

rusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." Matt. iii. 5, 6. For numbers so great, a large and ready supply of water for refreshment and cleanliness would be requisite. In that arid region, artificial wells had to be provided for travellers; and these were commonly twenty miles apart. To choose a neighbourhood, where was a river whose waters were fit to be drank, or much water, "many waters," as there were at Ænon, was prudent in one who had in view a protracted meeting at which so many thousands would attend. To suppose, then, that John had in view the dipping of persons, is a gratuitous assumption. Besides, neither Jordan nor Ænon was suited for immersion. As to the latter, it was not a river at all: it was "a well in a cave;" a spot now known; a well, like that of Samaria, where water was drawn; and, into which it would be neither decent, lawful, nor possible to plunge a human body. "Much water" there, means "many waters," as the name Ænon denotes; and it expressed the fact of there being several small springs and rivulets round about. The Jordan, on the other hand, was a deep, rapid current, rushing through steep banks, and thus very unsuited to dipping, which requires a particular depth of water, a quiet surface, and a comparatively safe bottom. It is found that a greater or less depth than about two-thirds of a person's height, or from three feet four inches to four feet, is unsuited to immersion-baptism; but the Jordan is six or seven feet deep close to the shore, and from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet wide. Now, were men and women, in light, loose, flowing dresses, taken into such a current? or did John stand in it to such a depth, plunging people, and this for days and months together, as he must have done? Why take such a difficulty for granted? why resort to it unnecessarily? Again, the people came out to *hear*, and not expecting to be baptized; and therefore did not take clothes in which to be baptized. Were they then baptized in their ordinary clothes? and did they remain in them, when saturated?—a course which must, in that hot climate, have produced wide-spread disease. Or did they strip in the presence of such crowds, and thus save their health at the sacrifice of all decency? They clearly did neither, and therefore were not immersed. Nor could they, in