

THE BOOK OF JOHN.

John ii.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-

pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, he called the bridegroom.

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

JOHN was distinguished among the Apostles for his many virtues, and was specially honored as the bosom friend of Jesus.

He is supposed to have lived in the neighborhood of Judea until the time approached for the predicted destruction of Jerusalem; then he went to Asia and resided some years in Ephesus, was banished to the Island of Patmos by the Emperor Domitian, and returned to Asia after the death of that Emperor. He lived to be a hundred years of age, and died a natural death, being the only Apostle who escaped martyrdom. John alone records the resurrection of Lazarus, and many things not mentioned in the other Gospels.

Probably Mary was related to one of the parties to the marriage, for she appears to have given directions as one of the family. As Joseph is not mentioned either on this occasion or afterwards, we may suppose that he died before Jesus entered into his public ministry. There was no disrespect intended in the word "woman" with which Jesus addressed his mother, as the greatest princesses were accosted even by their servants in the same manner among the ancients. Jesus merely intended to suggest that no one could com-

mand when he should perform miracles, as they would in any ordinary event subject to human discretion.

The Jews always kept a great number of water-pots filled with water in their houses for the ceremonial washing prescribed by law. Commentators differ as to how much these pots contained, but it is estimated that the six contained a hogshead. The ruler of the feast was generally a Levite or a priest; and he expressed his surprise that they should have kept the best wine until the last.

John iv.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, ask-

est drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman. yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

As the Samaritans were not generally disposed to receive the Jews into their houses, Jesus did not try to enter, but sat down by Jacob's well, and sent his disciples into the town to buy some necessary provisions. The prejudices against each other were so inveterate that they never asked for a favor, hence the woman was surprised when Jesus spoke to her. They might buy of each other, but never borrow nor receive a favor or gift, nor manifest friendship in any way.

But Christ, despising all such prejudices that had no foundation either in equity or in the law of God, asked drink of the Samaritan woman. He did not notice the woman's narrow prejudices, but directed her attention to matters of greater importance. He told her though she should refuse him the small favor for which he asked because he was a Jew, yet he was ready to confer far greater benefits on her, though a Samaritan. The living water to which Jesus referred, the woman did not understand.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men.

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word.

The woman could not understand Jesus' words because she had no conviction of sin nor desire for a purer, better life; and as soon as possible she changed the subject of the conversation from her private life to the subjects of controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans.

John viii.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him: and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery,

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he

lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

The Scribes and the Pharisees concocted a plan to draw Jesus into a snare. They concluded from many of his doctrines that he deemed himself authorized to alter or to abrogate the commands of Moses; therefore they desired his opinion as to the fitting punishment for an adulteress. If he had ordered them to execute her, they would doubtless have accused him to the Romans of assuming a judicial authority, independent of their government; had he directed them to set her at liberty, they would have represented him to the people as an enemy to the law, and a patron of the most infamous characters; and had he referred them to the Roman author-

ity, they would have accused him to the multitude as a betrayer of their liberties.

John ix.

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

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

A prevalent idea of the Jews was that, in accord with the ten commandments, the sins of the parents were visited upon the children. This is recognized as absolute law to-day; but it by no means follows that all afflictions are the result of sin. The blindness may have resulted from a combination of circumstances beyond the control of the parents. The statement does not disprove the law of transmission, but simply shows that defects are not always the result of sin.

John xi.

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

17 When Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

20 Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life:

28 And she went her way, and called Mary her sister, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

32 When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.

43 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth.

It appears that Jesus was a frequent visitor at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and felt a strong friendship for them. They lived in Bethany, two miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews came out from the city to express their sympathy. Martha did not fully un-

derstand Jesus; she considered him as a prophet who wrought miracles by faith and prayer in the same manner as the ancient prophets.

The grief of Mary, the tears of the Jews, and his own warm friendship for the sisters, affected Jesus himself to tears and groans. In appealing to Divine power, Jesus wished to show the unbelieving Jews that his miracles were performed by influence from above and not by the spirit of evil, to which source they attributed his wonderful works. Many who were said to witness this miracle did not believe.

After this Jesus again rested at the home of Mary, where she washed his feet and wiped them with the hair of her head, and then anointed him with costly spices from an alabaster box. He then went up to Jerusalem to attend the passover.

John xx.

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Mary appears to have arrived at the sepulchre before any of the

other women, and conversed with Jesus. Though the disciples, in visiting the tomb, saw nothing but cast-off clothes, yet Mary sees and talks with angels and with Jesus. As usual, the woman is always most ready to believe miracles and fables, however extravagant and though beyond all human comprehension. Several women purposed to be at the tomb at sunrise to embalm the body.

The men who visited the tomb saw no visions; but all the women saw Jesus and the angels, though the men, who went to the tomb twice, saw nothing. Mary arrived at the tomb before light, and waited for the other women; but seeing some one approaching, she supposed he was the person employed by Joseph to take care of the garden, so asked him what had been done to him. Though speaking to a supposed stranger, she did not mention any name. Jesus then called her by name; and his voice and his address made him known to her. Filled with joy and with amazement, she called him "Rabboni," which signifies, "teacher." Jesus said unto her, "Touch me not."

This finishes the consideration of the four Gospels—the direct recorded words of Jesus upon the question of purity; and all further references should harmonize, in spirit, with his teachings, and should be so interpreted, without regard to contrary assertions by learned but unwise commentators. E. C. S.

Is it not astonishing that so little is in the New Testament concerning the mother of Christ? My own opinion is that she was an excellent woman, and the wife of Joseph, and that Joseph was the actual father of Christ. I think there can be no reasonable doubt that such was the opinion of the authors of the original Gospels. Upon any other hypothesis it is impossible to account for their having given the genealogy of Joseph to prove that Christ was of the blood of David. The idea that he was the Son of God, or in any way miraculously produced, was an afterthought, and is hardly entitled now to serious consideration. The Gospels were written so long after the death of Christ that very little was known of him, and

substantially nothing of his parents. How is it that not one word is said about the death of Mary, not one word about the death of Joseph? How did it happen that Christ did not visit his mother after his resurrection? The first time he speaks to his mother is when he was twelve years old. His mother having told him that she and his father had been seeking him, he replied: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" The second time was at the marriage feast in Cana, when he said to her: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" And the third time was at the cross, when "Jesus, seeing his mother standing by the disciple whom he loved, said to her: 'Woman, behold thy son;' and to the disciple: 'Behold thy mother.'" And this is all.

The best thing about the Catholic Church is the deification of Mary; and yet this is denounced by Protestantism as idolatry. There is something in the human heart that prompts man to tell his faults more freely to the mother than to the father. The cruelty of Jehovah is softened by the mercy of Mary.

Is it not strange that none of the disciples of Christ said anything about their parents—that we know absolutely nothing of them? Is there any evidence that they showed any particular respect even for the mother of Christ? Mary Magdalene is, in many respects, the tenderest and most loving character in the New Testament. According to the account, her love for Christ knew no abatement, no change—true even in the hopeless shadow of the cross. Neither did it die with his death. She waited at the sepulchre; she hastened in the early morning to his tomb; and yet the only comfort Christ gave to this true and loving soul lies in these strangely cold and heartless words: "Touch me not."

ANON.