

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 4

Ver. 1. *When therefore our Lord knew*, etc.] Or Jesus, as some copies, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read; who is Lord of all, Lord of lords, the one and only Lord of saints: and who knew all things as God; every man, and what is in man; who would believe in him, and who not, and who would betray him; he knew his adversaries, what they thought, said, or did; what was told them, and how it operated in them; and what were the secret motions of their hearts, and their most private counsels and designs; for this is not merely to be understood of his knowledge as man, which he might have by private intelligence from others; though what is here said, might be true also in this sense:

how the Pharisees; the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ, and particularly those that dwelt at Jerusalem, and were of the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation:

had heard; either by their spies, which they constantly kept about Christ; or by John's disciples, who, through envy, might apply to the sanhedrim, to put a stop to, or check upon the baptism and ministry of Christ; or by common fame:

that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; (see ^{<RB>}John 3:26). The method Christ took was, he first made men disciples, and then baptized them; and the same he directed his apostles to, saying, "go and teach", or "disciple all nations, baptizing them", etc. And this should be a rule of conduct to us, to baptize only such, who appear to have been made the disciples of Christ: now a disciple of Christ, is one that has learned of Christ, and has learned Christ; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by him; who is a believer in him; who has seen a beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness in him, as a Saviour; and is come to him, and has ventured on him, and trusted in him; and who has been taught to deny himself, sinful self, and righteous self; to part with his sins, and to renounce his own righteousness, and all dependence on it, for justification before God; and who has been made willing to leave and forsake all worldly things and

advantages, and to bear all reproach, indignities, and persecutions, for Christ's sake: and such who are Christ's disciples in this sense, are the only proper persons to be baptized; these are they, that ought to put on this badge, and wear Christ's livery: nor can baptism be of any use to any others; for such only are baptized into him, and into his death, and partake of the saving benefits of it; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; and without it also, it is impossible to please God.

Ver. 2. *Though Jesus himself baptized not*, etc.] And therefore as Nonnus observes, it was a false report that was made to the Pharisees; at least in part, so far as concerns the act of baptizing: though it may be this is observed, not so much to show the falsehood of that report, as to correct what is said of Christ's baptizing; lest it should be understood, as if he baptized in his own person; whereas he did not, that not so, well comporting with his greatness and majesty: wherefore "the king did not baptize in water", as Nonnus expresses it, but left that for his disciples and servants to do; he had other and greater work to perform, as to preach the Gospel, and work miracles, heal diseases, cast out devils, etc. And besides, had another sort of baptism, of a more excellent nature to administer, namely, the baptism of the Spirit; and since water baptism is administered in his name, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Spirit, it does not seem that it would have been administered with that propriety by himself, in his own name; add to which, as is also observed by others, it might have occasioned contentions and disputes among the baptized, had some, been baptized by Christ, and others by his disciples; the one valuing themselves on that account, above the others. The Persic version indeed suggests, as if both Christ and his disciples baptized, rendering the words thus, "Jesus was not alone who baptized, but the disciples also baptized": whereas the truth of the matter is, that Christ did not baptize in water at all:

but his disciples; they baptized in his name, and by his orders, such who were first made disciples by him.

Ver. 3. *He left Judaea*, etc.] Where he had been for some time: at the feast of the passover he went up to Jerusalem, and after a short stay there, he came into the country part of Judea, where he tarried longer; and in both about the space of eight months; for it was now but four months to harvest, which began at the passover; (see ~~4:13~~ John 2:13 3:22 4:35). And now upon thee Pharisees being made acquainted with his success in these

parts, he leaves them; not through fear of them, but because he would not irritate and provoke them, and stir up their malice and envy against him, which might put them upon measures to seek to take away his life; whereas his time was not yet come, and he had other work to do elsewhere:

and departed again into Galilee; where he had spent the greatest part of his time, in private life; from whence he came to Jordan unto John to be baptized by him; and after that went thither again, where he wrought his first miracle: and now having been in Judea some time, he removes to Galilee again; and of this journey of his thither, after the imprisonment of John, an account is given, in (^{<4012>}Matthew 4:12,13). The Persic version leaves out the word “again”, and so do the Alexandrian copy, and many copies; but is by others retained, and very justly.

Ver. 4. *And he must needs go through Samaria.*] Not the city, but the country of Samaria; for the way to Galilee from Judea, lay through the midst of Samaria; nor was there any other way, without going a great way about; (see ^{<4051>}Luke 9:51,52 ^{<4052>}17:11); and which is also confirmed by Josephus ^{f169}: and this accounts for his going through Samaria, consistently with his forbidding his apostles going in the way of the Gentiles, or into any of the cities of the Samaritans; since here was a necessity for it, or otherwise he himself would not have gone, where he forbid his disciples; though the prohibition may be understood, not of barely going into a Samaritan city; for it was lawful for them, notwithstanding that, to go into one of them, as appears from (^{<4008>}John 4:8 ^{<4052>}Luke 9:52); but of going to preach there, (^{<4005>}Matthew 10:5-7). And besides this necessity, there was another thing that lay upon him, and obliged him to take this tour, and that is, the calling and conversion of a certain woman, and other Samaritans, whom the Father had given to him, and he was to redeem by his blood; and the time of whose effectual calling was now come; and therefore he must needs go this way, and at this particular time. The Arabic and Persic versions represent it, as a purpose and determination in his mind to go this way.

Ver. 5. *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar,* etc.] Now called Neapolis ^{f170}; the same with “Sichem”, or “Shechem”, as appears from its situation,

near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; (see ^{<4038>}Genesis 33:18,19 ^{<4042>}48:22 ^{<4042>}Joshua 24:32); and is either the same, only its termination is changed from “em” into “ar”, as Achan into Achar, (^{<4007>}1

Chronicles 2:7). Or it is a new name that was given it, and by which it went in the time of Christ; and might be so called, either from **rkws**, “Socher”, which signifies a grave; because here, Joseph and the rest of the patriarchs were buried, (^{<03>}Joshua 24:32 ^{<47>}Acts 7:16). Or rather, it was a name of reproach, and so called, from **rkç**, “drunken”; since the Ephraimites, the posterity of Joseph, which dwelt in these parts, were infamous for the sin of drunkenness; (see ^{<30>}Isaiah 28:1). Hence “Sychar Sichem”, is “drunken Sichem”; mention is made in the Talmud ^{f171}, of a place called **arkys**, “Sichra”. The “parcel of ground”, or of a “field”, as in (^{<39>}Genesis 33:19 ^{<03>}Joshua 24:32), is in the Persic version, called “a vineyard”; and so Nonnus renders it, “a field planted with vines”; and which may serve to confirm the above conjecture, concerning “Sychar” being a nickname.

Ver. 6. *Now Jacob’s well was there*, etc.] So called, either because it was dug by him; or because he and his family made use of it, when in those parts, as in (^{<04>}John 4:12), though no mention is made of it elsewhere, unless any reference is had to it in the blessing of Joseph, to whom this place belonged, (^{<04>}Genesis 49:22), as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, or in (^{<03>}Deuteronomy 33:28), as Grotius suggests: in the Talmud ^{f172} there is mention made, of **rkws ^y**], “the fountain of Sochar”; and may not improperly be rendered, “the well of Sychar”: but whether the same with this, is not certain; that appears to be a great way from Jerusalem, as this also was, even forty miles:

Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey; having travelled on foot, from Judea thither; and he having a body like to ours, subject to weariness, and which proves the truth and reality of it, was greatly fatigued; having very probably travelled all that morning, if not a day, or days before:

sat thus on the well; or by it; by the side of it, upon the brink of it, as Nonnus paraphrases it, upon the bare ground. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out “thus”; and the Ethiopic version reads it, “there”; but it is rightly retained, and is emphatical; and signifies, that he sat like a weary person, glad to set himself down any where; and not caring how, or where, he sat to rest his weary limbs:

and it was about the sixth hour; about twelve o’clock at noon. The Ethiopic version adds by way of explanation, and “it was then noon”; and all the Oriental versions omit **ωσει**, “about”; rendering it, “it was the sixth hour”: and now Christ had been travelling all the morning, and it was a

time of day to take some refreshment, which as yet he had not, the disciples being gone to buy food; and a time of day also, when the sun is out, and has any strength, beats with its greatest vehemence; and all which considered, it is no wonder that he should be weary, faint, and thirsty.

Ver. 7. *There cometh a woman of Samaria*, etc.] Or “out of Samaria”; not out of the city of Samaria, but out of the country of Samaria; out of Sychar, a city of Samaria: her coming was not by chance, but by the providence of God, and agreeably to his purpose, who orders all things according to the counsel of his will; and it is an amazing instance of grace, that a woman, a Samaritan woman, a lewd and infamous one, should be a chosen vessel of salvation, should be the object of divine favour, and be effectually called by the grace of God; when so many wise, learned, and religious men in Judea, were passed by; and not only so, but she was the happy means of conveying the knowledge of the Saviour to many of her neighbours: she came, indeed,

to draw water; for her present temporal use and service; she little thought of meeting at Jacob’s well, with Christ the fountain of gardens, and well of living water; she came for natural water, having no notion of water in a spiritual sense: or of carrying back with her the water of life, even a well of it, springing up to everlasting life:

Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink; that is, water to drink, out of the pot or pitcher, she brought with her, for he was athirst; which is another proof of the truth of his human nature, and of his taking it, with the sinless infirmities of it: though indeed this request was made, to introduce a discourse with the woman, he having a more violent thirst, and a stronger desire, after the welfare of her immortal soul.

Ver. 8. *For his disciples were gone away*, etc.] This is related, not so much to give a reason why Christ asked the woman for water, because his disciples were not present, to minister to him; but rather to show, that Christ took the opportunity, in their absence, to converse with her; partly to avoid the scandal and offence they might take, at his conversation with her, being a Samaritan; as it appears to have been astonishing to them, when they found him talking with her, (~~407~~ John 4:27). And partly, that he might not put the woman to shame and blushing before them all; he chooses to tell her of the sins of her former life, in a private way. The disciples were gone

unto the city: to the city Sychar, which was hard by; and their business there, was

to buy meat: for though it is said, in the following verse, that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans; yet this is not to be understood in the strictest sense; for they had dealings with them in some respects, as will be seen hereafter; particularly their food, eatables, and drinkables, were lawful to be bought of them, and used: it is said by R. Juda bar Pazi, in the name of R. Ame^{f173},

“a roasted egg of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), lo, this is lawful: says R. Jacob bar Acha, in the name of R. Lazar, the boiled victuals of the Cuthites (Samaritans), lo, these are free; this he says concerning boiled food, because it is not their custom to put wine and vinegar into it,”

for these were forbidden: hence it is often said^{f174}, that

“the unleavened bread of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), is lawful, and that a man is allowed the use of it at the passover.”

And there was a time when their wine was lawful; for one of their canons runs thus^{f175};

“he that buys wine of the Cuthites (Samaritans), says, the two logs that I shall separate, lo, they are first fruits, etc.”

It is indeed said in one place, R. Eliezer^{f176}

“that, he that eats the bread of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), is as if he eat flesh; to when (who reported this) says (R. Akiba) be silent, I will not tell you what R. Eliezer thinks concerning it.”

Upon which the commentators serve^{f177}, that this is not to be understood strictly; cause he that eats bread of the Samaritans, does deserve stripes according to the law, but according to the constitutions of the wise men; but these, Christ and his disciples had no regard to.

Ver. 9. *Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him*, etc.] In a scoffing, jeering way,

how is it, that thou being a Jew; which she might know, by his language and his dress:

askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? not that the waters of Samaria were unlawful for a Jew to drink of; for as

“the land of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), was pure, or clean, so, *hytwqm*, “their collections of water”, and their habitations, and their ways were clean ^{f178},”

and might be used; but because the Jews used no familiarity with the Samaritans, nor would they receive any courtesy or kindness from them, as follows:

for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans: some take these to be the words of the evangelist, commenting upon, and explaining the words of the woman; but they seem rather to be her own words, giving a reason why she returned such an answer; and which must be understood, not in the strictest sense, as if they had no dealings at all with them: indeed in some things they had no dealings with them, and at some certain times; hence that discourse of the Samaritans with a Jewish Rabbi ^{f179}.

“The Cuthites (or Samaritans) inquired of R. Abhu, your fathers, *ˆyqptsm wyh*, “used to deal with us” (or minister to us, or supply us with necessaries), wherefore do not ye deal with us? (or take a supply from us;) he replied unto them, your fathers did not corrupt their works, you have corrupted your works.”

They might not use their wine and vinegar, nor admit them to their tables; they say of a man ¹⁸⁰,

“because the Cuthites (or Samaritans) ate at his table, it was the reason why his children went into captivity — and further add, that whoever invites a Cuthite (or Samaritan) into his house, and ministers to him, is the cause of captivity to his children.”

And they forbid a man to enter into partnership with a Cuthite (or Samaritan ^{f181}): and particularly,

“three days before the feasts of idolaters (for such they reckoned the Samaritans, as well as others), it is forbidden to have any commerce with them, to borrow of them, or lend to them ^{f182} etc.”

But then at other times, and in other respects, they had dealings with them; they might go into their cities and buy food of them, as the disciples did, (~~408~~ John 4:8); they might send their wheat to a Samaritan miller, to be

ground^{f183}; and as it appears from the above citations, their houses and habitations were clean, and might be lodged in, with which compare (~~<0182>~~ Luke 9:52); the poor of the Samaritans were maintained with the poor of Israel^{f184}; wherefore the sense is, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the Jews refused to receive the least favour or kindness at the hand of a Samaritan; and therefore the woman might justly wonder, that Christ should ask so small a favour of her, as a little water. The reason of this distance and aversion, was religion; and so the Ethiopic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, renders the words, “the Jews do not agree in religion, nor do they communicate with the Samaritans, nor mix together”: and this was of long standing, and had been occasioned and increased by various incidents; for when the ten tribes revolted in Jeroboam’s time, the calves were set up in Dan and Bethel, in order to draw off the people from worship at Jerusalem, which gave great umbrage to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and when the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, he planted the cities of Samaria with colonies in their room, consisting of Heathenish and idolatrous persons, brought from Babylon, and other places; to whom he sent a priest, to instruct them in the manner of the God of the land; but with these instructions, they still retained their idols, and their idolatrous practices; (see ~~<1724>~~ 2 Kings 17:24-41), which must render them odious to the Jews: and these were the principal adversaries of the Jews, after their return from captivity; and discouraged them, and weakened their hands, in the building of the second temple: but what latest, and most of all had fixed this aversion and enmity, was this; Manasseh, brother to Jaddua the high priest, having married Sanballat’s daughter, governor of Samaria, was for it removed from the priesthood; who applying to his father-in-law, he proposed building for him a temple on Mount Gerizim, and making him an high priest; for which he obtained leave of Alexander the Great, and accordingly built one, and made his son-in-law high priest; which drew a great many profligate Jews over to him, who mixing with the Samaritans, set up a worship, religion, and priesthood, in distinction from the Jews; and this was ever after a matter of contention and quarrel between these people, and the reason why they would have no dealings with them.

Ver. 10. *Jesus answered and said unto her*, etc.] In a very serious manner, in a different way from hers:

if thou knewest the gift of God; meaning, not the Holy Spirit with his gifts and graces, as some think, but himself; for the following clause is explanatory of it;

and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; and Christ is also spoken of in the Old Testament, as the gift of God, (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6) and he had lately spoken of himself as such, (²³⁰⁶John 3:16) and he is, by way of eminency, “the gift of God”; which is comprehensive of all others, is exceeding large, and very suitable to the wants and cases of men; and is irrevocable, unchangeable, and unspeakable: for he is God’s gift, as he is his own and only begotten Son; and he is given for a covenant to the people, with all the promises and blessings of it; and as an head, both of eminence and influence; and to be a Saviour of them, and a sacrifice for their sins; and as the bread of life, for them to feed and live upon; of which gift, men are naturally ignorant, as this woman was: they know not the dignity of his person; nor the nature and usefulness of his offices; nor the way of peace, righteousness, and salvation by him; nor do they see any amiableness, or loveliness in him; and whatever notional knowledge some natural men may have of him, they know him not spiritually and experimentally, or as the gift of God to them:

thou wouldst have asked of him; a favour and benefit; for such who truly know Christ, the worth and value of him, and their need of him, will apply to him for grace, as they have encouragement to do; since all grace is treasured up in him, and he gives it freely, and upbraideth not; and souls are invited to ask it of him, and take it freely; nor is it to be had anywhere else: but knowledge of Christ, is absolutely necessary, to asking anything of him; for till he is known, he will not be applied to; but when he is made known to any, in his fulness and suitableness, they will have recourse to him, and ask grace and mercy of him; and which is freely had: the Vulgate Latin very wrongly adds, “perhaps”; reading it, “perhaps thou wouldst have asked”; whereas our Lord’s meaning is, that she would certainly have asked:

and he would have given thee living water; pardoning and justifying grace, every branch of sanctifying grace, and all the supplies of it; so called, because his grace quickens sinners dead in sin, and dead in law, and in, their own apprehensions; and causes them to live in themselves, and before God; and because it refreshes and comforts, revives and cheers, and is like rivers of water in a dry land; and because it maintains and supports spiritual

life in their souls; and it ever abides, and continues, and springs up unto everlasting life: for the allusion is to spring water, that bubbles up in a fountain, and is ever running; for such water the Jews call “living water”; (see ^{<0239>}Genesis 26:19); where in the Hebrew text it is “living water”; which we, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, render “springing water”. So living waters with them, are said to be always flowing, and never cease ^{f185}.

Ver. 11. *The woman saith unto him, Sir,* etc.] Which was an usual, way in those countries, of addressing men, and especially strangers; and expresses no uncommon respect to Christ, of whose dignity and greatness she was, entirely ignorant; and at whom she was now scoffing; for so the following words are to be understood:

thou hast nothing to draw with; no pail, or bucket, or rope, to let it down with, as Nonnus adds; for it seems, there was no bucket, or vessel, fastened at the well for the common use, but everyone brought one with them, when they came to draw: though it is strange there was not one; since, according to common usage, and even of the Jews ^{f186},

“a public well had, **ל וק**, “a bucket”, or pitcher; but a private well had no bucket:”

and the well is deep; that which is now called Jacob’s well, is by some said to be forty cubits deep, and by others thirty five yards:

from whence then hast thou that living water? this she said in a sneering, scoffing manner: she reasoned with him, either that he must have it out of this well; but that could not be, since he had no vessel to draw with, and the well was so deep, that he could not come at the water without one; or he must have it from some neighbouring spring; upon which she scoffs at him in the following manner.

Ver 12. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob,* etc.] A person of greater worth and character than he, who was content to drink of this water; or wiser and more knowing than he, who could find out no better fountain of water in all these parts? she calls Jacob the father of them, according to the common notion and boasting of these people, when it served their turn; otherwise they were not the descendants of Jacob; for after the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, he placed in their room, in the cities of Samaria, men from Babylon, Cuthah Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, Heathenish and idolatrous people; (see ^{<0273>}2 Kings 17:24).

And from these, the then Samaritans sprung; only upon Sanballat's building a temple on Mount Gerizzim, for Manasseh his son-in-law, when put away from the priesthood by the Jews, for his marriage of his daughter, several wicked persons of the like sort, came out of Judea, and joined themselves to the Samaritans: and such a mixed medley of people were they at this time, though they boasted of Jacob as their father, as this woman did; and so to this day, they draw their genealogy from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and particularly call Joseph their father, and say, from whence are we, but from the tribe of Joseph the just, from Ephraim ^{f187}? as they formerly did ^{f188},

“R. Meir saw a Samaritan, he said to him, from whence comest thou? (that is, from what family;) he answered, from the (tribe) of Joseph.”

Which gave us the well; Jacob gave it indeed to Joseph and his posterity, along with the parcel of ground in which it was; (see ~~4015~~ John 4:5); but not to this mixed company:

and drank thereof himself and his children, and his cattle; which shows both the goodness and plenty of the water: though our Lord had spoken of living water, this woman understood him of no other water, but spring water; called living water, from its motion, because it is continually springing up, bubbling, and ever running: so carnal persons, when they hear of spiritual things under earthly metaphors, think of nothing but carnal things; as Nicodemus, when Christ talked of being born again; and the Jews at Capernaum, when he discoursed concerning eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; for spiritual things are neither known nor received by the natural man.

Ver. 13. *Jesus answered and said unto her*, etc.] In a mild and gentle manner, patiently bearing all her scoffs and flouts, and continuing to instruct and inform her, concerning this living water, showing the preferableness of it to all others:

whosoever drinketh of this water; meaning in that well called Jacob's well, or any other common water:

shall thirst again; as this woman had often done, and would again, as she herself knew, (~~4015~~ John 4:15), and as Jesus did, who very likely afterwards drank of it, (~~4015~~ John 19:28). For though water allays heat, quenches thirst, and refreshes and revives the spirits for a while, yet in process of time,

natural heat increases, and thirst returns, and there is a necessity of drinking water again.

Ver. 14. *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him*, etc.] Meaning, the Spirit and his grace; (see ~~4078~~ John 7:38,39); and which he more than once speaks of, as his gift here, and in the context: of which, whoever truly partakes,

shall never thirst; either after sinful lusts and pleasures, and his former vicious way of living, which he now disrelishes: not but there are desires and lustings after carnal things in regenerate persons, as there were lustings in the Israelites, after the onions, garlic, and flesh pots in Egypt, when they were come out from thence; yet these are not so strong, prevalent, and predominant; they are checked and restrained by the grace of God; so that they do not hanker after sin as they did, nor drink up iniquity like water, or commit sin with greediness, as before: or else it means thirsting after the grace of God; thirsty persons are invited to take and drink of the water of life freely, and are pronounced blessed; and it is promised, that they shall be filled, or satisfied; yet not so in this life, that they shall never thirst or desire more; for as they need more grace, and it is promised them, they thirst after it, and desire it; and the more they taste and partake of it, the more they desire it: but the sense is, either as some read the words, “they shall not thirst for ever”; though they may for a time, and be in a distressed condition for want of a supply of it, yet they shall always; God will open rivers and fountains for them, and give drink to his people, his chosen; and the other state, they shall hunger and thirst no more; for the Lamb shall lead them to fountains of living waters: or rather, they shall never thirst, so as to be like the thirsty and parched earth, dried up, and have no moisture in them; for however this may seem sometimes to be their case, God will, and does, pour out water and floods upon them; yea, that grace which is infused into their souls, is an abundant and an abiding principle, which will preserve them from languishing, so as to perish:

but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water; which denotes the plenty of it; for the grace of God given at conversion is exceeding abundant, it superabounds all the aboundings of sin; it comes in large flows into the hearts of regenerate persons, and flows out of them, as rivers of living water: and which also abides, for it continues

springing up into everlasting life: it is a seed which remains, an immortal and never dying principle; it is inseparably connected with eternal life; it is

the beginning of it, and it issues in it; whoever has grace, shall have glory; and whoever are called, sanctified, justified, and pardoned, shall be glorified: such is the nature, influence, and use of this living water, in Christ's gift: the words of the law are, in the Targum on (²⁰¹⁵ Song of Solomon 4:15) compared to a well of living water.

Ver. 15. *The woman saith unto him, Sir,* etc.] (See Gill on "²⁰¹¹ John 4:11");

give me this water, that I thirst not. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "again":

neither come hither; the Ethiopic version adds here, "again";

to draw. This she said also, in the same sneering and scoffing way, as her talking of not thirsting and coming thither to draw water, shows; and it is as if she had said, pray give me some of this fine water you talk of, that I may never thirst again; and so have no occasion to be at all this fatigue and trouble, to come daily to this well for water: though some think, that she now spoke seriously, having some little knowledge of what our Lord meant by living water, but with a mixture of much ignorance, and that she heartily desired it; but the reason she gives, shows the contrary.

Ver. 16. *Jesus saith unto her,* etc.] Observing that she continued an ignorant scoffer at him, and his words, determined to take another method with her; and convince her, that he was not a common and ordinary person she was conversing with, as she took him to be; and also what a sinner she was, and what a vicious course of life she had lived; so that she might see that she stood in need of him, as the gift of God, and Saviour of men; and of the grace he had been speaking of, under the notion of living water: saying to her,

go, call thy husband, and come hither; go directly from hence to the city of Sychar, and call thy husband, and come back hither along with him again: this Christ said, not to have him come to teach and instruct him, and as if he would more readily and easily understand him, and that he might be with her, a partaker of the same grace; but to bring on some further conversation, by which she would understand that he knew her state and condition, and what a course of life she now lived, and so bring her under a conviction of her sin and danger, and need of him and his grace.

Ver. 17. *The woman answered and said, I have no husband,* etc.] Which was a truth she would not have spoke at another time and place, or to any of her neighbours; but Christ being a stranger, and no odium incurring upon her by it; and this serving a purpose to excuse her going to call him, she declares the truth of the matter:

Jesus said unto her, thou hast well said, I have no husband; this is the truth, it is really fact, and is the true state of the case, between thee and him, who goes for thy husband.

Ver. 18. *For thou hast had five husbands,* etc.] Which she either had had lawfully, and had buried one after another; and which was no crime, and might be: the Sadducees propose a case to Christ, in which a woman is said to have had seven husbands successively, in a lawful manner, (⁴¹²⁵Matthew 22:25-28). Or rather, she had had so many, and had been divorced from everyone of them, for adultery; for no other cause it should seem did the Samaritans divorce; seeing that they only received the law of Moses, and rejected, at least, many of the traditions of the elders; and since they are particularly said ^{f189}

“not to be expert in the law of marriages and divorces:”

and the rather this may seem to be the case, as Dr. Lightfoot observes; since these husbands are mentioned, as well as he with whom she lived in an adulterous manner; and which suggests, that she had not lived honestly with them:

and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband; that is, not thy lawful husband, as the Persic version reads, and Nonnus paraphrases; being not married to him at all, though they cohabited as man and wife, when there was no such relation between them:

in that saidst thou truly; or that which is truth: thus Christ the omniscient God, who knew her full well, and the whole of her past infamous conversation, and her present lewd and wicked way of living, exposes all unto her.

Ver. 19. *The woman saith unto him, Sir,* etc.] With another countenance, and a different air and gesture, with another accent and tone of speech, dropping her scoffs and jeers:

I perceive that thou art a prophet; such an one as Samuel was, who could tell Saul what was in his heart, and that his father's asses were found, and where they were, (^{<009>}1 Samuel 9:19,20); and as Elisha, whose heart went with his servant Gehazi, when Naaman turned to him to meet him, and give him presents; and who could tell, ere the king's messenger came to him, that the son of a murderer had sent to take away his head, (^{<116>}2 Kings 5:26 6:32). And such a prophet, that had such a spirit of discerning, this woman took Christ to be; and who indeed is greater than a prophet, and is the omniscient God; who knows all men's hearts, thoughts, words and actions, and needs not that any should testify of them to him; for he knows what is in them, and done by them; and can tell them all that ever they did, as he did this woman, (^{<409>}John 4:29). Now in order either to shift off the discourse from this subject, which touched her to the quick; or else being truly sensible of her sin, and willing to reform, and for the future to worship God in the place and manner he had directed, she addressed Christ in the following words.

Ver. 20. *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain*, etc.] Mount Gerizim, which was just by, and within sight; so that the woman could point to it; it was so near to Shechem, or Sychar, that Jotham's voice was heard from the top of it thither, (^{<006>}Judges 9:6,7). By the "fathers", this woman claims as theirs, are meant, not the immediate ancestors of the Samaritans, or those only of some few generations past; but the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose descendants they would be thought to be; and they improved every instance of their worshipping in these parts, in favour of this mountain, being a sacred place. And Abraham did indeed build an altar to the Lord, in the plain of Moreh, (^{<012>}Genesis 12:6,7) and which the Jews themselves ^{f190} own, is the same with Sichem; but their tradition which Theophylact reports, that Isaac was offered upon the Mount of Gerizim, is entirely false: Jacob, it is true, came to Shalem, a city of Shechem; and upon this very spot of ground, the parcel of a field, he bought of the children of Hammor, and gave to his son Joseph, he built an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel, (^{<013>}Genesis 33:18-20). And also upon this very mountain, the tribe of Joseph, with others stood, when they were come over Jordan, and blessed the people; all which circumstances, the Samaritans failed not to make use of in vindication of themselves, and their worship in this mountain; and which this woman might be acquainted with, and might refer unto: but as for any temple, or place of worship on this mount, there was none till of late years, even after the second temple was

built. The occasion of it, as Josephus^{f191} relates, was this; Manasseh, brother to Jaddua the high priest, having married Nicasso, daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, was on that account driven from the priesthood; he fled to his father-in-law, and related the case to him, expressing great love to his daughter, and yet a regard to his office; upon which Sanballat proposed to build him a temple on Mount Gerizim, for which he did not doubt of obtaining leave of Darius the Persian monarch, and make him an high priest. Darius being overcome by Alexander the Great, Sanballat made his court to him, and petitioned him for the building of this temple, who granted him his request; and accordingly he built one, and Manasseh became the high priest; and many of the profligate Jews, that had married strange wives, or violated the sabbath, or had eaten forbidden meat, came over and joined him. This temple, we are told^{f192}, was built about forty years after the second temple at Jerusalem: and stood two hundred years, and then was destroyed by Jochanan, the son of Simeon, the son of Mattathiah, who was called Hyrcanus, and so says Josephus^{f193}; it might now be rebuilt: however, this did not put a stop to worship in this place, about which there were great contentions, between the Jews and the Samaritans; of which we have some instances, in the writings of the former: it is said^{f194}, that

“R. Jonathan went to pray in Jerusalem, and passed by that mountain (the gloss says, Mount Gerizim), and a certain Samaritan saw him, and said to him, whither art thou going? he replied, that he was going to pray at Jerusalem; he said to him, is it not better for thee to pray in this blessed mountain, and not in that dunghill house? he replied, why is it blessed? he answered, because it was not overflowed by the waters of the flood; the thing was hid from the eyes of R. Jonathan, and he could not return an answer.”

This story is told elsewhere^{f195}, with a little variation, and more plainly as to the place, thus;

“it happened to R. Jonathan, that he went to Neapolis, of the Cuthites, or Samaritans, (i.e. to Sichem, for Sichem is now called Naplous,) and he was riding upon an ass, and an herdsman with him; a certain, Samaritan joined himself to them: when they came to Mount Gerizim, the Samaritan said to R. Jonathan, how came it to pass that we are come to this holy mountain? R. Jonathan replied,

whence comes it to be holy? the Samaritan answered him, because it was not hurt by the waters of the flood.”

Much the same story is told of R. Ishmael bar R. Jose ^{f196}. It is to be observed in this account, that the Samaritans call this mountain the holy mountain, they imagined there was something sacred in it; and the blessed mountain, or the mountain of blessing; no doubt, because the blessings were pronounced upon it; though a very poor reason is given by them in the above passages. And they not only urged the above instances of the worship or the patriarchs at, or about this place, which this woman refers to; but even falsified a passage in the Pentateuch, as is generally thought, in favour of this mount; for in (~~1520b~~ Deuteronomy 27:4), instead of Mount Ebal, in the Samaritan Pentateuch Mount Gerizim is inserted. So stood the ease on one side of the question; on the other hand, the Jews pleaded for the temple at Jerusalem.

And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship; that is, in the temple, there; who urged, and very rightly, that God had chosen that place to put his name, and fix his worship there; and had ordered them to come thither, and bring their offerings and sacrifices, and to keep their passover and other feasts; (see ~~1521b~~ Deuteronomy 12:5,6 16:2 ~~14712~~ 2 Chronicles 7:12). This was built by Solomon, according to the command and direction of God, some hundreds of years before Mount Gerizim was made use of for religious worship; and they had not only these things to plead, but also the worship which was here given to God in this place before the temple was built upon it, which they failed not to do. So the Targumist on (~~1481b~~ 2 Chronicles 3:1) enlarges on this head;

“and Solomon began to build the sanctuary of the Lord in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, in the place where Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Lord: *anj l wp [ra rta awh*, “this place is the land of worship”; for there all generations worshipped before the Lord; and there Abraham offered up his son Isaac, for a burnt offering, and the word of the Lord delivered him, and a ram was appointed in his stead; there Jacob prayed when he fled from Esau his brother; there the angel of the Lord appeared to David, when he disposed the sacrifice in the place he bought of Ornan, in the floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

And since, now there were so many things to be said on each side of the question, this woman desires, that seeing Christ was a prophet, he would be pleased to give her his sense of the matter, and inform her which was the right place of worship.

Ver. 21. *Jesus saith unto her, woman, believe me,* etc.] In what I am now going to say, since you own me to be a prophet:

the hour cometh; the time is at hand; it is very near; it is just coming:

when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father; that is, God, whom the Jews, and so the Samaritans, knew under the character of the Father of all men, as the Creator and preserver of them; for not God as the Father of Christ, or of the saints by adopting grace, is here intended, which this ignorant woman at least had no knowledge of: and the reason of our Lord's speaking after this manner, signifying, that she need not trouble herself about the place of worship, was, partly, because in a little time Jerusalem, and the temple in it, would be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another; and that Samaria, and this mountain of Gerizim, with whatsoever edifice might be upon it, would be laid desolate, so that neither of them would continue long to be places of religious worship; and partly, because all distinction of places in religion would entirely cease; and one place would be as lawful, and as proper to worship in, as another; and men should lift up holy hands, and pray, and offer up spiritual sacrifices in every place, even from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, (³⁰¹¹Malachi 1:11).

Ver. 22. *Ye worship ye know not what,* etc.] However, as to her question, he more directly replies by condemning the Samaritans, and their ignorance in worship, and by approving the Jews; and so manifestly gives the preference to the Jews, not only with respect to the place, and object of worship, but with respect to knowledge and salvation. As for the Samaritans, he suggests, that they were ignorant, not only of the true object of worship, but knew not what they themselves worshipped; or, at least, were not agreed in it. The original inhabitants of those parts, from whence these Samaritans sprung, were idolatrous Heathens, placed by the king of Assyria in the room of the ten tribes he carried away captive; and these feared not the Lord, for they "knew not the manner of the God of the land": wherefore lions were sent among them which slew many of them; upon which the king of Assyria ordered a priest to be sent to instruct them: but notwithstanding this, they had everyone gods of their own, some one,

and some another; and so served divers graven images, they and their children, and their children's children, to the time of the writer of the Book of Kings; (see ^{<1272>}2 Kings 17:24-41). And though after Manasseh, and other Jews were come among them, and they had received the law of Moses, they might have some knowledge of the true God, yet they glorified him not as God; and though they might in words profess him, yet in works they denied him; and even after this they are very highly charged by the Jews with idolatrous practices on this mount. Sometimes they say ^{f197} the Cuthites, or Samaritans, worshipped fire; and at other times, and which chiefly prevails with them, they assert ^{f198}, that their wise men, upon searching, found that they worshipped the image of a dove on Mount Gerizim; and sometimes they say ^{f199}, they worshipped the idols, the strange gods, or Teraphim, which Jacob hid under the oak in Sichem; which last, if true, may serve to illustrate these words of Christ, that they worshipped they knew not what, since they worshipped idols hid in the mount.

“R. Ishmael bar Jose, they say ^{f200} went to Neapolis, (Sichem, called Naplous,) the Cuthites, or Samaritans came to him (to persuade him to worship with them in their mountain); he said unto them, I will show you that ye do not “worship at this mountain”, but “the images which are hid under it”; for it is written, (^{<1304>}Genesis 35:4); “and Jacob hid them” under the oak which was by Shechem.”

And elsewhere ^{f201} it is reported of the same Rabbi, that he went to Jerusalem to pray, as before related on (^{<1304>}John 4:20), and after what passed between him, and the Samaritan he met with at Mount Gerizim, before mentioned, he added;

“and said to him, I will tell you what ye are like, (ye are like) to a dog that lusts after carrion; so because ye know the idols are hid under it, (the mountain,) as it is written, (^{<1304>}Genesis 35:4) and Jacob hid them, therefore ye lust after it: they said — this man knows that idols are hid here, and perhaps he will take them away; and they consulted together to kill him: he arose, and made his escape in the night.”

But this was not the case of the Jews:

we know what we worship; Christ puts himself among them, for he was a Jew, as the woman took him to be; and, as man, was a worshipper of God; he feared, loved, and obeyed God; he trusted in him, and prayed unto him;

though, as God, he was the object of worship himself: and the true worshippers among the Jews, of which sort Christ was, knew God, whom they worshipped, spiritually and savingly; and the generality of that people had right notions of the God of Israel, having the oracles, and service of God, and being instructed out of Moses, and the prophets:

for salvation is of the Jews; the promises of salvation, and of a Saviour, were made to them, when the Gentiles were strangers to them; the means of salvation, and of the knowledge of it, as the word, statutes, and ordinances, were enjoyed by them, when others were ignorant of them; and the Messiah, who is sometimes styled “Salvation”, (see ^{<0498>}Genesis 49:18 ^{<0947>}Psalms 14:7 ^{<0933>}Luke 2:30), was not only prophesied of in their books, and promised unto them, but came of them, as well as to them; and the number of the saved ones had been for many hundreds of years, and still was among them; the line of election ran among them, and few among the Gentiles were called and saved, as yet.

Ver. 23. *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers*, etc.] The worshippers of the true God, and who worship in a right manner, whether Jews or Samaritans, or of whatsoever nation:

shall worship the Father; the one true God, the Father of spirits, and of all flesh living:

in spirit; in opposition to all carnal conceptions of him, as if he was a corporeal being, or circumscribed in some certain place, dwelling in temples made with hands, or was to be worshipped with men’s hands; and in distinction from the carnal worship of the Jews, which lay greatly in the observation of carnal ordinances: and this shows they should not worship with their bodies only, for bodily exercise profiteth little; but with their souls or spirits, with their whole hearts engaged therein; and by, and under the influence and assistance of the Spirit of God, without whom men cannot perform worship, neither prayer, praise, preaching, or hearing, aright:

and in truth; in opposition to hypocrisy, with true hearts, in the singleness, sincerity, and integrity of their souls; and in distinction from Jewish ceremonies, which were only shadows, and had not the truth and substance of things in them; and according to the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; and in Christ, who is the truth, the true tabernacle, in, and through whom access is had to God, prayer is made to him, and every part

of religious worship with acceptance: so Enoch is said, *aj ɕwqb j l p*, “to worship in truth”, before the Lord, in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, in (^{<OR>}Genesis 5:24). And it may be that the worship of all the three persons in the Godhead, as more distinctly performed under the Gospel dispensation, is here intended: for the words may be thus read, “shall worship the Father, with the Spirit”, and with the truth; so the preposition *ev*, is rendered in (^{<OR>}Ephesians 6:2); and elsewhere; and then the sense is, they shall “worship the Father”; the first person in the Trinity, who is the Father of Christ, his only begotten Son, and together and equally with him “the Spirit”; the holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads; and Nonnus calls it the divine Spirit: and the rather he may be thought to be intended, since it follows in (^{<OR>}John 4:24), “the Spirit is God”; for so the words lie in the Greek text; and are so rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and therefore is the proper object of religious worship, whose temples the saints are, with whom they have communion, to whom they pray, and in whose name they are baptized: and also together “with the truth”; with Christ the way, the truth, and the life; who is the true God, and eternal life; and who is equally to be worshipped as the Father and Spirit, as he is by the angels in heaven, and by the saints on earth; who pray unto him, trust in him, and are also baptized in his name, as in the name of the other two persons: and the rather this may be thought to be the sense, since Christ is speaking, not of the manner, but of the object of worship, in the preceding verse:

for the Father seeketh such to worship him; it being agreeable to him to be worshipped in the manner, as above related; and his desire is, that the Son and Spirit should be honoured equally as himself; and such worshippers he has found, having made them such, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and such only are acceptable to him; (see ^{<OR>}Philippians 3:3).

Ver. 24. *God is a spirit*, etc.] Or “the Spirit is God”; a divine person, possessed of all divine perfections, as appears from his names, works, and worship ascribed unto him; (see Gill on “^{<OR>}John 4:23”); though the Arabic and Persic versions, and others, read as we do, “God is a spirit”; that is, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: for taking the words in this light, not one of the persons is to be understood exclusive of the other; for this description, or definition, agrees with each of them, and they are all the object of worship, and to be worshipped in a true and spiritual manner. God is a spirit, and not a body, or a corporeal substance: the nature and essence of God is like a spirit, simple and uncompounded, not made up of

parts; nor is it divisible; nor does it admit of any change and alteration. God, as a spirit, is immaterial, immortal, invisible, and an intelligent, willing, and active being; but differs from other spirits, in that he is not created, but an immense and infinite spirit, and an eternal one, which has neither beginning nor end: he is therefore a spirit by way of eminency, as well as effectively, he being the author and former of all spirits: whatever excellence is in them, must be ascribed to God in the highest manner; and whatever is imperfect in them, must be removed from him:

and they that worship him; worship is due to him on account of his nature and perfections, both internal and external; with both the bodies and souls of men; and both private and public; in the closet, in the family, and in the church of God; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances:

must worship him in spirit and in truth; in the true and spiritual manner before described, which is suitable to his nature, and agreeably to his will.

Ver. 25. *The woman saith unto him*, etc.] Not knowing well what to say to these things Christ had been discoursing about, as the place, object, and manner of worship; and being undetermined in her judgment of them, by what he had said, was willing to refer them to the Messiah's coming; of which she, and the Samaritans, had some knowledge,

I know that Messiah cometh which is called Christ: the last clause, "which is called Christ", are not the words of the woman explaining the Hebrew word Messiah; for as, on the one hand, she did not understand Greek, so, on the other, she could not think that the person she was conversing with, who she knew was a Jew, needed that word to be explained to him; but they are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the Hebrew word "Messiah", by the Greek word "Christ", in which language he wrote: hence this clause is left out in the Syriac version, as unnecessary to a Syriac reader, not needing the word to be explained to him. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read in the plural number, "we know that Messiah cometh"; the knowledge of the coming of the Messiah was not peculiar to this woman, but was common to all the Samaritans; for as they received the five books of Moses, they might learn from thence, that a divine and excellent person was to come, who is called the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head; Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be; and a prophet like unto Moses: and though the word "Messiah" is not found in those books, yet, as it was usual with the Jews to call the same person by this name, they might easily

take it from them, and make use of it; and they not only knew that there was a Messiah to come, and expected him, but that he was coming, just ready to come; and this they might conclude, not only from the general expectation of the Jewish nation about this time, but from (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10). And it is certain, that the Samaritans to this day do expect a Messiah, though they know not his name, unless it be **bhçh**; the meaning of which they do not understand ^{f202} to me it seems to be an abbreviation of **abhçh**, or **abh rça awh**, “he that is to come”; by which circumlocution the Jews understand the Messiah; (see ^{<0103>}Matthew 11:3); and to which this Samaritan woman seems to have some respect:

when he is come he will tell us all things; the whole mind and will of God; all things relating to the worship of God, and to the salvation of men. This the Samaritans might conclude from his general character as a prophet, like unto Moses, to whom men were to hearken, (^{<0515>}Deuteronomy 18:15), and from a common prevailing notion among the Jews, that the times of the Messiah would be times of great knowledge, founded on several prophecies, as (^{<2113>}Isaiah 2:3 11:2,9 ^{<2134>}Jeremiah 31:34), and which they sometimes express in the following manner ^{f203}:

“in the days of the Messiah, even the little children in the world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom, and know in it the ends and computations (of times), and at that time he shall be made manifest unto all.”

And again ^{f204},

“says R. Judah, the holy blessed God will reveal the deep mysteries of the law in the times of the King Messiah; for “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord”, etc. and it is written, “they shall not teach every man his brother”, etc.”

And elsewhere ^{f205},

“the whole world shall be filled with the words of the Messiah, and with the words of the law, and with the words of the commandments; and these things shall extend to the isles afar off; to many people, the uncircumcised in heart, and the uncircumcised in flesh; and they shall deal in the secrets of the law. — And there shall be no business in the world, but to know the Lord only; wherefore the Israelites shall be exceeding wise, and know secret

things, and comprehend the knowledge of their Creator, as much as is possible for a man to do, as it is said, “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord”, etc.”

Accordingly, the Messiah is come, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has made known all things to his disciples, he hath heard of him; he has declared him to them, his love, grace, and mercy. God has spoken all he has to say that appertains to his own worship, and the salvation of the children of men by his Son Jesus Christ.

Ver. 26. *Jesus saith unto her*, etc.] Upon her making mention of the Messiah, of his coming, and of his work, he took the opportunity of making himself known unto her:

I that speak unto thee am [he]; the Messiah; (see ^{f206}Isaiah 52:6). This is a wonderful instance of the grace of Christ to this woman, that he should make himself known in so clear and plain a manner, to so mean a person, and so infamous a creature as she had been: we never find that he ever made so clear a discovery of himself, in such express terms, to any, as to her, unless it were to his immediate disciples; and these he would sometimes charge not to tell who he was.

Ver. 27. *And upon this came his disciples*, etc.] Just as he was saying the above words, and making himself known in this full manner, his disciples, who had been into the city to buy food, came up to them:

and marvelled that he talked with the woman; or with a woman; for, according to the Jewish canons, it was not judged decent, right, and proper, nor indeed lawful, to enter into a conversation, or hold any long discourse with a woman. Their rule is this,

“do not multiply discourse with a woman, with his wife they say, much less with his neighbour’s wife: hence the wise men say, at whatsoever time a man multiplies discourse with a woman, he is the cause of evil to himself, and ceases from the words of the law, and at last shall go down into hell ^{f206}.”

And especially this was thought to be very unseemly in any public place, as in an inn, or in the street: hence that direction ^{f207},

“let not a man talk with a woman in the streets, even with his wife; and there is no need to say with another man’s wife.”

And particularly it was thought very unbecoming a religious man, a doctor, or scholar, or a disciple of a wise man so to do. This is one of the six things which are a reproach to a scholar, “to talk with a woman in the street”^{f208}. And it is even said^{f209},

“let him not talk with a woman in the street, though she is his wife, or his sister, or his daughter.”

And besides, the disciples might marvel, not only that he talked with a woman, but that he should talk with that woman, who was a Samaritan; since the Jews had no familiar conversation with Samaritans, men or women: and the woman was as much astonished that Christ should have anything to say to her, and especially to ask a favour of her; for though they might, and did converse in a way of trade and business, yet did they not multiply discourse, or enter into a free conversation with one another: and it may be, that the disciples might overhear what he said to the woman, just as they came up; so that their astonishment was not merely at his talking with a woman, and with a Samaritan woman, but at what he said unto her, that he should so plainly tell her that he was the Messiah, when he so strictly charged them to tell no man.

Yet no man said; no, not Peter, as Nonnus observes, who was bold and forward to put and ask questions: “what seekest thou?” or inquest of her about? is it food, or drink, or what? “or why talkest thou with her?” when it is not customary, seemly, and lawful. It may be considered, whether or no these two questions may not relate separately, the one to the woman, the other to Christ; as, the first,

what seekest thou? to the woman; and the sense be, that no man said to her, what do you want with our master? what are you inquiring about of him? what would you have of him? or what do you seek for from him? and the latter,

why talkest thou with her? peculiarly to Christ. The Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Beza’s ancient copy indeed read, “no man said to him”; which confines both the questions to Christ. Now this shows the reverence the disciples had for Christ, and the great opinion they entertained of him, that whatever he did was well, and wisely done, though it might seem strange to them, and they could not account for it: however, they did not think that he, who was their Lord and master, was accountable

to them for what he did; and they doubted not but he had good reasons for his conduct.

Ver. 28. *The woman then left her water pot*, etc.] Her pail, or bucket, she brought with her to the well to draw water in: this she left, either for Christ and his disciples to make use of; or rather through forgetfulness, her mind being greatly impressed, and her thoughts much taken up with what Christ had said to her, and she being in haste to acquaint others with it: so the disciples left their nets, their business, their friends, and all for Christ; and so the saints are brought to quit their earthly and worldly things for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel. The Ethiopic version renders it, “she left her disputation”: she left off discoursing with Christ upon the disciples coming to him.

And went her way into the city: the city of Sychar, to inform her friends, relations, and neighbours what she had met with: so Andrew and Philip, when they had found Christ themselves, acquaint others with it, and bring them to him; so Levi, the publican, being called himself by Christ, makes a feast for Christ, and invites many publicans and sinners to sit down with him, that they might know him as well as himself; so the Apostle Paul, when converted, expresses a great concern for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and such is the nature of true grace, that those that have it would have others partakers of it likewise:

and saith to the men. The Ethiopic version adds, “of her house”; no doubt the men of the place in general are meant; not only those of her family, but the inhabitants of the city. The Syriac version leaves out the words, “to the men”. The Jews will not allow the Cuthites, or Samaritans, to be called “men”; this they peculiarly ascribe to priests, Levites, and Israelites^{f210}.

Ver. 29. *Come, see a man*, etc.] An uncommon, an extraordinary man, a prophet, and, who himself says, he is the Messiah, who is now at Jacob’s well; come, go along with me, and see him and converse with him, and judge for yourselves, who, and what he is: she does not say, “go and see”; for she proposed to go along with them herself, that she might have more conversation with him, and knowledge of him, and grace from him: so such that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, desire more grace from him, and communion with him.

Which told me all things that ever I did; the more remarkable things that had been done by her in the whole series of her life and conversation;

referring more especially to the account he had given her of her having had five husbands, and what the man was she now lived with; when no doubt, all the transactions of her life were laid before her, and she had, at once, a view of all her iniquities; when her sins stared her in the face, and her conscience was filled with guilt and remorse, and her soul with shame and confusion; and so it is when Christ, by his Spirit, convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment:

is not this the Christ? that was to come, has been promised and prophesied of, and we have expected, who is of quick understanding, and even God omniscient; surely this must be he, as he himself says he is.

Ver. 30. *Then they went out of the city*, etc.] “The men”, as the Syriac version expresses it; the inhabitants of Sychar left their business, and came out of the city:

and came unto him; to Christ, to see him, and converse with him, that they might know who he was: for though the woman had been a woman of ill fame, yet such was the account that she gave of Christ, and such power went along with her words, that what with the strangeness of the relation, and the curiosity with which they were led, and chiefly through the efficacy of divine grace, at least in many of them, they were moved to regard what she said, and to follow her directions and solicitations.

Ver. 31. *In the mean while*, etc.] Whilst the woman was gone into the city, and had acquainted the inhabitants, that such a wonderful person was at Jacob’s well, and invited them to come and see him:

his disciples prayed him, saying, master, eat; for they perceived a disinclination in him to food; and they knew that he was weary with his journey, and that it was the time of day, and high time, that he had had some food; and therefore out of great respect to him, and in concern for his health and welfare, they entreated him that he would take some food: so far was Christ from indulging his sensual appetite; and so little reason had the Scribes and Pharisees to traduce him as a wine bibber and glutton.

Ver. 32. *But he said unto them*, etc.] That is, “Jesus”, as the Persic, or the Lord Jesus, as the Ethiopic versions express it:

I have meat to eat that ye know not of: meaning the conversion of the Samaritan woman, and of other Samaritans, who were flocking in great numbers to him, which he knew, though his disciples did not; and the

harvest of souls he had a prospect of, (see ~~DOES~~ John 4:35), was as meat unto him, delightful and refreshing; and his mind and thoughts were so taken up with these things, that he had no inclination to any corporeal food.

Ver. 33. *Therefore said the disciples one to another*, etc.] Privately, among themselves, though in his hearing; at least he knew what they said by answer;

hath any man; or anyone, any angel from heaven, or any of the inhabitants of the city, or any man or woman, or this woman they had found him talking with:

brought him [ought] to eat? for they thought of nothing else but bodily food; just as when he cautioned them against the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees, they imagined he said it, because they had taken no bread; whereas he meant the doctrine of these persons: so dull of understanding spiritual things were the disciples themselves, that it is not so much to be wondered at that the Samaritan woman, whilst in her carnal state, when Christ spoke of living water, should understand him of material water, or spring water.

Ver. 34. *Jesus saith unto them*, etc.] His disciples:

my meat is to do the will of him that sent me. The Ethiopic version reads, “of my Father that sent me”, and who is undoubtedly intended. Now as food is pleasant, and delightful, and refreshing to the body of man, so doing the will of God was as delightful and refreshing to the soul of Christ: he took as much pleasure in it, as an hungry man does in eating and drinking. One part of the will of God was to assume human nature; this he had done, and with delight and pleasure: another part of it was to fulfil the law; and this was in his heart, and was his delight, and he was now doing it: and another branch of it was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of his people; and as disagreeable as this was in itself to the human nature, yet he cheerfully agreed to it; and was sometimes, as it were, impatient till it was accomplished; and he voluntarily became obedient to it: no man could, with greater eagerness, fall to eating, when hungry, than Christ went about his Father’s will and work, even that which was most ungrateful to him, as man.

And to finish his work; one part of which was to preach the Gospel, and for, which he was anointed and sent; and which he did with great assiduity and constancy: and another part of it was the conversion of sinners by it,

whom he was sent to call, and with whom he delighted to be; and was the work he was now about, and took the pleasure in, the text expresses: and beside these miracles were works his Father gave him to finish; such as healing diseases, and dispossessing of devils, and which he went about doing continually, with great delight: but the chief, work of all is, that of redemption and salvation of his chosen ones: this was a work his Father called him to, and sent him into this world to perform, which he gave unto him, and Christ accepted of, and agreed to do; and though it was a very toilsome and laborious one, there being a righteous law to be fulfilled, justice to be satisfied, the sins of all his people to bear, as well as the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and numerous enemies to grapple with, and an accursed death to undergo; yet with pleasure he performed this: for the joy of his Father's will, accomplishing his counsels and covenant, and his own engagements, and procuring the salvation of his people, he endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame of it. The whole of the and work of God was done by him, just as the Lord commanded it; exactly, according to the pattern given him, with all faithfulness and integrity; with the most consummate wisdom and prudence; with all application, diligence, and constancy, and so as to finish it, and that without the help of any other; and in such a manner that nothing can be added to it to make it more perfect, or that it can be undone again by men or devils: and that the doing and finishing of this were his meat, or as delightful and refreshing to him as meat is to the body, appears from his ready and cheerful engaging in it in eternity; from his early and industrious entrance on it in time; from his constancy in it, when he had begun, insomuch that nothing could deter him from it; nor did he sink and fail under it, nor left it till he had finished it.

Ver. 35. *Say not ye, there are yet four months*, etc.] Our Lord had been in Jerusalem and Judea, about eight months from the last passover, and there remained four more to the next passover:

and then cometh harvest? barley harvest, which began at that time. Now as the passover was in the middle of the month Nisan, which was about the latter end of our March; reckoning four months back from thence shows, that it was about the latter end of our November, or beginning of December, that Christ was in Samaria, and at Jacob's well. Some think, that this does not refer to the then present time, as if there were so many months from thence to the next harvest, but to a common way of speaking, that there were four months from seed time to harvest; during which time there was a comfortable hope, and longing expectation of it: but this will,

by no means, agree either with the wheat or barley harvest. The wheat was sown before this time, and the barley a good while after.

“Half Tisri, Marcheshvan, and half Cisleu, were, [r z, seed time
f211,,

The earliest they sowed their wheat was in Tisri, which answers to our September and October; i.e. to half one, and half the other. The month of Marcheshvan, which answers to October and November, was the principal month for sowing it ^{f212}: hence that paraphrase on (²¹¹⁰Ecclesiastes 11:2):

“give a good part of thy seed to thy field in Tisri, and do not refrain from sowing even in Cisleu.”

As for the barley, that was sown in the months of Shebet and Adar, and usually in the latter ^{f213}; the former of which answers to January and February, and the latter to February and March. And we read ^{f214} of their sowing seventy days before the passover, which was within six weeks of the beginning of barley harvest.

Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: pointing to the lands which lay near the city of Sychar:

for they are white already to harvest; alluding to the corn fields, which, when ripe, and near harvest, look white: hence we read ^{f215} of [^]bl h hdç, “the white field”: which the Jews say is a field sown with wheat or barley, and so called to distinguish it from a field planted with trees; though it may be rather, that it is so called from its white look when ripe. So the three Targums paraphrase (⁰⁴⁹²Genesis 49:12):

“his hills (his valleys, or fields, as Onkelos) [^]rwwj y, “are white” with corn, and flocks of sheep.”

Christ here speaks not literally; for the fields could not be white at such a distance from harvest; but spiritually, of a harvest of souls; and has regard to the large number of Samaritans that were just now coming out of the city, and were within sight, and covered the adjacent fields: and these he calls upon his disciples to lift up their eyes and behold; and suggests to them, that it was not a time for eating and drinking, but for working, since here was such a number of souls to be gathered in: and thus as from corporeal food he proceeded to treat of spiritual food; so from a literal

harvest he goes on to speak of a spiritual one, and encourages his disciples to labour in it, by the following arguments.

Ver. 36. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages*, etc.] Angels are sometimes called reapers, and so are ministers of the Gospel here. The works and ministry of the apostles are here expressed by “reaping”: for as in reaping, when the corn is ripe, the sickle is put in, and the corn is cut down, and laid to the ground, and then bound in sheaves, and gathered into the barn; so when things are ripe in providence, and God’s set time is come to convert any of his people, he makes use of his ministers for the cutting them down, laying low the loftiness and haughtiness of man, stripping him of all his goodness, and taking him off of a dependence on his own righteousness and works, and for the gathering them into his churches, which is done with a great deal of joy and pleasure: and such as are so employed, and in this way made useful, shall “receive wages”, shall not only be taken care of in providence, and have a sufficient and comfortable maintenance, the labourer being worthy of his hire; but shall have pleasure, delight, and satisfaction in their work, that being blessed for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ, and they having the presence God in it; and also shall hereafter receive the crown of righteousness, when they have finished their course, and shall shine like the stars for ever and ever.

And gathereth fruit unto life eternal: by fruit are meant sinners converted and turned from the error of their ways which are the fruit of a Gospel ministry, of the efficacy and power of divine grace accompanying it; (see ^{<B1516}John 15:16); and these are gathered, by the preaching of the Gospel, out from among the rest of mankind, unto Christ, the Shiloh, or peace maker, and into his churches, and remain, abide, and persevere to the end; that grace, which is implanted in their souls, being a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; so that they are at last gathered into Christ’s garner, into heaven, where they shall live with him for ever:

that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. The sowers are the prophets of the Old Testament, who sowed that seed in the prophecies, which sprung up in Gospel times, and laid the foundation therein of the great success of the apostles of Christ in preaching the word; for they so clearly described the Messiah, and pointed out Christ, his offices, and his work, in so distinct a manner, that when he was come he was readily known, and cheerfully embraced; they greatly facilitated the work of the apostles, who had nothing to do but to preach Christ, as come

in the flesh: and hence they reaped and gathered a vast harvest of souls every where. John the Baptist also was one that sowed; he prepared the way of the Lord, and made straight his paths: and our Lord himself was a sower, that went forth to sow, and who sowed good seed in the field; all which succeeded well, and were ripening apace for a general harvest, which began on the day of Pentecost, after our Lord's ascension to heaven. This was in Judea; and in the Gentile world there was a sowing in providence, which contributed to make the work of the disciples more easy there, and to bring on, in time, a large harvest. The books of the Old Testament were translated into the Greek language; and the Jews were scattered in the several parts of the world; and the Greek tongue, in which the New Testament was to be written, was every where generally spoken; and these providences were ripening apace to bring on a great work there. And now, as before observed, the apostles were the reapers; they were remarkably successful in the gathering in of souls, even more than the prophets, than John the Baptist, or Christ himself; never was such a harvest of souls, either in Judea, or in the Gentile world, before or since; of which the conversion of these Samaritans was a pledge or earnest. Now when the whole harvest is gathered in, at the end of the world, all these will rejoice together, the "patriarchs" and prophets, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his apostles and ministers; the different parts they have had in this work all concurring and agreeing together, and issuing in the glory of God, and the good of souls.

Ver. 37. *And herein is that saying true*, etc.] This verifies that proverbial expression so much in use, and which may be applied to different persons and cases:

one soweth, and another reapeth; the prophets sowed, and the apostles reaped.

Ver. 38. *I sent you to reap*, etc.] To preach the Gospel, and gather in souls by your ministry; referring to the mission of them in (~~DOM~~ Matthew 10:6,7);

that whereon ye bestowed no labour; being sent to the Jews, who had the writings of the prophets, and were versed in them; and had learned from them that the Messiah was to come, and were now in general expectation of him; so that they had nothing more to do, than to declare to those persons who were cultivated by the prophets, and were like to ground tilled and manured, that the Messiah was come, and the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Other men laboured; the prophets, and John the Baptist:

and ye are entered into their labours; to finish the work they had begun, and which was almost done to their hands.

Ver. 39. *And many of the Samaritans of that city*, etc.] Of Sychar, which was a city of Samaria;

believed on him; that he was the true Messiah he had told the woman he was; and she put it to them whether he was or not: before they saw him, or had any conversation with him themselves, they believed in him; (see ~~EBB~~John 20:29);

for the saying of the woman which testified, he told me all that ever I did: the account she gave was so plain, and honest, and disinterested, that they could not but give credit to it; and since the person was an utter stranger to her, and yet had laid before her the whole series of her past life and conversation, they concluded he could be no other than the Messiah, who should tell all things; and being of quick understanding or smell, was able to disclose the secrets of men.

Ver. 40. *So when the Samaritans were come unto him*, etc.] The Ethiopic version reads, all the Samaritans; they came to him at Jacob's well, upon the woman's solicitations, and the account she gave of this extraordinary person: and after they had conversed with him, and heard him themselves, they were taken with his divine discourses, and being thoroughly persuaded that he was the Messiah,

they besought him that he would tarry with them; they were not like the Gergesenes, who besought him to depart out of their coasts as soon he was in them: but these men were delighted with his company; and notwithstanding his being a Jew, desired a conversation with him, and entreated that he would go along with them to their city, and stay with them:

and he abode there two days; he went with them to Sychar. He would not deny their request, lest they should be discouraged; and yet would not make any long stay with them, that he might give no umbrage to the Jews; though it is very likely from this short stay in Samaria, they afterwards reproached him as a Samaritan, (~~EBB~~John 8:48). Our Lord's direction to his disciples not to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, was not a rule

to himself, or binding upon him, and was only a rule to them “pro tempore”.

Ver. 41. *And many more believed*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, “on him”: when he was come into the city, and had preached to the inhabitants in general, a larger multitude than before believed in him as the Messiah, and professed him, and became followers of him.

Because of his own word; which came to them, not in word only, but in power, and was the power of God unto salvation to them; and was received by them, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and it wrought effectually in them, and was an hammer to break their rocky hearts in pieces, and to bring them into subjection to himself, his Gospel and ordinances: whether his word or doctrine was accompanied with miracles is not certain; this shows, that their faith in him was founded on his own word, which fell with great weight upon them. It seems to have an emphasis laid upon it, his own word, in distinction from the woman’s saying.

Ver. 42. *And said unto the woman*, etc.] Who, it appears, kept hearing Christ, attending on him, and conversing with him; for having tasted of his grace, she could not leave him:

now we believe, not because of thy saying; not on account of that only: it should seem that these were the same persons that believed upon her word before they went out of the city; and who, when come to Christ, invited him into it; and now, having heard his excellent discourses, were confirmed in the faith of him:

for we have heard him ourselves; not only externally with their bodily ears, but internally, having ears given them to hear, so as to understand what he said; to mix it with faith, and receive it in love; to feel the power of it in their hearts, and taste the sweetness of it, and be nourished by it; and so as to distinguish his voice from another’s, as Christ’s true sheep are capable of.

And know that this is indeed the Christ; the true Messiah, and not a false one; the Messiah spoken of by Moses, whose books the Samaritans received, as the seed of the woman, the Shiloh, and prophet, like to Moses; the Christ of God, who is anointed to be prophet, priest, and King. The

Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word “Christ”, and only read what follows,

the Saviour of the world: they knew him to be the Saviour, he who was spoken of as such; for his work to bruise the serpent’s head implies it, and his name Shiloh imports as much: and besides, he is called by Jacob God’s salvation, (⁰⁴⁹⁸Genesis 49:18). God appointed him as a Saviour; he sent him, and he came as such, and is become the author of salvation; and his name is called Jesus, on this account: and a great Saviour he is; both able, and willing; and he is suitable to the case of sinners; and is a complete, and an only one: and these Samaritans knew him to be “the Saviour of the world”; not of every individual person in it, for all are not saved by him; nor of the Jewish world, for many of them died in their sins; but of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; (see ⁴⁸⁶John 3:16 ⁴¹¹1 John 2:2); even of all God’s elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles; of all that believe in him, of whatsoever nation, and in whatsoever state and condition: so that their knowledge of him, and faith in him, were beyond that of the Jews, who looked upon the Messiah only as a Saviour of their nation; and that the Gentiles would have no manner of benefit and advantage by him: though the Jews ^{f216} do call the angel in (⁰²³⁰Exodus 23:20) **aml [d aqwrp**, “the Saviour”, or “Redeemer of” the world. And this the Samaritans might know from the writings of Moses, as from (⁰²¹⁸Genesis 22:18 49:10) their present knowledge of Christ was not a mere notional, speculative, and general one, but was special, spiritual, and saving, which they had from the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; they approved of him as their Saviour; they trusted in him as such; they had an experimental acquaintance with him, and practically owned him; and which they attained to by hearing him.

Ver. 43. *Now after two days he departed thence*, etc.] When he had stayed two days at Sychar conversing with, and discoursing to the Samaritans, which were the means of the conversion of many of them; he departed out of that country, and passed on his way:

and went into Galilee; as he first intended; (see ⁴⁰⁴John 4:3).

Ver. 44. *For Jesus himself testified*, etc.] (⁰¹⁵⁷Matthew 13:57);

that a prophet hath no honour in his own country: all the Oriental versions read, “in his own city”; that is, Nazareth: for these words must not be understood as a reason why Christ left Judea, and went into Galilee,

because he had no honour in Judea, in which was Bethlehem, the place of his nativity; but are a reason why, when he came into Galilee, he did not go to Nazareth, his own city, where he was educated, and had been brought up, and had lived the greatest part of his life, because they treated him with great disrespect and contempt; (see Gill on “^{<4057>}Matthew 13:57”).

Ver. 45. *Then when he was come into Galilee*, etc.] That part of it in which Cana lay, as appears by what follows:

the Galilaeans received him; willingly, readily, and cheerfully, with much delight and pleasure, and with marks of great esteem and respect: they received him into their houses, and entertained him, and provided for him and his disciples:

having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover; the miracles he wrought there, (see ^{<4023>}John 2:23);

for they also went unto the feast; as well as Jesus and his disciples: they kept the feast of the passover, and went yearly to Jerusalem on that account: so Josephus speaks of the Galilaeans going to the Jewish festivals at Jerusalem, when he says ^{f217};

“it was the custom, or usual with the Galilaeans, when they went to the holy city at the festivals, to go through the country of the Samaritans;”

which was the way that Christ now came from thence to them.

Ver. 46. *So Jesus came again unto Cana of Galilee*, etc.] Where he had been once before; (see ^{<4001>}John 2:1,2). The Syriac version here, as there, calls it “Kotne” of Galilee; and the Persic version, “Catneh” of Galilee:

where he made the water wine; (see ^{<4009>}John 2:9,11);

there was a certain nobleman; the Vulgate Latin renders it, “a petty king”; the Arabic version, and Nonnus, call him, “a royal man”; and the Syriac version renders it, “a king’s servant”; with which agrees the Ethiopic, calling him “a minister, a steward, the king’s domestic”. The Persic version makes it to be his name, reading it, “there was a great man, whose name was Abdolmelic”, which signifies a king’s servant: from the whole he seems to be one that belonged to the palace of Herod Antipas, and was one of his courtiers; who, though he was but tetrarch of Galilee, yet is sometimes called a king, (^{<4064>}Mark 6:14);

whose son was sick at Capernaum; some versions, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic, read the phrase, “in Capernaum”, with the former clause, “there was a nobleman in Capernaum”: and others, as we do with this; and both may be true; for he might be an inhabitant of Capernaum, and his house be there where his son lay sick. Some think this nobleman was either Chuza, Herod’s steward, (^{<488>}Luke 8:3), or Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod, (^{<413>}Acts 13:1).

Ver. 47. *When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea*, etc.] For the fame of Christ, for his doctrine and miracles, was spread every where; so that it was known, and talked of, in most places, where he was, and what course he was steering: and this nobleman understanding that he had left Judea, and was come

into Galilee; and having inquired in what parts of Galilee he was,

he went unto him; though it was many miles from Capernaum, where Jesus was, at least a day’s journey; since, when the servants met their master, the child had been healed at one o’clock the day before; (see ^{<482>}John 4:52). Some reckon it about fifteen miles, but one would think it should be more:

and besought him, that he would come down; for Capernaum, though it was built on a hill, lay lower down in the country of Galilee than Cana did, near the sea of Tiberias: a like way of speaking is used in (^{<402>}John 2:12);

and heal his son. The nobleman believed that Christ had power to do it, by what he had heard concerning him, but thought his corporeal presence was absolutely necessary to it:

for he was at the point of death; or “would die”: he was very near it; there was no likelihood of his recovery; the physicians had given him over; and when he left him, he seemed to be near his death, and must die for any human help that could be obtained, or natural means that could be used.

Ver. 48. *Then said Jesus unto him*, etc.] With some degree of roughness in his speech, and severity in his countenance, in a way of reproof for his unbelief, as if he could not heal his son without going down to Capernaum along with him:

except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe. This was the cast of the Jews every where, both in Judea and Galilee; they required signs and miracles to be wrought, in confirmation of Christ’s being the Messiah, and

which indeed was but right; and Christ did perform them for that purpose: but their sin of unbelief lay in this, that they wanted still more and more signs; they could not be contented with what they had seen, but required more, being sluggish and backward to believe. Our Lord seems to say this chiefly for the sake of the Galilaeans, that were about him; who, though they might be acquainted with his former miracles, when among them, of turning water into wine, and had seen his wondrous works at the feast at Jerusalem, yet were very desirous of seeing more, and perhaps very pressing for this cure.

Ver. 49. *The nobleman saith unto him, Sir,* etc.] Notwithstanding this reproof, and seeming denial, he presses him again, and addressing him in a handsome and courteous manner, importunately entreats him, saying:

come down ere my son die; here was faith with a mixture of unbelief; he believed that Christ was able to heal his son, but he still thought that his going down with him was necessary; that he must be corporeally present, and must lay his hands on him, or touch him, or speak, and command the distemper off, or something of this kind, and which must be done before he died; for otherwise, should he die first, all hope was then gone; he had no notion of Christ being able to raise him from the dead.

Ver. 50. *Jesus saith unto him, go thy way,* etc.] Return home in peace, be not over much troubled and distressed about this matter; leave it with me, I will take care of it; all will be well: so the Persic version reads, “be not anxious, and go thy way”; do not be solicitous for my presence, or urge me to go with thee; depart alone, there is no necessity for my being upon the spot:

thy son liveth; he is now recovered of his disease, and is well, and in perfect health, and lives, and will live:

and the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him; such power went along with the words of Christ, as not only cured the son at that distance, who lay at the point of death, but also the father of his unbelief; and he no more insisted on his going down with him, but firmly believed that his son was alive, and well, as Christ had said he was:

and he went his way; he took his leave of Christ, and set out for Capernaum; very probably, not the same day, it being now in the afternoon of the day; but the next morning, as it should seem from what follows.

Ver. 51. *And as he was now going down*, etc.] From Cana to Capernaum, the day after he had been with Christ:

his servants met him, and told [him], saying, thy son liveth; as soon as this cure was wrought, though it was not known in the family how, and by whom it was done, immediately some of the servants were dispatched to carry the news to their master, that his sorrow might be removed; and he give himself no further trouble in seeking for a cure: these meeting him on the road, with an air of pleasure, at once address him with the joyful news, that his son was thoroughly recovered of his disorder, and was alive, and well; news which he was acquainted with, and believed before; though it must give him an additional, pleasure to have it confirmed.

Ver. 52. *Then inquired he of them the hour*, etc.] He did not at all hesitate about the truth of it, or was in any surprise upon it; but that he might compare things together, he asked the exact time,

when he began to amend; or grow better; for he seemed to think, that his recovery might be gradual, and not all at once, as it was:

and they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour; which was one o'clock in the afternoon:

the fever left him; entirely at once, so that he was perfectly well immediately.

Ver. 53. *So the father knew that it was at the same hour*, etc.] Precisely;

in that which Jesus said to him, thy son liveth: he had observed what time of day it was, in which he conversed with Jesus; and particularly, when he told him his son was alive and well, and when he took his leave of him; and by comparing the account of his servants, with that, found that things entirely agreed, and that the cure was wrought exactly at the time, that Jesus spoke the words:

and himself believed, and his whole house; when he came home, he related the whole affair to his family, and he and they all believed, that Jesus was the Messiah, and became his disciples and followers: if this nobleman was Chuza, Herod's steward, we have an account of his wife, whose name was Joanna, that she followed Christ, and ministered to him of her substance, with other women, (^{<ARB>}Luke 8:3). There is a story, told by the Jews, and which seems somewhat like to this ^{f218};

“it is reported concerning R. Chanina ben Dosa, that when he prayed for the sick, he used to say, **yj hz**, “this liveth”, and this dies; it was said to him, whence knowest thou this? he replied, if my prayer be ready in my mouth, I know that he is accepted (of God, i.e. the sick man for whom he prayed); but if not, I know that he will be snatched away (by the disease):”

upon which the Gemarists give the following relation ^{f219};

“it happened that the son of Rabban Gamaliel (the Apostle Paul’s master) was sick, he sent two disciples to R. Chanina ben Dosa, to ask mercy for him; when he saw them, he went up to a chamber, and sought mercy for him; and when he came down, he said unto them, **hmj wtxl j ç wkl**, “go your way, for the fever has left him”; they said unto him, art thou a prophet? he replied, I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but so I have received, that if my prayer is ready in my mouth, I know that he is accepted; and if not, I know that he shall be snatched away; and they sat and wrote and observed “the very hour”; and when they came to Rabban Gamaliel, he said unto them, this service ye have not been wanting in, nor abounded in; but so the thing was, that in that hour the fever left him, and he asked of us water to drink.”

Which story perhaps is told, to vie with this miracle of Christ, and to obscure the glory of it.

Ver. 54. *This [is] again the second miracle [that] Jesus did*, etc.] That is, in that place, in Cana of Galilee; for otherwise, in Jerusalem and Judea, he had done many miracles, between the former and this; (see ^{<RB>}John 2:23 3:2); and so the following words explain it:

when he was come out of Judea into Galilee; this was the first he wrought, after his coming out of Judea into Galilee, this time, and was the second that he wrought in Cana of Galilee; (see ^{<RB>}John 2:11).