nothing in this chapter to determine the  
nature of this feast, I cannot attach any  
weight to most of the elaborate chronological arguments which have been raised on the subject. It can hardly have been **a**Passover, both because it is called **a** feast,  
not **the** feast, as in ch. vi. 4, and because if  
so, we should have an interval of a whole  
year between this chapter and the next,  
which is not probable. Nor can it have  
been the Dedication, in the *winter*; for then  
the multitude of sick would have hardly  
been waiting in the porches of Bethesda.  
The feast of Purim would nearest agree  
with the subsequent events ; and it seems as  
if our Lord did not go up to Jerusalem at.  
the Passover next following (ch. vi. 4; vii.  
1), so that no difficulty would be created  
by the proximity of the two feasts, unless,  
with De Wette, we believe that the interval was too little for what is related ch.  
vi. 1—3 to have happened. But it may  
be doubted, (1) whether it was a general  
practice to go up to Jerusalem at the Purim: (2) whether our Lord would be likely  
to observe it, even if it was.

No reason need be given why St. John does not  
name the feast; it is quite in accordance  
with his practice of mentioning nothing  
that does not concern his subject-matter.  
Thus the Passover is mentioned ch. ii. 13,  
because of the *buying and selling in the  
temple*; again, ch. vi. 4, to account for  
the *great multitude*, and as eminently  
suiting (see notes) the subject of His discourse there; the feast of Tabernacles, ch.  
vii. 2, because of the practice alluded to  
by our Lord in ver. 37; that of the Dedication, ch. x. 22, to account for His being  
in Solomon’s porch, because it was winter ;  
but in this chapter, where there is nothing  
alluding to the time or nature of the feast,  
it is not specified.

**Jesus]** and probably  
His disciples: for the same expression is  
used ch. ii. 13, whereas we find, ch. iii. 22,  
that His disciples were with Him; compare  
also ch. vii. 10 and ch. ix. 2.

**2.]** The  
expression **there is** has been thought to import that St. John wrote his Gospel *before  
the destruction of Jerusalem*. But this  
must not be pressed. He might have spoken  
in the present without meaning to be literally accurate with regard to the moment  
when he was writing.

The locality  
given means, probably, **near the sheep-gate**,—mentioned by Nehemiah, see reff.  
The situation of this gate is unknown;—  
it is traditionally supposed to be the same  
with that now called St. Stephen’s gate ;  
but inaccurately, for no wall existed in that  
quarter till the time of Agrippa. Eusebius, Jerome, and the Jerusalem Itinerary  
speak of a *sheep-pool*, as indeed the Vai.  
gate renders here.

**Bethesda**,—in Syriac, **the house** (place) **of mercy**, or **of  
grace**. Its present situation is very uncertain. Robinson established by personal  
inspection the fact of the subterranean  
connexion of the pool of Siloam (sce ch.  
ix. 7 note) and that called the Fountain of  
the Virgin ; and has made it probable that  
the Fountain under the grand Mosk is also  
connected with them; in fact that all  
these are but one and the same spring.  
Now this spring, as he himself witnessed,  
is an *intermittent* one, as indeed had been  
reported before by Jerome, Prudentius,  
William of Tyre, and others. There might  
have been then, it is obvious, some artificially constructed basin in connexion  
with this spring, the site and memory of  
which have perished, which would present.  
the phenomenon here described.

I have received an interesting communication from a traveller who believes that he  
has identified Bethesda in the present pool  
of Siloam. It appears from his account:  
that there are still visible four bases of  
pillars in the middle of the water, and four  
corresponding ones in the wall, shewing  
that at one time the pool has been arched  
over by five equal porches. This pool is,  
as above noticed, intermittent, and is even  
now believed to possess a certain medicinal  
power. See the account of my informant.  
at length at the end of vol.i., edn. 5, of  
my Greek Testament.

The spot now traditionally known as Bethesda is a part  
of the fosse round the fort or tower Antonia, an immense reservoir or trench,  
seventy-five feet deep. But, as Robinson  
observes, there is not the slightest evidence  
that can identify it with the Bethesda of  
the N. T.

This pool is not mentioned  
by Josephus.

**having five porches]**Probably these were for the shelter of the  
sick persons, and were arches or porticos,  
opening upon and surrounding the reservoir:  
see above.

**3. withered]** Those who were  
afflicted with the loss of vital power in any