because his precepts were all contrary to their traditions, and because they expected a Messiah in outward pomp and splendour. The fear of man brings a snare, [Pr 29:25](#), and often makes people deny and disown Christ and his truths and ways, and act against their consciences. The unlearned and poor, who are simple-hearted, readily draw proper inferences from the evidences of the light of the gospel; but those whose desires are another way, though ever learning, never come to the knowledge of the truth.

#### **Verses 24–34**

As Christ's mercies are most valued by those who have felt the want of them, that have been blind, and now see; so the most powerful and lasting affections to Christ, arise from actual knowledge of him. In the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when, and how, and by what steps the blessed change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort, if we can say, through grace, Whereas I was blind, now I see. I did live a worldly, sensual life, but, thanks be to God, it is now otherwise with me, [Eph 5:8](#). The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction, is indeed marvellous. All who have felt the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, wonder at the wilfulness of others who reject him. He argues strongly against them, not only that Jesus was not a sinner, but that he was of God. We may each of

us know by this, whether we are of God or not. What do we? What do we for God? What do we for our souls? What do we more than others?

**Verses 35–38**

Christ owns those who own him and his truth and ways. There is particular notice taken of such a suffer in the cause of Christ, and for the testimony of a good conscience. Our Lord Jesus graciously reveals himself to the man. Now he was made sensible what an unspeakable mercy it was, to be cured of his blindness, that he might see the Son of God. None but God is to be worshipped; so that in worshipping Jesus, he owned him to be God. All who believe in him, will worship him.

**Verses 39–41**

Christ came into the world to give sight to those who were spiritually blind. Also, that those who see might be made blind; that those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, might be sealed up in ignorance. The preaching of the cross was thought to be folly by such as by carnal wisdom knew not God. Nothing fortifies men's corrupt hearts against the convictions of the word, more than the high opinion which others have of them; as if all that gained applause with men, must obtain acceptance with God. Christ silenced them. But the sin of the self-conceited and self-confident remains; they reject the gospel of grace, therefore the guilt of their sin remains unpardoned, and the power of their sin remains unbroken.

## Chapter 10

### Chapter Outline

The parable of the good shepherd.	(1-5)
Christ the Door.	(6-9)
Christ the good Shepherd.	(10-18)
The Jews' opinion concerning Jesus.	(19-21)
His discourse at the feast of dedication.	(22-30)
The Jews attempt to stone Jesus.	(31-38)
He departs from Jerusalem.	(39-42)

### Verses 1-5

Here is a parable or similitude, taken from the customs of the East, in the management of sheep. Men, as creatures depending on their Creator, are called the sheep of his pasture. The church of God in the world is as a sheep-fold, exposed to deceivers and persecutors. The great Shepherd of the sheep knows all that are his, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and word, and goes before them, as the Eastern shepherds went before their sheep, to set them in the way of his steps. Ministers must serve the sheep in their spiritual concerns. The Spirit of Christ will set before them an open door. The sheep of Christ will observe their Shepherd, and be cautious and shy of strangers, who would draw them from faith in him to fancies about him.

### Verses 6-9

Many who hear the word of Christ, do not understand it, because they will not. But we shall find one scripture expounding another, and the blessed Spirit making known the blessed Jesus. Christ is the Door. And what greater security has the church of God than that the Lord Jesus is between it and all its enemies? He is a door open for passage and communication. Here are plain directions how to come into the fold; we must come in by Jesus Christ as the Door. By faith in him as the great Mediator between God and man. Also, we have precious promises to those that observe this direction. Christ has all that care of his church, and every believer, which a good shepherd has of his flock; and he expects the church, and every believer, to wait on him, and to keep in his pasture.

### Verses 10-18

Christ is a good Shepherd; many who were not thieves, yet were careless in their duty, and by their neglect the flock was much hurt. Bad principles are the root of bad practices. The Lord Jesus knows whom he has chosen, and is sure of them; they also know whom they

have trusted, and are sure of Him. See here the grace of Christ; since none could demand his life of him, he laid it down of himself for our redemption. He offered himself to be the Saviour; Lo, I come. And the necessity of our case calling for it, he offered himself for the Sacrifice. He was both the offerer and the offering, so that his laying down his life was his offering up himself. From hence it is plain, that he died in the place and stead of men; to obtain their being set free from the punishment of sin, to obtain the pardon of their sin; and that his death should obtain that pardon. Our Lord laid not his life down for his doctrine, but for his sheep.

#### **Verses 19–21**

Satan ruins many, by putting them out of conceit with the word and ordinances. Men would not be laughed out of their necessary food, yet suffer themselves thus to be laughed out of what is far more necessary. If our zeal and earnestness in the cause of Christ, especially in the blessed work of bringing his sheep into his fold, bring upon us evil names, let us not heed it, but remember our Master was thus reproached before us.

#### **Verses 22–30**

All who have any thing to say to Christ, may find him in the temple. Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves doubt. The Jews understood his meaning, but could not form his words into a full charge against him. He described the gracious disposition and happy state of his sheep; they heard and believed his word, followed him as his faithful disciples, and none of them should perish; for the Son and the Father were one. Thus he was able to defend his sheep against all their enemies, which proves that he claimed Divine power and perfection equally with the Father.

#### **Verses 31–38**

Christ's works of power and mercy proclaim him to be over all, God blessed for evermore, that all may know and believe He is in the Father, and the Father in Him. Whom the Father sends, he sanctifies. The holy God will reward, and therefore will employ, none but such as he makes holy. The Father was in the Son, so that by Divine power he wrought his miracles; the Son was so in the Father, that he knew the whole of His mind. This we cannot by searching find out to perfection, but we may know and believe these declarations of Christ.

#### **Verses 39–42**

No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper. He escaped, not because he was afraid to suffer, but because his hour was not come. And He who knew how to deliver himself, knows how to deliver the godly our of their temptations, and to make a way for them to escape. Persecutors may drive Christ and his gospel our of their own city or country, but they cannot drive him or it out of the world. When we know Christ by faith in our hearts, we find all that the Scripture saith of him is true.

## Chapter 11

### Chapter Outline

The sickness of Lazarus.	(1-6)
Christ returns to Judea.	(7-10)
The death of Lazarus.	(11-16)
Christ arrives at Bethany.	(17-32)
He raises Lazarus.	(33-46)
The Pharisees consult against Jesus.	(47-53)
The Jews seek for him.	(54-57)

### Verses 1-6

It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves, to be sick; bodily distempers correct the corruption, and try the graces of God's people. He came not to preserve his people from these afflictions, but to save them from their sins, and from the wrath to come; however, it behoves us to apply to Him in behalf of our friends and relatives when sick and afflicted. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dealings of Providence, that they are all for the glory of God: sickness, loss, disappointment, are so; and if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied. Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. The families are greatly favoured in which love and peace abound; but those are most happy whom Jesus loves, and by whom he is beloved. Alas, that this should seldom be the case with every person, even in small families. God has gracious intentions, even when he seems to delay. When the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, public or personal, is delayed, it does but stay for the right time.

### Verses 7-10

Christ never brings his people into any danger but he goes with them in it. We are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord, when really we are only zealous for our wealth, credit, ease, and safety; we have therefore need to try our principles. But our day shall be lengthened out, till our work is done, and our testimony finished. A man has comfort and satisfaction while in the way of his duty, as set forth by the word of God, and determined by the providence of God. Christ, wherever he went, walked in the day; and so shall we, if we follow his steps. If a man walks in the way of his heart, and according to the course of this world, if he consults his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God, he falls into temptations and snares. He stumbles, because there is no light in him; for light in us is to our moral actions, that which light about us to our natural actions.

**Verses 11–16**

Since we are sure to rise again at the last, why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life, make it as easy for us to put off the body and die, as it is to put off our clothes and go to sleep? A true Christian, when he dies, does but sleep; he rests from the labours of the past day. Nay, herein death is better than sleep, that sleep is only a short rest, but death is the end of earthly cares and toils. The disciples thought that it was now needless for Christ to go to Lazarus, and expose himself and them. Thus we often hope that the good work we are called to do, will be done by some other hand, if there be peril in the doing of it. But when Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, many were brought to believe on him; and there was much done to make perfect the faith of those that believed. Let us go to him; death cannot separate from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his call. Like Thomas, in difficult times Christians should encourage one another. The dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls us.

**Verses 17–32**

Here was a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested; yet it was made a house of mourning. Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, but not from the house. When God, by his grace and providence, is coming towards us in ways of mercy and comfort, we should, like Martha, go forth by faith, hope, and prayer, to meet him. When Martha went to meet Jesus, Mary sat still in the house; this temper formerly had been an advantage to her, when it put her at Christ's feet to hear his word; but in the day of affliction, the same temper disposed her to melancholy. It is our wisdom to watch against the temptations, and to make use of the advantages of our natural tempers. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us refer ourselves to God; let him do as seemeth him good. To enlarge Martha's expectations, our Lord declared himself to be the Resurrection and the Life. In every sense he is the Resurrection; the source, the substance, the first-fruits, the cause of it. The redeemed soul lives after death in happiness; and after the resurrection, both body and soul are kept from all evil for ever. When we have read or heard the word of Christ, about the great things of the other world, we should put it to ourselves, Do we believe this truth? The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make such a deep impression upon us as they do, if we believed the things of eternity as we ought. When Christ our Master comes, he calls for us. He comes in his word and ordinances, and calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself. Those who, in a day of peace, set themselves at Christ's feet to be taught by him, may with comfort, in a day of trouble, cast themselves at his feet, to find favour with him.

**Verses 33–46**

Christ's tender sympathy with these afflicted friends, appeared by the troubles of his spirit. In all the afflictions of believers he is afflicted. His concern for them was shown by

his kind inquiry after the remains of his deceased friend. Being found in fashion as a man, he acts in the way and manner of the sons of men. It was shown by his tears. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Tears of compassion resemble those of Christ. But Christ never approved that sensibility of which many are proud, while they weep at mere tales of distress, but are hardened to real woe. He sets us an example to withdraw from scenes of giddy mirth, that we may comfort the afflicted. And we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. It is a good step toward raising a soul to spiritual life, when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed, and got over, and way is made for the word to enter the heart. If we take Christ's word, and rely on his power and faithfulness, we shall see the glory of God, and be happy in the sight. Our Lord Jesus has taught us, by his own example, to call God Father, in prayer, and to draw nigh to him as children to a father, with humble reverence, yet with holy boldness. He openly made this address to God, with uplifted eyes and loud voice, that they might be convinced the Father had sent him as his beloved Son into the world. He could have raised Lazarus by the silent exertion of his power and will, and the unseen working of the Spirit of life; but he did it by a loud call. This was a figure of the gospel call, by which dead souls are brought out of the grave of sin: and of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day, with which all that sleep in the dust shall be awakened, and summoned before the great tribunal. The grave of sin and this world, is no place for those whom Christ has quickened; they must come forth. Lazarus was thoroughly revived, and returned not only to life, but to health. The sinner cannot quicken his own soul, but he is to use the means of grace; the believer cannot sanctify himself, but he is to lay aside every weight and hinderance. We cannot convert our relatives and friends, but we should instruct, warn, and invite them.

#### **Verses 47–53**

There can hardly be a more clear discovery of the madness that is in man's heart, and of its desperate enmity against God, than what is here recorded. Words of prophecy in the mouth, are not clear evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. The calamity we seek to escape by sin, we take the most effectual course to bring upon our own heads; as those do who think by opposing Christ's kingdom, to advance their own worldly interest. The fear of the wicked shall come upon them. The conversion of souls is the gathering of them to Christ as their ruler and refuge; and he died to effect this. By dying he purchased them to himself, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for them: his love in dying for believers should unite them closely together.

#### **Verses 54–57**

Before our gospel passover we must renew our repentance. Thus by a voluntary purification, and by religious exercises, many, more devout than their neighbours, spent some time before the passover at Jerusalem. When we expect to meet God, we must solemnly



prepare. No devices of man can alter the purposes of God: and while hypocrites amuse themselves with forms and disputes, and worldly men pursue their own plans, Jesus still orders all things for his own glory and the salvation of his people.

## Chapter 12

### Chapter Outline

Christ anointed by Mary.	(1–11)
He enters Jerusalem.	(12–19)
Greeks apply to see Jesus.	(20–26)
A voice from heaven bears testimony to Christ.	(27–33)
His discourse with the people.	(34–36)
Unbelief of the Jews.	(37–43)
Christ's address to them.	(44–50)

### Verses 1–11

Christ had formerly blamed Martha for being troubled with much serving. But she did not leave off serving, as some, who when found fault with for going too far in one way, peevishly run too far another way; she still served, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words. Mary gave a token of love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family. God's Anointed should be our Anointed. Has God poured on him the oil of gladness above his fellows, let us pour on him the ointment of our best affections. In Judas a foul sin is gilded over with a plausible pretence. We must not think that those do no acceptable service, who do it not in our way. The reigning love of money is heart-theft. The grace of Christ puts kind comments on pious words and actions, makes the best of what is amiss, and the most of what is good. Opportunities are to be improved; and those first and most vigorously, which are likely to be the shortest. To consult to hinder the further effect of the miracle, by putting Lazarus to death, is such wickedness, malice, and folly, as cannot be explained, except by the desperate enmity of the human heart against God. They resolved that the man should die whom the Lord had raised to life. The success of the gospel often makes wicked men so angry, that they speak and act as if they hoped to obtain a victory over the Almighty himself.

### Verses 12–19

Christ's riding in triumph to Jerusalem is recorded by all the evangelists. Many excellent things, both in the word and providence of God, disciples do not understand at their first acquaintance with the things of God. The right understanding of spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, prevents our misapplying the Scriptures which speak of it.

**Verses 20–26**

In attendance upon holy ordinances, particularly the gospel passover, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus; to see him as ours, to keep up communion with him, and derive grace from him. The calling of the Gentiles magnified the Redeemer. A corn of wheat yields no increase unless it is cast into the ground. Thus Christ might have possessed his heavenly glory alone, without becoming man. Or, after he had taken man's nature, he might have entered heaven alone, by his own perfect righteousness, without suffering or death; but then no sinner of the human race could have been saved. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is owing to the dying of this Corn of wheat. Let us search whether Christ be in us the hope of glory; let us beg him to make us indifferent to the trifling concerns of this life, that we may serve the Lord Jesus with a willing mind, and follow his holy example.

**Verses 27–33**

The sin of our souls was the troubled of Christ's soul, when he undertook to redeem and save us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. Christ was willing to suffer, yet prayed to be saved from suffering. Prayer against trouble may well agree with patience under it, and submission to the will of God in it. Our Lord Jesus undertook to satisfy God's injured honour, and he did it by humbling himself. The voice of the Father from heaven, which had declared him to be his beloved Son, at his baptism, and when he was transfigured, was heard proclaiming that He had both glorified his name, and would glorify it. Christ, reconciling the world to God by the merit of his death, broke the power of death, and cast out Satan as a destroyer. Christ, bringing the world to God by the doctrine of his cross, broke the power of sin, and cast out Satan as a deceiver. The soul that was at a distance from Christ, is brought to love him and trust him. Jesus was now going to heaven, and he would draw men's hearts to him thither. There is power in the death of Christ to draw souls to him. We have heard from the gospel that which exalts free grace, and we have heard also that which enjoins duty; we must from the heart embrace both, and not separate them.

**Verses 34–36**

The people drew false notions from the Scriptures, because they overlooked the prophecies that spoke of Christ's sufferings and death. Our Lord warned them that the light would not long continue with them, and exhorted them to walk in it, before the darkness overtook them. Those who would walk in the light must believe in it, and follow Christ's directions. But those who have not faith, cannot behold what is set forth in Jesus, lifted up on the cross, and must be strangers to its influence as made known by the Holy Spirit; they find a thousand objections to excuse their unbelief.

**Verses 37–43**

Observe the method of conversion implied here. Sinners are brought to see the reality of Divine things, and to have some knowledge of them. To be converted, and truly turned from sin to Christ, as their Happiness and Portion. God will heal them, will justify and sanctify them; will pardon their sins, which are as bleeding wounds, and mortify their corruptions, which are as lurking diseases. See the power of the world in smothering convictions, from regard to the applause or censure of men. Love of the praise of men, as a by-end in that which is good, will make a man a hypocrite when religion is in fashion, and credit is to be got by it; and love of the praise of men, as a base principle in that which is evil, will make a man an apostate, when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be lost for it.

**Verses 44–50**

Our Lord publicly proclaimed, that every one who believed on him, as his true disciple, did not believe on him only, but on the Father who sent him. Beholding in Jesus the glory of the Father, we learn to obey, love, and trust in him. By daily looking to Him, who came a Light into the world, we are more and more freed from the darkness of ignorance, error, sin, and misery; we learn that the command of God our Saviour is everlasting life. But the same word will seal the condemnation of all who despise it, or neglect it.

## Chapter 13

### Chapter Outline

- Christ washes the disciples' feet. (1-17)
- The treachery of Judas foretold. (18-30)
- Christ commands the disciples to love one another. (31-38)

### Verses 1-17

Our Lord Jesus has a people in the world that are his own; he has purchased them, and paid dear for them, and he has set them apart for himself; they devote themselves to him as a peculiar people. Those whom Christ loves, he loves to the end. Nothing can separate a true believer from the love of Christ. We know not when our hour will come, therefore what we have to do in constant preparation for it, ought never to be undone. What way of access the devil has to men's hearts we cannot tell. But some sins are so exceedingly sinful, and there is so little temptation to them from the world and the flesh, that it is plain they are directly from Satan. Jesus washed his disciples' feet, that he might teach us to think nothing below us, wherein we may promote God's glory, and the good of our brethren. We must address ourselves to duty, and must lay aside every thing that would hinder us in what we have to do. Christ washed his disciples' feet, that he might signify to them the value of spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. Our Lord Jesus does many things of which even his own disciples do not for the present know the meaning, but they shall know afterward. We see in the end what was the kindness from events which seemed most cross. And it is not humility, but unbelief, to put away the offers of the gospel, as if too rich to be made to us, or too good news to be true. All those, and those only, who are spiritually washed by Christ, have a part in Christ. All whom Christ owns and saves, he justifies and sanctifies. Peter more than submits; he begs to be washed by Christ. How earnest he is for the purifying grace of the Lord Jesus, and the full effect of it, even upon his hands and head! Those who truly desire to be sanctified, desire to be sanctified throughout, to have the whole man, with all its parts and powers, made pure. The true believer is thus washed when he receives Christ for his salvation. See then what ought to be the daily care of those who through grace are in a justified state, and that is, to wash their feet; to cleanse themselves from daily guilt, and to watch against everything defiling. This should make us the more cautious. From yesterday's pardon, we should be strengthened against this day's temptation. And when hypocrites are discovered, it should be no surprise or cause of stumbling to us. Observe the lesson Christ here taught. Duties are mutual; we must both accept help from our brethren, and afford help to our brethren. When we see our Master

serving, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to domineer. And the same love which led Christ to ransom and reconcile his disciples when enemies, still influences him.

**Verses 18–30**

Our Lord had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without such trouble of spirit as he now discovered when he spake of Judas. The sins of Christians are the grief of Christ. We are not to confine our attention to Judas. The prophecy of his treachery may apply to all who partake of God's mercies, and meet them with ingratitude. See the infidel, who only looks at the Scriptures with a desire to do away their authority and destroy their influence; the hypocrite, who professes to believe the Scriptures, but will not govern himself by them; and the apostate, who turns aside from Christ for a thing of naught. Thus mankind, supported by God's providence, after eating bread with Him, lift up the heel against Him! Judas went out as one weary of Jesus and his apostles. Those whose deeds are evil, love darkness rather than light.

**Verses 31–35**

Christ had been glorified in many miracles he wrought, yet he speaks of his being glorified now in his sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humbled state. Satisfaction was thereby made for the wrong done to God by the sin of man. We cannot now follow our Lord to his heavenly happiness, but if we truly believe in him, we shall follow him hereafter; meanwhile we must wait his time, and do his work. Before Christ left the disciples, he would give them a new commandment. They were to love each other for Christ's sake, and according to his example, seeking what might benefit others, and promoting the cause of the gospel, as one body, animated by one soul. But this commandment still appears new to many professors. Men in general notice any of Christ's words rather than these. By this it appears, that if the followers of Christ do not show love one to another, they give cause to suspect their sincerity.

**Verses 36–38**

What Christ had said concerning brotherly love, Peter overlooked, but spoke of that about which Christ kept them ignorant. It is common to be more eager to know about secret things, which belong to God only, than about things revealed, which belong to us and our children; to be more desirous to have our curiosity gratified, than our consciences directed; to know what is done in heaven, than what we may do to get thither. How soon discourse as to what is plain and edifying is dropped, while a doubtful dispute runs on into endless strife of words! We are apt to take it amiss to be told we cannot do this and the other, whereas, without Christ we can do nothing. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and has many ways of discovering those to themselves, whom he loves, and he will hide

pride from them. May we endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to love one another with a pure heart fervently, and to walk humbly with our God.

## Chapter 14

### Chapter Outline

- Christ comforts his disciples. (1-11)
- He further comforts his disciples. (12-17)
- He still further comforts his disciples. (18-31)

### Verses 1-11

Here are three words, upon any of which stress may be laid. Upon the word troubled. Be not cast down and disquieted. The word heart. Let your heart be kept with full trust in God. The word your. However others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so. Christ's disciples, more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when everything else is unquiet. Here is the remedy against this trouble of mind, "Believe." By believing in Christ as the Mediator between God and man, we gain comfort. The happiness of heaven is spoken of as in a father's house. There are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory. Mansions are lasting dwellings. Christ will be the Finisher of that of which he is the Author or Beginner; if he have prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it. Christ is the sinner's Way to the Father and to heaven, in his person as God manifest in the flesh, in his atoning sacrifice, and as our Advocate. He is the Truth, as fulfilling all the prophecies of a Saviour; believing which, sinners come by him the Way. He is the Life, by whose life-giving Spirit the dead in sin are quickened. Nor can any man draw nigh God as a Father, who is not quickened by Him as the Life, and taught by Him as the Truth, to come by Him as the Way. By Christ, as the Way, our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us; this is the Way that leads to rest, the good old Way. He is the Resurrection and the Life. All that saw Christ by faith, saw the Father in Him. In the light of Christ's doctrine, they saw God as the Father of lights; and in Christ's miracles, they saw God as the God of power. The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ's life. We are to believe the revelation of God to man in Christ; for the works of the Redeemer show forth his own glory, and God in him.

### Verses 12-17

Whatever we ask in Christ's name, that shall be for our good, and suitable to our state, he shall give it to us. To ask in Christ's name, is to plead his merit and intercession, and to depend upon that plea. The gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, bought by his merit, and received by his intercession. The word used here, signifies an advocate, counsellor, monitor, and comforter. He would abide with the disciples to the end of time; his gifts and graces would encourage their hearts. The expressions used here and elsewhere, plainly denote a person, and the office itself includes all the Divine perfections. The gift of the Holy Ghost



is bestowed upon the disciples of Christ, and not on the world. This is the favour God bears to his chosen. As the source of holiness and happiness, the Holy Spirit will abide with every believer for ever.

**Verses 18–24**

Christ promises that he would continue his care of his disciples. I will not leave you orphans, or fatherless, for though I leave you, yet I leave you this comfort, I will come to you. I will come speedily to you at my resurrection. I will come daily to you in my Spirit; in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace. I will come certainly at the end of time. Those only that see Christ with an eye of faith, shall see him for ever: the world sees him no more till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with him in his absence. These mysteries will be fully known in heaven. It is a further act of grace, that they should know it, and have the comfort of it. Having Christ's commands, we must keep them. And having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives. The surest evidence of our love to Christ is, obedience to the laws of Christ. There are spiritual tokens of Christ and his love given to all believers. Where sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience. Love will be a commanding, constraining principle; and where love is, duty follows from a principle of gratitude. God will not only love obedient believers, but he will take pleasure in loving them, will rest in love to them. He will be with them as his home. These privileges are confined to those whose faith worketh by love, and whose love to Jesus leads them to keep his commandments. Such are partakers of the Holy Spirit's new-creating grace.

**Verses 25–27**

Would we know these things for our good, we must pray for, and depend on the teaching of the Holy Ghost; thus the words of Jesus will be brought to our remembrance, and many difficulties be cleared up which are not plain to others. To all the saints, the Spirit of grace is given to be a remembrancer, and to him, by faith and prayer, we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know. Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all that is really and truly good, all the promised good; peace of mind from our justification before God. This Christ calls his peace, for he is himself our Peace. The peace of God widely differs from that of Pharisees or hypocrites, as is shown by its humbling and holy effects.

**Verses 28–31**

Christ raises the expectations of his disciples to something beyond what they thought was their greatest happiness. His time was now short, he therefore spake largely to them. When we come to be sick, and to die, we may not be capable of talking much to those about us; such good counsel as we have to give, let us give while in health. Observe the prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men, but with the powers of darkness. Satan has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when he would

disturb Christ, he found nothing sinful to help him. The best evidence of our love to the Father is, our doing as he has commanded us. Let us rejoice in the Saviour's victories over Satan the prince of this world. Let us copy the example of his love and obedience.

## Chapter 15

### Chapter Outline

Christ the true Vine.	(1-8)
His love to his disciples.	(9-17)
foretold.	(18-25)
The Comforter promised.	(26, 27)

### Verses 1-8

Jesus Christ is the Vine, the true Vine. The union of the human and Divine natures, and the fulness of the Spirit that is in him, resemble the root of the vine made fruitful by the moisture from a rich soil. Believers are branches of this Vine. The root is unseen, and our life is hid with Christ; the root bears the tree, diffuses sap to it, and in Christ are all supports and supplies. The branches of the vine are many, yet, meeting in the root, are all but one vine; thus all true Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, meet in Christ. Believers, like the branches of the vine, are weak, and unable to stand but as they are borne up. The Father is the Husbandman. Never was any husbandman so wise, so watchful, about his vineyard, as God is about his church, which therefore must prosper. We must be fruitful. From a vine we look for grapes, and from a Christian we look for a Christian temper, disposition, and life. We must honour God, and do good; this is bearing fruit. The unfruitful are taken away. And even fruitful branches need pruning; for the best have notions, passions, and humours, that require to be taken away, which Christ has promised to forward the sanctification of believers, they will be thankful, for them. The word of Christ is spoken to all believers; and there is a cleansing virtue in that word, as it works grace, and works out corruption. And the more fruit we bring forth, the more we abound in what is good, the more our Lord is glorified. In order to fruitfulness, we must abide in Christ, must have union with him by faith. It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples, constantly to keep up dependence upon Christ, and communion with him. True Christians find by experience, that any interruption in the exercise of their faith, causes holy affections to decline, their corruptions to revive, and their comforts to droop. Those who abide not in Christ, though they may flourish for awhile in outward profession, yet come to nothing. The fire is the fittest place for withered branches; they are good for nothing else. Let us seek to live more simply on the fulness of Christ, and to grow more fruitful in every good word and work, so may our joy in Him and in his salvation be full.

### Verses 9-17

Those whom God loves as a Father, may despise the hatred of all the world. As the Father loved Christ, who was most worthy, so he loved his disciples, who were unworthy.

All that love the Saviour should continue in their love to him, and take all occasions to show it. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. They are to show their love to him by keeping his commandments. If the same power that first shed abroad the love of Christ's in our hearts, did not keep us in that love, we should not long abide in it. Christ's love to us should direct us to love each other. He speaks as about to give many things in charge, yet names this only; it includes many duties.

**Verses 18–25**

How little do many persons think, that in opposing the doctrine of Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, they prove themselves ignorant of the one living and true God, whom they profess to worship! The name into which Christ's disciples were baptized, is that which they will live and die by. It is a comfort to the greatest sufferers, if they suffer for Christ's name's sake. The world's ignorance is the true cause of its hatred to the disciples of Jesus. The clearer and fuller the discoveries of the grace and truth of Christ, the greater is our sin if we do not love him and believe in him.

**Verses 26, 27**

The blessed Spirit will maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it meets with. Believers taught and encouraged by his influences, would bear testimony to Christ and his salvation.

## Chapter 16

### Chapter Outline

Persecution foretold.	(1-6)
The promise of the Holy Spirit, and his office.	(7-15)
Christ's departure and return.	(16-22)
Encouragement to prayer.	(23-27)
Christ's discoveries of himself.	(28-33)

### Verses 1-6

Our Lord Jesus, by giving his disciples notice of trouble, designed that the terror might not be a surprise to them. It is possible for those who are real enemies to God's service, to pretend zeal for it. This does not lessen the sin of the persecutors; villainies will never be changed by putting the name of God to them. As Jesus in his sufferings, so his followers in theirs, should look to the fulfilling of Scripture. He did not tell them sooner, because he was with them to teach, guide, and comfort them; they needed not then this promise of the Holy Spirit's presence. It will silence us to ask, Whence troubles come? It will satisfy us to ask, Whither go they? for we know they work for good. It is the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians to look only on the dark side of the cloud, and to turn a deaf ear to the voice of joy and gladness. That which filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow, was too great affection for this present life. Nothing more hinders our joy in God, than the love of the world, and the sorrow of the world which comes from it.

### Verses 7-15

Christ's departure was necessary to the Comforter's coming. Sending the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's death, which was his going away. His bodily presence could be only in one place at one time, but his Spirit is every where, in all places, at all times, wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. See here the office of the Spirit, first to reprove, or to convince. Convincing work is the Spirit's work; he can do it effectually, and none but he. It is the method the Holy Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort. The Spirit shall convince the world, of sin; not merely tell them of it. The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin; of the fault of sin; of the folly of sin; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become hateful to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Holy Spirit proves that all the world is guilty before God. He convinces the world of righteousness; that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous. Also, of Christ's righteousness, imparted to us for justification and salvation. He will show

them where it is to be had, and how they may be accepted as righteous in God's sight. Christ's ascension proves the ransom was accepted, and the righteousness finished, through which believers were to be justified. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. All will be well, when his power is broken, who made all the mischief. As Satan is subdued by Christ, this gives us confidence, for no other power can stand before him. And of the day of judgment. The coming of the Spirit would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples. The Holy Spirit is our Guide, not only to show us the way, but to go with us by continued aids and influences. To be led into a truth is more than barely to know it; it is not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish, and savour, and power of it in our hearts. He shall teach all truth, and keep back nothing profitable, for he will show things to come. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, all the preaching, and all the writing of the apostles, under the influence of the Spirit, all the tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ. It behoves every one to ask, whether the Holy Spirit has begun a good work in his heart? Without clear discovery of our guilt and danger, we never shall understand the value of Christ's salvation; but when brought to know ourselves aright, we begin to see the value of the Redeemer. We should have fuller views of the Redeemer, and more lively affections to him, if we more prayed for, and depended on the Holy Spirit.

#### **Verses 16–22**

It is good to consider how near our seasons of grace are to an end, that we may be quickened to improve them. But the sorrows of the disciples would soon be turned into joy; as those of a mother, at the sight of her infant. The Holy Spirit would be their Comforter, and neither men nor devils, neither sufferings in life nor in death, would ever deprive them of their joy. Believers have joy or sorrow, according to their sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence. Sorrow is coming on the ungodly, which nothing can lessen; the believer is an heir to joy which no one can take away. Where now is the joy of the murderers of our Lord, and the sorrow of his friends?

#### **Verses 23–27**

Asking of the Father shows a sense of spiritual wants, and a desire of spiritual blessings, with conviction that they are to be had from God only. Asking in Christ's name, is acknowledging our unworthiness to receive any favours from God, and shows full dependence upon Christ as the Lord our Righteousness. Our Lord had hitherto spoken in short and weighty sentences, or in parables, the import of which the disciples did not fully understand, but after his resurrection he intended plainly to teach them such things as related to the Father and the way to him, through his intercession. And the frequency with which our Lord enforces offering up petitions in his name, shows that the great end of the mediation of Christ is to impress us with a deep sense of our sinfulness, and of the merit and power of his death, whereby we have access to God. And let us ever remember, that to address the Father in the

name of Christ, or to address the Son as God dwelling in human nature, and reconciling the world to himself, are the same, as the Father and Son are one.

**Verses 28–33**

Here is a plain declaration of Christ's coming from the Father, and his return to him. The Redeemer, in his entrance, was God manifest in the flesh, and in his departure was received up into glory. By this saying the disciples improved in knowledge. Also in faith; "Now are we sure." Alas! they knew not their own weakness. The Divine nature did not desert the human nature, but supported it, and put comfort and value into Christ's sufferings. And while we have God's favourable presence, we are happy, and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us. Peace in Christ is the only true peace, in him alone believers have it. Through him we have peace with God, and so in him we have peace in our own minds. We ought to be encouraged, because Christ has overcome the world before us. But while we think we stand, let us take heed lest we fall. We know not how we should act if brought into temptation; let us watch and pray without ceasing, that we may not be left to ourselves.

## Chapter 17

### Chapter Outline

Christ's prayer for himself.	(1-5)
His prayer for his disciples.	(6-10)
His prayer.	(11-26)

### Verses 1-5

Our Lord prayed as a man, and as the Mediator of his people; yet he spoke with majesty and authority, as one with and equal to the Father. Eternal life could not be given to believers, unless Christ, their Surety, both glorified the Father, and was glorified of him. This is the sinner's way to eternal life, and when this knowledge shall be made perfect, holiness and happiness will be fully enjoyed. The holiness and happiness of the redeemed, are especially that glory of Christ, and of his Father, which was the joy set before him, for which he endured the cross and despised the shame; this glory was the end of the sorrow of his soul, and in obtaining it he was fully satisfied. Thus we are taught that our glorifying God is needed as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

### Verses 6-10

Christ prays for those that are his. Thou gavest them me, as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; as a patient to the physician, to be cured; as children to a tutor, to be taught: thus he will deliver up his charge. It is a great satisfaction to us, in our reliance upon Christ, that he, all he is and has, and all he said and did, all he is doing and will do, are of God. Christ offered this prayer for his people alone as believers; not for the world at large. Yet no one who desires to come to the Father, and is conscious that he is unworthy to come in his own name, need be discouraged by the Saviour's declaration, for he is both able and willing to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him. Earnest convictions and desires, are hopeful tokens of a work already wrought in a man; they begin to evidence that he has been chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. They are thine; wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them? Observe the foundation on which this plea is grounded, All mine are thine, and thine are mine. This speaks the Father and Son to be one. All mine are thine. The Son owns none for his, that are not devoted to the service of the Father.

### Verses 11-16

Christ does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, but that they might be kept from sin, strengthened for their duty, and brought safe to heaven. The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity. He pleaded with his holy Father, that he would keep them



by his power and for his glory, that they might be united in affection and labours, even according to the union of the Father and the Son. He did not pray that his disciples should be removed out of the world, that they might escape the rage of men, for they had a great work to do for the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind. But he prayed that the Father would keep them from the evil, from being corrupted by the world, the remains of sin in their hearts, and from the power and craft of Satan. So that they might pass through the world as through an enemy's country, as he had done. They are not left here to pursue the same objects as the men around them, but to glorify God, and to serve their generation. The Spirit of God in true Christians is opposed to the spirit of the world.

#### **Verses 17–19**

Christ next prayed for the disciples, that they might not only be kept from evil, but made good. It is the prayer of Jesus for all that are his, that they may be made holy. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace. The means of giving this grace is, “through thy truth, thy word is truth.” Sanctify them, set them apart for thyself and thy service. Own them in the office; let thy hand go with them. Jesus entirely devoted himself to his undertaking, and all the parts of it, especially the offering up himself without spot unto God, by the eternal Spirit. The real holiness of all true Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased; he gave himself for his church, to sanctify it. If our views have not this effect on us, they are not Divine truth, or we do not receive them by a living and a working faith, but as mere notions.

#### **Verses 20–23**

Our Lord especially prayed, that all believers might be as one body under one head, animated by one soul, by their union with Christ and the Father in him, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. The more they dispute about lesser things, the more they throw doubts upon Christianity. Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, praying that all believers may be more and more united in one mind and one judgment. Thus shall we convince the world of the truth and excellence of our religion, and find more sweet communion with God and his saints.

#### **Verses 24–26**

Christ, as one with the Father, claimed on behalf of all that had been given to him, and should in due time believe on him, that they should be brought to heaven; and that there the whole company of the redeemed might behold his glory as their beloved Friend and Brother, and therein find happiness. He had declared and would further declare the name or character of God, by his doctrine and his Spirit, that, being one with him, the love of the Father to him might abide with them also. Thus, being joined to Him by one Spirit, they

might be filled with all the fulness of God, and enjoy a blessedness of which we can form no right idea in our present state.

## Chapter 18

### Chapter Outline

Christ taken in the garden.	(1–12)
Christ before Annas and Caiaphas.	(13–27)
Christ before Pilate.	(28–40)

### Verses 1–12

Sin began in the garden of Eden, there the curse was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promised; and in a garden that promised Seed entered into conflict with the old serpent. Christ was buried also in a garden. Let us, when we walk in our gardens, take occasion from thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden. Our Lord Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and asked, Whom seek ye? When the people would have forced him to a crown, he withdrew, ch. 6:15, but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came into this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign. He showed plainly what he could have done; when he struck them down he could have struck them dead, but he would not do so. It must have been the effect of Divine power, that the officers and soldiers let the disciples go away quietly, after the resistance which had been offered. Christ set us an example of meekness in sufferings, and a pattern of submission to God's will in every thing that concerns us. It is but a cup, a small matter. It is a cup that is given us; sufferings are gifts. It is given us by a Father, who has a father's authority, and does us no wrong; a father's affection, and means us no hurt. From the example of our Saviour we should learn how to receive our lighter afflictions, and to ask ourselves whether we ought to oppose our Father's will, or to distrust his love. We were bound with the cords of our iniquities, with the yoke of our transgressions. Christ, being made a sin-offering for us, to free us from those bonds, himself submitted to be bound for us. To his bonds we owe our liberty; thus the Son makes us free.

### Verses 13–27

Simon Peter denied his Master. The particulars have been noticed in the remarks on the other Gospels. The beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water. The sin of lying is a fruitful sin; one lie needs another to support it, and that another. If a call to expose ourselves to danger be clear, we may hope God will enable us to honour him; if it be not, we may fear that God will leave us to shame ourselves. They said nothing concerning the miracles of Jesus, by which he had done so much good, and which proved his doctrine. Thus the enemies of Christ, whilst they quarrel with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against it. He appeals to those who heard him. The doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and those

who judge in truth bear witness to it. Our resentment of injuries must never be passionate. He reasoned with the man that did him the injury, and so may we.

**Verses 28–32**

It was unjust to put one to death who had done so much good, therefore the Jews were willing to save themselves from reproach. Many fear the scandal of an ill thing, more than the sin of it. Christ had said he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and they should put him to death; hereby that saying was fulfilled. He had said that he should be crucified, lifted up. If the Jews had judged him by their law, he had been stoned; crucifying never was used among the Jews. It is determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, what death we shall die: this should free us from disquiet about that matter. Lord, what, when, and how, thou hast appointed.

**Verses 33–40**

Art thou the King of the Jews? that King of the Jews who has been so long expected? Messiah the Prince; art thou he? Dost thou call thyself so, and wouldest thou be thought so? Christ answered this question with another; not for evasion, but that Pilate might consider what he did. He never took upon him any earthly power, never were any traitorous principles or practices laid to him. Christ gave an account of the nature of his kingdom. Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men, set up in their hearts and consciences; its riches spiritual, its power spiritual, and its glory within. Its supports are not worldly; its weapons are spiritual; it needed not, nor used, force to maintain and advance it, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. Its object and design are not worldly. When Christ said, I am the Truth, he said, in effect, I am a King. He conquers by the convincing evidence of truth; he rules by the commanding power of truth. The subjects of this kingdom are those that are of the truth. Pilate put a good question, he said, What is truth? When we search the Scriptures, and attend the ministry of the word, it must be with this inquiry, What is truth? and with this prayer, Lead me in thy truth; into all truth. But many put this question, who have not patience to persevere in their search after truth; or not humility enough to receive it. By this solemn declaration of Christ's innocence, it appears, that though the Lord Jesus was treated as the worst of evil-doers, he never deserved such treatment. But it unfolds the design of his death; that he died as a Sacrifice for our sins. Pilate was willing to please all sides; and was governed more by worldly wisdom than by the rules of justice. Sin is a robber, yet is foolishly chosen by many rather than Christ, who would truly enrich us. Let us endeavour to make our accusers ashamed as Christ did; and let us beware of crucifying Christ afresh.

## Chapter 19

### Chapter Outline

Christ condemned and crucified.	(1–18)
Christ on the cross.	(19–30)
His side pierced.	(31–37)
The burial of Jesus.	(38–42)

### Verses 1–18

Little did Pilate think with what holy regard these sufferings of Christ would, in after-ages, be thought upon and spoken of by the best and greatest of men. Our Lord Jesus came forth, willing to be exposed to their scorn. It is good for every one with faith, to behold Christ Jesus in his sufferings. Behold him, and love him; be still looking unto Jesus. Did their hatred sharpen their endeavours against him? and shall not our love for him quicken our endeavours for him and his kingdom? Pilate seems to have thought that Jesus might be some person above the common order. Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found fighting against God. As our Lord suffered for the sins both of Jews and Gentiles, it was a special part of the counsel of Divine Wisdom, that the Jews should first purpose his death, and the Gentiles carry that purpose into effect. Had not Christ been thus rejected of men, we had been for ever rejected of God. Now was the Son of man delivered into the hands of wicked and unreasonable men. He was led forth for us, that we might escape. He was nailed to the cross, as a Sacrifice bound to the altar. The Scripture was fulfilled; he did not die at the altar among the sacrifices, but among criminals sacrificed to public justice. And now let us pause, and with faith look upon Jesus. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? See him bleeding, see him dying, see him and love him! love him, and live to him!

### Verses 19–30

Here are some remarkable circumstances of Jesus' death, more fully related than before. Pilate would not gratify the chief priests by allowing the writing to be altered; which was doubtless owing to a secret power of God upon his heart, that this statement of our Lord's character and authority might continue. Many things done by the Roman soldiers were fulfilments of the prophecies of the Old Testament. All things therein written shall be fulfilled. Christ tenderly provided for his mother at his death. Sometimes, when God removes one comfort from us, he raises up another for us, where we looked not for it. Christ's example teaches all men to honour their parents in life and death; to provide for their wants, and to promote their comfort by every means in their power. Especially observe the dying word wherewith Jesus breathed out his soul. It is finished; that is, the counsels of the Father concerning his sufferings were now fulfilled. It is finished; all the types and prophecies of the

Old Testament, which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah, were accomplished. It is finished; the ceremonial law is abolished; the substance is now come, and all the shadows are done away. It is finished; an end is made of transgression by bringing in an everlasting righteousness. His sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul, and those of his body. It is finished; the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed. His life was not taken from him by force, but freely given up.

#### Verses 31–37

A trial was made whether Jesus was dead. He died in less time than persons crucified commonly did. It showed that he had laid down his life of himself. The spear broke up the very fountains of life; no human body could survive such a wound. But its being so solemnly attested, shows there was something peculiar in it. The blood and water that flowed out, signified those two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ, justification and sanctification; blood for atonement, water for purification. They both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified we owe merit for our justification, and Spirit and grace for our sanctification. Let this silence the fears of weak Christians, and encourage their hopes; there came both water and blood out of Jesus' pierced side, both to justify and sanctify them. The Scripture was fulfilled, in Pilate's not allowing his legs to be broken, [Ps 34:20](#). There was a type of this in the paschal lamb, [Ex 12:46](#). May we ever look to Him, whom, by our sins, we have ignorantly and heedlessly pierced, nay, sometimes against convictions and mercies; and who shed from his wounded side both water and blood, that we might be justified and sanctified in his name.

#### Verses 38–42

Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ in secret. Disciples should openly own themselves; yet some, who in lesser trials have been fearful, in greater have been courageous. When God has work to do, he can find out such as are proper to do it. The embalming was done by Nicodemus, a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. That grace which at first is like a bruised reed, may afterward resemble a strong cedar. Hereby these two rich men showed the value they had for Christ's person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross. We must do our duty as the present day and opportunity are, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and his own time. The grave of Jesus was appointed with the wicked, as was the case of those who suffered as criminals; but he was with the rich in his death, as prophesied, [Isa 53:9](#); these two circumstances it was very unlikely should ever be united in the same person. He was buried in a new sepulchre; therefore it could not be said that it was not he, but some other that rose. We also are here taught not to be particular as to the place of our burial. He was buried in the sepulchre next at hand. Here is the Sun of Righteousness set for a while, to rise again in greater glory, and then to set no more.

## Chapter 20

### Chapter Outline

The sepulchre found to be empty.	(1–10)
Christ appears to Mary.	(11–18)
He appears to the disciples.	(19–25)
The unbelief of Thomas.	(26–29)
Conclusion.	(30, 31)

### Verses 1–10

If Christ gave his life a ransom, and had not taken it again, it would not have appeared that his giving it was accepted as satisfaction. It was a great trial to Mary, that the body was gone. Weak believers often make that the matter of complaint, which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. It is well when those more honoured than others with the privileges of disciples, are more active than others in the duty of disciples; more willing to take pains, and run hazards, in a good work. We must do our best, and neither envy those who can do better, nor despise those who do as well as they can, though they come behind. The disciple whom Jesus loved in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus, was foremost. The love of Christ will make us to abound in every duty more than any thing else. He that was behind was Peter, who had denied Christ. A sense of guilt hinders us in the service of God. As yet the disciples knew not the Scripture; they Christ must rise again from the dead.

### Verses 11–18

We are likely to seek and find, when we seek with affection, and seek in tears. But many believers complain of the clouds and darkness they are under, which are methods of grace for humbling their souls, mortifying their sins, and endearing Christ to them. A sight of angels and their smiles, will not suffice, without a sight of Jesus, and God's smiles in him. None know, but those who have tasted it, the sorrows of a deserted soul, which has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ, and hopes of heaven, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness; such a wounded spirit who can bear? Christ, in manifesting himself to those that seek him, often outdoes their expectations. See how Mary's heart was in earnest to find Jesus. Christ's way of making himself known to his people is by his word; his word applied to their souls, speaking to them in particular. It might be read, Is it my Master? See with what pleasure those who love Jesus speak of his authority over them. He forbids her to expect that his bodily presence look further, than the present state of things. Observe the relation to God, from union with Christ. We, partaking of a Divine nature,

Christ's Father is our Father; and he, partaking of the human nature, our God is his God. Christ's ascension into heaven, there to plead for us, is likewise an unspeakable comfort. Let them not think this earth is to be their home and rest; their eye and aim, and earnest desires, must be upon another world, and this ever upon their hearts, I ascend, therefore I must seek the things which are above. And let those who know the word of Christ, endeavour that others should get good from their knowledge.

#### **Verses 19–25**

This was the first day of the week, and this day is afterwards often mentioned by the sacred writers; for it was evidently set apart as the Christian sabbath, in remembrance of Christ's resurrection. The disciples had shut the doors for fear of the Jews; and when they had no such expectation, Jesus himself came and stood in the midst of them, having miraculously, though silently, opened the doors. It is a comfort to Christ's disciples, when their assemblies can only be held in private, that no doors can shut out Christ's presence. When He manifests his love to believers by the comforts of his Spirit, he assures them that because he lives, they shall live also. A sight of Christ will gladden the heart of a disciple at any time; and the more we see of Jesus, the more we shall rejoice. He said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, thus showing that their spiritual life, as well as all their ability for their work, would be derived from him, and depended upon him. Every word of Christ which is received in the heart by faith, comes accompanied by this Divine breathing; and without this there is neither light nor life. Nothing is seen, known, discerned, or felt of God, but through this. After this, Christ directed the apostles to declare the only method by which sin would be forgiven. This power did not exist at all in the apostles as a power to give judgment, but only as a power to declare the character of those whom God would accept or reject in the day of judgment. They have clearly laid down the marks whereby a child of God may be discerned and be distinguished from a false professor; and according to what they have declared shall every case be decided in the day of judgment. When we assemble in Christ's name, especially on his holy day, he will meet with us, and speak peace to us. The disciples of Christ should endeavour to build up one another in their most holy faith, both by repeating what they have heard to those that were absent, and by making known what they have experienced. Thomas limited the Holy One of Israel, when he would be convinced by his own method or not at all. He might justly have been left in his unbelief, after rejecting such abundant proofs. The fears and sorrows of the disciples are often lengthened, to punish their negligence.

#### **Verses 26–29**

That one day in seven should be religiously observed, was an appointment from the beginning. And that, in the kingdom of the Messiah, the first day of the week should be that solemn day, was pointed out, in that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly. The religious observance of that day has come down to us through



every age of the church. There is not an unbelieving word in our tongues, nor thought in our minds, but it is known to the Lord Jesus; and he was pleased to accommodate himself even to Thomas, rather than leave him in his unbelief. We ought thus to bear with the weak, [Ro 15:1, 2](#). This warning is given to all. If we are faithless, we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless. Thomas was ashamed of his unbelief, and cried out, My Lord and my God. He spoke with affection, as one that took hold of Christ with all his might; “My Lord and my God.” Sound and sincere believers, though slow and weak, shall be graciously accepted of the Lord Jesus. It is the duty of those who read and hear the gospel, to believe, to embrace the doctrine of Christ, and that record concerning him, [1Jo 5:11](#).

**Verses 30, 31**

There were other signs and proofs of our Lord's resurrection, but these were committed to writing, that all might believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of sinners, and the Son of God; that, by this faith, they might obtain eternal life, by his mercy, truth, and power. May we believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing may we have life through his name.

## Chapter 21

### Chapter Outline

Christ appears to his disciples.	(1-14)
His discourse with Peter.	(15-19)
Christ's declaration concerning John.	(20-24)
The conclusion.	(25)

### Verses 1-14

Christ makes himself known to his people, usually in his ordinances; but sometimes by his Spirit he visits them when employed in their business. It is good for the disciples of Christ to be together in common conversation, and common business. The hour for their entering upon action was not come. They would help to maintain themselves, and not be burdensome to any. Christ's time of making himself known to his people, is when they are most at a loss. He knows the temporal wants of his people, and has promised them not only grace sufficient, but food convenient. Divine Providence extends itself to things most minute, and those are happy who acknowledge God in all their ways. Those who are humble, diligent, and patient, though their labours may be crossed, shall be crowned; they sometimes live to see their affairs take a happy turn, after many struggles. And there is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders; it is casting the net on the right side of the ship. Jesus manifests himself to his people by doing that for them which none else can do, and things which they looked not for. He would take care that those who left all for him, should not want any good thing. And latter favours are to bring to mind former favours, that eaten bread may not be forgotten. He whom Jesus loved was the first that said, It is the Lord. John had cleaved most closely to his Master in his sufferings, and knew him soonest. Peter was the most zealous, and reached Christ the first. How variously God dispenses his gifts, and what difference there may be between some believers and others in the way of their honouring Christ, yet they all may be accepted of him! Others continue in the ship, drag the net, and bring the fish to shore, and such persons ought not to be blamed as worldly; for they, in their places, are as truly serving Christ as the others. The Lord Jesus had provision ready for them. We need not be curious in inquiring whence this came; but we may be comforted at Christ's care for his disciples. Although there were so many, and such great fishes, yet they lost none, nor damaged their net. The net of the gospel has enclosed multitudes, yet it is as strong as ever to bring souls to God.

### Verses 15-19

Our Lord addressed Peter by his original name, as if he had forfeited that of Peter through his denying him. He now answered, Thou knowest that I love thee; but without

professing to love Jesus more than others. We must not be surprised to have our sincerity called into question, when we ourselves have done that which makes it doubtful. Every remembrance of past sins, even pardoned sins, renews the sorrow of a true penitent. Conscious of integrity, Peter solemnly appealed to Christ, as knowing all things, even the secrets of his heart. It is well when our falls and mistakes make us more humble and watchful. The sincerity of our love to God must be brought to the test; and it behoves us to inquire with earnest, preserving prayer to the heart-searching God, to examine and prove us, whether we are able to stand this test. No one can be qualified to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ, who does not love the good Shepherd more than any earthly advantage or object. It is the great concern of every good man, whatever death he dies, to glorify God in it; for what is our chief end but this, to die to the Lord, at the word of the Lord?

#### **Verses 20–24**

Sufferings, pains, and death, will appear formidable even to the experienced Christian; but in the hope to glorify God, to leave a sinful world, and to be present with his Lord, he becomes ready to obey the Redeemer's call, and to follow Him through death to glory. It is the will of Christ that his disciples should mind their own duty, and not be curious about future events, either as to themselves or others. Many things we are apt to be anxious about, which are nothing to us. Other people's affairs are nothing to us, to intermeddle in; we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many curious questions are put about the counsels of God, and the state of the unseen world, as to which we may say, What is this to us? And if we attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which does not belong to us. How little are any unwritten traditions to be relied upon! Let the Scripture be its own interpreter, and explain itself; as it is, in a great measure, its own evidence, and proves itself, for it is light. See the easy setting right such mistakes by the word of Christ. Scripture language is the safest channel for Scripture truth; the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, [1Co 2:13](#). Those who cannot agree in the same terms of art, and the application of them, may yet agree in the same Scripture terms, and to love one another.

#### **Verse 25**

Only a small part of the actions of Jesus had been written. But let us bless God for all that is in the Scriptures, and be thankful that there is so much in so small a space. Enough is recorded to direct our faith, and regulate our practice; more would have been unnecessary. Much of what is written is overlooked, much forgotten, and much made the matter of doubtful disputes. We may, however, look forward to the joy we shall receive in heaven, from a more complete knowledge of all Jesus did and said, as well as of the conduct of his providence and grace in his dealings with each of us. May this be our happiness. These are

written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name, [ch. 20:31](#).