

an occasion to the guiding and keeping of the Spirit of wisdom! Jesus, it is true, was, in one sense, a Vessel of God's house, like prophets and apostles. He was a minister of the circumcision. Like John, He preached the coming of the kingdom. He piped, and John lamented. God spake by Him, as by any prophet. And thus He was, most surely, a Vessel in God's house, as others. But He was of a peculiar order. The material and the moulding of that Vessel were peculiar. And if occasion bring Him into question with any other vessel, as in this place of our Gospel, the peculiar honour which attaches to Him must be made known. John delights to be the instrument for this. He delights, as under the Holy Ghost, and as in full concord with the mind of God, to bring out the budding rod of the true Aaron, blooming with its fruits and flowers, and to expose every rival rod in its native dead and withered state, that the murmurings of Israel, the fond and partial thoughts of even his own disciples, may be silenced forever. (Numb. xvii.) He acknowledges that all his joy was fulfilled in that which was thus provoking the displeasure of his disciples. He was but the Bridegroom's friend. He had waited for such a day as this. His course was now therefore run, and he was willing to retire and be forgotten. Like his fellow-servants, the prophets, he had held up a light to guide his generation to Christ, to lead the bride to the Bridegroom, and now he had only to retire. He stands here, as at the end of the line