So that it would seem as if the Evangelist  
had purposely avoided saying *of Jesus*  
to shew that the works were reported to  
John not as those of the Person whom he  
had known as Jesus, but of the Deliverer  
—the Christ; and that he was thus led  
to desire a distinct avowal of the identity  
of the two. I have before said that the  
opening part of the ensuing discourse seems  
to have been designed to prevent, in the  
minds of the multitude, any such unworthy estimations of John as those above  
cited. The message and the answer  
might well beget such suspicions, and  
could not from the nature of the case be  
explained to them in that deeper meaning  
which they really bore; but the character  
of John here given would effectually prevent them, after hearing it, from entertaining any such idea.

**2. had heard**] From *his own disciples*, Luke vii.  
18. The place of his imprisonment was  
Machæerus, a frontier town between the  
dominions of Aretas and Herod Antipas.  
Our Lord in that hour wrought many  
cures, Luke ver. 21. Verses 4–6 are nearly  
verbatim in the two Gospels.

**5.**] The words **the dead are raised up** have occasioned some difficulty; but surely without  
reason. In Luke, the raising of the  
widow’s son at Nain immediately precedes  
this message; and in this Gospel we have  
had the ruler’s daughter raised. These  
miracles might be referred to by our Lord  
under the words **the dead are raised  
up**; for it is to be observed that He bade  
them tell John not only what things they  
saw, but what things they *had heard*, as  
in Luke.

It must not be forgotten  
that the words here used by our Lord  
have an inner and spiritual sense, as  
betokening the blessings and miracles of  
divine grace on the souls of men, of  
which His outward and visible miracles  
were symbolical. The words are mostly  
cited from Isa. xxxv. 5, where the same  
spiritual meaning is conveyed by them.  
They are quoted here, as the words of Isa. liii. are the Evangelist in ch. viii. 17,  
as applicable to their partial external fulfilment, which however, like themselves,  
pointed onward to their greater spiritual  
completion.

**the poor have the  
gospel preached to them (are evangelized)**]  
Stier remarks the coupling of these  
miracles together, and observes that with  
**the dead are raised**, this is united, as being  
a thing hitherto unheard of and strange,  
and an especial fulfilment of Isa. lxi. 1.

**6.**] See note on ver. 2.

**offended in**] *scandalized at, take offence at*.

**7—30.**] The discourse divides itself into  
TWO PARTS: (1) vv. 7–19, *the respective  
characters and mutual relations of John  
and Christ:* (2) vv. 20—30, *the condemnation of the unbelief of the time*—ending with *the gracious invitation to all the  
weary and heavy laden to come to Him,  
as truly He that should come.*

**7.**] The following verses set forth to the  
people the real character and position of  
John; identifying him who cried in the  
wilderness with him who now spoke from  
his prison, and assuring them that there  
was the same dignity of office and mission  
throughout. They are not spoken till  
after the departure of the disciples of  
John, probably because they were not  
meant for them or John to hear, but for  
the people, who on account of the question  
which they had heard might go away with  
a mistaken depreciation of John. And our  
Lord, as usual, takes occasion, from reminding them of the impression made on  
them by John’s preaching of repentance,  
to set forth to them deep truths regarding