on the part of Philip with Jesus. No  
stress can be laid, as has been most unfairly  
done, on Jesus being called by Philip, the  
son of Joseph, as indicating that the history of His birth and childhood, as related  
by St. Matthew and St. Luke, was *unknown  
to St. John*. Philip *expresses what was  
the prevailing belief, in the ordinary words,*as Olshausen remarks. In an admirable  
note, Neander remarks, that by combining  
the two declarations of John, that *in Jesus  
the Eternal Word of God became flesh*(ver. 14), and that *‘that which is born of  
the flesh is flesh’* (ch. iii. 6), we cannot escape the inference, that a *supernatural  
working of God in the conception of the  
Ban Christ Jesus is implied.*

**46.]** As Lücke observes, the meaning of this  
question is simpler than at first sight  
appears. It is impossible that Nathanael,  
himself a Galilean, could speak from any  
feeling of contempt for Galilee generally :  
and we have no evidence that Nazareth was  
held in contempt *among the Galileans*.  
He alluded therefore to the smallness and  
insignificance of the town in proportion  
to the great things which were now predicated of it. Nazareth is never named in  
the O. T. nor in Josephus.

**47.]** The Evangelist certainly intends a supernatural  
insight by the Lord into Nathanael’s character to be here understood; and there is  
probably no reference at all to the question which Nathanael had just asked. To  
suppose that Jesus *overheard that question*, is just one of those perfectly gratuitous assumptions which the very Commentators who here make this supposition  
are usually the first to blame. Compare  
ch. ii. 25.

**an Israelite indeed]** ‘An  
Israelite who truly answers to the inner and  
honourable meaning of the name’ When  
we reflect what was contained in that  
name, and Who it is that speaks, we can  
hardly agree with De Wette that the  
words are spoken merely in the spirit in  
which every nation attaches some peculiar  
virtue, and especially those of openness  
and straightforwardness, to itself.

Our Lord probably referred to Ps. xv.

**48.]** The remark was overheard by  
Nathanael, and recognized as indicating  
perfect knowledge of his character. The  
question, **Whence knowest thou me**? is one  
of astonishment, but not perhaps yet of  
suspicion of any thing supernatural. Our  
Lord’s answer first opens this to him.

**Before that &c.]** The whole form of our  
Lord’s answer seems to indicate that the  
place where Philip called Nathanael was  
not *now* in sight, nor had been. The declaration that Jesus had seen him there, at  
once brings the conviction which he expresses in the next verse. This would  
not have been the case, unless the sight  
had been evidently and unquestionably  
supernatural : and unless the words “*when  
thou wast under the fig tree*” involved this.  
Had Jesus merely seen Nathanael without  
being seen by him, or had “*I saw thee*”  
only expressed, ‘*I knew thy character*,’  
at first sight, ‘*although at a distance, no  
such immediate conviction would have followed*.’

**when thou wast under the  
fig tree**, ses Wordsw., “is something more  
than merely ‘*under the fig tree’* would  
be: it indicates retirement thither as well  
as concealment there,—perhaps for purposes of prayer and meditation.” In fact  
it contains in it, ‘when thou wentest under  
the fig tree, and while thou wert there.’

**49.]** The answer expresses, ‘Thou art the  
Messiah;’ see Ps. ii. 7: ch. xi. 27: Matt.  
xvi. 16: Luke xxii. 70. Olshausen maintains that **the Son of God** was not a Jewish  
appellation for the Messiah,—on account  
of the Jews taking up stones to cast at  
Jesus when He so called Himself, ch. x. 33.  
But as Lücke observes, it was not for the  
*mere use* of this Name,—but for using it  
in a *close and literal sense* which was unintelligible and appeared blasphemous to  
them, ‘I and My Father **are one**,’—that  
they wished to stone Him; see note on  
ch, x.36. It was certainly not so common  
a name as ‘the Son of David, for the Messiah. Nathanael can hardly have meant  
the name in other than its popular meaning;