

they had met together by the side of a well, and where (in order to give her entire ease in His presence) He had asked her for a drink of water—was this patronage after the manner of men? Was this the distance and condescension of a superior? Was this heaven or the world, man or God? Condescension, or the world, will confer what favour you please, but will have the elevation of a superior, and the reserve of a dependant kept and honoured. But heaven, or love, acts not thus. Blessed, blessed, be God, Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, was kinsman to them He befriended, and as a kinsman He acted, and not as a patron. He seeks to bring us near—to invest our hearts with ease and confidence. He visits us, nay, He comes to us upon our invitation, as He went and dwelt two days with the Samaritans who came out and sought His company at the report of the woman of the well. He asks a favour from our hand, that we may take a favour from His without reserve—He will drink out of our pitcher while opening His eternal fountains for us, and eat of our kid at the tent door, while revealing eternal secrets to us. (Gen. xviii. John iv.)

And so it was (as another once observed) after He rose from the dead—He meets His disciples at the table again, gets the dinner ready for them, but tells them to help him to load the board. All this being still the way of love, and of heaven. He has now done with His sorrow and His humiliation in the world, it is true, but He has not done with this essential way of love—He is still the *kinsman* and not the *patron*. (John xxi. 8-14.)