

“Royal Dainties”

Notes of
Readings & Addresses
Held at 24 Rebecca Street
BRADFORD

Monday - Friday
November 1st to 5th, 1948

Revised by
J. McBroom

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FOREWORD

This little book is an attempt to put into the hands of the reader something of what the Lord gave in the Meetings held at Bradford, November 1st-5th, 1948.

Addresses were given by six brothers, and are inserted as revised by each of themselves. The truths they contain are not only deeply instructive but make their appeal to us all, with regard to affections for Christ and response to our God and Father.

As to the Bible Readings, in the absence of a full report it has not been possible to transcribe them exactly as they were spoken. It is clear that Readings like these are often jerky as a result of different speakers, and variety of thought. This may be quite right and orderly if reported verbatim, but not so when an attempt has to be made to put in a fairly consecutive way that which came before us. This is what has been done here.

It has called for some rearranging of both remarks and questions, but all with a view to present what the Lord so graciously gave, in as orderly a way as possible. It is due to the contributors that what they said should be included, and it is hoped that nothing is left out; but, if so, it has been unintentional.

On the other hand, a few words had to be added here and there, to link up and put together what was said. It may be, too, that a little of the matter which belonged to one Reading has found its way into another; if so, we know we can count on the reader's forbearance.

It is impossible to put on record the spirit of grace and mutuality that marked the Meetings. Unity, with variety, seemed to mark the beginning and was, in the goodness of God, maintained right through. The various Addresses were of such a choice character that they fitted in beautifully with the portion chosen for the Readings.

Our earnest prayer is that the Lord may be pleased to bless this little book to His beloved people; for His Own Name's sake.

J. McBROOM.

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Monday Evening.

PRAYER MEETING.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IT is proposed that, with the Lord's help, we should consider John's Gospel, chapters 13-17 inclusive. This Gospel, it is well known, was written late in the first century, in view of recovery. Confessedly, things are low down today, and we may be helped and encouraged a little in our Readings on these chapters, as we are together here these few days. There is that in them which, in the hand of the Lord, may both encourage and enrich our souls in the present state of need.

We shall have the Holy Trinity before us, in the working out of the purposes of eternity, each One in relation to the Others, and in that way our Lord will come before us in a very full and blessed way. The Father comes before us in a particularly blessed way, as the Source of counsel, and then the Holy Spirit, with regard to the carrying out of those counsels. The Person and Glory of the Lord, also, may well engage our reverent attention.

There are those one meets who seem to fear when our Lord in His Person and Glory is spoken of. One can appreciate this and welcome that feeling of holy jealousy for the honour and glory of Him we love and adore, but do not let that hamper or hinder us from seeking, with all reverence, to follow Scripture in its fulness, on this holy theme. Let us go "all-out" to the bounds of Holy Scripture, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. He wants us to know Him, and we may well count on His support and blessing, if we take it up in the spirit of mutual dependence on Himself. But if so, it is hoped that there may be no speculation, analysing, nor dissecting. If we cannot fully understand the mystery of our own creaturehood, surely we may well refrain from attempting it with Him Who is "God manifest in the flesh."

Meditating thus on the Person and Glory of the Son we come, of necessity, to the Glory of the Father. Here, there is much to be learned of the Father, in relation to the Son, and also to the Spirit. The Father's House, His counsels and the place He takes in working them out to fruition, in the mutuality of love and glory, in company with the Son and the Spirit.

This leads to the place of the Holy Spirit in the scheme of counsel, the place He takes in relation to the Father and the Son ; each One in the Blessed Trinity working in relation to the Others, in view of the fulfilment of that glorious plan which had creatures like ourselves in view from all eternity.

All this, we may be sure, will in the hand of our God lift us up, fitting us to meet the state of things around us in apostate Christendom, our own confessedly low moral condition, and enriching our souls with that which abides for evermore.

J. McBROOM.

(This was followed by united, fervent prayer for the Lord's blessing to be upon our gathering, as also upon the whole Church of God.)

Tuesday Morning.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 13 : 1–30.

WITH reference to the imminence of the Lord's return the general moral state of things is appalling. The relapse back to Paganism in the world, in its degrading delusions ; apostacy in the professing Church, with all its superstition on the one hand, and blatant attack on Scripture on the other ; the revival of many of the dark, ancient cults, of Satanic character, which are issuing like smoke from the pit ; these, to the devout heart, are distressing. It is more painful still when we turn to the inner circle—the living Church, the household of faith—where the divided state of things is humiliating indeed. But it is only as we seek to walk with God **individually** that it is felt ; otherwise, through lack of spiritual sensibilities we may drop into pretension.

This chapter gives the remedy. We begin here with a clearance of all opposition. We sometimes sing “From sin, the world, and Satan we're ransomed by Thy Blood.” Here we have the world judged, Satan defeated, and man, as under divine culture, put out for ever. “Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out ” (chapter 12 : 31). Judas “went out : and it was night ” (chapter 13 : 30). And now, our blessed Lord, within a few hours of Calvary, is seen in the midst of His own, leading them from the world and from Judaism and Himself as Messiah, into God's world with all its wealth of blessing. This will put us right with regard to our God, and consequently with regard to all that is going on around. Then it should be noted what engaged the mind and heart of our Lord, as recorded by the Spirit, in that hour. He knew that Calvary with all its woe was nigh at hand, recorded here, as always in John, as His departure “out of the world unto the Father.” In the light of all this His blessed heart was engaged with these His disciples. “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

Then observe, He is standing here in relation to the whole created universe, knowing that the Father had put all things into His hands. We must remember that this little world is but a small part of the redemption scheme ; that the Cross, in all its atoning value, was called for throughout creation. It must be observed here that the revelation of God (John 1 : 18) is for the whole universe. Moreover, every feature of the great Godhead that has come out in revelation in the Son will find an answer and reflect back on Himself for evermore. Our Lord had it all before Him in its fullest extent, but central in it all, this little planet, and these dear men whom He had called out to Himself as the nucleus of one new heavenly company.

But He also knew that “ He came out from God and was going to God ” (John 13 : 3, New Trans.). Speaking of Himself later He says : “ I came forth from the **Father**, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the **Father** ” (John 16 : 28). Here the Spirit says, “ came out from **God**, and was going to **God**.” The former of these is more intimate, as bringing before His own something of the intimacy of the sacred, holy circle of Deity. The latter is what we speak of as Revelation and Approach. He came out to reveal God ; no created being could do that. Having done that, He went back to God. He did not come a Man from heaven, He came out to assume the body prepared for Him. But if so, He did not go back as He came out. Here, observe, we get both **assumption** and **resumption**. This sets before us the two sides of His adorable Person. If He assumes to go there and **has** gone there, in Manhood, it is because He is but resuming the place He had left and to which He belongs in Godhead, in equality with the Father and the Spirit. In this sense He has taken Manhood to the Throne of God, and, as is often said, God has come out and Man has gone in, in the same blessed One.

In this, we must ever remember that His unseeable, unapproachable Godhead remains beyond the creature for evermore. “ No man knoweth the Son but the Father ” (Matthew 11 : 27). In that verse He stands beyond

revelation, with the Father and the Spirit, in all the blessed unsearchable depth of Deity. There is one little word of difference in Luke 10 : 22. There, “no man knoweth **who the Son is** but the Father.” This leaves it open for divine teaching, and surely, in the faith of our souls, we can say we know now **Who** He is. Scripture tells us He is “God over all, blessed for ever.” This, surely, brings us to see Him, not only in His intrinsic glory in Deity, but in His infinite love, which comes out in the counsels of eternity, for our everlasting delight.

And here a remark is called for on the beautiful moral order of John’s Gospel. In His coming, there was the setting forth of God in fulness of light, life and love. The first two of these are intimately linked together in chapter 1 : 4. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Light and life—the Light and Life of God—were for men. See how they are reversed in chapter 8 : 12. “I am the light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” But the orderly way in which they come before us is so beautiful. In chapters 1–6 the leading point is LIFE, while in chapters 7–12 it is LIGHT. If, in the earlier chapters, we appropriate His death to get life, here, in this part, He is the light of the world. All this is very blessed, but in chapter 13, where we are reading, it is His LOVE which is brought before us so blessedly. “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Here His love is seen at its brightest and best.

But one word as to His POWER. Comparing verse 2 with verse 27 we can see our Lord in supreme power. Here the conflict between good and evil rages, and is seen at its keenest. The betrayer is seen, and the Evil One controlling his heart. The blessed Lord is cognizant of it all and stoops to wash the feet of him (along with the rest), who was so under the power of Satan. Oh, the grace of it ! Later, Satan took full possession (verse 27).

Before coming to the feet-washing (which seems to bespeak the Official glory of our Lord) we may dwell a

little further on what is Personal. Grouped together here are three of His glories which, in a way, answer to three vessels in the Tabernacle, namely, the Ark of the Covenant, the Brazen Laver and the Brazen Altar. The last two sat in the Court, but the Ark had for its place the Holiest of all. This vessel would prefigure our Lord, as seen here in the early part of our chapter as God and Man, in His own unique Personality. The feet-washing represented what was then future but is going on today, namely, the ministry of life and righteousness from heaven. (See II Corinthians, chapter 3.) But, first of all, we have what He is in Person, and that calls for some remarks on the Lord in His pre-Incarnate state and relations within the Godhead, when in abstract Deity.

In the eternal plan, both eternal life and sonship were for men. We have therefore to take account of our Lord first, intrinsically, within the ever-blessed Godhead ; and then to note how Scripture presents Him, while pre-Incarnate, in relationships of life and love, into which in the eternal plan men were to be brought. We now know that sonship for believers was in the eternal purpose of God. That blessing was brought into time by the Incarnation of our Lord. We know that before we could be brought into the blessing He must die, but His coming had nothing less in view (Galatians 4 : 4-5). " God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The same is true with regard to eternal life. Many passages show that eternal life, **for us**, was in the eternal purpose of God. (See II Timothy 1 : 9, 10 ; Titus 1 : 2.) **That** life came into time in the Person of the Son. (I John 1 ; 1-3)

When the Deity of our Lord is spoken of, as in John 1 1, 2, it is said that life was **IN** Him, but when He is seen in relation to man He **IS** the Life ; that is, life is personified in Him. It is said at the close of the first Epistle of John, " We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus

Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." The words "This is the true God" take us in thought to the first verses of John's Gospel; but the words "and eternal life" take us to the opening verses of the first Epistle of John.

Now, coming to the feet-washing, we must note the double sense. First, the literal fact of the Lord of Glory at the feet of these men in His gracious humility; then, the figurative sense, as foreshadowing the present ministry of the Lord, on high, towards us. The first of these must ever bow our souls in adoration before Him. The latter has a most important and spiritual bearing, as we shall see, but do not let us miss the wonder of it, the grace of it, and what it must have meant to the Father's eye and heart, to see His blessed Son in such an act of humiliation. This side of the transaction has its bearing on us, surely. The Lord said at the same time: "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26). And so the Lord says "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

It was Peter's ardour that drew forth from the Lord the meaning of feet-washing, as having part with Himself, risen and glorified. The words of verse 10 have often been made clear by showing that the first washing refers to the initial work of the Spirit, in New Birth, and cannot be repeated, but the feet-washing is much like the daily cleansing of the priests, in their daily functions. The analogy between the Brazen Laver and the feet-washing here in John is striking. It will be remembered that the Laver was made of copper plates, which had been used as looking-glasses by the women (Exodus 38:8). In this way, it turns us to the Cross, where we meet with that which not only exposes us to ourselves but carries the waters of death, which meet us in all our sinful state, for the glory of God.

Much has been said, both as to Priesthood and Advocacy, with regard to feet-washing. If we connect Priesthood

with it it may be better to take it as the ministry not of the intercessory Priest for the desert but the minister of the Sanctuary, leading His people IN. This becomes clear when we recall that in this meeting, as recorded in the other Gospels, the Lord is speaking to His disciples with regard to the earth, Judaism and Himself as Messiah, but in John He is detaching them from all these things by leading them into "part with Himself" as glorified, and into the verities of Divine Counsel and the eternal system.

In this meeting there were three speakers, besides the Lord Himself, and each of the three may set forth what is in evidence today. Christendom, in its apostacy, is betraying the Lord. That may be set forth in Judas Iscariot. In Peter we get what more clearly sets forth Evangelic Christendom ; a man full of ardour and zeal for his Lord, but not sufficiently near to be in the secret of His mind for the moment. John may be taken as representative of a feeble few who, at the close, are seeking in divine affection to answer to His mind and cleave to that which He has given back to the assembly today. It should be mentioned, however, that wherever souls are true to the light they have received they may be acceptable to the Lord and Philadelphian in character, though not in the good and gain of recovered truth.

Peter could not know the meaning of what the Lord was doing, since the water figuratively speaks of the Cross, where blood and water flowed from His pierced side ; and beyond that, the Holy Spirit must come to bear witness to its meaning. The question might profitably be raised with ourselves. Do we know what it is to have part with the Lord ? One thing is certain, we are poorly acquainted with the new order of things into which the Lord here introduces His disciples ; and, surely, us with them. It is a new eternal order. He had taken part with us as to flesh and blood, and in that way was a centre of attraction for man in this world, as He said, "I am the light of the world" ; but He has established another world by death and resurrection, and into this He brings us to have part with Himself. It would in some way answer to the holy

priesthood, in the inside, and then the royal priesthood, on coming out. It would surely work out in two ways. First of all, in the inside as sanctuary service, that is, as seen in these two chapters 13 and 14; then also, in the outside, in fruitbearing and witnessing as seen in the next two chapters, 15 and 16.

When the Lord spoke of "part with Me," the spiritual meaning of feet-washing lay ahead of them. It is helpful to refer here to John 17:1: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, THAT Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Here, having done everything for the Father's glory on earth, the Son seeks to be glorified, that He may continue to glorify the Father in heaven. This He is doing now, by a ministry of life and righteousness to us, which is fore-shown in the washing of the disciples' feet.

It is well to remember that Gethsemane lay before the Lord, at this time. "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name" (John 12:27, 28). Death, as the judgment of God, that which lay upon us, was before Him there. That was gone through anticipatively in Gethsemane, but actually, in all its dread reality, in the dark hour of Calvary. Here, in this chapter, He was troubled in spirit, evidently at the presence of Judas Iscariot, but in the full consciousness of the power behind the betrayer.

It was after dealing with him in such grace that Judas could no longer remain in the place, that the Lord began to speak of the Cross in its richest and fullest meaning. We should remember that the marvellous communications that came out here were held back for over half a century. Divine wisdom is seen in this. Paul comes upon the scene, as beginning with Christ in glory; he is used by the Spirit to bring out the truth of the Assembly, as the House of God and the Body of Christ; but decay set in, and this great Apostle lived to see the external breakdown of that which he had been used to build up. John outlived all his fellow apostles and is used in his ministry to give that which

continues to the end ; something that can defy breakdown. That is what we have in these chapters. It is in this sense that the writings of John had recovery in view. They were written, really, when Gnosticism had established itself in the midst of the Christian profession.

Now let us ask ourselves : What **would** we do without this Gospel, or the other writings of John ? Many of the Pentecostal saints had passed off the scene before ever it was written. The Corinthians had their Epistles, and the Thessalonians theirs also ; but we, blessed be God, have them all bound together in this precious Book. We live, as we often say, in the best time of all.

Tuesday Afternoon.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 13 : 31 to end ; 14 : 1-6.

IT has been thought that a little more might be said about the feet-washing that we had before us this forenoon, before we proceed, but we have had what the Spirit had for us at the moment and it may be better to begin with the verses that give us the Cross. If we refer to verse 31 of chapter 13 we note the phrase “Son of MAN.” “Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him.” This is the Cross in its widest aspect. When rejected by His people the Lord told His disciples to say no more that He was the Christ, for the Son of Man goes up to Jerusalem to die (See Matthew 16 : 20, 21. Mark 8 : 31. Luke 9 : 44). This gives the bearing of the Cross on all. In that way we have God perfectly glorified in the fullest way in the whole creation, by the Son of Man at the Cross.

It is important to see that the glory of the Lord, referred to here, is the glory specifically seen at the Cross : so much so, indeed, that it cannot be divorced from the Cross. We might ask : “What does the word ‘glorified’ mean, when applied to Him on the Cross ?” This would, surely, fix our eyes on Him, in all the beauty of the accumulated graces and perfections, which shone out in perfect combination in Him, in His pathway, which led up to the Cross. We speak of Him, as seen in His pathway, both Personally and in moral effulgence. How perfectly all His excellency, beauty, glory and moral grandeur is seen in its totality, there amidst the darkness of that dark hour. It answers to the Brazen Altar, upon which the fire burned perpetually, and upon which the morning and evening sacrifices were burnt. It is the Cross in relation to the sin question, and the glory of God in the creation.

We are, it is feared, too limited in our thoughts with regard to the redemption work of our Lord. Although the “burnt offering” aspect of the Cross is prominent here, we must remember that all the offerings meet here, since God is glorified in the Son of Man. If all the offerings meet, it is

the hour and place when, and where, sin was dealt with as a rebellious element that has invaded the creation, far beyond this earth, going so far in its originator as to attempt to dethrone the Almighty Himself and rule supreme. (Compare Isaiah 14 : 12-15 ; Exodus 17 14-16.) What adds to our appreciation of this glory is to see Him there ALONE ; betrayed, denied, and deserted ; the target of all the apostate forces of evil ; and there, and then, bearing the judgment, the wrath of God, so that God is perfectly glorified in regard to the sin question, throughout the whole creation.

Remark, too, the difference of the words in John 12 : 20 - 23, when the Greeks came, saying to Philip, " Sir, we would see Jesus." The range of His future glory came before Him there, and He said, " The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." This turns our thoughts to Psalm 8, which gives a prophetic picture of His glory in the creation, as Son of Man. The words of the Psalm are taken up by the Spirit Who gave them and expanded for us in Hebrews 2. We may go further and recall the exact words quoted from the Psalm in three passages in the New Testament, namely, I Corinthians 15 : 27, Hebrews 2 : 8, Ephesians 1 : 22. The words cited from the Psalm in each of these passages are, " Thou hast put all things under His feet." In I Corinthians 15, these words are used to show the relative place of God and Man : He Who is God, co-equal with the Father, has become Man ; the absolute becomes relative and in that condition takes His place under God. So it is said : " But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him." The same words are used by the Spirit in Hebrews 2, to show that the whole creation is put under that blessed Man. We, as belonging to Him through grace, gladly take our place under Him as our adorable Lord. But in Ephesians 1 : 22, where the same words are taken from the Psalm, there is one other that is not put under Him, that is, the Church, which is His Body, the fulness or complement of Him Who filleth all in all. Here it is the new Adam and the new Eve, in prophetic anticipation. He, pre-eminent as Head over all things to

the Assembly which, like as Eve was to Adam, is associated with Him in the whole vast domain, the universe of bliss.

The blessed Lord came to put away sin ; what it cost Him to do this the creature shall never fathom. The words " God is glorified in Him " stand in that connection. Scripture distinguishes between the shedding of His Blood, and His actual death. On the Day of Atonement it was the blood of the sin offering that was taken in and sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, thus signifying that God's sentence on man had been carried out and the life to which sin attached **in us** was gone in the judgment of God. But in the carrying out and burning of the carcass we learn that all that man is as under judgment has gone in judgment. If God be glorified in the Son of Man it means that all God's glory in the creation has been retrieved ; that all He is in Majesty, Holiness, Righteousness, and Supremacy has been met ; yea, the wrath, terror and fury of a Holy God has been borne. It was this our Lord was anticipating in Gethsemane ; death as the judgment of God on sin. When sin is in question God is a consuming fire, and at the Cross the consuming fire of His wrath came upon the Righteous One, His well-beloved Son.

But there is another side to this. In all we have been speaking of the suffering One was **passive** ; in truly suffering obedience He submits to all. But in the " Burnt Offering " aspect He is **active** ; He offered Himself and was accepted. Here His mighty power, glory and majesty is seen, and by the eye of faith we can penetrate the darkness and behold Him there, in all His innate perfection under the Father's eye, an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God. If, as Sin Offering, He meets the sin question, restoring that which He took not away (Psalm 69 : 4), then, as Burnt Offering, He brings in a scene of divine bliss. In His infinite resource He not only meets the breakdown by supplying all that divine justice required, but in the excess of His power, resource and glory He brings in an order of things into which sin can never come and in which will be displayed the pleasure of God for evermore.

“God shall glorify Him in Himself.” Here is the immediate answer, by God the Father, to what His Son has done. Many Scriptures speak of the time when our Lord shall shine out in glory before a wondering creation, but the Father would not wait for that, He will straightway, or immediately, glorify Him in Himself. This is the “private” glory; that which is true now, at this time, when our Lord is glorified in God. Observe, too, the place into which this puts His people, as identified with Him today, so far as this world is concerned. We read in Colossians 3 : 3, “your life is hid with Christ in God.” We, as believers, are brought into a life and range of things that the world cannot understand. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Since we are dealing with the Person and Glory of our Lord it would perhaps be better to leave ourselves out just now; we shall come in later. We come next, in chapter 14, to the Father, and the place He fills in this glorious order; then to the Spirit and the way of His operations, chapters 14–16. Saints are looked at, in this part, first as disciples, then as believers, later as servants, and last of all as His friends.

It is most touching to note that all these words on glory came from the Lord after the exit of Judas Iscariot. It is as if His blessed heart was pent up, until the betrayer had gone, for He immediately brings out the elements of love and glory that were proper to the occasion. A farewell meeting should be marked by joy and the Lord was Himself leading on to that, whatever the present gloom. He is, as it were, clearing the ground for what is of God, and what is proper to His own, from whom He was departing. If we take the departure of Judas, in the darkness, and apply it to the putting out of man in Adam, at the Cross, we see that creature, as under the power of evil, at his very worst; at the same time Man is seen at His brightest and best, in Christ Himself, to the delight of the heart of God.

After His gracious words about glory He comes to LOVE, and it is most touching to see how precisely He words the new commandment. He says “That ye love one another,

as I have loved you.” How poorly we answer to this. Its import to Him is seen in the way He emphasises it over and over again in these chapters. He had come as the fount of eternal love into this world and would have that love continued. We have all to admit the lack of this, and how poorly we have answered to His desire for us concerning, as it does, the honour due to His Name and the continuance of His love in this world of hate. But we must not forget that the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord **has** wrought wonders here, in His absence, and is still a force that is puzzling to His enemies. Blessed be His Name ! He is producing a response to Himself, and has formed a circle here, where brotherly love is seen in all its gracious traits.

The new commandment is not a legal enactment ; it can only be carried out as we are living His life and thus in communion with Himself. If the blessed Lord took up His Father’s words as commands, well may we take the expression of His will for us, in the same way. The commands of the New Testament become an outlet for the renewed heart, under the influence of the love of Christ. Love that has to be “ worked up ” is artificial ; the Lord is speaking of the spontaneous outflow of brotherly love ; this is seen from the words “ as I have loved you.”

While this theme is characteristic of John’s Gospel, we must keep in mind that it marks all four Gospels. The Lord is never the victim of circumstances in any of the Gospels. As we follow His footsteps through each Gospel we are struck with the way He uses each happening or combination of circumstances to bring in God, but here in John this is most conspicuous ; whether addresses, parables or movements, all are fitting and in perfect moral order ; but here in John it is the Father’s **words** He speaks and the Father’s **works** He does.

Peter’s two questions bring out that which leads to the communications of chapter 14, “ Let not your heart be troubled.” How often have the words of verses 1-3 brought comfort to His afflicted people. “ In My Father’s

house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Within a few hours of the greatest of all sorrows His tender heart considers them, in view of their loss in His departure. But His Godhead links with it, for no created being could say "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." It is important to see that this is an indirect statement of His Godhead glory. He had been before their eyes in the place of sight and sense; now it was to be faith. Christianity takes us from the sensuous to the supersensuous, from the things that are seen to the things that are eternal; to the holy grandeur of the divine system, with all the precious things of heaven. The things of the Spirit are thus made good to us, as we read in I Corinthians 2 : 9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The Father's house and its many abodes would be the universe. Paul speaks of the Father, "of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," or as the New Translation puts it, "of Whom every family in the heavens and on the earth is named" (Ephesians 3 : 15). There is evidently an abode for each family, and from the phrase "in the heavens and on the earth" it would appear to include the heavenly hosts as well. In Chapter 13 : 3 we see the whole creation put into the hands of the Son, in Manhood. Then at verse 31 we see the work of Calvary in relation to the whole creation again. Now, here it is once more, in the opening of chapter 14, in all its scope, the Father's house. We do well to take an enlarged view of these things; if we do so, it will bring more into relief the wondrous place this earth occupies in connection with His dealings in the whole vast universe. It is **here** that God has been revealed, and for that the Son had to take part with man, the creature of this part of creation. It is **here** that the work of Calvary was accomplished, and we know from many Scriptures that the eyes of heavenly hosts are

turned towards this earth, as the scene of the wonderful activities of our God.

Then the Father is mentioned in other connections ; when cleansing the Temple courts the Lord said, " Take these things hence ; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise." In the parable of the Prodigal, of Luke 15, the Father, the Feast, and the House are figurative and describe the place of nearness and intimacy into which we are brought by the Gospel. The word " Father," there, is descriptive of God in the riches of His mercy, in reinstating man before Himself, as " in Christ." We must ever remember that this is an illustration and man, in actuality, to be **reinstated**, must be **reconstituted**—there must be new creation.

His going to prepare a place for them had its fulfilment in His own entrance there, in the right both of His Person and His redemptive work. Having captivated their affections His going away from them was a sore trial. To meet this the Lord says, " Let not your heart be troubled." It is as though He said, I would not have asked you to share with Me the hardship of the path had I not something in store for you. " Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." I am leaving you, but it is in view of a place with Me in scenes of infinite joy. " Part with Me " is connected with this. How infinitesimally small is all the suffering, in the light of the home of divine affections to which we belong. And how blessed for us to know that He will never be satisfied until He has us at home with Himself.

His Godhead comes out, in the way He seeks that their faith and affections should follow Him into the faith system. They had believed on the unseen God. He Himself was going from them, but if God was their Object so also must He be, until the time He came back for them. He opens up what was to engage them during His absence, telling them again that it was needful for them that He should go. Until He did so they were not able to avail themselves of what He had brought them into and given

to them in the days of His flesh. Not only would they be led into the gain of His ministry in those days, but they would be led into new associations of life, along with Himself, as glorified. It was in this way He was leading them from all that was Jewish and connected with the covenant people, and the hopes of Israel.

His words, "Part with Me," suppose detachment from all that was merely Messianic and earthly and this could not be accomplished in a day. When we consider that piety in Israel made everything of the Law, the Covenants, the Temple and the Courts of God's House, and when we recall that all this was a divinely established system we can understand that it would take a great amount of spiritual power, and proofs, to lead the godly to turn their back upon it all and take up an order of things which had nothing to show in the realm of sight. Such a transit could only be accomplished by divine power. We know little of this and can only behold the exercises of these men, some quick and others slow, to make the transit. Since Christendom is a replica of Judaism we ourselves have had something to leave, but nothing that can be compared with the exercises of these men at the turn of the dispensation.

Again, "Part with Me" is association with Christ in glory, but that connects with the ministry of the Spirit, to transfer us into the likeness of the Heavenly Man. This brings in our place as dwelling in the love of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." This is John 1 18; but in the Epistle it is, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us" (I John 4 12). That is, as the love of Christ is reciprocated amongst the saints there is a perpetuation here of that which came out in the Son of God in revelation. Then it goes on to say, "**We have seen**" (in strong contrast with "No man hath seen") "and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Observe here the difference between the revelation of God and the declaration of the Father. In the former

it is what came out, in Christ, for the whole creation, and doubtless every feature of God that has been revealed will find an answer, and be reflected, in the creation. But the declaration of the Father's Name by the Son was to that company given to the Son by the Father, which brings in all the favour of God to the Church, the inside company.

It is interesting to connect the close of chapter 13 with the opening of chapter 14. They were all in trouble and knew it, but there was trouble of another kind, before Peter, about which he did not know. What must that have cost the heart of our Lord ! The blessed Lord foresaw the lapse of His servant and the attempt of the enemy to ruin him. In all this we have something that was going on "behind the scenes," that only the Lord could know. In the same breath as He rebukes Peter and foretells his fall, He intimates to him, and to us, His intercession on his behalf. (Compare Luke 22 : 31-34 ; John 13 : 38.)

It has often been said that chapter 14, down to verse 14, is the "faith" line, but from verse 15 to the end is the "love" line. In the early part He is gone on high, and His saints are here in the faith of His coming for them ; but in the latter part, which clearly is the "love" line, He comes to them. "I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you" (verse 18). Thomas is the first of three speakers in the chapter, and it is clear that each one of them, namely, Thomas, Philip and Judas (not Iscariot), are simply on the ground of sense and nature. In His love and wisdom the Lord is drawing them out, in view of transferring them intelligently and consciously from the ground of earth, Judaism and Messianic hopes, to their place in association with Himself in the system of heavenly and eternal blessing. So He says, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." The words of Thomas we can well understand. It indicates to us, surely, the place of nearness and confidential trust that they were in, when the disciple could contradict the Master. "Lord, we know **not** whither Thou goest ; and how **can** we know the way ?" His thoughts were on a far-away heaven, like many of us today. But the place of intimacy produced a

liberty that, all unconscious to themselves, allowed a certain freedom of speech which is beyond our understanding, if we fail to appreciate the circumstances and feelings of the moment.

Note how the Lord leads from distance to nearness, in His reply. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life : no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Leaving out, for the moment, the words "the Truth and the Life," we see He is leading them to the Father, **now**. And if so, we also, instead of waiting until we go to heaven to be in the presence of the Father, may have all the good and gain of heaven in the Father's company, now. In this connection, we all know that it is not the furniture, nor the appearance of the building, that makes Home. It is the Persons, relationships and affections that make Home, HOME. Here we have the place **because** we have the Person, and as a result can say, "How blest a Home, the Father's House."

Tuesday Evening.

The All-Sufficiency of Christ.

(Colossians 2.)

MY object in reading this Scripture to you to-night is to seek to impress upon all our minds its very great importance. Two lines run through it: first, the all-sufficiency of Christ; and second, the solemn warning against any departure from that which is set forth in Christ. The history of the professing Church, from apostolic days to this present time, is sad enough testimony as to how little this warning has been heeded. The more one considers this Scripture, the more one realises how it contains the answer to much that is around us today. Do we give sufficient weight to this in our minds?

The apostle Paul begins by drawing attention to the great conflict in prayer he had for the saints, even extending to those who had not seen his face in the flesh. How all-absorbing Christ was to the apostle, since that ever-memorable day when he beheld Him on the road to Damascus. In a moment of time he was turned from being the mad persecutor of the church of God, and became the most zealous, whole-hearted servant of the One Whose Name he had sought to wipe from off the face of the earth. Never did he forget what he learned when he heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME" (Acts 9 : 4), our Lord thus identifying Himself with the saints Saul had, in mad zeal, been taking to prison and even to death. Paul never forgot that moment. How could he? How dear were the lowly disciples to their Lord! Touch them, and they touched Him. Paul never ceased to mourn over his persecuting past.

He prayed, with much conflict, that the hearts of the saints might be knit together in love. There is no real cohesion among saints other than in this way. In this way united, how happy is it for them to be occupied with "the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknow-

ledgement of the mystery of God." All this has been revealed in Christ. Wonder of wonders, surely !

The Apostle Paul warns them to beware of any man spoiling them "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." At once he tells them that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Sit down and meditate on such a subject, pray about it, that your spiritual apprehension might answer to this glorious truth.

It is as if the glorious ocean lay before you. You gaze on the vast expanse of water. Your eye fails to take it all in, for far beyond the horizon that your eye can reach, there is stretching, still further and further, the mighty ocean.

We are told that we "are complete in Him" Who is the Head of all principality and power. Complete in Him ! It is as if a basket were flung into the ocean. The waters of the mighty stretch of water percolate through every crevice in the basket, filling it full with the fulness of the ocean to its very utmost capacity. This is but a feeble illustration of what it is to have the Holy Spirit telling us of the glories of Christ, and how all the mystery of God is unfolded in Him. This is where the absolute poverty of creeds comes in. How is it possible for the finite mind to understand the wonders of redeeming grace, seen in one blessed Person Who is God and Man, in Whom all fulness is pleased to dwell (Colossians 1 19).

The warning against Rationalism, in the things of God, was early unheeded in the history of the professing church. It is not without very serious reflection that we see how the early heresies in the church of God sadly affected the minds of God's people as to the Person of our adorable Lord. There were the Gnostics (Greek, **gnosis**, knowledge). They maintained that a Divine Person could not unite Himself with that which is human. They contended that our Lord's body was an **appearance** only, an **apparition**, and that He only **seemed** to live upon earth. It is thought

that these doctrines were alluded to in John's first Epistle, where it is said that "every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," and that the denial of this great truth is the spirit of Antichrist. Then there were the followers of Arius, who taught that the Son was not of the same substance as the Father. The church of God owes a great debt, to this day, to Athanasius, who boldly stood for the truth, involving him in bitter persecution, and going into exile again and again. There was a veritable crop of various theories concerning the Person of our adorable Lord in the early days of the professing Church, many of which have their counterpart in the Modernism and Higher Criticism of the present time.

All this, carrying with it a loss of spiritual power, opened the way for Ritualism ; the second warning of our chapter. Refusing the Substance of everything seen in our adorable Lord, they harked back to the shadows. Was there a gorgeous temple at Jerusalem? They must build their grand cathedrals. Were there priests in the Jewish economy? They must have a priesthood in Christianity. It is blessedly true that **all** believers are priests unto God, the Father (Revelation 1 : 6), a holy priesthood (I Peter 2 : 5), but the introduction of a **special** class (and calling Christians who do not belong to this class with the impertinent name of **laity**) is a denial of the Spirit's place, in the assembly, to use whom He will in praise, worship or ministry. It is this that has developed into a Ritualism in which the features of the Substance are well-nigh obliterated. Indeed, Mr. Darby wrote a tract that clericalism was a sin against the Holy Spirit of God.

The glorious Reformation came in, and brought a large measure of light into the minds of many. But we see the reproduction of Rationalism, on the one hand, and Ritualism, on the other, working again in the ranks of that which, at first, was delivered from Rome and her pretensions. Things are working rapidly towards Rome, even in Protestantism, and Rome is heading for apostasy, as the Scriptures foretell.

The consideration of all this only makes the fulness of Christ—His Person, His eternal Sonship, His perfect Manhood, His place in glory (as having made purgation for sins, so sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high)—all the more wonderful. May the Lord keep us in the place of safety, finding nothing outside of Christ, finding everything in Him, in Whom all fulness is pleased to dwell.

A. J. POLLOCK.

Under His Shadow.

(Song of Solomon : chapter 1, verses 1 to 3 and 12 to 14.
John's Gospel : chapter 12, verses 1 to 24).

“ O blessed Saviour, is Thy love so great, so full,
so free ?

Fain would we have our thoughts, our hearts,
our lives engaged with Thee.

We love Thee for the glorious worth, which in
Thyself we see :

We love Thee for that shameful cross, endured
so patiently.

— — —
O Lord ! we treasure in our souls the memory
of Thy love ;

And ever shall Thy name to us a grateful
odour prove.”—(Hymn 88)

WELL, dear Brethren, we all sang the hymn very heartily, because, after all, in spite of our weakness and failure we do love the Lord.

The “ Song of Songs ” is a song of love and, while it has in view a future day when our blessed Lord shall come forth in the character of Solomon, we may apply it to ourselves in the present day, because we also know Him as the lover of our souls.

The Bride speaks, and she desires an expression of His love towards her. "For," she says, "Thy love is better than wine." Wine is what makes glad the heart of man and do we so appreciate the precious love of Christ that it gladdens our heart more than any natural joy? His love is stronger than death and it was tested and tried to the utmost, "But firmly endured as a rock."

In verse three we read, "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments, Thy name is as ointment poured forth." How fragrant are the graces and the moral virtues of His Person! And surely it is as we apprehend, and appreciate, these glorious excellencies that His Name is indeed to us as ointment poured forth. As we meditate upon the fulness that is in Him we are constrained to say, "All things that God or man could wish, in Jesus richly meet."

In verse 12 the Bride says "While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." She gives expression to her delight in Him, and it is all in view of giving joy and satisfaction to His heart. Then, as she meditates upon His love, "told out in sufferings on the Tree," she says: "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me: he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." This is the night of His rejection. The world sees no beauty in Him, that it should desire Him; but surely He has a place in our affections, for He has endeared Himself to us by His wond'rous self-sacrificing love. We may well love Him Who so loved us, as to suffer all the anguish and agony of Gethsemane and Calvary, that He might have us for Himself.

Then, as she contemplates His loveliness and beauty she exclaims, "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi." What is needed, I am sure, is a deeper appreciation of the preciousness of His love, and the loveliness of His Person.

In John's Gospel the Lord is seen as rejected from the very outset, and so we read in the very first chapter, "He was in the world (that is, the place), and the world was made by Him (that is, the material), and the world knew

Him not (that is, the persons). He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." In the other three Gospels, our Blessed Lord is presented for man's acceptance, and His rejection is not looked at as complete until the end.

In the eleventh chapter we read, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." They were the objects of His heart's affection. We might have been inclined to put Martha last, but no, she is mentioned first. Martha was just as dear to the heart of Jesus as Mary; and how sweet and blessed it is to single ourselves out and realise how personal is His love, and how He loves us, each individually. We surely want to be more **conscious** of the love of Christ.

These three, at Bethany, had experienced His sympathy, His power, the beauty of His Person, the sweetness of His love; and "they made Him a supper." It was all for Him, prepared by loving hearts. The chief priests and Pharisees were already plotting His death. Did He not feel His rejection by His earthly people? Yes! He felt it keenly, and how precious to His tender heart must have been this evidence of their appreciation and love at Bethany. They truly ministered to Him and gave joy to His heart: and do we not wish that we could give a greater return for all His love, and so bring joy and satisfaction to His heart?

Martha is not now "cumbered about much serving," but she is free and happy in her service. She is in her right place and counts it a high honour to do something **for** such a blessed Person. How acceptable is this service!

Lazarus has a greater privilege, for he "was one of them that sat at the table **with** Him"; and, we read, that "greater is he that sitteth at meat than he that serveth." Lazarus had been dead, but the Lord had raised him from the dead. In the Epistle to the Colossians we learn this truth, that we are dead and risen with Christ, and surely our association with Him is only in resurrection. "Both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). Surely it is a high honour

and a wonderful privilege to sit down at the table, in sweet communion, with such a glorious Person.

But when we think of Mary, it is not so much the greatness of our privilege, but the greatness of the Person that is before us. Her soul is enraptured, and she is seen at His blessed feet. How did she fill her box of precious ointment? Ah! was it not when she sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word? She chose that good part and, as she sat and listened to His wonderful words, she learned something of the glories of His Person. She knew something of the savour of His good ointments and, enraptured with the Object of her affection, she pours the precious ointment upon His feet. Truly, she could say, "While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof," "and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." How we need to sit at His feet, so that we might learn there more of the glories of His Person! He is the delight of the Father's heart, and, we, surely, long to know Him better. Then, as we are gathered around Himself, in assembly, we shall be able to give expression to what we have learned of Him. This shall ascend to the Father as a sweet-smelling savour, and all present will enjoy the sweetness, as His Name is magnified. I am convinced that it is only what is of Christ that will be acceptable to God. In all the Old Testament sacrifices there was that which spoke of Christ, in some aspect, for all that is well-pleasing to God, is to be found in the Person of Jesus.

Judas valued the ointment at three hundred pence, but the Spirit of God can only say, "very precious." How blessed, to be brought to share, in some measure, the Father's delight in the Son!

In verses 12 to 15 we have a little picture of the coming day, when our Lord shall come as the Son of David, into His earthly Kingdom. When He came the first time, His earthly people did not receive Him. They did not know that God, in grace, had visited His people and the doors were closed against Him: but when He comes the second time, in wond'rous glory, they shall say, "Hosanna! Blessed

is the King of Israel, that cometh in the Name of the Lord." Then the everlasting doors will lift up their heads to let the King of Glory in.

In verse 23 we read that there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the feast. They were attracted to Him, and they came to Philip, and desired him, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." "Philip cometh and telleth Andrew, and again, Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." This, surely, reminds us of Zechariah 8 : 23, where we read, "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'" The Greeks did not approach Jesus directly, but through Philip and Andrew ; and so, when He comes in His glory as the King of Israel, the nations will realise that God has blessed His people and they will go up to worship at Jerusalem. Then, truly, will His House be a house of prayer for all nations.

As Jesus heard the request of these Greeks, it seems that this glorious day was brought before His mind, and He answered them, saying, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." He anticipates the day when "all nations shall call Him blessed."

Surely, in the feast at Bethany, we have a little picture of what is going on today, in the assembly, where He is known as the Son of God Who has revealed to us the Father's Name ; and the Spirit delights to bring His preciousness before us.

In His entry into Jerusalem we have set forth His glory as the Son of David, when He shall sit upon the throne of His father, David, and Israel will be richly blest.

In the incident concerning the Greeks, we have portrayed the day when He shall be the Desire of all nations, and, as the Son of Man, He shall have world-wide dominion. As he thinks of these different circles, Jesus says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." His death was a necessity, if there was to be this glorious

harvest. He will be the Centre of all these circles, and all shall call Him blessed.

How blessed to know that He is God's centre of attraction, at the present time, for all men, as we read in verse 32 : "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." This surely means, "All men without **distinction**", but not "all men without **exception**", for all men have not been drawn to Him. It is in keeping with the character of John's Gospel which takes in the whole world in its scope, and not merely the Jews ; and so we have such expressions as "All men," "Any man," "Whosoever," and so on.

We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, as we look on to the blessed day that is coming, when we shall be with Him and like Him and when His glory shall be revealed.

He is the Man of God's purpose, Who shall fill all things, and be the Centre and Sun of the vast Universe of bliss.

What a glorious Person ! And He is the well-beloved of our souls !

"O God, Thou hast engaged our hearts
 With Christ Thy well-beloved Son ;
 Thy love a holy joy imparts,
 A joy which He for us hath won.

— — —
 To Him Thy voice from out the cloud,
 Once spake Thy deep, Thy full delight ;
 And now, without a veil to shroud,
 In Him shines forth Thy glory bright.

— — —
 Yet, midst thine own the Spirit still
 Bears witness of His glory there,
 And from the sphere which He doth fill,
 Brings knowledge of His fulness here.

Our God we bless Thee, Father Thou
 Of Him, Thy well-beloved Son ;
 As blest in Him before Thee bow,
 And joy in all that love has done."—(Hymn 59.)

J. B. DUFF.

Wednesday Morning.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 14 : 6-16.

WE finished, yesterday afternoon, at verse 6 of this chapter, where the Lord says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." All three of these qualities should be well weighed. The first, that is, the Way, is different from the other two ; it is, really, Mediatorial, and hangs upon the truth that He is both God and Man. But, besides that, we may say that, His being the Way to the Father hangs on the fact of His being the Truth and the Life. As the Truth, He is the standard, both for God and for man. "Grace and truth came (or subsist) by Jesus Christ." It is closely connected with righteousness, for the truth is what is right. If we speak of time we must have a standard ; the sun in the heavens is that by which time is regulated. So, in the moral region, Christ is the blessed Centre of all. Then, too, just as we need the sun for physical life, so we need the Lord Jesus, as the Sustainer of life, morally. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me," says Paul (Galatians 2 : 20). As we live and thrive under the sun's rays, so our souls are invigorated, under the beneficent influence of the shining of Christ, from the glory.

In our chapter, the Lord Jesus is set before us, objectively. Everything is summed up in Him. He is the Truth. In his second Epistle, the writer says, "For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever" (verse 2). If we know the Lord, we know, not only the Way to the Father, but we know the Truth, and the Truth is reality. We live in a world of illusions, but, having the Truth, we are fitted to meet all that is unreal. Then, we do well to remember that it is only as we grasp the objective side of the truth that we can, by the power of the Spirit, seek to answer intelligently to it. In Holy Scripture, the subjective and the objective are inextricably woven together. The Lord Jesus Christ on high is the Truth objectively ; the Spirit is the Truth within us subjectively ;

and then, speaking to the Father, the Lord says, "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17 17).

But He is also the Life. If His being the Truth sets Him before us as the Word become flesh, the Life takes us back to what He ever is, as true of Him, when He subsisted in the form of God, with the Father and the Spirit, through all eternity. We can look back and think of Him there, in the inscrutable depth of Godhead, with the Father and the Spirit, and then take account of Him as "that eternal life, which was with the Father," and, in this way, behold Him in relations which, according to the eternal plan, were to be brought into Manhood for men. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." It had ever been with the Father, but we are told that "that eternal life **which was with the Father,**" has been manifested, seen and handled down here.

The same is true of the calling of sons. As we have seen, the Lord brought Sonship into time; it was in the eternal plan for man. The Lord Jesus had not only to become Man before the blessing of sons could be ours (and when we say "ours," we have before us everyone in the baptism of the Spirit today), but He had, in death, to meet God about our fallen state, as in Adam. Sonship, then, is for us the relationship; eternal life is the condition in which the relationship is enjoyed: both were in the eternal purpose of God for us.

A difficulty is sometimes felt about the use of the word "abstract." We have spoken of our Lord, when in abstract Godhead, in the pre-Incarnate condition, but are we not permitted to hear Him speaking in Godhead during His ministry here? When He said, "I and the Father are One," or, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father," surely He was speaking in Godhead. This was abstract, for at that moment He was also Man. If the word "abstract" means "to draw from," surely the Lord is speaking of Himself here, as distinct and apart from Manhood, in the full rights of His co-equality with the Father. We are on holy ground here, with the Word of

God before us, and however deep and profound, let us remember that He wants us to know Himself ; for that, indeed, He has given us His Spirit and with this knowledge is richest blessing.

He also speaks, in an abstract way, in His Manhood ; when He said, " Give Me to drink " ; " Show Me a penny " ; " Where have ye laid Him " ? Or, indeed, when He said, " I am a Man Who has told you the truth. " Even in the Old Testament, the Father proclaims the Manhood of His Son, " The Man Who is My Fellow " (Zechariah 13 : 7). Surely, in such words, we behold Him, with delight, in the simplicity and beauty of His matchless Manhood. So, when He spoke in His Godhead He was more than that : co-equal with the Father and the Spirit, yet He had stooped to Manhood. When He spoke in His Manhood, He was much more than that : He was " over all, God blessed for ever. " Each side, then, in the very nature of things, is abstract.

But when He said, " I am the Good Shepherd, " " I am the Light of the world " ; or, when He is spoken of by the Spirit, as Saviour, Head, Lord or Priest ; then, we have the full Divine-Human Person before us. This calls for more attention than we give it : the Scriptures are full of it. Can we not see a distinct contrast between the words " I AM, " and " I AM the Good Shepherd " ? The first is abstract, as when He said, " I am " to Moses at the burning bush ; the second is, if we may use the word, concrete, since it sets Him before us in His full Divine-Human Personality, in relation to man. In pre-Incarnate condition, He could not die for us, and as a Man only He could not be our Redeemer ; and, while we are permitted to take account of Him on both sides of His unique Personality, we know, with adoring hearts, that if God is to be glorified, and the creature blest, He must be both God and Man in full Divine-Human perfection of glory.

It is well to be clear, when speaking in any way of our Lord, in the abstract, but the word is also called for when used in reference to ourselves. Take, for instance, Chapter

3 of John's First Epistle. There, the Spirit speaks of the saints as "begotten of God" and, as such, they "cannot sin." Now, we know that, as long as we are here in these bodies, the tendency to sin, if not kept by the grace of God, is present. Saints, then, are looked at, in these verses, in the work of the Spirit, in an abstract way, as the children of God, and as such they simply cannot sin. He is guarding against the possibility of connecting sin with the divine nature in us.

There is no clearer example of the Abstract, in the creature, than in Paul, when in the third heaven. So definitely was he taken out of himself, that is, abstracted, that he could not tell whether he was in the body, or out of it (II Corinthians 12 : 2). Then again, we are "In Christ"; this, in the very nature of things, is abstract. We know that the life we are in, with its relationships in the flesh and blood condition, will come to an end, either by death or the Coming of the Lord : but, at this very moment, we are all linked up together (this is true of all saints), in a life, and its relationships, that death cannot touch. To be "in Christ," therefore, is an abstract reality, and without seeing this, Christianity cannot well be understood.

The question of Philip, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," affected the tender heart of the Lord. The Lord had just said, "from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him." It is abundantly clear that He was patiently drawing them from Messianic conceptions, over on to the heavenly side of divine revelation. Philip was looking for an apparition, something for the natural eye, although the Lord had previously, in His answer to Thomas, sought to transfer them from the sight system to the realm of faith. If we compare this with what came out through Moses ; or compare the Sermon on the Mount, with this, the Sermon in the Upper Room, how great is the difference. Then, think how all this is expanded in the Epistles and we get some sense of the heavenly wealth bestowed upon us, as children of God.

Eternal relationships in the Godhead are in view in verse 10. In other respects these relationships are seen with the new activities which came in by Incarnation. To us there is "One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we **for** Him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we **by** Him " (I Corinthians 8 : 6). Although Incarnate, there is no inferiority, neither as to Person, nor Place. If we refer to Ephesians 4 it is somewhat different. The Father has been spoken of as the Father of every family in heaven and earth (chapter 3 : 15) ; consequently, when we enter chapter 4 the Holy Trinity comes before us, each Person in His taken place in relation to divine testimony. There it is said of the Father, " One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all " ; " above all "—Supremacy, " through all "—Permeation, " in you all "—Christianity (Ephesians 4 : 6).

Observe here, how the distinctive glory of the Lord comes out, by comparing verse 10 with verse 20. " **Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me ?** " " At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and **ye in Me**, and I in you." The first of these is the intrinsic and consubstantial Oneness of Deity ; no creature can come in there, as is clearly seen by the words, " The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." Comparing this with Matthew 12 : 28, where it says " If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God," we learn that the works of our Lord, in the days of His ministry, were the works of Father, Son and Spirit. In contradistinction with what is said in verse 10, **we** are brought in, in verse 20. " At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father and **ye in Me**." This is worked out in a very full way in the first Epistle of John, where our dwelling in God is made to hang upon our dwelling in love, and all, as the result of His having given to us His Spirit.

The Father is named, in some way, in almost every chapter of this Gospel ; He is named over twenty times in the chapter we are reading. In chapter 1 it is the Only-Begotten Son " in the bosom of the Father " ; at the

cleansing of the Temple Courts (chapter 2), "Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise"; in chapter 3, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand"; in chapter 4, "the Father seeketh worshippers"; chapter 5 tells us of His activities and is outstanding, in the whole of the Gospel, as showing the Father and the Son at work, for the blessing of men: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Then, in the sixth chapter, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." And so we might go on, for chapter 8 is like 5; much that was spoken in the treasury there, is rich in its communications of divine Persons, in their relationships and activities.

But what calls for particular attention is the different way the Father is spoken of here, from the way He is put before us in the other three Gospels. There we are viewed in the scene of our daily needs, namely, food and raiment; but our Father knows and cares. "Seek not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." We have, thus, the Father's care for us in the scene of "bread and butter," and we are told, not only of His providential goodness, but that He numbers the hairs of our head. All this is most precious and we need to know it, and trust Him more simply; but it is not exactly what is here. There, it is our needs and His care; here, it is His interests and the place He gives us and confides to us, as committing to us His interests.

One word from Peter's first Epistle, may help us here: "If ye call on the Father (better, If ye invoke as Father), Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work." Here, we learn, that the God Who controls and rules in the sphere of Providence is our Father, and in that sphere, as we have seen from Luke 12, He deals with us in a Fatherly way. The same is seen in Romans 8:28. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." All that is going on in the sphere of

divine government on the earth is under divine control, in view of those who are His own in that sphere ; but it is because they have their place with Him beyond that sphere. As His called ones, they have a place in the **sphere of divine purpose**. Think of the favour of all this ; we are taken behind the veil of His Providence (and it is true of every believer who is in the baptism of the Holy Spirit) to be at home with Him in the inside, the sphere of His inner working, distinct and apart from all the confusion around.

We come now to the last half of the chapter, to the place of the Spirit. Here it is His work in and with us, in relation to His place in the Holy Trinity, and the part He takes with regard to the Father and the Son in the effectuation of the eternal plan. It should be observed, that the Spirit speaks of Himself six times in this Gospel, in an outstanding way. The first three are connected with us as individuals : chapter 3, the new birth ; chapter 4, the living water, a spring within us ; chapter 7, the outflow of rivers of living waters from us. The next three connect with the company, as given here in chapters 14–16. First, the ministry of Christ, as in the Gospels, opened up to their understanding ; next, His witness to Christ as glorified and in His activities on behalf of His own here ; lastly, the range of things that still lay in the future, “ He will show you things to come.”

It has been thought that, as we have had by analogy the Ark, the Brazen Laver and the Brazen Altar, in chapter 13, there may be some analogy with the Seven Branched Candlestick here, in the way the Spirit puts Himself before us. It was not given to John to unfold Christianity as the antitype of the Tabernacle and its Ministry ; that we have by Paul if, as we believe, it was he who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. In chapters 9 and 10 of that Epistle there is a wonderful unfolding of the meaning of the Typical System. The Tabernacle had its significance, as an actual material structure here on earth, but it was also a representation of something else. What it copied was seen by Moses alone, for it is said, more than once, that he was to make an exact copy of the pattern showed him in

the Mount (Exodus 25 : 40 ; Hebrews 8 : 5). What we have in John is the eternal system itself, and that would correspond not exactly with what was set up down here but with what Moses saw in the Mount. We may say, then, that if Paul gives the antitype of the material structure set up on the earth, John gives us the prototype of the same. What we all want to see is that there is an eternal system and that we, with all the saints of every dispensation, have a place in it. "It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these ; **but the heavenly things themselves** with better sacrifices than these." Both Paul and John are inspired by the Spirit to open out to us something of the grandeur of what may be called the holy universal order, which sprang from the heart of God, all to be reared up by the Holy Spirit, as based on the redemption work of the Son. The seven-fold way that the Spirit is mentioned in these three chapters (14-16) may be easily seen, but the point before us is the place He fills in relation to the Father and the Son. A very clear example of it comes out in I Corinthians 12. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." We may therefore speak of a certain amount of analogy with the vessels of the sanctuary, in the way the Son and the Spirit come before us in these chapters.

Observe how the Lord connects the gift of the Spirit with their affections for Himself. "If ye love Me keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." The word "another" implies that He had been everything to them, as is indeed witnessed by their sorrow at His going away.

The word from which our word "Comforter" is taken is said to be difficult to translate and is rendered "Advocate," in the first Epistle of John. It certainly carries with it the thought of comfort, but means much more. It is applied by the Spirit to our Lord on

high, as well as **to** the Spirit for us here, and conveys to us that we have, in the glorified Saviour, One who represents us above, and looks after all our needs, while the Spirit Himself, Who dwells in us, looks after us down here. He was to be with them for ever, in contrast with the departure of the Lord, and we may conclude that, as given to us now, the Holy Spirit will be ours for evermore. "Ye know Him ; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Well He knows us and, surely, it is our joy to know Him.

But there is much more, for, "He shall be **in** you." He is immanent ; the word "indwelling" is a good word, but it may not convey the full meaning of the words : "The love of God is **shed abroad** in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Here, there is the idea of diffusion and, indeed, the intimacy which these chapters presupposes, calls for men like Stephen, of whom it is said he was "**full of the Holy Ghost.**"

Being a divine Person, and we but feeble creatures, the Holy Spirit is available for us in numberless ways, and we can well understand that this connects with our spiritual growth, for a believer of spiritual growth and maturity has experienced His help, teaching and power much more than those younger in the faith.

It has been well said that nothing could be more wonderful than that a divine Person should take up His abode in such creatures as we and in such proximity to evil as is in us, as not yet being delivered from flesh of sin.

Wednesday Afternoon.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 14 : 17—end.

A GAIN, we have the Holy Spirit before us this afternoon and that will call for dwelling a little more on chapter 14. We have had the Spirit before us in relation to the individual, as seen in the early chapters ; here it is in relation to the company. In speaking here of the analogy with the seven-branched candlestick we should remember that it is altogether different from the seven lampstands of Revelation 1. This latter gives us a representation of the seven Churches which is an entirely different range of thought. The seven-branched candlestick sat in the Holy Place and its shining was in connection with Itself, the Golden Altar and the Table of Shewbread ; things that stand in relation with Israel.

In that connection the disciples were representative men. They stand, in these chapters, as representative of the Assembly, the heavenly company ; while in Matthew 24, for example, they are seen as representing Israel, the earthly people. Here, as the nucleus of the Church, they bear witness to the historic facts ; the Holy Ghost bears witness as to the meaning of these facts, and we may take what the Lord said to them, as said to us.

In considering these chapters we should bear in mind that what they contain was held over for at least half a century, and during that interval Paul was brought in and used to open up the calling and constitution of the Assembly as the House of God, and the Body of Christ in relation to the Ascended One. But decay had set in and, as we know, the outward structure had broken down. It was to meet this state of things that John wrote, and in his writings he goes back even beyond Paul, to the solemn night in which the Lord so blessedly brought out these wonderful truths ; and in so doing uses them with a view to the recovery of the saints.

In that way the writings of John are suitable for any and every occasion. They were not written **only** to meet the

breakdown, but also to fit us for communion with the Father and the Son. It is well to remember that John stresses **obedience** as well as Paul. The word "abide" (sometimes "continue" or "remain") is a characteristic word in John's writings. I John 2 : 24 gives us an example. "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." In these chapters, then, all that is spoken of is conditional, that is, our enjoyment of richest blessing hangs on our obedience.

This leads us to see a characteristic difference in the writings of Paul and of John. The ministry of the Gospel, as given by Paul, shows that man is not only cleared from his sins but the fallen or sin state is judicially met in the Cross, so that the sin state having been set aside in the judgment, man is now set in Christ; that is, as transferred from the Adamic condition, he is set in new creation, an entirely new order of life, before God. This is a racial thought and cannot be improved upon. There can be no "IF" here. Every believer who is in the baptism of the Holy Spirit is "in Christ," and, that being so, is a new creature, nor can we ever be any less than that before God. Doubtless, the writings of Paul call for obedience as much as any, but with him as with John obedience springs from the position in which grace has set us.

Now, it is to be observed that John brings in the "IF." "If ye abide in Me, and My Word abide in you"; "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you"; "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." All this shows moral obligation, and that our enjoyment hangs on our obedience. Here, the objective and the subjective meet. Every believer having the Spirit is in Christ, and as such his dwelling-place is the love of God and "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I John 4 16). It is well known that mysticism is the danger here, and so the Spirit guards us by showing that our home is the love of God, and by dwelling in that love we are said to dwell in God and He

in us. But that this is conditional is clear from what Jude says : “ Keeping yourselves in the love of God ” ; and moreover the Lord says here, “ Continue ye in My love ” (chapter 15 : 9). It may then be clearly seen that obedience is necessary and moral obligation is ours as long as we are here ; but it is important to see exactly where it comes in, and to see how each writer fits in with the other, in giving us the truth.

All this is the love of complacency ; it is family affections, but it is the mixed condition we are in that keeps up the moral obligation. Here we mark the distinction between Love in Compassion and Love in Complacency. We all know the compassionate love of God as, for example, John 3 16, “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” What a sublime manifestation of the love and compassion of our God, this verse gives. But in the very same chapter the love of God is seen in perfect complacency in His blessed Son on earth. “ The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand ” (chapter 3 : 35). How could it be otherwise ? The Son, in Manhood, was the delight of the Father’s heart and, as such, He found One to Whom He could entrust everything. The thought of divine complacency we may meet again in chapter 16 ; but there, in regard to **ourselves**.

The absence of the Supper, in John, is surely instructive. All that **belongs** to that Holy Occasion is, however, before us in these chapters in its fulness. The Supper, as given to us in the first three Gospels, puts us out, that is, outside with the Cast-out-One. Paul got the Supper by revelation from the glorified Lord and puts it on new **heavenly ground** by bringing in the truth of the Body of Christ. It is different again with John ; he omits the actual Institution of the Supper and, instead, gives all the heavenly and spiritual realities that accompany it. All the spiritual grandeur of it is spread out before us, as shut in with the Father and the Son, where love and glory dwell.

A remark in a previous meeting calls for some emphasis. That is, the three-fold way the Holy Spirit presents our

Lord in chapters 14–16. It connects with the words of Hebrews 13 : 8, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever.” In chapter 14 26, “He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” The last clause points clearly to the Gospels ; “Teach you all things,” is the Old Testament as well ; but this word about their remembrance, could only be the words and works that came out in Him whilst He was with them. How could such a ministry be put in writing by any unassisted person ? The Spirit having come, it is put before us in a fourfold way, by men for the most part simple and unlearned. It is the same today. Just as they could never have written these precious Gospels without the aid of the Holy Spirit, so we must ever depend on that same Divine Person to illuminate our understanding, if we are ever to see the beauty and glory of what they wrote. All this would be “Jesus Christ—Yesterday.”

But “Today” is another matter. What creature could know anything about our adorable Lord since He left the earth, had He not sent the Spirit here to report His glory ? When He was taken up they were all left at their wit’s end ; that is shown in Acts 1. But immediately the Spirit came, Peter can tell us, that He, Jesus, “having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,” had sent Him down here ; and also, that “God has made that same Jesus, Whom ye crucified (now the glorified Man), both Lord and Christ.” The four-fold witness in John 5 was to Him **here** ; the two-fold witness in Acts 5 : 29–32 was to Him **on the Cross** : but here the Spirit’s witness is to Him in **glory**. But see what that opens up. If, in chapter 14 : 26 it looks back to the Gospels, in chapter 15 : 26 we have, surely, what is in the Epistles ; it is Christ as He is today, in full Mediatorial Glory, as Lord, Head and Priest, at God’s right hand on high.

But chapter 16 goes further, and carries us on to His place in the future. “He will show you things to come.” Doubtless, this would include all that was **then** future, and which came out later in Apostolic ministry, but it goes

further and brings in all that is Prophetic, down to and including, the Book of Revelation. What a loss it is in Christendom, that the Holy Spirit is ignored ! What a loss to any of us if we seek a mere, mental acquisition of the things of God !

How remarkable the identification between the work of the Spirit "inside," and His delivering power from what is "outside." The diver, in the diving bell, is sustained from the top ; but the air by which he lives is the same air which holds in control the waters of death which surround him. The men at the top must pump the air for him to breathe, but he is just as dependent on that same air to hold in check the force of water which would swallow him up. Under the control of what comes from above, the men are able to go on with their work, taking no account of the threatening element around them. So, the believer is sustained from above, and truly we can say, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."

Much has been said about Priesthood and Advocacy, but it is better to look at the service of the Priest here as Minister of the Sanctuary. As such, He leads us in, along with Himself, into that range of things that belongs to the Father and the Son, as we may see later in chapter 16 ; it is there we have part with Him, in sanctuary service.

In that connection, observe the words, "Ye see" ; "Ye shall live" ; "Ye shall know" (verses 14, 19, 20). The first of these is exemplified in Stephen ; the doctrine being proclaimed in Hebrews 2 : 9 and II Corinthians 3 : 18. The second is so beautifully put in the verse in which it occurs, "Because I live, ye shall live also." In source, manifestation and eternal continuity we can say "Christ is our life." "At that day ye shall know." This is clearly the Spirit's day, and with it all the blessedness, for the saints, of knowing that they are wrapped up in the life of the Father and the Son. Surely such words call for holy reflection, referring as they do to the richest of all God's rich blessings.

The indwelling of the Spirit is most wonderful. That a Divine Person can take up His abode in creatures such as

we, would be overwhelming, but for the great truth of Redemption. The relation to evil, in that we are still in flesh of sin, is that which makes the Christian unique above all others. The Spirit dwells, not only in our bodies, although that is true, but He is in our souls. He cannot own the fallen condition, that has been judged in the Cross ; He dwells in us, in that which He has already formed within our souls. The cloven tongues, in Acts 2, would show that He takes account of man's state when taking up His abode in the soul ; He manifests His holiness. In Romans 8 we have much about the Holy Spirit ; not only is the Spirit in the believer in that chapter but the believer is in the Spirit.

“ He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me : and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” Here again we are in the realm of moral obligation. The question might be raised with each of us : How much do I know of these precious manifestations ? Here is a holy refinement that we might well covet. It challenges one ; we may well say : Can the Lord really manifest Himself to me ? Is there that holy devotedness of heart that draws down upon me the love of the Father and the Son in such a way that definite manifestations are made good to me ? Such words drew forth from Judas (not Iscariot) the question, “ Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world ” ? This question we can well understand, but how it must have affected His blessed heart ! Judas was in the sensuous world, but the Lord was in the realm of faith and love. The Lord's answer goes further than in verse 21. There, it was keeping His “ commandments ” ; here, it is the love that values His “ words,” a somewhat deeper and richer treasure and, the result is, the Father and the Son come and take up Their abode with him, not as Visitors, as with Abraham, in earlier days, but “ make Their abode ”—a word the same as that translated “ mansion,” in verse 2.

Distinction is made between “ Receive ye Holy Ghost ” (when the Lord breathed upon His disciples, chapter 20),

and the Holy Ghost as a divine Person given to them at Pentecost. It would lead us, in thought, back to Romans 8, where we get "in Spirit," and "the Spirit in you." But the one grand reality is that God dwells in us by His Spirit. In that we are reminded that all we know or can know of God is by the Spirit. He is the One in the Holy Trinity with Whom we are in direct contact ; all we know of the Father and the Son (indeed, the whole revelation) comes from Him. We have got our Bible from Him and, by Him alone can we understand it.

Note the prepositions, "with" and "in." As dwelling in us, the Spirit adapts Himself to us. He dwells in us as a result of obedience to the faith ; we believe the Gospel, and as a result are sealed by the Spirit, Who takes up His abode in our souls. We cannot have more of Him, but if we yield ourselves to Him He will have more of us. We may fail and thus grieve Him, in which case He may correct but never leaves us, as may be seen in the case of the Corinthians and the Galatians. Note, too, the difference when it says that **the Father and Son** come and make Their abode. In this, one is brought by his obedience and response to the Lord, in such holy affection, that he is loved by the Father and the Son in such a way that they come and make Their abode with him. Such a condition each of us may well seek after and with holy jealousy maintain, but, that it is conditional, it is easy to see.

The Holy Spirit is also **with** the Church. If the Son took the Body prepared for Him, the Spirit formed the Body of Christ, in which He Himself dwells. This is spoken of as the mystical Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells in that Body and, in virtue of that, has His place in the Christian profession today. This may be seen in His mention of Himself in the Epistles to the Seven Churches. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches" (Revelation 2 and 3). In Acts 13 : 2 we read of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Assembly, saying, "Separate Me Barnabus and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Again, in I Timothy 4 1, "The Spirit speaketh expressly."

Note, too, the distinction between the Spirit, and our Lord as the "Word" become "flesh." In becoming Man the Son took upon Him a condition which, **in us**, has its limitations, as we speak. To put it simply, in His Manhood, when He was in Galilee, He was not in Judea. While saying this, we are not forgetting that **that Man is God**, and as such is everywhere. He healed the Nobleman's son, at Capernaum, without needing to make the journey to the place where he was. So, also, in the case of the Syrophenician woman's daughter. These two cases clearly shew both omnipotence and omnipresence in that blessed Man ; all was accomplished in perfect order, and in the absence of outward display.

This connects beautifully with the way the Lord took to make Himself known amongst His people. How could they have gone on had they known that the great Creator was in their midst, in that blessed Man ? How, it may be asked, could the family at Nazareth have existed if they had known that the Almighty was in that home, as one of themselves ? It is just here that His moral glory is seen, and in the Gospels it shines out in perfection. Being Who He is, Godhead glory could not be hid ; but, if that were so, it came out in acts of grace and mercy, and, in general, in relation both to their need and capacity. After His resurrection a little more came out, but for the full blaze of His glory, they had to wait until He had gone from them and ascended on high. In the days of His flesh, Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" ; after His rising, Thomas confessed Him as his "Lord" and "God" ; but, after He was glorified on high, He is described as "over all, God blessed for ever."

Here we must remember that we are dealing with deep and blessed things, things indeed which are beyond our creature minds. Think of Three Persons in One God. They are not Three, in the same sense as They are One, nor are Father, Son and Spirit different names for one and the same Person. The Father counsels and sends the Son ; the Son comes to reveal the Godhead, a revelation which stands good for the whole creation ; and the Holy Spirit,

Whose work is the subjective part, comes to make good, in the souls of the heirs of purpose, that which has been revealed. This revelation includes every family in the heavens and earth, and indeed, it will go out to the place of eternal punishment, for the lake of fire will be an everlasting witness to the righteousness, holiness and majesty of God.

In these chapters we are reading we see that the Spirit is sent by both the Father and the Son ; it reminds us of the prophetic announcement of our Lord's first coming in Isaiah 48 : 16, " And now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." Both the Son, and the Spirit, were sent, yet both came forth in a voluntary way. This shows the Father, so to speak, at the Head of the whole, wondrous plan. He remains in His own absolute Godhead, in divine immutability, for ever ; " Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

In verse 3 we have the Lord's promise that He would come **for** them ; but in verse 18 He says, " I will come to you." This precious promise has been a comfort to numberless souls when in affliction. As it stands, however, it goes on into the Christian circle and, indeed, is made good to us, as coming together to remember Him at the Supper. It is then, as Minister of the Sanctuary, He leads us into the innermost place, the Holiest of all, to praise and worship God. How blessed the privilege ! That links with Hebrews 10, where we come to God ; but the prominent thought here is the family and the response to the Father. We have had the Father before us here, as we might say, in the scope of **His** own affairs, but it is good for us to remind ourselves that we have Him to turn to with regard to **our** own affairs. This has a steadying effect upon us. How blessed, to know that we have One we can call Father, to Whom we can turn, in the sphere of our creature needs. And, after all, this is perhaps our greatest defect, lack of confidence in our God, in the battle of life.

It is precious to have the Holy Trinity before us, as in these chapters, but the place and work of the Son is that which takes possession of our hearts. It was He, the One

in that Holy Trinity Who became a Man, taking part with us in flesh and blood ; it was He Who went to the Cross ; and it is He Who has brought God, in love and mercy, to us. It is this that affects the heart and bows it in holy praise and worship and will be the direct motive for praise and worship for evermore.

The Lord brings to a close that wonderful meeting with the word "Peace," and repeats the words, "Let not your heart be troubled." The conflict in which peace was secured and triumphantly won, He was about to enter into. The forces of good and evil met there, and the battle raged. Thank God ! the issue was never in doubt. Good has triumphed and the forces of evil are defeated for evermore. As a result, we have peace with God. He said also, "My peace I give unto you." As freed from all that stood against us, it is ours, now, to enjoy that calm peace which ever filled His blessed heart, in all that He passed through down here.

Wednesday Evening.

The Glory of The King-Priest.

(Hebrews 2 : 9 ; Hebrews 10 : 19 - 25.)

THE truth before us, Beloved Brethren, on this occasion, has reference to "The Heavenly Calling," "The High Priest," "The House of God" and "The Holy Place." The High Priest is brought before us in nine consecutive chapters, beginning at the second and ending at the tenth. Each reference is distinctive, and the truth unfolded is most glorious. To make sure we have the Lord Jesus Christ before us, let us look at the grand array of dignities and glories which exclusively belong to Him, as presented to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews. I will enumerate them in the order given.

SONSHIP. "God Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews 1 : 1-2). Sonship glory is the greatest of all the glories pertaining to our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Son"—by Whom He made the worlds (Hebrews 1 : 2). "The Son"—it is none but Himself Who is the "Author of eternal salvation" (chapter 5 : 8-9). "The Son"—now the Great High Priest "consecrated for evermore" (chapter 7 : 28). "Thou art My Son"—twice repeated (chapter 1 : 5 ; chapter 5 : 5), God announcing His last word in the Person of His Son.

HEIRSHIP. God hath appointed Christ, His own beloved Son, to be Heir of all things. It is divinely predestined that He shall presently come into possession of all things (chapter 1 : 2). When He first came, in His marvellous, condescending grace, He was maligned and maltreated ; they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir : come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours." The Gospels bear witness to the fact that He was despised and rejected of men, crucified in shame and dishonour, "cut off," having nothing of the "all things"

that were rightly His. The day of his full manifested glory is not yet come, but God hath declared that He will give Him the heathen for His inheritance, "and the uttermost parts of the earth" for His possession (Psalm 2 : 8).

CAPTAINSHIP. Whenever He takes up any relationship with His people it is becoming that He should be pre-eminent. "As Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come" (Joshua 5 : 14). To us He is now presented as the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2 : 10).

APOSTLESHIP. We are exhorted to consider Him as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. As the Apostle, He is the sent One from God. In John's Gospel this truth is fully developed. The word "sent" characterises that Gospel, mentioned some forty times, six times in Chapter 17, "Whom Thou hast sent." "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."

AUTHORSHIP. We usually use this term in respect to writing, but we have no record of our Lord having written anything whilst here on earth, except the wonderful incident in the Temple (John 8 : 6-8). Nevertheless, He is named the "Author of eternal salvation" (chapter 5 : 9), and "the Author and finisher of faith" (chapter 12 : 2).

KINGSHIP. He is brought before us in this dignified glory, symbolically, under the name of Melchisedec, King of righteousness, and King of Salem, which is King of peace. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the great King-Priest, and, in due course He will function in that dual office, to the glory of God and the well-being of man. In the meanwhile, let us not deprive Him of any single glory, but rather, let us rise up as one and Hail Him in His Majesty.

LORDSHIP. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands" ; "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him" (Hebrews 1 : 10 ; 2 : 3). "God hath made that

same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ ” (Acts 2 : 36).

SURETYSHIP. He became surety of a better Covenant (Hebrews 7 : 22). Solomon, who was both wealthy and wise, in his book of Proverbs, warns against “ suretyship.” “ He that is surety for a stranger shall **smart** for it ” (Proverbs 11 15). Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His matchless grace, took up our cause—**strangers indeed**—He Himself assumed our liabilities, paid our debts ; the sorrows and sufferings of the Cross betoken to us the price He had to pay for our Redemption.

MEDIATORSHIP. The Lord Jesus is now stated to be the Minister of the Sanctuary and “ the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better promises ” (Hebrews 8 : 2-6).

TESTATORSHIP. “ Where a Testament is, there must also be the death of the Testator. For a Testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the Testator liveth.” Our Lord has died : “ This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which is shed for you ” (Luke 22 : 20). His last Will and Testament is made known to us in the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation, and it is in force now. What a rich and glorious inheritance !

The Lord Jesus Christ, Who holds these many titles, is the self-same One Who is our great High Priest. The manner and the measure in which the Priestly office is filled gives us assurance and confidence as to the blessedness of its ministrations. Hophni and Phineas were removed from the priesthood on account of their grievous failure. At that time God said : “ I will raise Me up a **faithful Priest** that shall do according to that which is in Mine heart and mind, and I will build Him a sure house.” In the Epistle to the Hebrews we get the fulfilment of this important prophetic utterance : “ A **merciful and faithful High Priest** in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

The ministry of the Priest has certain distinctive marks. It is **Heavenly in character**, in contradistinction with what is earthly. We have tasted the heavenly gift and are called by a heavenly calling ; we belong to a heavenly country, of which the Heavenly Jerusalem is the grand and glorious centre. Then it is **Eternal in character and duration**. By His death our Lord has wrought eternal redemption, on the basis of which we have eternal salvation and are on the way to our eternal inheritance, of which we have His promise. And, Blessed be His Name ! It is **Divine in its totality** ; by which we mean, it is all of God.

Note the majestic opening of this Epistle ; the first word is " God." Here is Dignity and Authority, and both of these qualities are maintained right through to the end. Further, God's will is done. " Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." " By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." " For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Hebrews 10 : 6-16.)

Permit me to cite a verse of a hymn here : " Lord of the worlds above " (No. 271).

" Lord of the worlds above
How pleasant and how fair
The dwellings of Thy love,
The heavenly mansions are !
To Thine abode our hearts aspire,
With warm desire, to see our God."

The Apostle had observed that some had halted by the way and others were going back, so he calls them to attention, and then exhorts them to go on. " Let us go on unto perfection." And then with firm resolve and determination, says : " This will we do, if God permit." But the warm and worshipping hearts which the hymn quoted suggests, would say : Let us go IN. Not now, as lingering in the courts, nor standing by the door, but boldly going right in to the Holy Place. " Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us,

through the veil, that is to say, His flesh ; . Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith ” (Hebrews 10 : 19–22).

The House of God is named for us in three Epistles, in distinct ways : in relation to our behaviour (I Timothy 3 : 15) ; in connection with judgment (I Peter 4 : 17) ; and in view of our approach for worship here in Hebrews 10. May I suggest, dear brethren, that **over**-occupation with the judgment or with the behaviour character of the House of God, will detain us too long in the courts of the House and at best occupy us as doorkeepers ; but occupation and association with Christ, the great High Priest, will bring us right into the Holiest of all.

“ ’Tis Jesus fills that holy place,
Where glory dwells, and Thy deep love
In its own fulness (known through grace),
Rests where He lives, in heaven above.”

The Holiest is where God is known, His glory seen, His love enjoyed, His mind apprehended, and His heart gratified. Well we know that He seeks worshippers. This, may we not say, would surely lead to exuberance in our growth and enrichment of our praise. “ O send out Thy light and Thy truth : let them lead me ; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.”

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we certainly get a good start. And I would assure you, brethren, that we are in for a good finish. God is bringing many sons to glory ; yea, to heaven itself. But the Epistle was written in view of our having a good going on, here and now, and continuing to the end. As to the start, we begin with a heavenly vision. “ We see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ” (Hebrews 2 : 9).

It may be well to notice the relationships mentioned, that we are set in, as having a right to take up these precious things : Sons, Brethren and Children. We have been

given by the Father to the Son, and as sons, God is bringing us home to glory. Next, the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Again, it is said, "Behold I, and the children which Thou hast given Me."

If we get everything for a good start, there is assured also a good going on. For this, the greatness and glory of the Priest is put before us. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens." And, observe, He is an altogether different kind of Priest from any that had ever been before. Five times over it is repeated that He is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec (chapters 5-7), and there is no mere repetition, but rather a grand sequence. First, there is the **Salutation**. "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him"—(Notice this, "He that said unto Him." Here we have God the Father speaking directly, Personally, and most warmly to His Son)—"Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee." And again, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Then, as Priest, He is the **Called** of God. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5: 5-10). In chapter 6 He, as our Forerunner, was **Made** an High Priest after the Order of Melchisedec." **Witness** is borne to this in chapter 7: 17; and, lastly, it is **Confirmed** by an oath: "The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 7: 21).

Under the Aaronic priesthood there were many priests and Israel suffered much, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood. "Wherefore, He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make

intercession for them. For such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." It is good to know that all is established in the power of an endless life.

The word "boldness" is twice used in the Epistle. First in chapter 4, where we come with our needs to the Throne of Grace; but in chapter 10 we come boldly into the Holiest, to praise. All this brings in His ability. He is able to succour, sympathise, and save to the uttermost all that approach God by Him. In all this we have been considering the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

Now, as to a good finish. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin (that is, apart from sin) unto salvation" (Hebrews 9 : 28). "For yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10 : 37). Remember also the Lord's own promise. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14 : 3). Having recalled His unfailing promise, let us remind ourselves of His prayer. Read it aloud, please! "Father, I will (that is, intense desire) that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17 : 24).

We wait the coming of our Lord (I Thessalonians 4 : 16). We look forward to the grand reception—Unto Himself. Forever with the Lord. Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord! Amen.

J. DAWSON.

The Beauty of The Heavenly Man.

(Hebrews 10 : 5-9 and 12-22).

BELOVED Brethren, one has been deeply impressed during these present Readings of John 13 and onwards, listening intently to the sublime language recorded in these chapters, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have been, dear brethren, in the presence of Divine Persons, listening to Them in Their exchange of holy thoughts, and we, oftentimes, the subject of Their conversation. The disciples' feelings at the Lord's departure were intense ; there was nothing tangible to take His place. He brought into this world all the wealth of God, and had been, and was, unfolding all to His disciples. What impressions He was making upon their hearts, as the gracious words fell from His lips ! Impressions that would come to light at a later date.

I want, dear brethren, to speak of the Man Christ Jesus, as the only Man Who ever established the right to live. I am not overlooking the fact as to His Person in the Godhead, a subject that stirs my innermost soul ; but I wish to trace the Man Christ Jesus from the Manger to the Cross, and from the Cross to the Glory. He came from God, and He went back to God.

If we are to understand Christianity aright, we must know the kind of man that is going into heaven. Perhaps it is well to remind ourselves of the kind of man **not** going there.

The first man Adam, with his privileges and, indeed, considerable intelligence, broke the covenant with God, and we see the awful result in the world today, the speed at which it is moving on to its final judgment.

We are, dear brethren, on the threshold of seeing Him, the Man Christ Jesus, God Blessed for evermore, and as we follow on and trace His footsteps we see how different He was from the first order of man, Adam, man marked by failure ; even Abraham, we learn, has to be corrected by his wife as to Isaac. Then God takes up a nation and we

learn the same sad story of failure, in that they spurned and refused the goodness of our God. But God has His Man !

So, dear brethren, we have read in Hebrews 10, "Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do Thy Will, O God." We have been speaking of the movements of Divine Persons, Three in One, One speaking to the Other ; here it is the Son's voice we listen to.

A brother asked the question during the Readings : What are we going to do to fortify ourselves to meet what is abroad today ? What but **this** could stay the mark of the beast ; what but the contemplation of Divine Persons, in Their Own sphere, as revealed in Their Own Word ?

So, at Bethlehem, the coming into this world of our Lord Jesus Christ, you will remember, that, at His birth, it was said " good pleasure in **men** " ; the Divine desire being that there would be a race of men upon whom They (Divine Persons) may lavish Their love.

A new kind of Man is now coming into view, this Blessed Man establishing His right to live. Have you ever taken up the Psalms and seen this Man walking through the world ? How Blessed ! He could put His Hand on the throne of God ; yet that same One puts His Hand upon us. He says, at one time, " show Me a penny," yet all is His. This is the kind of Man that is going to fill the universe of bliss ; evil could not find a point of contact in Him ; morning by morning His ear was opened. " The Word which ye hear is not Mine," He could say, " but the Father's—which sent me." Everything in Him was an answer to every thought and desire of the Blessed God. Having established His right to live, yet He would not go out free. " I love my Master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free." During this Holy life, man had reached the height of his evil, and the time came when the Lord had to say, " This is your hour and the power of darkness." When that hour came, He could speak in all His calm dignity, of Himself as a Man before God ; the traitor's kiss, the agony of the hour, could not divert Him.

No ! He was ever in touch with heaven ; He was the One Who had said, “ Lo, I Come— ”

Do we, dear brethren, come together, expecting impressions to be made upon us ? We have at the present time the Ministry of the Spirit, with a view to forming us into the likeness of that Blessed Man, so being here as vessels of testimony. “ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done.” This characterised His whole path, from the manger to the Cross ; He was ever in the path of the will of God.

All had in view the securing of a company, to take up service in the Holy Place. “ I leave the world—I go to the Father ” ; not a word about the Cross, tho’ all was involved. In Acts 1 He was received up in a cloud out of their sight. He had gone back to the Father, having established that right as Man.

The triumph of God is, surely, that He has had a Man here, Who never violated His law, but kept it—the true Ark of God.

All this, beloved brethren, is in view of administration in the coming day of glory, in which, through mercy, we are to share with Him, and God would educate us for this now.

“ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.”

So, I close, dear brethren, with this : What is to be our reaction to this Revelation and to these Meetings ? Reaction there will be. Let it be with boldness to enter into the Holiest (indicating there is nothing higher), for it is the very Presence of God.

What impressions this would make upon us ! What changes in your life and mine ! Easy it is to sit and enjoy such precious ministry as we are having, but does it not go further ? Our home life, our business life, every

department should be and is affected, and so, in measure, the life of the Man Christ Jesus is continued in the Saints.

So it says : “ Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water** ” ; that is the kind of man that is going in.

May God continue to work, and put upon us the final touches, so that we may be the very portrait of the Man Who is now in the Glory.

J. D. AYRE.

Thursday Morning.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 15 : 1—end.

WE shall have to pass on more rapidly and take chapter 15 this forenoon, and if possible chapter 16 this afternoon, in view of finishing with chapter 17 tomorrow forenoon.

It is easy to see two worlds, or systems, in this chapter, one of hate, and one of love. In verses 18–25 the Lord speaks of this world in its opposition to Himself, and gives His own estimate of His rejection by the world. “If I had not done among them the works which none other Man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.” On the other hand, we have a world bound together by divine love, in this little company gathered around the Lord on this dark night. This latter is our happy portion ; we need not, therefore, dwell on the other ; it is a state of things we know too well to need to dwell upon it. This blessed circle of love is to expand until it fills the whole creation and becomes what we speak of as the universe of bliss.

We might look a little now at the way the Spirit comes to report the glory and gracious activity of the Ascended One, as given in verse 26 ; then turn back to those precious communications in the body of the chapter, from verse 7. We saw yesterday, the different way the Spirit is presented, in each of these three chapters ; first, as to the Gospels, chapter 14 ; then, as to the Epistles, chapter 15 ; and, lastly, as to the future, chapter 16.

The Holy Ghost tells us a good deal about the Father, and indeed about Himself, but the point here in our chapter, in verse 26, is that the disciples were not to have the Lord with them any longer, as to bodily presence in the realm of sense ; but, by the report of the Spirit, He would continue to be known, and that in a new, and much fuller, way. This witness to the glorified One would include not only His new state and place, as set at God’s right hand, but also the official place He has taken Mediatorially, as called to fill

certain offices, namely, Lord, Head and Priest. Further, this testimony to Christ in glory was opened out, in the ministry of Paul, some time before John put on record what we have in these chapters. It has opened up to the Church a good deal of the "Many things" which the Lord referred to, when He said to His disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

We have to confess how poorly we are acquainted with these things, and the new heavenly system which is opened up to us in the Epistles. It is a faith system and beyond the senses altogether; things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," but, having the Spirit, in us and with us, we may well seek to encourage each other to enter, more and more, into this region of heavenly light and glory.

As we said, Christ ascended, has been made Lord, Head, and Priest. Well we know that the moral qualifications for these dignities were His, when here. In point of fact, it was when here on earth that He spoke of the Father having put all things into His hand. We must remember, however, that until Atonement had been wrought the position for these offices had not been created. This links with the truth of Redemption; He could not take His place at the head of a defiled inheritance. The Lord is much more, we can well understand, than these official titles indicate; but they may be taken as covering all that He takes up as Mediator, for the glory of God, and the perfect adjustment of the whole creation.

We can understand something of the feelings of the disciples, when the Lord was taken up from them. But immediately the Spirit is come, Peter can tell not only where He has gone, but also a good deal about Him. This was an exact fulfilment of what He had said to them. The Spirit had come from above, to report how the One that had been refused here was received up there. Observe how it links with what the Lord had said to the downcast disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24 : 26). "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" What glory is this? Being Himself the Source and Centre of glory nothing could be added to Him, but by His death

and resurrection an entirely new order of things had been brought into being : He takes His place at the Head of that, in the full power of redemption glory. The plan and purpose of God calls for time in its working out, everything in its place and order. We can understand therefore what is meant by Him entering "into His glory."

We should remember that we can have no links with the Lord as He was before His death : all our links are with Him as risen from the dead. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The attempt to bring Christ back to the "flesh and blood" life has been the loss of true Christianity to many. "Bring not my son hither again," is a needed word here. Abraham used these words twice to his servant, when sending him forth to procure a bride for his son Isaac, the risen one. In attempting thus to connect our Lord with life here, after His resurrection, we lose the whole grand system of new creation, as a "faith" system. But there is still worse, for the need for redemption is set aside by connecting our Incarnate Lord with man, in his fallen state. How could He, Who is the Second Man out of heaven, connect Himself with the first man in all his state of sin and degradation ? If our Lord came to exalt fallen flesh by Incarnation, then there was no need for His death and, on the other hand, to put man right by Incarnation is to deny that he lay under the sentence of death and was living a forfeited life from Adam onwards.

By ignoring the Spirit's teaching, the natural mind thinks it is exalting the Saviour, when actually it is degrading Him down to the level of other men whom they acknowledge as leaders. Citing the Sermon on the Mount, they eulogise Him as a great Teacher, comparing Him with certain outstanding men, even from darkest heathendom. It is all to be deplored as foreign to Scripture and painful to one taught of God. The result is that Christendom is fast losing the Deity of our Lord. It reminds us of what Paul said to the Corinthians, when he spoke of "another spirit," and "another gospel."

In the light of all this, we may well say, Why are we here today in the enjoyment of the truth, rejoicing in the Lord? It is surely a mark of the favour of God and draws forth from our hearts praise and thanksgiving. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (II Corinthians 5: 15, 16).

It is well to have that which was from the beginning; that is what John, by the Spirit, is continually bringing us back to. False teachers, like the Pharisees, sought to **add**, bringing in the traditions of the ancients, and many burdensome but useless observances, in place of the Law of God; while others, like the Sadducees, would **take away**, denying the resurrection from the dead, with all it implies, as to reward or punishment.

In considering the testimony of the Spirit to Christ in glory, let us note how carefully it is distinguished from other testimonies borne to him. In chapter 5 there is the Father; then the Baptist; the works that He wrought; and the Scriptures. This was testimony to Him, when here. Then, there is the witness to Him in death and resurrection (Acts 5: 29-32). "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost." These testimonies were to Him here, in the realm of sight and sense; but John 15: 26 is altogether different. If this world has got rid of Him His people have the comfort and blessing of having Him in a fuller way than they could have had Him, had He remained with them here on earth.

The Lord goes on to say, in verse 27, "Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." They bore witness to Him in the days of His flesh, but after Pentecost they were called to testify of Him in glory. This is where we all come in. As a qualification for the work **they** were called to, they had to be with the Lord when He was here. The planting of Christianity was no ordinary work; He Himself planted the testimony;

they, working with and under Him. But as witness to Christ glorified we are all brought in. Paul speaks of being "born out of due time"; that is, he was too late for the Gospel and too soon for the day of manifested glory. It is the same with each of us. We begin, like Paul, with a glorified Christ and are thus favoured to be called into blessing, in the most important day of all the divine dealings with man on earth.

This leads to the witness of the Assembly, as seen in chapter 4 : 14 of the first Epistle of John. In the 5th chapter we have a three-fold testimony in the Spirit and the water and the blood. The Holy Ghost takes up and applies to us the meaning of the water and blood that flowed from the side of our Lord upon the Cross. This is the witness of God concerning His Son. This is the work in detail that secured for us the blessing, and so it goes on to say : "And this is the witness that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." This is the witness **to** us, but in the previous chapter it is **through** us. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World."

In all this we must remember that Divine revelation was completed in the life and death of our Lord. The coming of the Spirit brought about expansion, but the revelation itself does not come from Christ on high ; the incapacity of His disciples being the immediate cause. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." And again, "It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." The coming of the Spirit more than made up for their loss in His departure, but who could have thought that another, Saul of Tarsus, would be called in to be the vessel through whom the holy grandeur of the new faith system would be spread out before the adoring hearts of His own.

All this brings into relief the ministry of Paul, which, as we said, began from Christ in glory. It is sometimes said that we must not be occupied with the ministry of Paul to the exclusion of what is given by John. It is well to have the true balance and not put the one against the

other. We need them both, nay, we need them all, and to push one part of the truth to the exclusion of another is to lose the whole. Surely, it becomes those who are here, today, to value the truth. We are living in the most wonderful moment in the world's history. We have the darkest and worst, in the presence of the brightest and best. Christendom, with its abominations, is the darkest blot that ever God has permitted on the earth : it appears to the Lord as a vomit. As has often been pointed out, you have only to compare the last half of Romans 1 with II Timothy 3, to see that what was practised in paganism is in evidence today ; and all would admit that paganism **after** Christianity is infinitely more guilty than paganism **before** it. It was a saying of an aged brother, now gone Home, that there is little or no sense of what sin is today. But (and here is what should fill our hearts with praise) the Assembly of God is here, as the House of God and as the Body and Bride of Christ ; the Spirit of God is here, dwelling in the Assembly ; the blessed Book of God is here ; and God is dwelling here, by the Spirit.

In the light of all this we can understand that the conflict between good and evil rages, and what is called for is not only the truth but, along with it, affections for Christ, our absent Lord. We are provided with the whole armour of God ; our enemies have their abode in the heavenlies, and today we are in conflict with demons that are at work in, and through, men that are in the highest places. It is well to know that Christ is Lord, and that His subduing power stretches out even to the place of the lost. His Headship covers the scene of reconciliation, the universe of bliss, as we say ; but Lordship goes beyond and extends even to those who would not bow to Him here.

We might, now, look a little at the early part of the chapter (verses 7-17). What the Lord looks for here is that our hearts should be in concert with Himself, and consequently with the Father. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." He counts on a state, in us, so abiding in Himself and in His love that we would be so nourished

morally that the desires expressed, and the things asked, would be in such conformity with His will that we could not be refused. This leads on into that holy concord which marks intimate friendship and shews how, in that holy circle, He speaks of having communicated to them of the treasures which passed between Himself and the Father. It is noticeable that this friendship is from Himself, as taking them into His own place before the Father. There were no conditions (verse 15), since it sprang from Him as fruit of His own will and pleasure. Its continuance, however, is conditional.

How well we know that the sweeter and more tender the relationships and feelings, the more easily they are disturbed and broken. "Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you." The life, with its relationships and intimacies, is ours, but we can well understand the meaning of the IF. None of us cares to tell everyone his secrets ; these things are kept for our **intimate** friends. But if one shows, by his ways, that he undervalues the confidence of his friend, it may grieve that friend, and, in the very nature of things, the intimacies cease, and there is distance, instead of nearness. Do we not know something of this ?

How beautiful it is to see an example of true friendship, in Abraham. The Lord said, " Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do ; for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," and so on. Abraham was trustworthy. It is as we do what our Lord has commanded, that we continue in His love, and, like Abraham, we become trustworthy.

It would be interesting to consider the things the Lord speaks of, as having been made known to them, from the Father. Surely, it turns us to those blessed communications of light, life and love, which come out so sweetly in this Gospel. The Father's love, the Father's counsels, the Father's house. He is really putting them before the Father, in all these chapters, in the holy intimacy that is inherent in the relationships that belong to eternal life.

How could they have talked to Him as they did, if they had not this sense of nearness, at home with Himself ?

“ How sweet and sacred is the place,
With Christ within those doors ;
Where everlasting Love displays
The choicest of her stores.”

The end in view here is that there may be fruit for God. With us it is the result of spiritual health, and that exuberance of life that results in there being no withered leaves. “ Those that be planted in the House of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing.” Fruitbearing may include preaching or teaching, but it means much more ; it goes on, indeed, to the perpetuation of the life of Christ in us. It really means that what was so perfectly blended in Him and seen down here is now seen in His people, coming out in such a way that it is the continuation of Himself here.

The pruning, which is the work of the Father, would be His disciplinary ways, a theme which touches us all very closely. It is well known that the wood of the vine is of little or no value ; it can only be thrown aside to be burnt (See Ezekiel 15). The work of the Husbandman is to so check the growth of wood that room may be made for the growth of fruit. The ultimate aim of the sap, as it circulates in the branches, is grapes and nothing else. This being connected with the work of the Spirit in us, links up beautifully with the verses in Galatians 5 : 22, 23. “ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.” This is a three-fold cluster of three's, each of the threes having a bearing all its own. The first three is personal, giving a lovely picture of a person walking with God. The second three shows what we can be in relation to each other and, indeed, towards all ; here are the marks of a true gentleman. The third three is a description of what we can be to God, and is that by which both the other triple qualities are maintained.

“As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. . . . He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : **for without Me ye can do nothing.**” But He goes on to say, “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” This is often a puzzle to many of us, for we often ask and do **not** get what we pray for. The difficulty vanishes when we see that the asking here is not for ourselves nor our affairs, but for what concerns His interests and His testimony in the earth. As having had committed to them the affairs of the Father and the Son, the disciples are viewed, in these chapters, in that business in such a way that their prayers, and asking, are in the interests of the business, if we may venture to speak in that way.

This calls for a remark on the beautiful progress Scripture shews, in intelligent prayer. For example, the difference between the language in the Psalms and what is expected from us today. If we take the “imprecatory” Psalms, we see, at once, the difference. No intelligent Christian could pray for judgment on his enemies ; the thought is repulsive. Immediately we enter the New Testament we meet with these words : “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” A slight advance is made on this in the Gospel of Luke, which has been pointed out in the difference between Matthew and Luke when presenting the word of the prayer which the Lord taught His disciples (See Matthew 6 : 9-12, and compare Luke 11 : 2-4. N. Trans.).

The advance in prayer, first from the Psalms to Matthew, and then to Luke, is continued to what is in John and, as we have seen, this takes us from our interests to those of the Father and the Son. Paul, though coming in between the

Synoptists and John, rises to the greatest height of all. The prayer in Philippians is, perhaps, the **sweetest** of all ; then the prayer of Colossians 1, which is marked by **fulness** : but when we come to Ephesians we rise to the **highest** of all ; there the glorified Man is placed at the Head of the whole creation, fruit of the mystery of God's will.

It may be remarked that grapes, and not thistles, are what are expected from the vine. The more we look into these precious, heavenly things, the more we are impressed with their incomparable value ; the more, too, we have a sense of divine favour and the need of grace, to value and walk in them. How sad it is, if we don't ! A well-known servant of the Lord, now gone Home, said once to a company of us, " If we talk of new creation do let us be marked by it, for it is a miserable affair if one talks glibly of new creation and, reaching home one day, and his dinner not quite ready, he gives his wife a slice of the old creation." There is a call for faithfulness today. The Lord, in His mercy, graciously help us all, for His Name's Sake.

Thursday Afternoon.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 16 : 1—end.

THE first four verses of this chapter remind us of the remark made this morning, namely, that we have before us here a system of evil, which is marked by hatred to God, and in this little company, gathered round the Lord, we have a circle of blessing which is marked by holy love. This will stamp upon our meeting a due solemnity, reminding us of the state of things we are in at the end. The unabashed and blatant activity of evil, and the shallow sense of sin, remind us that we are near the close, and the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Before He deals with the ministry of the Spirit to the saints, the Lord shows what would be the effect of the Spirit's presence on the world. "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." The word "reprove" is difficult to translate; it is sometimes translated "convict," but that, too, is scarcely the thought. It really means that He would bring demonstration to the world of its guilt in crucifying the Lord of glory. To get the idea properly we must see that the presence of the Holy Spirit here, apart from any of His activities, is the proof to mankind of what it has done to the Saviour. His presence here is the proof of Christ's absence, and that absence was the guilt of this world. The Holy Spirit is here in the Assembly, in all His varied activities, and we shall now endeavour to dwell a little on these activities.

Twice, the Lord says, when speaking of the coming of the Spirit, in verse 7, "unto you." He had Himself, in gathering out these men, formed a vessel for the Spirit's reception. Looked at as the House of God, the Lord had Himself gathered the stones, during His ministry, but it was when the Spirit came that they were "builded together for an habitation of God." There is an advance here on what He says to them, in chapters 14 and 15. In the former, it was to open up the Gospels; in the latter, to report His

glory, as ascended on high ; but here it is to open up the wealth of heaven and show to them the things belonging to the Father and the Son. To the world the Spirit's presence says "Guilt" ; but to these disciples it says "Blessing" and what blessing ! For they would learn, in and by a living Person, the deep things of God.

The way the Lord mentions the three factors of sin, righteousness and judgment is most remarkable. First, they are mentioned as the result of the Spirit's presence ; afterwards, each is qualified with the word "Because." Here, He tells us why the Spirit brings demonstration to the world, of sin; that the sin is because they would not believe on Him. He says, in the previous chapter, that they had both seen and hated both Himself and the Father. But the Spirit is also the demonstration of righteousness, and this is "because I go to My Father." If man and devils put Him down, God has raised Him up, and this is supremely right and proper. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Observe in this that we pass from the three **factors** of sin, righteousness and judgment, to the three **Actors** in this solemn tragedy : the Lord Himself, the World and its Prince (Compare chapter 12 31). This judgment is final and absolute ; this world is like a condemned criminal who awaits execution. Judgment is an accomplished act, but its execution awaits the day of reckoning. This puts a solemn touch on the matter ; it is well for us to remember that we are passing through a judged system.

It may be asked, "What effect has this to have on our testimony here, where sin itself is even denied ?" Surely, it would make us all evangelic and long to see souls rescued from the dark delusions of the day. We have to remember, however, that this is our testimony, and if we are in the hands of the Spirit, it will be maintained and we shall not be found lending ourselves, in any way, to a system that is under divine judgment.

It is clear, that the movement with which we here today are connected was not an evangelic movement. We may well bless our God that the preaching has been greatly

enriched by it. For a thousand years and more the Gospel, as we have it preached today, was not known. It is not proclaimed today in its fulness, except as a result of that movement. It would be easy to name men connected with it who have been the means of blessing, in the hand of the Lord, to thousands of souls. Take C. H. Mackintosh, Charles Stanley and Dr. Wolston. In that movement the Spirit of God got His proper place, and that brought in a ministry of Christ which has been a blessing to the whole Church.

The exaltation of Christ, then, is a question of righteousness ; even if the Cross be in the way the Throne of the Majesty on high **MUST** be His destiny. It has been put in this way. That righteousness was **established** at the Cross, **declared** in resurrection, **celebrated** on high, as the result of redemption ; and the joy of it is brought here, in the ministry of life and righteousness, by the Spirit, as shown in II Corinthians 3. This is, for us, the feast of Luke 14, into which we are brought, like the Prodigal, to participate in the joy of God, in His Son.

The Spirit's place in the circle of the disciples is next opened out in all its blessedness. He is the Spirit of truth ; this asserts both His Personality and His Guardianship of the revelation. The whole truth is put on record by Him, and all of it is under His eye for preservation. Then, He is Guide. How well it would be for us all, if we put ourselves into His hands in the realm of divine revelation. "He will guide you into all the truth : for He shall not speak of (or from) Himself." Here again we have the intimacies and co-activities of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit, we all know, tells us a great deal about Himself in the Scriptures ; but here it is His speaking and acting in and with the Father and the Son. "He shall not speak from Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." As a divine Person, within the circle of Deity, He will bring out, here, within the reach of your faith, all that is within the inner circle of the Father and the Son, in regard to the working out of the eternal plan. "Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." His

part in the communications belonging to the inner circle, was that He should make them known to the loved ones here.

The Lord brings before us this same truth with regard to Himself, in chapter 5 of this Gospel. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do : for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." The Son is standing here, in this world, speaking to men of what He sees, and is in contact with, in another world. The Father shows Him, and He sees. It is not that the Son does works of a like nature to the Father, but He does the identical same works. In that way He is doing the works of the Father, even as He is speaking the Father's words, as we get in chapter 5 : 24 : "He that hears My word and believes **Him** that hath sent Me" (New Translation).

We are here in the presence of God's very best : the wealth of the Father and the Son—My peace, My love, My joy, My glory. All this He bequeaths to them, but if it is to be made good to them and to us all, He must die. In this case the One Who died to give effect to the Will is the same One Who came forth in resurrection, that it might be read. In that blessed Man, risen from the dead, we read the will of God for man and we, today, are in the good of that will, in the measure we give place to the Spirit.

Faith is not mere credence. There is often a danger, when dealing with souls individually of going before the Lord. For example, one quotes a verse of Scripture, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"; the question is asked, "Do you believe that?" and the reply is "Yes, I do." What so often follows is, "Then you are saved." In such cases our anxiety to get people converted may do harm. Man has both mind and heart ; the mind takes in the Word, but, if the heart is to be reached, it must pass through the conscience ; there must be the "ploughing up." It is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Here is something to which you entirely commit yourself ; this makes all the difference.

But if faith is not mere credence it is beyond the limit of mere nature, and this is where there is a need for something beyond nature. The Holy Spirit dwells in our souls and, in this we have the thought of immanence ; He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. To be filled with the Spirit means that every part of our moral being is pervaded by that blessed Person. As the blood flows through our bodies in healthy life physically, so the life of Christ may fill every fibre of our moral being. It is only as we are under the influence of the Spirit of God that Christ can have His way with us.

Next, the Lord said : " He shall shew you things to come." When these words were spoken, Pentecost was still future, as well as all that range of heavenly things which marked the ministry of Paul. The " things to come," then lay, of necessity, in the future ; but they go on to the end and take in both what is heavenly and earthly. It is in this way that the words include the whole prophetic scheme and go on to the close of inspired writings. We are now in the Spirit's day, when it is a question of faith ; but He, the Spirit, goes on to the day of Christ, when it will all be brought out in display. He also leads on to the day of God, the scene of eternal bliss.

" He shall glorify Me : for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." He shall **magnify Me**. This reminds us of I Chronicles 29 : 25. " The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." But a greater than Solomon is here. Whatever was the wisdom and grandeur of Solomon, it all pales into insignificance before what is here. For here we come to the divine treasury, to the richest of all.

What are " The things " that " are Mine " ? We have spoken of Him in His varied glories, but this surpasses them all. Whether in the days of His flesh or ascended on high ; whether morally, officially, or in any Mediatorial sense ; this goes beyond all, to the things that are His, with the Father, in the intrinsic blessedness of the fulness of Godhead glory. It has been said that the place and

glory of the Son is set before us in Scripture in a more distinctive way than of the Father or of the Spirit. For example, Christ came "Who is over all, God blessed for ever." In the passage before us this Pre-eminence is seen. It does not say, "All things that I have are the **Father's**." but "All things that the Father hath are **Mine**."

This mutuality of interest and possession, characteristic of the Father and the Son, comes out beautifully in the prayer in the next chapter. "I pray for them : I pray not for the world but for them which Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine ; and I am glorified in them." In the gifts of ear-rings, bracelets and jewels, given by the servant to Rebecca, we get a beautiful little illustration of the things of the Father and the Son made known to the disciples here.

Apart from the Holy Spirit what would any one of us see in Christ? Think a moment of a little snowdrop ; the ordinary person looks at it and admires it, but to them it is just a simple little flower. Now let the botanist, with all his knowledge of its intricate structure and beauties, take it up and dissect it, showing us each tiny part in its perfection, under the microscope, and the more he shows us the more we say, "How glorious !" So, with the Holy Spirit, as He unfolds to us the beauties of our Lord, seeking to captivate our hearts with what is in Him. How important that we should avail ourselves of His ministry !

Referring to the microscope reminds us of the need of the telescope as well. The one speaks to us of the wonders of **immensity**, and the other of the wonders of **intensity**. The microscope, we are told, sheys a world of life in a drop of water, but the telescope, the grandeur and immensity of the created universe. In the one we have an illustration of the glory of Messiah, Son of David, the smallest circle of the administrative glory of our Lord; but in the other, that which bespeaks the whole extent of the sway of our Lord, as Son of Man. We learn from the 8th Psalm, with its quotations in the New Testament, that all things are put under Him as such, and from the 1st of Ephesians that He is made Head over all things. How marvellous

that in the small nation of Israel God should be able to show forth, in shadow, type and symbol, something of that which is yet to fill the whole creation. "We have found the Messias," said Andrew; that was to them everything. But we who are called today are brought into a much greater range of things, namely, the whole grand scope of the mystery of God. Someone has said that we can never see Christ any greater than He is; but the question for us is, do we seek to learn Him in His wondrous fulness, as He is presented to us in this Holy Book. Moreover, we must not carry the illustration too far; the microscope is to shew us what is there, what we could not see otherwise; so also the telescope. There, too, it is what cannot be seen, but in this case it is the range of immensity that is so far beyond us.

As the time is going, we might now look a little at the closing part of our chapter. His disciples were perplexed when the Lord said, "A little while and ye shall not see Me and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father." His perfect wisdom is seen in this: they had not once been able to take in what He said when He spoke to them of His death. In this simple but figurative way, He puts before them what includes His death, resurrection and even His ascension, but to them it seemed as if He were speaking in allegory. From the place of favour into which we have been brought, we can well understand the difficulty of these dear men. The first "little while" would be when He was taken from them and crucified. It was then that they could not behold the One they loved to look upon. But again, "a little while, and ye shall see Me." This time the word "see" is from a different word, which means "seeing with the mind's eye," and carries on the thought of seeing Him by the eye of faith, as gone to the Father. This is what we have already seen. The Lord Jesus Christ is on the way to the Father; nothing less than the throne of Glory is His place. He must, He will, go there. The apostate forces of a broken-down creation will not hinder this; yea, they shall, in the hands of God, even in the Hands of their Victim, become serviceable to bring it about.

But deeper things are here in view, for the resurrection of our Lord is the birth of the new creation. The beauty and pathos of it all, the Lord continues to bring out, in a simple illustration which comes home to us all, and let us mark the brevity of it. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16 : 21). Thus, we may clearly see that the sepulchre of our Lord was the womb of the new creation, and His resurrection its birth. This introduces a new order where all is joy and into which sin can never come ; a scene of divine illumination which shall ever be vibrant with the praises of God.

But besides this, He said to them, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." The word "see" has here a very different meaning from what it has in the previous verses. It was fulfilled when He came into their midst, as in chapter 20, in His new, risen state. There, all was peace and joy. What a moment that must have been for His disciples ! It is by resurrection that the Lord enters His glory. Well we know that He is the Centre of an accumulation of glories, but the glory here is His place in a new order of things which had its origin in eternity and is now brought to pass by His death and resurrection. He had settled the question of sin, and met every claim of the rights and majesty of God in the whole creation. He now brings into being a new creation where He Himself is everything and all things are of God. All this is based upon the glory of Redemption.

Emphasis should be laid on the new state of Manhood He entered upon by resurrection, and its necessary results for His disciples and for us all. God's sentence, that lay upon man, had been carried out. His rights had been secured, in that the forfeited life in us had come under His judgment judicially ; but, if so, substitutionally, in the Sinless One. This was done in such an absolutely perfect way that, while nothing **less** would do, nothing **more** is needed for the everlasting glory of God and the blessing

of the creature. This is the answer to the question we often raise, "Why should such a life have to come to an end here"? It was the first and only time in which God was perfectly glorified in man upon earth. Of the only One Who had established His right to live, it is said, "His life is taken from the earth."

It is important for us to see the bearing of this on His disciples. Having brought to a complete end, in judgment, their fallen condition, He can now bring them into a new state, in life and relationship with Himself, as risen from the dead. To understand this we must, first of all, see that new creation is established in Himself alone, as having left the flesh and blood condition of life for ever. Thus, when He came in among them, He breathed into them His risen life. The message sent to them, by Mary, showed that they had now His relationship with the Father, but in the meeting itself it was the life to which this relationship belongs.

This has often been observed as being an example of the truth of being "Risen together with Christ," as stated in Colossians. How many of us read the words, "Risen together with Christ," intelligently, so as to have an example of the truth of it before us in these disciples, associated with the Lord in His risen life, in John 20. The Lord Jesus had left this life, and the world that crucified Him never saw Him again. Being Man in a new state, in resurrection, He shows Himself to His own and links them up with Him in such a way that, though still in the "flesh and blood" condition, they may be viewed in His risen life as risen together with Him. We ourselves may be in the present good of such a position. Here is a class of people, linked up, in the ingoings and outgoings of life, with One Who was living in an entirely different world; a world created by Himself, as risen from the dead. So true is this for **all** who are in His risen life, by the baptism of the Spirit, that they can be looked upon as "Risen together with Christ."

We come here to the ministry of Paul and learn the meaning of "As is the Heavenly One, so also are the

heavenly ones." If it be the Lord's will that meetings like these may again be arranged, we may be led to see that the Spirit, through Paul, shows how God has been judicially met in all His claims regarding the fallen condition that we were in, and has in His Son, risen from the dead, established a new order of Manhood for His own eternal pleasure.

To be "In Christ" is a relationship that calls for more consideration than has been given to it. We have already seen the abstract nature of this, but the way God has taken to bring it about should engage us more. We do not read of any other created intelligence being **recreated** as man is, and the wonder is that God, by His Spirit, can work this in us while still living in the first created condition. But what bows the soul before Him in adoration is to see it all as fruit of His own eternal purpose; a new order of man and yet the oldest of all, as being the centre of God's eternal plan. Surely, this gives man a place in the ranks of the intelligences of creation, beyond all our thoughts. It necessitated that the eternal Son should come down, past the higher ranges of the creation, into Manhood, and by death and resurrection take His place at the Head of all ranks and transfer us generically into the same order as Himself. No one of us could ever have conceived it. Surely, we can thank and praise our God for what it is to be "in Christ."

One more endearing touch calls for a word. "At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." He had said before, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name." While He was with them, He was to them everything they needed, but now He is leaving them, and His Name will be the guarantee for all they need, as from the Father (see chapter 14 : 13). There is something most touching here. It is as if He said, "You have so endeared yourselves to the heart of My Father in the way you have received Me, that by going directly to Him you may have what you ask." We have had before us the love of God in compassion towards us,

as sinners, and that same love towards the Son in complacency. Here it is the complacent love of the Father towards those who have received His Son. There are two words, in the original, for "love," and one is of a richer and sweeter character than the other ; that is the word used here. "The Father Himself loveth you (**dearly loves** you), because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

A delicacy of feeling, and a refinement which goes far beyond the refinement and education of this poor world is called for here. Nothing could make us true gentlemen like this. It reminds us of a verse in chapter 12. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me ; and where I am, there shall also My servant be : if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." If we desire to be distinguished, here is something to go in for. But, beyond all, it is so blessed to see that the Father has drawn us to His Son, and having brought us there He credits us with all the value of it and pours upon us His love, in return. We have seen, in chapter 15, how the blessed Lord calls us His friends ; here, He shows us in the same intimacy with the Father.

We may well remind ourselves of the importance of OBEDIENCE. Privilege, we have often been told, is measured by responsibility : the richer, and sweeter the blessing, the greater is the need for that holy watchfulness, which is the fruit of divine love, wrought into our hearts by the Spirit. May we cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, in these dark days, for His Name's Sake.

Thursday Evening.

The Word of the Cross.

(I Corinthians 1 : 9-13 ; 3 : 1-4.
Joshua 4 19-24 ; 7 : 6-13.)

IT is possible that some of the wonderful ministry we have had during the past three days has been a little over the heads of a few, but one thing is certain, that every impression we have received from God will, by the Holy Spirit, produce a right expression upward in praise and worship to the Father and the Son, and outward in service to mankind in general and the saints in particular. When the blessed God receives from our hearts His portion, everything else is in right perspective. May I remind you that the Epistles are, in the main, corrective communications, and some have wondered why this should be so : the reason must surely be that we are in constant need of correction, and our Father loves His children far too much to allow them to go on without chastening and correction. If the ministry up to the present has been, in any way, beyond our spiritual capacity, that which I have before me tonight will be well within the understanding of all, for the Apostle himself states that those to whom the Epistle was written were but babes in Christ.

The subject that has been upon my heart for many months calls for no lengthy discourse or impassioned oratory, and I approach it with fear and trembling, and with a deep sense that what is said may wound some of my nearest and dearest friends. But the subject is one calling for prayerful and earnest consideration by all who confess the Name of Jesus as Lord. The Scriptures we have read together are well known and reveal the fact that the saints at Corinth were in much the same state as we are in today, and I am suggesting to you that the truth presented to the Corinthians, so powerfully and effectively, is just the truth for us, now. If it was effective then, why not now? We are called to the same fellowship, have the

same Lord, and the same Spirit Who worketh in us. In Hebrews 8 : 5 we read that Moses, when he was about to make the Tabernacle, was told to make all things according to the pattern shewn to him in the Mount, and the amazing details revealed to Moses on that memorable occasion are fully set forth in Exodus 25 and onward. We have no minute directions given to us from the Holy Mount, as to our walk and behaviour, but we have the Holy Scriptures, wherein is given the true pattern of everything that is to be reproduced here for God : if Moses was not to depart from his pattern, either in material or design, we must not depart from our pattern, however broken the days are in which we live. The word is, to let every man take heed what material he uses, and how he builds (I Corinthians 3 10-15).

The broken and sectarian state of the Church was mentioned as one of the exercises of our dear brother who called these meetings. These exercises we all share, and for the past fifty years, to my knowledge, we have be-moaned this brokenness, and the bewilderment of all who seek, or should seek, to answer to the truth of the One Body. But, my beloved brethren, what have we done about it? Are we not like Joshua, about whom we have just read? He, and others with him, were on their faces afflicting their souls, because the armies of Israel were in full flight, with their backs to the enemy. The Lord told Joshua to get up and deal with the cause, to sanctify the people and remove the accursed thing, i.e. that goodly Babylonish garment, with the gold and the silver, and to execute judgment. The Lord called for action in that day, Paul called for action in his day, and may I, with all humility, suggest that this is the day for action, for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

In the past forty years I have twice sought to remove the barrier between two companies of the saints, in two separate towns. In one case the reconciliation lasted only a week, and in the other some three years, but both were shattered by brethren coming in from other districts. At the time of the last cleavage, one honoured servant of the Lord re-

marked that all I sought to do was to reunite two fragments of a shattered vase. Be that as it may ; I do feel that he was right, and if we are to act according to the instructions in Holy Writ we must go back, not 40 years, nor 60 years, nor even 120 years, but back to Pentecost and the death of Christ our Lord. The movement of the Spirit, some 120 years ago, was a return to the truth of the Body of Christ, and, in a large measure, there was a recovery of that truth, and the early expectation of the Lord's return was revived. Alas, as the years passed, the warmth and fervour of the first movement has been lost, and today many wonder if it is possible to revive, in practice, the truth of the " oneness " of all believers in Christ. Some of my dear brethren, who mourn over the dishonour brought upon the precious Name of our Lord through the existence of parties and sects, are actually adding to the confusion by having a foot in two or more parties. In other words, they are becoming interdenominational instead of undenominational, thereby seeking to strengthen two or three parties, rather than passing judgment on them all. The Apostle was under no delusion about which was the best party in his day, or which was the nearest to the truth, or had the most gift, amongst them ; he viewed them all as carnal and walking as men. In their divided state he could have nothing to do with them, but sought to stir their affections by appeal and entreaty and by reminding them Who was crucified for them. What a word ! What a strong appeal he made to these saints, glorying in their wisdom, and reigning like kings ! " Is Christ divided ; was Paul crucified for you ? "

Let us ask ourselves that question—nay, let us draw near to that Central Cross and gaze upon that Face so marred more than any man's. Are those the features of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, or of Mr. A ? Yea, let us again approach dark Golgotha's Hill, with our shoes put off from our feet, and reverently listen to that cry of abandonment : " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " Is it the voice of Paul ; is it the voice of Apollos ; is it the voice of Mr. B, breaking through the thick darkness ? No, no ! It is the voice of the Son of

God ; it is the voice of the Good Shepherd that we hear, as He gives His life for the sheep. It is the voice we know, and in resurrection life He calls yet again, and the sheep hear His voice and follow Him. There is one flock and one Shepherd, and it is difficult to see how those sheep now in various folds can readily respond to the Shepherd's call, for there is only one exit from a fold and one by one the sheep must pass out of it if they are to reach the Shepherd and be made to lie down in green pastures. What, then, is the remedy for our present broken and sectarian condition ? Surely the apostle shews the way to the Corinthians. He brings them back to the death of Christ, and reminds them what he had received of the Lord. That on the very night of His betrayal He had instituted the Supper—that imperishable monument which ever brings us back, Lord's Day after Lord's Day, to realise what must have been our eternal portion had He not suffered in our stead and borne our sins in His own body, that "body given for you." The Ark of Gilgal as having been in the bed of the Jordan, was to the children of Israel what the bread and the wine are to the people of God today. We therefore do well, never to miss an opportunity of coming to this remembrance, and calling Him to mind, so that the wonderful truth that "we, being many, are one loaf, and one body," and that the cup of blessing is "the fellowship of the blood of Christ," may fill our hearts with adoring worship.

In death, all distinctions are ended, and all that we are, after the flesh, is brought to an end ; the wise, the foolish, the rich, the poor, the noble and the unknown, are alike. Paul was content to be of no account and had been, with the Corinthians, determined to know nothing among them "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." I am persuaded, beloved brethren, that we must return to the basic truth that we owe everything to the death of Christ, and disown all that which has gone in His death, in order that we may be united by the cords of His love, and drawn to Him more closely because, as drawn to Him, we must be in closer fellowship one with another. The pattern for us is still in the Holy Scriptures : "they continued steadfastly in

the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, and fear came upon every soul" (Acts 2 : 42).

Paul's Epistle brought about the desired result at Corinth, and the second Epistle shews that it was with many tears he had written to them, but he now rejoiced that he had made them sorry after a godly manner, and that they had cleared themselves. If we, in our day, could be brought to the same self-judgment and recognition of the truth, the world would begin to know that we are His disciples, because we have love one for another. True love is shewn, not by our going on with any who walk not in the truth, but in the keeping of God's commandments ourselves, and constraining our brethren to walk therein. For our encouragement let us not forget that there was a partial recovery of God's people in Nehemiah's day, when they gathered together as one man, whilst Ezra read to them from the law from early morning until midday ; the ears of the people were attentive, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord after they had rebuilt the walls of separation. Oh for such a recovery in our day !

S. W. MILLER.

Abide in Him.

(I John 2 : 28 ; 3 1-3.)

THAT which has been occupying us so happily in our Bible Readings is the farewell discourse of our Lord to His disciples, uttered on the night He was betrayed, in the upper chamber in Jerusalem, as recorded in John 13, 14. We have seen how He indicated the new place before the Father that was to be theirs, and that, when the Holy Spirit was come they would know that He was in the Father, and that they were in Him, the Son, and that He was in them. We have also seen that if they were to bear fruit for God they must abide in Him, as the branch abides in the vine. Much more we have seen in those chapters, and we have realised that what is there stated as to the disciples is, in principle, true for us today. Now the opening word in the few verses I have read is "Abide in Him."

In the day when John wrote his Epistle, the broken state of things, of which Mr. Miller has spoken, had already come into evidence. The earliest attack of the great adversary was delivered through the people known as Gnostics. They posed, as their name implied, as being the knowing ones, who were advancing to fuller knowledge. They said to the Christians, in effect, "You are merely dabbling in the shallows and ought to be swimming in the deep sea of advanced thought. We are the people to lead you into those depths." Under cover of that, they were teaching, as to Christ, what was false and not that which had been revealed in Him from the outset. John's Epistle was written to meet that situation.

By the time he wrote the years had passed, and amongst the saints were found those who had matured in their knowledge of Him from the beginning. These he called "fathers." There were also "young men," who were strong in the word of God, as well as many "babes" who, in spite of their immaturity, yet knew the Father. All of these are addressed in verse 28, for the word there is

really "children," embracing the whole family of God, and not "little children," which designates only the "babes." Verse 24 is addressed to the babes, and even these were to have abiding in them what had been made known from the beginning. It was not to be diluted, not modified, not altered in any way. It was to be the original thing. But this abiding in Him is to characterise the whole family of God. What will help us to that end comes before us in the opening verses of chapter 3.

Look now at verse 1. Here we get, first of all, the wonderful **manner** of the Father's love. Then, the **place** into which that love has introduced us. Then, again, the **separation** from the world that thereby has been brought about.

Let us put it in another way. First comes **affection** on the part of the Father, which is the source of all. Out of this affection springs the **relation** in which we now stand with the Father. Amongst men we should reverse the order. A child is born—the relationship is established—and at once there wells up affection in the heart of the father. With God, the affection comes first, for He loved us when there was nothing in us to love. Because of His love He has called us to the children's place and has made it a real and effectual thing, inasmuch as we are "born," or "begotten of Him," as the last verse of chapter 2 says.

The Father's love, then, is spontaneous, and before the relation is established. He might have done what the prodigal of Luke 15 suggested, and made each of us one of His "hired servants." But this is what He did *not* do; but rather made us His children, to display His character. He is righteous, and those begotten of Him practise righteousness, for that indeed is the proof that we really are begotten of Him. This new and wonderful relationship is established **now**. Let us then lay hold of the great fact that not one of us will ever be more a child of God than we are tonight. And the love that is proper to the relation on the Father's part will never shine on us more brightly than it does now.

But then, by the very fact that we are brought into this new relation there is brought about **separation** between us and the world. We now have another nature from the man of the world, and hence he does not know us, cannot fathom and understand us. Have you ever leant over a gate and watched different animals—say a cow and a sheep, grazing in the field? There is no real contact between them. That cow might be a bush or a tree for all the sheep seems to care. A gulf is between them, and with animals more diverse in nature than these two the gulf would be more pronounced. It is a matter of nature. Hence it may serve to illustrate the gulf between the child of God and the world, for that is a matter of nature, too.

Here we are looking at things in their essence, or, as we have been saying, in the abstract. Do not therefore expect the world to understand you. Our business is to be what we are, as the fruit of God's work, and if we come out in our true character we shall be pilgrims and strangers in the world. Bunyan in his great allegory knew this, when he pictured Christian and Faithful passing through Vanity Fair.

In verse 2 we are reminded that though we are now the children of God we are not yet visibly manifested as such. They may put a halo round the head of a saint in a church window, but no one has yet seen a halo round the head of a saint walking the streets of Bradford, though Stephen's face when martyred did shine as the face of an angel. What we shall be is not yet manifested. There is to be a day of manifestation and to that we look forward, for it will certainly arrive.

We may borrow a parable from nature. In the early autumn you may see a bed of nettles and, feeding on them, a number of black and spiny caterpillars, not very pleasing to look upon. But some student of nature would say to you, "But what those creatures really are has not yet been manifested. Wait till they come out of the chrysalis stage next summer, and in the air you will see soaring about gorgeous Peacock butterflies!" The day of manifestation will bring to light what we really are.

Manifestation, then, is the first of the two words we emphasise in connection with verse 2. But it will only come, for us, when Christ is manifested in His glory, and any glory that will attach to the children of God, then, will only be a reflection of the supreme glory that is His, for the day of manifestation will mean our being "like Him."

Conformation is, then, the second word that marks verse 2. We are to be conformed to His image since we shall then "see Him as He is." On several occasions I saw our late King George V. On one occasion I saw him in the uniform of a Field-Marshal. On another, in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet. But I never saw him apart from his official dignities, so as to know him as he really was. Let this illustrate the point. We who are of the Church of God, which is to be the Bride of Christ, are to know Him as He is and not only in His official glories. And for that we must be conformed to His likeness, in bodies of glory like His own.

Do we realise this? Then the effect upon us is bound to be as stated in verse 3. We are at once committed to a course of **purification**. We may hold Second Advent truth as doctrine, and yet be careless in our ways, but to have this hope, centred in Him, burning in our hearts, has of necessity a purifying effect on our characters and lives. If I were asked the secret of Christian growth and progress I should say: Keeping oneself in the love of God, and in the active criticism of oneself, in the light of the truth.

Several years ago I heard our friend Mr. Wilson, of Inkongo, tell an incident which I have never forgotten. He was superintending some natives who were planting young grape fruit trees. Being called away and wishing to have them planted at regular intervals in a straight line, he stretched a long line in a certain direction and left them with clear instructions to plant the trees against the line. When he returned he found the trees planted, but far out of the straight, and all over the place. On remonstrating they pointed out that they had done as he said and planted the trees against the line. So they had! But it was by planting the trees where they liked and then

pulling the line to touch the trees. There is grave danger with us of twisting the Scriptures to suit our crooked ways. Our business is to accept the straight line laid down in Scripture and criticise our lives by that. The Word of God must judge us. The result will be purification. And that will go on to the end of life's journey, since the standard is, "even as He is pure."

This brings us back to the verse with which we started. This purification taking place, we shall abide in Him. If a last word akin to the others used would be helpful, we may take it as **Continuation**. This does not mean a condition of stagnation, nor of standing still. The very reverse, for as we abide, or continue in Him, we deepen in our abiding, and then it is that we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

He is coming. He must be glorified in the place where most He has been dishonoured. So with hearts that long for His advent, and with consciences exercised to purify ourselves, may we be found "abiding in Him."

F. B. HOLE.

Friday Morning.

BIBLE READING.—JOHN 17 : 1—end.

IT may be well to say that we are highly favoured to have this Book before us and, above all, the chapter which we have read. We gaze on the Son, as He stands in the midst of eternity, and hear Him speaking to His Father, as He looks back into its infinite depth, and forward to the consummation of all blessing, in the depth of that same eternity, in a scene of eternal bliss. The Son is, here, speaking to the Father with regard to divine plans and interests ; matters which include ourselves, and all put on record by the Holy Spirit. We are privileged to draw near and hear divine Persons speaking to Each Other.

Even in the Old Testament, we read, “ Thou art My Son ; this day have I begotten Thee ” (Psalm 2 : 7) ; this is His Birth, in Time. In Isaiah 49, they speak together concerning the service of the Son here, and His rejection by His people. “ The Lord hath called Me from the womb . . . and said unto Me, Thou art My servant, O Israel, in Whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain : yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God.” These and the following verses speak prophetically of the position the Lord stood in at the end of Matthew 11, when rejected after all His labours in Israel.

In the New Testament the voice of the Father is heard at various times, speaking both of Him and to Him. We listen, with deepest feelings of adoration, as we hear the Lord expressing His distress, as the sufferings of the Cross come before Him ; “ Now is My soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save Me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”

We are brought, in chapter 17, as it were, into the Council Chamber of heaven, to listen to the innermost secrets of the heart of God. When speaking to His

disciples of family feelings and treasures, He said, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (chapter 15). Here, it is to the Father. "These things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." In the resource of His love He would have them to know, not only what He said to themselves but what He said to the Father concerning their happiness.

The early verses are about Himself, and this we feel is most becoming and orderly. The way He uses the words "I have" is remarkable. "I have glorified Thee on the earth." "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me." "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me." No ordinary man could speak in this way to God. It describes not only the completeness of His service to them but the perfection of His obedience to the Father's will in the working out of the eternal plan. Who else could ever look up to God and say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth" ?

We have had the "Hour" before us already, but here it is that "Hour" which, beyond all others, stands in the midst of eternity. No creature can measure the issues that hung upon that solemn hour. Nor can any of us ever fathom the depth of the feelings which sprang out of the circumstances of that dark hour. He seeks to be glorified in virtue of His own Personal rights in verse 1, but in verse 5 He claims to be glorified along with the Father, in the place that was ever His on account of the work He had done, as standing anticipatively beyond the Cross. These two aspects of glory constitute His right, both to go to the right hand of God and to rule the universe.

The glory of the Son of Man (chapter 13 : 31) is clearly in relation to the Cross and His meeting God in relation to sin ; here it is the glory of the Son in relation to the Father. The distinction is most marked. If we think of God in Essential Being we must take account of His attributes, such as, for example, His Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence. In the first of these, He **upholds** all things ; sits upon the circle of the earth, holds the oceans in the

hollow of His hand, weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. In the second, He **knows** all things. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord." "All things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." Then, the third thing is His Omnipresence; He **fills** all things. "The heaven is My Throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? saith the Lord."

These great features of Essential Godhead stand, as it were, on the outskirts of revelation and are beyond us for ever. If that were all we had, it would make us shrivel up into our own nothingness, as creatures of a day: Deity in its essential fulness and greatness could but keep us at a distance. There is that which stands for ever beyond revelation, a shoreless and fathomless ocean of Godhead. Here we come up against a wall, which says, thus far shalt thou come, and no further. This is the unseeable and unapproachable God, in His essential and impersonal Being as One.

But, leaving the outskirts of revelation, and coming towards the centre, what do we learn? That within that eternal Essence, or Substance, there are three Subsistences—Father, Son and Spirit—governed in nature by holy love. By this revelation we learn that the exigence of the Being of God is, that He will live in the hearts of countless hosts of intelligent beings, and be the Object of their delight and praise, for evermore. In what has been revealed we have more than we shall ever be able to traverse, even in thought, without seeking to attempt to go over the wall, to that which must be beyond the creature for ever.

It is just here that we touch the eternal purpose of God and, in that way, learn that He is not an arbitrary Being. His counsels are the fruit of His nature, and that glorious scheme of counsel was indeed the cause of creation. It is so blessed to see how all is worked out on the line of moral necessity, that necessity being the very nature of God.

In this precious chapter, which is sometimes spoken of as the Holiest of all, we come to the very richest of divine revelation, to learn that our good and gracious God ever

subsisted, Father, Son and Spirit, within a circle of love and glory ; and that we, as the fruit of the redemption work of the Son are made fit to be before Himself, in such moral suitability as to be within that precious circle of love and glory. We have before us a glory which is beyond us, for evermore, but in infinite love we shall be permitted to behold it ; but we have also, here, the glory we shall share with our adorable Lord, to all eternity.

It will be recalled that we read of the glory of our Lord in Psalm 72, and Zechariah 9. That would refer to the hour He speaks of in chapter 12, when the Greeks came up. It is the time when His " Son of Man " glory shall stretch " from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," when He shall have a public answer to all the sufferings of the Cross. But the " hour " here in John 17 stands by itself, nothing can compare with it. Sir Edward Denny wrote in his poem, " The Hour," on this wondrous theme. It is well worth reading.

We have had before us a good deal about the faith system, the new creation, the redemption world which is all coming out soon in public display ; but here we have something which is beyond display. This is the inner lining, so to speak, of the glory system ; the inner thoughts, feelings, joys and interests of that heavenly company that will be the centre of the display. We can understand something of the meaning of the Church, as the heavenly city coming down out of heaven, having the glory of God. She will be the expression of that glory, in the day when righteousness reigns. The time ways of God meet with His eternal purpose there, and all to be set forth in administrative perfection of glory. John sets the city before us, and Paul gives its intrinsic excellences. The two well-known prayers, in Ephesians, meet here. The first is to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and takes in the whole grand system of blessing, with Christ, the glorified MAN, at its head. The second is to the Father, and here Paul joins with John and leads us into the inside as seen in this chapter. The difference is well put, in two verses of a hymn, the one speaking of Millennial blessedness, when God shall give an

answer in the creation as to why sin was permitted ; and the other leading on into an endless eternity of bliss.

“ There Christ, the centre of the throng,
 Shall in His glory shine,
 But not an eye those hosts among,
 But sees His glory Thine.

Yet deeper, if a calmer joy,
 The Father’s love shall raise,
 And every heart find sweet employ
 In His eternal praise.”

The claim of our Lord to be glorified, in verse 1, is Personal, but in verse 5 it is on the ground of the work of redemption. It is remarkable that He connects His pre-Incarnate distinction with this. Although co-equal with the Father, and needing not to ask for anything, yet He is a Man, and to be in the place that was His eternally was to take Manhood, in His Person, to the Throne of God. This, indeed, is most amazing, but we have to remember that the Throne of God is His (Hebrews 1 : 8 ; Revelation 22 : 3).

Look at verses 2 and 3. “ As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.” After saying this, He goes on to speak of something of the moral blessedness of that life, as subsisting in the knowledge of the Father and the Son. In this way, those who form the inside company come into view and, too, the special place they fill in relation to divine Persons. They were the Father’s love gift to the Son, a transaction which supplied a motive for the Incarnation.

Although sent by the Father, it is also true that the Son came forth of His own voluntary will. The treasure hid in the field brought Him forth, and, for that treasure, He would buy the whole field. In this way a company is brought to light to whom is entrusted the deep secrets of the heart of God. We may well ask ourselves how much do we value these precious things, and how far are we trustworthy ?

There are other features of this life, such as walking in truth, practising righteousness, and loving the brethren, but here it consists in knowing the Father, as the only true God, and His sent One, Jesus Christ. He thus places them before the Father in His own life and relationship, in all the sweetness of divine favour.

There is a beautiful illustration of this life and how we come into it in the caterpillar, which our brother brought before us in his address last night. This creature lives and grovels in the mud and dust of the ground as a worm. But the time comes when it rises above the ground and flies in the sunshine, enjoying life in a new way, and instead of the filth of the ground its food is now the flowers and fruit of the field and garden. It is still the same creature, with the same creature life, but it is able now to enjoy life in a new and entirely different sense. What has brought about the change? It has been through death. It goes to sleep for months and, at length, its skin, which has become a shell, bursts and forth it comes on the principle of resurrection, to enjoy life in a new sphere.

So it is with ourselves. We all know what it is to be grovelling in this poor world, in the things which Satan presents to the vitiated tastes of the creature. A time comes when we are born again; get life. It has been said we must be born to have life, and have life if born; but eternal life is connected with the scene and state into which Redemption brings us. If we are to enter into this life we must, like the caterpillar, pass through death. This is, for us, the experience of the 7th chapter of Romans. Care is needed here. A kind-hearted person sought once to help the caterpillar when in the painful process of getting out of its shell. In doing this he hurt and marred it for life. So, we may say, when a soul is in the painful experience of Romans 7, leave it with God; He will bring it through into the full blessedness of eternal life, into the sunshine proper to that life, and into the full blessedness of the knowledge of the Father and the Son.

It must be acknowledged that there is a distance between the experience of Romans 7 and what we have before us,

here in John 17 ; but if we are to enter into eternal life, and the relationship to which it attaches, the passage must be made from Adam to Christ, and that is what is described there in Romans.

The words, "The only true God," in verse 3, are a supplementary clause. The Lord is addressing the Father, and the passage might read without it : it comes in to shew that, in the revelation of the Father, God had gained His true and proper place in the soul of man. We hear of gods many, and lords many, and where Polytheism was common Jehovah was spoken of as a tribal God. To us there is one God, the Father. It can in no way clash with the truth of the Trinity. When we remember that the Father remains in His own absolute Godhead, as distinct from the Son and the Spirit, who Both have come forth, we can understand why the word "God" is used most of Him. We can see, too, that so long as He remained behind the veil, God could not be known. The Son has made Him known, in Trinity, and we who live in the full sunshine of the Father's love, rejoice in the knowledge of the true God.'

It is important that we should know that "name" is not merely a label ; it carries with it the thought of both fame and renown. Here, in verse 6, it is meant to convey to us something of the Father, as distinct from the Son, and the Spirit ; as, for example, the Father's house, the Father's kingdom, and the Father's heart, and His counsels of love. It is most blessed that we can call that great and mighty Being, our Father. So far as we can tell, the words "Abba Father," which are put into our lips, came first from our Lord Jesus Christ when here a Man upon earth. In the declaration of that Name the Son places us before the Father in His own acceptance, relationship and place.

Let us ponder a moment what it is to be before God in the Son's relationship as sons. Could anything be equal to it ? We know that, necessarily, it places us before the world in His place of rejection as His witnesses, but think of the place inside ; the favour, the excellence, the grandeur and blessedness of it ! It baffles thought so that we can

only bow in adoration and ask Him to help us to grasp, and enjoy, its meaning. As we have seen, it is bound, in the very nature of things, to put us in His place before the world. But do we think of the favour of that? Does it really come to our hearts, that God, the Holy and the True, has put us in the place of being His representatives, here in this world? Whether the inside or the outside (and they both go together), it is a position created by the Son come in Manhood, and by redemption. It is well that we should give ourselves more to this. It is, as we know, God's intention that Christ should be set forth in His saints, here on earth. This is not on the principle of demand, but that of supply; He is willing to give far more than we can ask, or think, to enable us to carry it out.

It may be needful to distinguish between what was proper to the disciples, and what they share with us, as the common portion of the saints of the whole dispensation. On the side of testimony, they certainly had a place that was all their own. The planting of Christianity in the earth was a great work. For this they had an education that fitted them for the task. What they did, however, was under the guidance and in the power of the risen Lord, as we see in Mark 16 : 20; but the doing of that work was for them an education, for it meant the giving up of all that was dear to their hearts. We can little understand what it was to them to give up the Temple, with its Priesthood and its services; the Law, the Covenants, all that had up to then represented their relationship with God. They had to give up everything that appealed to sight and sense and turn to a new order of things, which was true to faith but offered nothing to their natural sensibilities. This new order is what is opened up before us, in these chapters, and being so, we are brought in to share with them in all its blessedness.

The point concerning Sanctification calls for a few remarks before closing. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their

sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Sanctification means "to set apart," as seen in its first mention, in Genesis 2 : 3. In setting Himself apart, the Lord has gone on high. There are different reasons for this given in the Word, but here, it is on behalf of His people. It is a precious thought that there is a Man in heaven Who has gone there as representative of His people here, and on their behalf, as we see from Hebrews 9 : 24.

As gone on high, our Lord Jesus Christ is made " blessings for ever " (Psalm 21 : 6. See New Trans.). As Son over God's House, He is the Administrator of all blessing. We learn, then, that the sanctifying power of the truth is gained from Himself. Israel had the Law as a moral code and, indeed, all they had was the written Word ; we have it all in a living Person, at God's right hand. This, it will be perceived, puts the affections in motion and delivers us from a mere mental acquisition of truth. Truth, however blessed, is nothing apart from the affections ; this is blessedly secured by the fact that the One in Whom all the truth is embodied has become an Object for the heart. We have already seen that Christ is the Truth ; here, it is put in all its sanctifying power as the Father's Word. The thing is so blessed that it is difficult to put into words the little one sees and enjoys of it.

Observe that sanctification here is progressive and is connected with growth. With a perfect Object before us we become more and more like that Object, as we go on with God. He " that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

All that a creature can ever learn of God is learned in Christ, and we can never be more than creatures. With the richest and most precious blessings heaped upon us there will remain, to all eternity, the distance of infinity between God and every created being. How blessedly this enhances the Incarnation and atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ, to our hearts, Who is eternally God.

We have already spoken of the glory that is peculiar to Himself, and incommunicable to the creature, and have seen

that although it could not be imparted to us, in His tender love He would have us to behold it. This must ever stand alone. All that we can share He shares with us, and there is a "glory" which He gives us to share. This connects with the inheritance. We can well understand that the whole vast universe is His, by Creatorial right. But since it became defiled He has, by His death, acquired it all in redemption right. All that He has acquired He shares with us, and in that way we share His glory. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One."

We are taken into the circle of holy love; even now within that circle is our home (Ephesians 1:4; I John 4:16; Jude 21); it will be our home for ever. There, in the richest blessing that God can bestow, we shall look upon Him Who died for us, in His own place and state, in the intrinsic greatness and majesty of what is proper and native to Godhead. Surely we may say this is the inner lining of the whole glory system.

In reference to the use of the word "lining," it may be better to say that we can understand the Church, the inside company, in the day of display standing, as it were, facing outward. This indeed will be true when it is seen as His glorious Help-meet, carrying out His orders to the creation. But there is another way the glorified Church is presented and that is, as we have seen, in the inside, in that which is beyond the gaze of any. Well we know that there is a certain imitation of piety that would say, this is too much and too far beyond us; but, surely, the sense of the Lord's goodness, these few days, should come home to us in such a way that we might be preserved from thus dishonouring Him. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

There is one more exceedingly precious touch in verse 23; "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

It is a blessed thing to be made suitable for the glory, and to be able to behold that incommunicable glory that no creature can ever share ; but here we are brought to that which is beyond all else, that from which all glory springs, even the eternal love of God. We know that the Father sent the Son. " We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son " ; but here His desire is that the world may know it, and get to know it in, and through, those He has brought out of the world to Himself. His will is that they should be seen by the world, as loved by the same love with which the Father loved Him. It is well that we should not only know these things but enter into them, and for this God has given us His Spirit.

From all that we have been engaged with, it is clear that the Church is an " Exotic " here ; a plant from a foreign land, shall we say. It does not belong to this world, and a little illustration may help us to see the force of this. It is well known that you cannot grow oranges here in Bradford ; the climate is not suitable. Is it not remarkable that, although Edinburgh is much further north oranges can be grown there. How is that ? Only by creating the atmosphere or climate that is suitable for their growth. It is done by hothouse accommodation, where the atmosphere can be so arranged that it permits their growth. The application is simple. We, as belonging to the Father and the Son, belong to the world of God's plan and purpose, but the Holy Spirit is here and has created the atmosphere in which we can live and thrive, and bring forth fruit for God, here in this world.

" But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life " (Jude 20 21).