

Notes of Readings
IN THE
GOSPEL OF JOHN.

BY

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"ABSENT FROM THE BODY,"

"PRESENT WITH THE LORD."

—2 Cor. 5-8.

**"BUT BELOVED, REMEMBER YE THE WORDS
WHICH WERE SPOKEN BEFORE OF THE
APOSTLES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."**

—JUDE 17.

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PREFATORY.

DURING 1875 there appeared a series of papers in *Sound Words* entitled "Occasional Notes on John." They were anonymous, but written by the writer of these "Notes," he being editor at the time of that periodical. They were used, in a way, as the foundation and starting point of the readings on John in Temple Court, giving what had been found up to that time by the author concerning the Ineffable One who is the subject of the book, His Godhead and worthiness of all worship and joyful adoration. They are, therefore, to a large degree, incorporated in this book for more permanent use, though forming but a minor portion of all that will be found here.

For in the years the mind and heart have enlarged their capacity both to take in and give out the wonderful things in this deepest of all the books of Scripture. One main portion here is the dispensational meaning which, it is hoped, he has been able to set forth intelligibly, though not fully; for who is sufficient for this? The Book of John has been the delight of the youngest children of God and of all ages, just as little ones may play in a field and enjoy its flowers and fruits, not knowing that which a man coming into it finds by digging a well, or still deeper, an artesian well, himself being followed by another who has found vastly farther down mines of coal or other minerals of exhaustless value.

Attention may be called here to some few points of matchless interest and instruction, found set forth in the

first chapter, which, like the first chapter of all the books, indicates the range and scope of what follows.

1. THE POSITION AND RELATION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. He is the forerunner here as in the other Gospels; in each one according exactly to the character and purpose of the book. Thus, in Matthew setting forth the King and the kingdom, he goes forth to prepare the way of Jehovah and make His paths straight by judgment; telling that the ax is laid at the root of the trees, ready to cut down all the great ones among the Jews, and so calling upon them to repent. In Mark he simply appears as a servant of the Servant to preach the baptism of repentance, with no mention of judgment. In Luke, again, judgment and the ax appear, but among all nations, for "*every valley shall be exalted and every hill be brought low and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*" This is surely Gentile, as in the Acts xvii., God endured their ignorance, but now commands all men, everywhere, to repent. In Luke there is a careful account of all accompanying John's birth as well as Christ's.

But in the gospel by John, while there is more said of the Baptist, it is to remove him from all this testimony of judgment, for that is over; the Jew and the Gentile are left aside. He came to the first and was rejected, and the latter did not know Him. Now John is a forerunner as characteristically here as elsewhere, bearing all out of both systems, and making Him known in a higher way, infinitely so. It is here, "*as many as received Him became sons of God.*" The book keeps John the Baptist as much in the place of the opener of it as the others; and here he is sent from God.

God and the Lamb are seen together. He there the one who has done all, and then He the illuminator, the light-bearer, that has accomplished all. In the first eight verses He is not seen. God is seen alone. This is the

new heavens and the new earth, the final thing. In short the Baptist gives the scope of each book in the few words that he utters.

2. But the great distinctive and vitalizing testimony of the book running through every word of it is of Jesus as the SON OF GOD; always God, who came out from God, and when His work is accomplished goes back to God. Chosen before all ages to be set forth as such, having a work that none but God could do, and that work to take away the sin of the world, so that man could be brought back to God, both God and man happy in it. As this is dwelt upon in the "Notes," it may be merely pointed out here. It was an infinite journey from God thus to God again, bringing these trophies of His triumph. Like a bridge with three arches, this bridge, sweeping from eternity to eternity, has three divisions, referred to in Col. i., 20, 21, as things in earth, Israel and the nations, and things in heaven, the Church. There one portion is looked upon as accomplished in ver. 21. "You, the Church, hath He reconciled." We are in that, and He hath taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty waiting for the consummation of the others, though he shall come to take us to Himself and to carry on the earth these others. The other two arches are to be gone over and then the end. In chap. i., 43, here we see that while He would go forth to the third day, He is halted by the object of the second, Israel. He would go forth to Galilee, but Philip and Nathaniel, figures of Israel, detain Him.

3. THE LAMB OF GOD. It is under this title and in this character alone that He takes away the sin of the world; not as King, the Messiah, Lord, Saviour, or any other; simply the Lamb. And in John and Revelation alone is it used, here to tell the work before Him; in Revelation to show all judgment of sin is accord-

ing to it. In 1 Peter i., 19, the term is used confirming this, for there He is seen as foreappointed before the ages as such for this very purpose. In Revelation the Lamb is found twenty-seven times, three times three by three, the absolute completeness, in the cube, of the work. The other two places in Revelation are of no consequence nor meaning here, for the one in chap. vi. is a false fear of the wrath of the Lamb, which is a contradiction of terms, and God is but recording their thoughts. In chap. xiii. it is of the second beast coming up with two horns like a Lamb; the false one, Anti-christ. This character therefore belongs to this work.

In the fifth chapter Christ is seen as the Lamb, as He had been slain, ready to enter upon possession of the earth. Then He is seen in the following chapters as the one confirming all these things, until in chapter xxi. in the millennium glory, it is God and the Lamb. He is the luminary, casting His light all the way through. In regard to the three great divisions—the church, Israel and the nations—the church is the golden city, Israel the walls, and then the nations. All purged forever.

The next scene is the beginning of the twenty-first chapter in which God is all and there is no Lamb.

4. THE WALK OF JESUS. All these are given in chap. i., 29–36 as the testimony of John the Baptist, the sent one to go before Christ, the voice to announce Him. This walk can be followed easily through Judea, Samaria, Galilee, the other side of Jordan, His faithfulness to walk and work during the twelve hours of the day and His accomplishing all till those feet were nailed to the tree. And then when He arose He showed His hands that wrought and His feet that walked during His wearisome day. All was accomplished and He entered into rest. It is all wonderful, calling for our most devout worship of Him and of self-abasement.

It is hoped these imperfect "Notes" will contribute to the delight of His own and their absorption with Him, who through all His course here could declare of Himself that He was God with us, the Lord made flesh, God manifest in the flesh. Having now for some few months traveled with Him, beholding with increasing amazement the manner of His love, all is committed to Him and the saints who are His delight. Should any one with clearer vision and more susceptible spirit go on discovering vastly deeper depths of the riches of His person and His work (for Ps. xxxvi., 5-9, is the record of Him all the way through), one might with a holy envy and fellowship follow him, and when all is said he would but utter the words of the first writer, "if all were written the world itself could not contain the books that might be written of Him;" and weighed down, crushed with the weight of the glory, he would but subscribe himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

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JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

We enter now upon the life of Jesus Christ, as He is; not in an official character, as in Matthew, or as the perfect Servant, in His ministering according to God's mind as such, as in Mark, nor as the perfect Man before God and among men, as in Luke, but in the full-orbed glory of His Person as the Son of God from the beginning, even God. In whatever way He is presented, He filled the character perfectly, and it is the delight of God to display Him. Here He displays and reveals God, for He is God. It is a storehouse of the profoundest and richest things that we have learned, and has its own vocabulary of terms and phrases, the most profound.

It was needful that we should have Him told out as He was in His work and in Himself; and, in reading the gospel accounts, we should first of all see that God is telling us of how He met His mind, whether men received Him or not. Instance in chap. v., how Jesus tells what the Son of God should be and what He is, and then places Himself before us as just that. So in chap. x., He tells of the One who comes in by the door into the sheepfold, and then says that thus He did, that He was the true Shepherd.

It is of exceeding importance that we know that He is fully certified to as meeting all requirements, according to the holiness and righteousness and love of God;

and, doing this, that there shall be none other and no room for another. We are apt to think of Him as our Saviour, meeting our need as sinners and succoring us when in trial; but here and in God's accounts in these four books, we are to learn what He is to God and to admire Him in all His attributes and ways, to accustom ourselves to going on with God in His delights. We shall find Him, besides being God and Creator when down here, the Life, the Light of the World, the Bread, the Way, the Truth, the Good Shepherd, in short everything that was and is a necessity for God and for us and between God and us, the indispensable One, All to God and All to us. If God need to be revealed, there shall be One set forth to do it worthily.

We start out from the abysmal depths of eternity past, and He *was*; the Word, the expression of God's thought, and He was God.

In the four faces of the cherubim of Ezekiel i:10, and afterwards, in Rev. iv., we see the representation of Christ, as setting forth all God's display and action upon the earth. In Ezekiel we notice that the faces of the lion and the ox were the right side, the place of dignity, and on the left the inferior place; but the man and the eagle were the most prominent, the front face, the characterizing ones; for Christ was essentially man and God, though officially King and servant, temporarily. In Matthew, the *Lion*, King, and all Matthew is kingly, the record of the perfect King. In Mark, the *Ox*, or the calf (Lev. i., Num. xix.), the servant, the Son of God in service at the bidding of the Father, yet serving us. In Luke, the face of the *Man* shines out all the way through, so that we learn what a man according to God is. In John, He is the *Eagle*. According to Prov. xxx:19, the way of the eagle in the air is one of the three things that are wonderful and of the four which we

know not. In John, the secret of what Christ is, is not understood by man's learning. It passes out beyond all his reasoning, his imagination, his standards. It is discerned by the Spirit alone. No man knoweth the Son but the Father. This must be revealed, as to Peter in Matt. xvi:17. In Job xxxix:27, the question is asked of Job, "Doth the eagle mount up at thy command and make her nest as high?" In Deut. xxxii:11, 12, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so Jehovah alone did lead them, and there was none other God with them." These describe graphically the character of Christ, in Himself beyond all, yet coming nearest to all in the character of the Son of God, in this marvellous book. And "they that wait on Him shall renew their strength,—here is resurrection power—they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Ex. xix. 4; Isa. xl. 31.) There is ever a renewing of strength in Christ, seeing and having fellowship with the Son of God, rather than in His official relationship, for this is He as He is.

His place is "in the air," the heavenly places, raised and seated there by God; and ours, too, is there as sons of God. (Ephes. i. 19–ii. 6.)

The four gospels also correspond to the four great offerings in Leviticus; Matthew being the Trespass offering, Mark the Sin offering, Luke the Peace offering, and John the Burnt or Holocaust offering, that which was a sweet savor to God, entire devotion to Him.

Vers. 1–5. Every one must see, as we open this precious book, that we are introduced to glories of a very special character. It is the presentation of the same Person as in the other "Gospels," the one Object of all God's thoughts and purposes, and in whom

His own glory is invested, and through whom it is to be displayed in all the ages, but preserving the lofty characteristics of its own special line of truth as given by itself in chap. xx. 31, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

The opening verses introduce the subject of the book in a way reaching out beyond all our highest thought. Who are we that we should be told such things? We are taken back to "the beginning" when the Everlasting Word was with God, Himself God. This first section, vers. 1-5, has compressed into it the most solid epitome of His history as to Himself in relation to creation, to man, to God, to all things up to the time of His coming to dwell among us.

And then what He is, the varied characteristics of His Person are told. He is the origin of all things, the Maker of every creature, whether in heaven or on earth, and, without Him as being of and for Him, was not anything made. Thus He is not only Author but End of all, the final Cause, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending. All things are by Him and for Him. Could man have written that concerning Him who was down here with not a place to lay His head, that He was not only of God but was the true God; and that creation had its being and meaning alone for and in relation to Him?

A likeness to two other passages of divine description will be felt:—Prov. viii. 22-31, where this One, under the name of Wisdom, which is exclusively His, is seen as He whom Jehovah possessed from the beginning, set up from everlasting. One brought up with Him, the phrase implying intimacies and conformities in purposes and designs, as "One by Him, a Master Workman" (compare Rev. v. 5-14), His delight, Himself

delighting with the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth long ere they were brought forth. And here man having no part there is no failure nor thought nor suggestion of disappointment; all is of God. Then, in Gen. i. 1, 2, the contemporary and subsequent scenes are unveiled, wherein God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, and after an indefinite interval when the earth was "desolate and empty," He rebuilt the whole in a way which set forth Christ. These five verses of John repeat the story morally, after telling what He was who made all, being the Life that was the Light of men and shining out because light must shine in darkness, by adding "and the darkness apprehended it not!" The story has become old, yet ever renewed; who shall reverse it? The Son of God alone.

Such is His pedigree passing back into eternity, beginning all history, taking a place in the genealogies of men and of kings to be of and for man, and to reign by right over men for a season and for a testimony, and to fill all things; but before all that is called the past, because He ever existed, the Son, the Actor, the uncreated; such *He was*.

And not only these things but relative things are told. Somebody else is thought of. The Light shineth in *darkness*. It was suited to man. He is the only Light. Man has none in himself; God did not make him to have it in himself but to have it from Him who came from God. Man was made to be dependent, and thence his fullest joy, his richest blessing. And for this dependence the amplest provision was made in Him whose life was for man. God could not be known but by Him, and man could have naught but by Him. Nor could he be reached after he had been made and had fallen, but by Him.

Then we are told (ver. 6) that adequate pains were

taken to get man's attention. [A man is sent from God, John (Jehovah's favor), to announce Him, to bear witness of the light that all might believe. Infinite mercy and love! God could not hold in all this wealth of love and delight and be God, for love must have objects to serve. It cannot bear barriers and it knows no selfishness. One thought opens and closes this book (i. 7, xx. 31), "that all might believe," "*that all might have life.*"

But he, the messenger, was not *that* Light though a burning and shining light in which the Jews were willing for a season to rejoice. He was sent to bear witness of that Light (ver. 9). *That* Light, "coming into the world, lighteth every man," John announcing to only a few, as the floating cloud aflame with the approaching light signals the day and the sun's full glory which reaches the farthest horizon. Christ was, as Son of God, for the world; John heralded Him for the field into which Christ first came, Judea and the Jews. Men may love darkness (chap. iii. 19), and hundreds may be blind (chap. ix. 40, 41), but there is the sun in the heavens, and light springs from nothing else.

Ver. 10. "He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" seems a summary of Luke, where He is seen as the Son of Man, if we look upon the world of man; or if, according to the original, *kosmos*, the creation in its perfect order in which He was and which He arranged in beauty and glory, but which becoming confusion and emptiness (Gen. i. 2), it knew Him not. If this be so, then in a modern day "He came into His own (realm) and His own (people) received Him not." This gives the verdict in regard to the Jews in *Matthew*, where He was offered to *reign*, and *Mark* where He would have *served*. This closes man's account and man's mouth, and this gospel

starts upon that; all decided, man a ruin and needing everything. Then grace supplies according to itself, flowing out through no limitation, as marked out by King or Servant or Man, modelled by naught, but infinitely untrammelled by even the need that was found in man's low condition, beyond which it measured into the need of God, and thus giving standing, dignity, relationship, glory, "As many as received Him, to them gave He the authority, liberty (the original, *exousia*, denying the presence of a hindrance!) to become children of God." This is the peculiarity, universality of offer, "as many" and family relationship, "children" now, if having to do with Him at all; nothing less near and dear. And it is a new nature in those receiving. They are *born*, not of bloods, by generation of man, as the descendants of Jacob, nor of the will of the flesh, natural desire, nor of the will of man, as by circumcision and proselyting, but of God.

And it is simply receiving Him; then He must be something in Himself. To have received Him as the Man would not have given life; to have received Him as King would not have given life; it would not be believing on His name, on Himself. This would have shown the righteous Jew, as to have received Him as Son of Man, the righteous Gentile. But this would not have given the son-place. Rejected in these offers, He bestows the higher, the highest blessing on those believing on Him, giving Himself in such a way that such become "as He is." The Only Begotten Son of God when He comes into the world, He goes out, having become Man, the Son of God with power to make others like Him, children, sons of God, bearing this fruit (chap. xii. 24) by dying. And now God having raised Him up from the dead, determines Him thus (Rom. i. 4). This glory was given, the Son of God with power to bring others, who should be fellows (Heb. i. 9) with Him in the manifestation of that glory.

To "determine" is to fix the limits, and this lets us into the secret that during the present period God is showing Jesus by resurrection from the dead of Himself and those with Him, the Son of God. Having proposed Him in other characters and purposing to do so again in due time, He now, as Heb. i. 2 gives it, speaks to us in His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, forming the heirs who are jointly to inherit with Him. For this is His reward that He was announced as Son (Ps. ii. "this day have I begotten thee") in the resurrection, and He shall continue thus (set forth in Heb. i. 5, "I will be to Him a Father and He shall be to me a Son") beginning in His resurrection and going on through His Headship of the Church and of Israel, both of these children of the resurrection, the former individually and as a body and the latter as a nation, in due time. To us is the position, to Him the power; and we are to share with Him all He has won by going down after us into our death. Always the Son, always God, resurrection from the dead adds the power and adds us through that power. The power involves us, as "our gospel" is called the gospel according to the power of God (2 Tim. i. 8). The practical word for us is found in Ephes. vi. 10, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might;" apprehend our standing in resurrection and that this is the standard for living.

Ver. 14. And how did He come to man? "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Here, He was, though veiled in flesh, "full of grace and truth." This was His glory and the glory of the Father, He being the Only Begotten Son in the bosom of the Father and like Him. "Grace and truth" were the swathing to human eyes of God as He is, Love and Light. And this glory, unknown then, is recorded as "beheld" when the veil was taken away from their eyes and the Spirit of truth had come, so that a kindred retrospect and testimony could

be given. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; (for the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 1-3). This book is content with revealing His person, while the Epistle brings us into fellowship, having the same life. And we declare by our nature and position in Him as the first fruits of His work here that there is nothing in the grand universe of bliss, that can do without Him; He is all, from the beginning throughout the ages.

And now, to finish this introductory portion (vers. 1-18) we find that Judaism is set aside, the testimony of John being introduced to show this by pointing to the One coming after him and after all the Jewish system, who is preferred before him, for He was before Him. The law was given but it could never give life, though it promised it on obedience; thus putting it out of the question. But He gave it; for "truth," disclosing what was in man, "grace" meets all, and grace and truth came by *Jesus Christ*. This being the first mention of this name, traces the journey He took from being in the flesh the Man Jesus down here, to the throne, when the title "Christ" is made good to Him, He having earned it with all power through death. (Acts ii. 32-36).

"And of His fulness have all we received and grace upon grace; His characteristics are ours as received from Him, having passed through the same death into the same life which must manifest itself as it did in Him," which thing is true in Him and in us (1 John ii. 8), this being the new

commandment because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth.

So He declared the Father, for in all that had gone before no one had seen God. It needed to be told that He loved, and here it is made clear in deepest ways. It needed to be manifest that He is righteous, too, acting in the Light, as He is Light; and in Christ grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. It can no more be a matter of law, which demanded but received nothing, but grace which gives more than the law asked for, every favor that was in Christ. What a marvellous contrast! Every form of speech is used to gather the excellencies that inhered in Him whom the world knew not and His own received not. The full truth of God could not come out under the law, for that retired God and brought man to the front, only to prove his being a sinner and without strength. But here it is only God; *He is made known*.

Vers. 19-28. In the former section the general testimony of the Baptist is given, only announcing that Christ has taken a place before him. In this section there is given the answer to the religious leaders, priests and Levites sent from Jerusalem. Everything, everybody must be measured in the presence of God on earth. He is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed, and the Pharisees as well as John are displayed. The latter holds faithfully and loyally to his own place as the man sent to bear witness, not of himself but of the Light, with whose glory he is wholly occupied. The reasonings of the people (Luke iii. 15, 16) and the inquiries of these messengers of the heads of the people were answered alike by "I am not the Christ." There had been others who had boasted themselves to be somebodies, but this true servant saw in their questions only the opportunity to exalt the One before whom he was sent. "The Christ" meant all they

had found in the Prophets; the substance of the hopes of those who were looking to God at all; but the estrangement of the nation's mind from God made them better prepared to receive one coming in his own name, boldly announcing himself the Anointed, than to discern the works of God when done among them. John, coming from the wilderness, of unique appearance, apparel and habits, might have caught the tide of longing in many hearts and of uneasiness in most, fretting under the Roman rule, to assert, "I am the Christ!" But that his heart was held leal by the Spirit (Luke i. 15), and the Holy Spirit gives emphasis to his confession by doubling it, "he confessed and denied not, but confessed."

But, was he Elijah (Mal. iv. 5) who was to go before the face of Jehovah? Ah, if they would receive him as the herald of the King, and then the King as offered in Matthew, Christ said he was truly Elijah (Matt. xi. 14, xv, 12). And so the Prophet of Deut. xviii. 15, 18. But here all this is foregone; His own received Him not. If Christ is refused as King, John is neither Elijah nor that Prophet. There is still the one ministry left, "the voice" (Isa. xi. 3) the cry "in the wilderness." If Christ had been received as King, it would have been a fruitful field instead of the parched ground which it was. (Isa. xxxii. 15, xxxv. 7) for these things happened in Beth-Arabah, "the house of the desert," beyond the Jordan, river, the expression of death, separating from that expectation given up by God for the time. At the end of every dispensation God lingers, and so John was waiting on the other side of Jordan; no king, now; the few that came to him to be put in another place than subjects of a king.

But why baptize, then? He was thus "making straight the way," not now for a king, but by this emblem of death and burial, for the new condition under Him who was already standing among them, unknown

to their dull earthly senses. Baptizing is here emphasized as setting forth the burial of the old for entering upon the new.

Vers. 29-34. And this gives meaning to "the day following." It was after the closing of the offer of the kingdom. Jesus goes to John in the outside place and in that "day," which covers ours, is announced as the Lamb of God, the taker away of the sin of the world. This is vastly above what is set forth in the other gospels, where the matter of death comes in the sorrowful way of "the Son of Man must be delivered," etc., after a detailed account of the proposal of Him in the various characters there. Behold its meaning and breadth, taking away the sin of the world! giving a ground on which God can justify him who believes on Jesus now and reaching on to the new heaven and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. The sin of the world has now been demonstrated, for have not "His own," the last hope, if there be any in man, failed utterly and refused Him in every plea? The sin must be taken away; and, for this, He must be the Lamb ere He can reign over Israel and the world. Rev. v. 5, 6, responds to this when He comes forth to open the sealed title deed to the whole estate, the Lion, and yet "the Lamb as it had been slain." Taking rank thus above John, being before Him from eternity, as of the counsels of God, how little could John know of Him thus, though he had come baptizing that He might be manifested to Israel. For the higher knowledge he must receive further revelation, and this he had by the wonderful sign of the Holy Spirit descending and resting upon Him. While sin was not in question but only the testing of the Jews if haply they might receive their King, John could not know Him as the Lamb, the sin-bearer. But now receiving the word from Him who sent him to baptize, he must testify of Him that He is the Son of God. Who can

give forth the Spirit, baptizing in Him, but God? Not the King, not the Man. It is peculiar to Jesus, as here set forth, the Son of God. And John can go no farther. Had Jesus been accepted as King, he might have remained to go before Him as such. But, that being over, his ministry of righteousness closes. But this "day" has witnessed wondrously in that the sin question is taken up and settled. The baptism in the Holy Spirit follows death and resurrection. This day comes in after John's legitimate and dispensational ministry to the Jews, and so there is a "day following" in which he himself is left, as the old Judaism has ceased by his day.

The taking away of the sin of the world is therefore represented by *three days*, the church day (vers. 35-42), Israel's day (43-51), and the third day, the nations, completing all up to the new heaven and the new earth (chap. ii. 1-11). And now introduced according to God's purposes and witnesses, the Holy Spirit and John, Jesus enters upon these, making His own utterances and invitations and announcement, and these His three days of grace in contrast with John's and the law we may now examine for a little time.

THE FIRST DAY.

"The next day John stood," no movement of his further, "and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked"—He is to walk through all henceforth—"he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" It is only his joy in the Person. And the *person of the Son of God* is the great matter of the first day, for at once the two leave John, never to return, drawn to the Son of God and to His abode. It is the mystery. We are not told where He dwelt, but they were told and they abide with Him. That is all. They are in company with Him and apart from the world, and it is but a little while, literally but two hours of the day

left. They who know concerning Christ and the church will recognize these particulars:

1. Drawn to the Person of Christ, only (Chap. xiii.).
2. Drawn away from the earthly kingdom ground. (Chap. xiv. 19, xvii. 16.)
3. Abiding with Him the whole time. (Chap. xv.)
4. Only a while thus hidden. (Chap. xiv. 1, 2.)
5. The special testimony that He is the Christ (resurrection title). (Acts xvii. 3.)
6. Andrew (strong), strong in the Son, the new man. (Ephes. vi. 10.)
7. Simon (hearing faith), change of name to Cephas, a stone, as having his portion with the Rock. We are stones. (1 Cor. iii. 12, 16.)

One would keep from imagination or fancy or the diversions of the intellect in the things of God which outreach in all directions all the mind can think, but surely the naming of these things in this short section must have been by design and full of meaning. Had the church more thoroughly held her place, the heavenly and the One Object, Christ Himself, with the hope of soon being caught to Him whose body we are, and that all her power is in hearing the Word from His lips, these things would not surprise us nor need enforcing. What else can they mean? We, the church, are the first that have to do with Christ in resurrection (Ephes. i. 12) and we are predestined to be conformed to His image and to reign with Him, being now unknown to the world, our life hid with Christ in God. The closing of the day is near: His coming is imminent. Our true place is with Him in the manifestation of His glory. Abiding with Him in Spirit while hidden from the world, soon we shall go forth into the second day.

THE SECOND DAY.

Vers. 43-51. "The day following," then, takes us beyond the church time, and in it Jesus would *go forth* into Galilee, the place set forth in Isa. ix. 1, and Matt. iv. 12-16, where He would begin the work for Israel. It is in contrast with the secret thing of the former day, an open matter in the world. In that the two or three had gathered to Him; in this He would seek according to Hos. ii. 14-23, alluring her, Israel, and bringing her into the wilderness, and Ezek. xxxiv. 11-16, going out after His scattered sheep.

He is the Saviour of Israel; and He finds *Philip* and saith unto him, Follow me! Israel had for a long time wandered from Jehovah, and now the voice of their true Shepherd who shall not sleep (Ps. cxxi. 4) while she had slept in her grave among the nations, is heard, and with Isa. lxiii. 7-13 before us, where Israel is compared to a horse, and also Jer. xxiv. 2, Hos. ix. 10, together with Matt. xxi. 18-22, where the fig tree is mentioned as like Israel, we can understand why the Holy Spirit gives the name of Philip, "a lover of the horse," when we find that the "horse led in the wilderness lest he stumble" is the figure of Israel and that this name as caring for such, and then taking his place beneath that which was accursed to be fruitless, as Israel has been ever since, thus as an "Israelite indeed" accepting the judgment and having the heart according to God, should represent the faithful whom He would call.

For Jacob received the name *Israel* as having power with God in his utter brokenness after the angel had reduced him to helplessness (Gen. xxxii. 24) at Peniel (the face of God); and Israel in the latter days, when it shall turn to Jehovah and cease resisting by going about

to establish its righteousness, shall then be what Philip represents, "an Israelite indeed."

But this is in contrast with the movement of the former day. Moreover when we recall Rom. x. 17-19, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," the full appropriateness of Nathaniel "the gift of God," being the one called by Philip, will be seen. Then his announcement, not as above, "we have found the Christ," but "Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote" is all of Israel and the earth. It is "of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph," for Joseph is in the kingly line from David (Matt. i.). The response of Nathaniel, like the despairing wail of Gideon (Judges vi. 13), is the language of disappointed hope, probably holding the common ignorance of the profound purpose of God that He should be called a "Nazarene," born in Bethlehem (Luke iii.) though living in Nazareth, and knowing only the common knowledge that their Christ was to be of Bethlehem the City of David. But "come and see" settled the matter then, as now and ever. The word of God is that in which we are to search to find the wonders of that birth and life and death and its infinite results.

As the Israel of God, "an Israelite indeed," he came at the hour and the invitation, having been found in the only place of doing the truth as before stated, under the fig tree; and to his question, "Whence knowest Thou me?" he receives the answer which tells not only of the loving eye that was upon him, but of the broader love and tenderness that beholds Israel now banished and under the curse, but never forgotten, never out of sight. The word "before" goes back through all their sad history, agreeing with the prophets and being the pledge of their glory to come. And the full swelling response to this startling array of the elements of Israel's blessing and their minute alignment is, "Thou art the Son of God;

Thou art the King of Israel" (Ps. ii. 7, 12). The place of Christ with reference to the Jew as such is not referred to in John as to the future, but to *Israel*, because as the Son of God He has to be at the head of the revived nation *brought again from the dead*, as of the church of risen ones. The Church is composed of those who have the son-place individually; and He their Head. Israel as a whole, nationally, not individually, is called God's son, His first-born (Exod. iv. 22, Hos. xi. 1). Christ as Son of God gives back the place of a son to Israel also. In Rom. i. 3, it is said that Jesus "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." As such He was offered to the Jews and they put Him to death. Then in resurrection from the dead He is determined by God to be the Son of God, first to the Church (chaps. i., viii.), and then to restore Israel (chap. xi.). Sitting now at the right hand of God He shall come forth first to deliver the Jewish remnant, and be over them as Son of Man and Son of David; and, gathering all Israel, He will be Son of God. The Jews are still living and known, never having been blotted out, but Israel shall be the nation again as sprung from the dead.

Vers. 50, 51. This was really faith and is acknowledged as such by Christ, for faith gets God in all His kindness. It is the language of the ransomed of Jehovah returning to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, sorrow and sighing fled away (Isa. xxxv. 10). And it must needs be met by its own peculiar revelation. And here we have it with the solemnity of "verily, verily," as everywhere in this gospel, the "Amen" of the Father confirming the "Amen" of the Son. "Henceforth ye shall see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." And this takes us back to the original word to Jacob in his helplessness wandering out from his father's house, as his

children have for ages, when the vision of God's purpose was given to him (Gen. xxviii. 10-15), and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder bring forth from Jehovah the word, "and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with thee and will *keep thee in all the places whither thou goest* and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that for which I have spoken to thee," The ladder, as everything that fails not, is the Son of Man, the One who must die for this, and He shall unite heaven and earth, too.

Now, how many things have we seen in this second day, of the bearing away the sin of the world:

1. Jesus going forth.
2. Into Galilee. (Isa. ix. 1.)
3. Calling Philip, who takes his place in judgment, with a heart for Israel. (Jer. xxxii. 18.)
4. Under the fig tree. (Israel in judgment.)
5. Calling Nathaniel. (Given of God.)
6. Seeing him under the fig tree. "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy upon him, saith Jehovah." (Jer. xxxi. 20.)
7. The confession, Son of God and King of Israel.
8. The promise of complete fulfilment of all promises to Israel, up to the new heaven and new earth.

CHAPTER II.

THE THIRD DAY.

Vers. 1-11. The third day sets forth the consummation of the taking away of the sin of the world. It is

resurrection day, not of Christ only, not of those that are in Christ spiritually, only, but of the world, the nations blest with Israel and the full glory of the Son of God manifested (ver. 11) to the day when the Son shall deliver the Kingdom up to the Father and God shall be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28), and the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness (Rev. xxi. 1-8). It is the day of Pss. c., cxvii., xxiv., cxxvi., of Isa. xxxv., xlii. 1-16, of Hosea ii. 18-23. There is a marriage, that which is the expression of the fulness of joy (Matt. xxii.) wherein everything that is best is set forth.

This is in Cana, which means "readiness," for all is ready now that Israel is redeemed; of Galilee (Matt. iv.) of the Gentiles, the people that are to see a great light. And the mother, Israel now restored, was there. It was *her place*. Jesus and His disciples were invited. The place of Christ and the Church is in heaven, but they have part not as resident on the earth but coming in by invitation to the feast where all things are to be cleansed, for the heavens are to hear the earth (Hos. ii. 21) and they, earth and heaven, shall hear Jezreel, "the field or seed of God," the whole of the redeemed here. The riches of Hosea ii. must come through Israel being there, as the mother was here, and the heavenly in fellowship with the scene.

Ver. 3. The mother (Israel) is the one that detects the lack of wine, which according to Judges ix. 13, cheers both God and man. The cheer is to be only through Christ, the One sent into the world to meet the need for both God and man, reconciling and more, giving abounding joy and fellowship through His blood.

And wherever Israel is found bemoaning her widowhood, her desolation, the mourning of the ways of Zion, the acknowledgment of her sorrows and her sins as the cause of them, and these are the continual confession in

the prophets, this is the voice of the mother of Jesus—"They have no wine." Israel had no joy with Jehovah nor He with them. And she, in the assurance that His power and grace will be expended to meet the need, can say to the servants "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do." So her language epitomizes the hopes and the exhortations of the same prophets, as Isa. li. 1, "Hearken to me ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. For Jehovah shall comfort Zion. He will comfort all her waste places and make her wilderness like Eden," etc. And Isa. lvi. 1, "Thus saith Jehovah, keep ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed." It is the word to the faithful, to those who care for the honor of God and tremble at His word. To quote the passages in consonance with this exhortation and its implied expectation would be to reproduce a large portion of the prophets (Ps. cxxxiv.).

The prophets and they who are like them in the latter day are in the secret of what is done, as in 1 Pet. i. 11, it was revealed while they spoke of the sufferings of Christ and the following glories, that it was then not to themselves these things were to come but to a later time. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos iii. 7).

But what of the words of Jesus to His mother? "What have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." This would seem to be clear that the whole purpose to *bless the world and bring in His glory could not be by Israel*, as they had made the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Ezek. xxxvi., Rom. ii. 24). And even after, for His own name's sake which they had thus so grossly dishonored, He has restored them to their land and blessing, *He* must be the One that is given as a

light to the Gentiles (Isa. xlii. 6, Ps. ii. 8). Isaiah xlix. is very clear and bold on this matter. Verses 6, 7 say, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayst be my salvation to *the ends of the earth*. Thus saith Jehovah the Redeemer of Israel, the Holy One; to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers; kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship because of Jehovah who is faithful and the Holy One of Israel and He shall choose Thee." Everywhere, too, this is found, His "hour" must come when He has purified Israel (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-30), for He cannot use an instrument which broke in His hand before, failing utterly in that for which He chose it.

And now in the vessels for purifying which were on hand, incomplete, being only six, doubtless we find the elements in Israel which were left among them (see Rom. ix. 4, 5), which when filled through the cleansing of the word, the water of purification, as He shall sprinkle clean water upon them, purging all their uncleanness, He will bring forth that which shall be a joy to the whole earth and a joy in heaven, and this shall be perpetual, the "best wine at the last." This is indeed Christ's glory here manifested, when, according to Psalm cxxxviii., all the kings of the earth shall praise Him when they hear the words of His mouth, "Yea, they shall sing in the ways of Jehovah, for great is the glory of Jehovah." Yes, all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah. All honor is to the Son of God who reconciles all things in heaven and in earth unto God, beginning with the heavens, the church, and coming to earth in first the whole house of Israel and then gathering the Gentiles, all in every place, rejoicing in Him (Col. i. 20).

“And His disciples believed on Him.” And what shall it be when all things are accomplished as set forth in this wonderful scene, when the words of Isaiah xxxv. are brought to pass? Then shall the weak hands be strengthened and the feeble knees be confirmed. It would be the fulfilment of Ps. xlv. 10. “Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth,” and then the response of faith in ver. 11, “Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” This did Jesus as the beginning of *signs* (not miracles). All the works in the gospel of John are “signs” because signifying more than the mere historical fact. We have seen this one setting forth His glory. A miracle is something to be wondered at, man’s full idea of what Christ did, often; but our Lord found a need to be supplied in the condition of the people and a deeper one to be met more profoundly on to the ages, securing all things for God and bringing in everlasting righteousness. And thus He began.

Vers. 12–24. In the next section His authority in cleansing that which man had offered as the house of God, but which he prostituted to his own selfishness, is brought to notice. This, too, may have the deeper meaning looking to the cleansing from all that defiles at the end, when He shall deliver up the purged Kingdom to the Father, linking all with the absolute taking away of the sin of the world.

For a season He and His mother and His disciples go down to Capernaum (for a few days). Still in Galilee, the place of the gathering for blessing, this word suggesting penitence, and so consolation, would indicate the way of joy through godly sorrow.

But other occupation is before Him in the city and season of religious solemnities, Jerusalem. Once the dwelling place of Jehovah, founded in peace, as its name

implies, it had lost God while it kept up all forms and ceremonials, with which His name had been associated. The attraction for Christ would be the need to make real worshippers, to bring in a true Passover which should tell of what God had wrought.

It was the temple of Herod, not of Solomon nor of Ezra; built in neither the fulness of the favor and glory of Jehovah nor in brokenness and confession of weakness, seeking Jehovah, God of Israel and keeping the feast of unleavened bread with joy, for Jehovah had made them joyful (Ezra vi. 16-22), a temple unaccepted of God as well as unordered by Him. In this day of the rejection of the Son of God, the whole ritual of the Jews and the temple service was kept more punctiliously than in the days when the cloud rested between the cherubim on the ark and the Urim and Thummim on the breastplate of the high priest. The less of God there was, the more of show and imitation.

And so He found in the temple those who made it a house of merchandise; man's greed in place of reverence for Jehovah. And this from the people to whom God had given the revelation of His will and of His goodness! According to their confession this was the house of God, and yet He was the only One who cared for the honor of God. So He rebuked and reversed the whole thing, feeling the reproaches of those that reproached God thus. How His presence brought out the truth in regard to God and man! He could say "I am become a stranger unto my brethren and an alien unto my mother's children." And the disciples remembered how fittingly Ps. lxi. described Him there, in that the zeal for God's house consumed Him. It was manifested all the way through His walk here, cleansing the house which they had brought to their own filthy level of suiting man, and cleansing man by making him anew and thus fit for that house. How

near He brought God again if they would have it so, while their thoughts were on the ritual of "authority," not understanding that the zeal and the care for God's glory were tokens of His right to do these things.

Then He must die to make all true, to declare the prerogative vested in Him. In death would be His title and in resurrection. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up." To have been up to the level of His doings they would have understood that He spoke of that one grand event for which He came, His death. While therefore He convicted them of insincerity as to that in which they boasted, the temple, He closed that temple and introduced another. Forty and six years was this in building, but that of which He spake was in the counsels of God before the ages. What is the religiousness of man worth? The disciples afterward, when the Spirit of truth came, could recall all this and its meaning, but as yet there was the haze of the vanishing Jewish teachings even while they had a heart for Him.

If the Jew with all his pre-eminent advantages and all his zeal is thus wanting in himself, so lost to all that belongs to God, as shown here, is there not a complete exposure of man made in the presence of Him who is the truth? But still there is another element in this exposure. It might be said, Did they not believe on Him in Jerusalem? Yes, but it was "when they saw the signs which He did." And is this faith? Faith does not erect a standard of its own by which to judge and test Christ and if He comes up to that accept Him. This is reasoning. Faith links with Him as needing all He brings, believes Him because He speaks, hears His voice, takes Him on His own authority. Man is a lost, helpless thing and he thinks to take up intellectually, adding to what he has, but having this accredited.

But this will not do. It gets nothing, receives not of His fulness, receives not Him. Hence Jesus did not commit Himself unto them. If one get not "Himself" he has nothing. He knew what was in man and His own presence here brought it all out, emptiness of joy, "the way of peace have they not known," enmity to God and independence of Him and rejection of Christ as the Life. Surely we are prepared to learn and to echo—he must be born again;—the theme that follows.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1-20. In this section there is one, a ruler of the people (Nicodemus) the teacher of Israel, blameless as teaching the righteousness that is in the law, as one after him asserted of himself (Phil. iii. 6) who had been affected by these signs which Jesus did, and who would know something more from Him, taking his place as one to be taught. And is not that amiable and in a certain degree humble? But is it an acknowledgment of the truth? Does "the old man" (Rom. vi. 6) need teaching to make him what he ought to be, or is there need to be another man, altogether?

His coming by night indicates that he had a reputation to conserve, but that he came at all shows that he wanted; and he came to the One whom God had sent and who had everything for him. But if there is grace to be offered there must be truth, for they go together with Christ.

So Jesus meets him at once. "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* the kingdom of God." It was the infinite necessity upon which His being made flesh and dwelling among men was caused, the counsel of

the Father and the Only Begotten Son, as shown in the "verily, verily;" the depth and purport of the will of Him who sent Him, which He must perform; the grand principle upon which all He should accomplish was founded, now brought to light, though always true, since for this cause He came into the world. It was the general statement of the way in which God and man could go on together, fundamental and universal in its reach, made to this representative of the religious culture of the day. The world was beyond repair. All was failure in the Jew, ruin and utter alienation from God in both Jew and Gentile. All must be begun over again in a new way, born from above.

But how utterly ignorant is Nicodemus of God's righteousness (Rom. x. 3), and of that to which both the law and the prophets bore continual testimony (Rom. iii. 21). His answer is but that of a child, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Ah, if he be but a child with the child's weakness and nothingness, he shall be led into all the truth. But would this kind of birth better the matter since man is a sinner? It is but going over again the same sad history to come to the same end. Man has been already proved *yet* a sinner, *yet* without strength (Rom. v. 6, 8). And could God go on with such an one? The "wine" would be wanting. Men are disposed to go on without God, to build up without Him, but it is building up themselves, only to consummate the ruin in death and utter destruction. Nor is it man with a new chance or new principles, motives, feelings; but a new creation, a new man. And God would not be without man. He made him for His Son; all things were made for Him. He means to have children, born of God. How shall He put them among the children?

(Jer. iii. 19.) He whom He determined to be the Son of God by resurrection from the dead is yet to say "I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. ii. 13). If man must be born again, then all that he is and all he has done is nothing to the purpose.

And now the answer comes nearer, beginning in a region with which Nicodemus must be familiar, the promise and therefore the necessity of the "water and the Spirit" of Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27, and this by the solemn oath of the Father and the Son, "verily, verily" is stated as indispensable to entrance into the kingdom of God, the one that would reinstate Israel in their land, no more to sin, but that God might enjoy them forever. Had this scripture never raised a question in this teacher or those taught as to the depth of meaning in it? Then he shall now be told that that which is born of the flesh, of man the sinner, is but flesh (see its works in Gal. v. 19-24; itself in Rom. viii. 5-8); and that which is spirit must be born of the Spirit. Would this help him to understand? The wind blows where it lists or the spirit (for it is the same word) acts thus and the *effect* only is seen. The power must come from without; it is not in man. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. The water referred to Num. xix. for cleansing ceremonial defilement. It "sprinkled the unclean" (Heb. ix. 13). And God taking pity for His own name's sake which was pledged to this people and therefore He must restore them, for His words to the fathers have been pledged, cleansing them from all their idolatries and all their sins and putting a new spirit in them that they should not sin again.

Water, used for cleansing, is a symbol of the word of God. See Ps. cxix. 9, John xv. 3, Ephes. v. 26. Compare John i. 13, 1 Pet. i. 23 as to our birth, and Ezek. xxxvi. 25, Zech. xiii. 1 for the earthly people. It is the word of God given and used by the Spirit of God to the

new spirit, not anything springing from ourselves, nor something of our own application, but of God alone. Is this marvelous? So is the wind, whence comes it; whither does it go? Yet it comes and goes. So the Spirit is freely given. The time was to come according to Joel ii. 28, when the Spirit should be poured out on all with its wondrous results. Did ever man have to say he was ready and the Spirit was not given? Nay, in the day of Acts ii. and the following, in Israel, the Spirit was rejected though they were fully told of His presence and works. But the verdict brought in by Stephen, Acts vii. 51, is that they always resisted the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 9. "How can these things be?" is still the difficulty. And the answer is called out in its completeness, It is true of the earthly kingdom which God will establish through the resurrection of Israel, iniquity thoroughly purged, and the people so made new that they shall no more depart from Him. The teacher of Israel ought to have known all these things if he had diligently studied the prophets, as the question of Jesus intimates, "Knowest thou not these things?" These earthly things clearly foretold as to manner and time and circumstances were, in the words of Jesus, concerning the water and the Spirit and so He had already told them. And this testimony was not received. How then of the heavenly things?

Surely then "ye must be born again" would be the necessity concerning the heavenly things and heaven itself. And (ver. 13) "no man has ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven." He then, the Only One, must tell all about it. Man was not made for heaven but for the earth (Gen. ii. 5-8). Putting together Prov. xxx. 4, "Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established the ends of the

earth? What is His name and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?" and Ps. lxxviii. 18, "*Thou hast ascended on high: Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, the rebellious also, that Jehovah might dwell among them,*" and the reference to these in Ephes. iv. 9, 10, "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended on High He led captivity captive (or a multitude of captives—those He delivered from hades when He ascended) and gave gifts unto men. Now, that He ascended, what is it but that He descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things," we learn then the "*Son's name,*" the *One who being here as man went down into the earth and ascended, receiving gifts for men that as Jehovah He might dwell with men.* This would give Him the title to accomplish Ezek. xxxvi., xxxvii., restoring and reigning over and dwelling among Israel. But also He led the captivity of hades (the believing ones) *His* captives, into heaven when He ascended; that to do this He had to descend first into the earth; and hence heaven being in question, it is only by Him that it is open to any. Man gets to heaven through Another Man, the Second.

Vers. 14, 15. How can any man ascend but by the Son of Man who is in heaven? For before He shall come to dwell with Israel on the earth He is to accomplish the first day of chap. i. 35-42, and gather to the heavens. And now, in this chapter, that all expectation is over for the earth, it is heaven or nowhere. Linked with the Son of Man who belongs in heaven is the only way. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." This takes us to Numbers xxi. and the scene of death from the serpent's bites. Israel's only thought was to

have the serpents removed. But would that have healed them? Another serpent, one of brass, as expressive to us of the judgment of God, must be lifted up. And that brought life to them, while the serpents still remained. And this instructs us that it was another life, not to be harmed or taken away by the biting, which was not true of the life they had before looking. The old life was given up but the new came from the brazen serpent. "Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Man must take his place as dead and get the new, the everlasting life in Him. Sin and Satan are not taken away from the world yet, but these are made anew, born from above.

Such is the necessity, the "must" as to the Son of Man to meet the "must" in regard to man. Has it been met? Thoroughly and beyond challenge. And here where not the necessity but the grand accomplishment of all is given, love is brought forth (v. 16), "God so *loved* the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This single sentence so richly freighted with all the glory of God contains all the words peculiarly characteristic of John's gospel—Life, Love, the World (the scene of all this love) and Give, Believe and Have. All the other gospels added together contain them not so many times. And this one verse has been honored of God to the salvation of an innumerable multitude. It is the very heart of this gospel to which all precious thoughts and words contribute. It is the Son of God here as the One having life in Himself and quickening whom He will, as set forth from heaven in resurrection; on the cross as Son of Man, in the glory the Son of God.

Here we find the force of what is given in 1 John v. 6, 8. The "water" and the "Spirit" were to bring to an earthly standing and now the "blood" is added, and these three agree in one, that we who believe have everlasting

life. "God hath given unto us eternal life and this life is in His Son." God's love is commended thus to us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, that He raised Him from the dead and that He sends forth the message, the *command* to repent, the *invitation* to all the blessed results, the *prayer* to be reconciled to Him. It is pure gift, proceeding from pure love; and all one can do is to *believe* and *have*; and what he has is eternal life, the very life of Christ. Not to do this renders man guilty. It is criminal not to be saved, because it is refusing to believe of Him whom God has sent.

Vers. 17, 18. "For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world but that the world through Him might be saved; He that believeth on Him is not judged, but he that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Man is not judged for being born a sinner, but that he will not accept another life offered him freely. He will offer God his religion, his service as he esteems it, his time, his possessions as though at his disposal, but he will not receive life, the only life that suits God, the life in His Son.

Ver. 19. "And this is the judgment that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." In the light God is disclosed and man is exposed. But grace meets and puts away all that is exposed and the man is saved that thus comes to the light. As soon as one is willing to hear from God about himself he is in a condition to be saved because he finds that in the *lifting up* of Christ all is done to meet him. Self judgment in view of the cross of Christ results in salvation. Thus he that doeth the truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God. That alone is wrought in God that will do for His eye. Christ's work on the cross; and the

happy man according to Pss. i. and xxxii. is the one who is either sinless or "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Of the latter vastly richer blessings are announced than of the former. How all the wealth of God is lavished upon him who confesses to being the *sinner!*

Vers. 22-24. "After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judea; and there He tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim because there was many waters there; and they came and were baptized; for John was not yet cast into prison." The Holy Spirit gives these notes of time that we may learn that the action and testimony of Jesus as Son of God is going on from the beginning of His ministry, contemporary with the offer of a kingdom. Here both Jesus and John are seen yet offering the kingdom and baptizing, the one in Judea and other in Samaria. For indeed all that Jesus was was manifested all the time, the varied glories of His character pleading for acceptance through the exposed wants of Israel. Satan would seize the occasion of this labor in separated fields to arouse in the mind of John the spirit of rivalry, but we are to learn the sweet and gracious working of the Spirit in him, only to bring out a clearer testimony for Jesus, He being in the place where, if they will, they can have Him according to all that John asserted.

Vers. 25, 36. The question of purifying that arose between John's disciples and a Jew gives the link connecting this part of the chapter with what was in the former part, the water of Ezekiel (ver. 5) and possibly the vessels in chapter ii. 6. Evidently the purifying was to be preparatory to the reception of their King; but if not King still the One indispensable to them. John they might reject but the rejection of Jesus was ruin. And this John unfolds, bowing with delight to the increasing reception of

Him who is preferred before him. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." Each had his ministry thus appointed. John was not the Christ but was sent before Him. This had been his constant testimony, of which they were witnesses. But his part was none the less fixed and his joy was in its reported accomplishment. Were all going to Jesus? then his joy was complete. It was what he labored for. Not yet retired, nor yet cut off, the rich opportunity is given him to announce, "I have finished the work given me to do," as Christ announced to the Father (chap. xvii.) and Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. iv.)

But it was no longer a question of an earthly kingdom but a Bridegroom with His Bride. It is not the earth but heaven. Yet the friend of the Bridegroom which stands and hears Him can rejoice at His voice. "He must go on increasing but I decrease." Abnegation complete! the immeasurable distance between the heavenly and the earthly things mentioned by Christ to Nicodemus, referred to its time, now He that comes from above being above all, and superseding him that is of the earth, who has spoken of the earth. A man can receive nothing except it be given him. Himself was sent from God on the earth and now the hour has come for the One from above. For with Him the birth by Spirit and water and blood must take place. He from heaven speaks what He has seen and heard as He said above (ver. 11) and His testimony is not received. But he that receives His testimony confirms as with his seal the truth of God. In chap. v. it will again be shown by Christ that He whom God sends speaks the words of God, for God gives not His Spirit by measure, and He has given all things into His hands.

Thus he fully introduces Christ, opens the door as the porter of chap. x., allowed if not to stay for an earthly

King, still to be glad for the coming Bridegroom, the Head of the body, the Church, of which he knew nothing and taught nothing, only pointing to the One Person to whom all are to go. And he that believeth on Him *hath everlasting life*. He came to give life and He is the life, and the quality of it is eternal. That which Nicodemus had not but the necessity of which was announced so peremptorily to him, is contingent only on the taking. But not to believe on Him is to remain as before, with the added judgment that results from rejecting it. How certain on both sides; how clear the offer!

CHAPTER IV.

John's action and testimony when they told him of Jesus baptizing more than he, is grandly responded to by that of Jesus, here. They fail to stir up jealousy in the heart of the *servant*, and his words and the movement of his Lord upon the same report from the Pharisees show that His work is of an entirely different character, a heavenly ministry, and God gives not His Spirit by measure. Accordingly in this remarkable chapter the "gift of God" is the subject.

If this is all that they have learned of Him and His work, He will leave Judea, He could not stay to be popular, to receive honor from men. There could be no more lonely place for Him than Judea, charged as He was with life and light and the power to quicken, to give these things and find no one to receive; to be the Saviour of sinners and no sinners to be saved; all acting in the sense of their superiority to Him and to their own need, holding on to the life which was death before God. This was the case; He was not wanted. He would go to Galilee again

where want had been once told and Himself had furnished the supply. It was to be the field of a future great work, though now sunk into rationalism that waited on its own judgment rather than that of God before receiving Him.

And while the Jews crossed the Jordan and went up on the East side and then recrossed it into Galilee, thus avoiding the hated Samaritans, "*He must needs go through Samaria.*" It is like Him; it is like God, and by the Father's appointment, He is going to be accepted and announced as the Saviour of the world. Such a journey among those esteemed to be sinners above all sinners, is its own argument for Him who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. The need was in the fullness He had in Himself. *He must impart!* What ways and needs of love for our poor hearts to estimate!

Verses 5, 6. "Therefore He comes to a city of Samaria called Sychar (drunkenness!) near to the land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's fountain was there." Joseph is a rich type of the risen Son of God, taking the birthright upon Reuben's offence and fall, as Christ the Second Man does instead of the first man who lost all. The portion was first purchased (Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19) and then taken by sword and bow (Gen. xlviii. 22) while yet the Amorite held the land with its overflowing spring, a fitting expression of the Holy Spirit who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

And there, being weary, He sat. Wearied with His journey, physically, doubtless, but there was another journey through the arid desert of ceremonialism without God, and another weariness of spirit that could find a resting place and none other like it, on that which told so much of God's ineffable grace. And He must seek till He find. If there is a needy place, as Samaria, He must jour-

ney there and be there for the tryst appointed by the Father with the sinner. He must get to the lost one with the gospel which meets the whole case. It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, who would not here take it, and to the Samaritan with whom He must labor to make her take it.

And for this He sat by that which, being from of old, was the silent witness of abounding grace to Israel and to those who shall serve them; as Jacob drank of it and his children and his cattle. For fountains were from the day of Abraham; digged again by Isaac, type of the Son in relation to the Father, who in spite of the opposition and the filling up of the idolatrous adversary opened afresh and claimed as his own these sources of life for the flocks. (Gen. xxvi. 15-26). And Jacob, too, might well love these springs since it was at one that he met her whom his soul loved and whom serving there that her flock might drink, he served also for her with delight. (Gen. xxix. 1-11, 20.) Have we not through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had a rich fountain opened by Him who named Himself their God, even this One who sat thus by Jacob's fountain?

At this noontide hour comes another, not to give but to draw water for herself; alone, because of her character, which kept her aloof from those whose custom it was to come in the cool of the day. The parched and heated hour was token of her own condition in spirit. She came to that which she named a "well" while the narrative aside from her lips calls it a *fountain*. The infinite grace of God has sunk to that in man's thoughts, hemmed and walled in by his handling and "deep" too, with difficulty to be reached even with something "to draw with." How unlike the repose of one who in simple faith in God sat at his tent door to welcome the stranger, in the heat of the day (Gen. xviii. 1) and could refresh others; the

one ministering to the Lord of glory, the other jaded in body and spirit and closed up in heart, but in the end refreshing the weary One from Judea; the same Lord of glory. She is to learn this yet and be able to sing in spirit with Isa. xlix. 10, "They shall not hunger nor thirst neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them; even by the springs of water shall He guide them."

Ver. 7. And first He would have her know that He would be refreshed by her. He asks, "Give me to drink," only to be taunted with an inquiry that recognizes without accepting the disrepute in which her countrymen are held by the Jews, betraying the unhappy state of her soul; in effect refusing. Ah, you say that to the sinner as though it were the word of God, "Give your heart to God," draw near to this scene. Here was the opportunity to do something for Him who came from heaven to meet her. A cup of cold water which given to a disciple in the name of a disciple would receive the disciple's reward she was not willing to give to the disciple's Lord. Say she did not know Him; neither does the sinner until he has first received the gift of eternal life, as he who in Prov. xxiii. 26 is exhorted to give his heart must know his father as he is addressed as a "son." Learn then that as it is not found in the scripture, it is therefore not according to the scriptures that the sinner is to do anything to be saved. "To him that worketh not but believeth on Him who died for the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "None seeketh after God" is the verdict of the Holy Spirit in the whole word of God. God alone is the Giver; and His is the "more blessed" place.

Poor thing! What does she know but the old prejudice, just as the presence of God is hateful to the sinner, and Christ whose very presence here is because of sin, brings out the old hatred against God. It was because

it was the way of man, "having no dealings with the Samaritans" that He addressed her. He meant to have dealings with her according to God, by imparting the gift of God to her eternal satisfaction. His ways are not our ways nor His thoughts ours. She shall know herself by knowing Him and His knowledge of her. In His light she is to see the light. And so His answer makes way for the whole matter.

Ver. 10. "If thou knewest the gift of God and how it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." Yes, asking comes from knowing Him, from His own handling of the heart and conscience. This is being quickened. He has always thus to make His own plea to bless. None are saved by seeking, but by being sought. It is the Holy Spirit in His power enriching the heart, begetting the life by presenting Christ. "Who it is;" that is the great matter. It is not doctrine any more than doing; it is the person of Christ having in Himself life, for all who will receive, for all who believe on Him.

Ver. 11. "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep," tells out the full state of her mind. Thinking only of her bodily want, she misses the offer of Himself and the living water, a rich boundless flow of life in Another. But He has taken her case up and He will lead her to drink yet. The well is deep; lower down than man can reach to. Is it keeping the law? He is "Without strength." Is it finding a righteousness by doing? "There is none that doeth good, no not one." Is it in our own nature cultivated? "There is none good; not so much as one." No, it must be a gift or nothing, the gift of God. And He would give it; it is there by her side. And this offer sets her in the right direction, asking about *Him*.

“Art *thou* greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well?”—(“well” still.) “From whence hast thou this water of life?” The *antiquity* of this fountain, known only as a well, upon which Jesus sat tells us delightfully of the gospel that was given to Adam and Eve, to Abel and Seth and Noah and to Abraham. It is that which God first announced when man became so infinitely needy through sin. Of Abel it is said, He being dead yet speaketh. He, accepted through his offering, is as modern as the sinner saved by the blood of Christ to-day. They *did* drink of it in earlier days; the fountain is as old as man the sinner.

Ver. 13. Beautiful as it was in type with Him by it, still they that drank of this thirsted again. It was but for the body. “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” This is true testimony. Everything that is of the world fails. In chap. ii the wine was out. In chap. iii man must be born anew; all is emptiness, dissatisfaction. In the end desire fails; it is impotence in respect to joy or peace. But what Christ gives has satisfied God and it brings peace, joy, and assurance forever. Justifying us before God, He separates us unto Him. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into this favor wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

Ver. 15. Beginning to learn her need by what is presented, but only beginning, she says at last, “Give!” The Jew and Samaritan have vanished from her thoughts, and He is now One who beyond all her conception of want has opened possibilities. The well with its depth could never reach that. And Himself is to be the giver. She is giving Him His proper place. It is the dawn of a light

that shall grow to the perfect day. Far back, in the beginning of man's history, another one offered to the first woman things for the outside, the flesh. It was "good for food, beautiful to the eye, to make one wise." That was to get her away from dependence on God, to spoil all that was within; this was to be a perpetual life within, with no exhaustion, no want. Each believing heart knows the sweetness, the fulness of this springing up into everlasting life. It links with God and His ages as that offer linked with Satan and his judgment. He has had it all to do, this Seeker. We know the son far off from his father's house, saying "I will arise and go to my father," but we know the meaning of the two preceding Seekers in the parable (Luke xv.), the work of the Shepherd the Son of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit, the woman; and, wrought upon by these two operations, the sinner gets to the Father, but even then by the Father going out the long distance to him and lavishing upon him love and robes and honors. The stories wherever found are all one story, the sinner sought and found.

But Jesus is still on the journey to find this lost one. He must break down all impediments; He must reach her conscience. Everyone that doeth the truth cometh to the light. There must be an opening for the light, searching, disclosing. The reference to her husband brings all out. She may for an instant attempt to run to cover as Adam and Eve did, but love will call her forth until she acknowledged by her word "I perceive that Thou art a prophet," that is, the voice of God. To the first culprit it was, "Hast thou eaten?" Here it is a direct assertion and it is acknowledged in the presence of God. The prophets of old came because of the ruin of Israel, and they had to show the people their transgressions. What else could they, until God's judgment was accepted? But they could also speak for God, "I am He

that blotteth out thy sins as a thick cloud." What a true thought she had of Him who had known her all the time and sat beside her. This is God's action; this is God's voice. And is there any way to get into His presence than as sinners, our sins being our warrant for being face to face with the only One who can deal with them? It is not the quantity of one's faith but that it be in the right One; and here it is perceiving Him. He has spoken more deeply than ever man spoke to her soul. It was not condemnation nor reproach but a revelation to her. The sore has been touched that He may heal her; and the response is faith that binds her to Him forever.

Ver. 20. Is it singular that the first question of a conscience purged in the presence of Christ should be of worship? It is divine leading and moulding. What can relieve the overfull heart but worship beyond form and ceremony? And she, relieved of her burden neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain, can easily learn that in neither is the place of worship but in spirit, not in bodily exercises; and in truth, not in forms and ceremonies; God who is Spirit is to be worshiped, for such worship He seeks. She has been sought by this One and now God seeks her as a worshiper. How then about the Messiah who was to come to accomplish this? "When He shall come He will show all things." Has she not been shown already, God, then herself a sinner, the way of worship, the kindness of God, in this minister of His? Her suggestion is right. The way to God and all things is by only One, and "I that speak to thee am He!" gives the full revelation. She is in the presence of God through Christ. Have not our hearts burned within us, as the story proceeded, in fellowship with her, in fellowship with Him?

Such workmanship can never be traversed or repeated. It is perfection. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Like the

word of our God it abideth forever. Oh, the bliss of it all!

And who can intermeddle with this joy or ask any questions? The disciples returning from seeking food for Him and them can challenge neither party. God, and the sinner exposed and saved, thus forever brought together, the glorious result is sufficient answer to "What seekest thou?" or "Why talkest thou with her?" which might have risen to their lips.

And thus the wondrous work of God silencing all (ver. 28), the woman *then* left her water pot, the well from which she had not drunken, and her thirst, as well. The spring of living water is flowing to others, and she goes at once to all that knew her with the message that none but a justified one could give. "Come see a Man that told me all things that ever I did! Is not this the Christ?" Was not this, too, perfection? And has not her question given the deepest meaning to that title, "the Christ?" How faith anticipates even the cross and resurrection, the acts by which that title is made good to him! Oh, faith reaches anywhere to what God has said, for it has Him. And the city is moved by her words.

And her fine action is responded to by Christ, who declares that He too has fared and is full, but it was beautiful to let her first express her abundant satisfaction. The will of the Father was that this dupe of Satan should be snatched from his hands and brought into the holiest, forever to know the fulness of His joy. Thus we know the heart of God.

And this rich grace has overleaped the slow four months; and the happy sower who has with one sweep scattered such precious seed, "He told all I ever did!" returns that the reapers may share her joy, for her neighbors were returning with her to say "we believe because we have heard Him ourselves." Oh, if we would only always sow the seed of the word that is of itself quick and

powerful, the power of God unto salvation! In this clear exhibition of grace and truth it is manifest that He, whose work it is, is indeed the Saviour of the world. Nothing short of the exposure of sin and guilt will show the need of a Saviour, no easy going, mere sentimentalism or mere excitation of feelings. Seed was sown and sprang up quickly on soil close lined with rock beneath, but the plants withered and came to nothing. There was no depth; conscience was not reached; the hurt was healed slightly, unrighteously (Matt. xiii.), but how different here!

But, in truth, than all this there is a larger scope as in all things in this book of boundless meanings. The story from beginning to end is typical of the history that is to be of the recovery of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Jesus comes out of Judea after laboring there, and He must needs go through Samaria, the place of the lost tribes, before He reaches out to the Gentiles, the full "manifestation" which is the meaning of Galilee. And He must go back to that which sets it all forth, the spring of Jacob. It was to Him, not as Israel, but Jacob, that the promise was given of that which should unite heaven and earth, when he was lying in the lowest place, down upon the earth. And Jehovah had left promises and assurances, rich as an overflowing fountain, running down through the whole history of Israel when it was a desert to all. In the beginning he drank of the promise and all his ways of service partook of it, as this woman asserted of Jacob and this fountain.

But Samaria was the desolate land of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin, setting up altars in Dan and Bethel to keep the tribes away from worshiping at Jerusalem; and now through the ages this question lay, whether at Jerusalem or in this mountain should men worship, and this woman in her lone condition coming in the heat of the day

told by her desolation the story of Israel. Israel had had five husbands, protection given to her of Jehovah Himself first, then Moses to lead through the wilderness, Joshua to establish them in the land, the Priesthood to keep them before God, kings according to His choice to rule them under His hand, and Prophets to admonish and restore if possible. But whom had she now? Who governed Samaria? It was no husband provided by God but the faithlessness of idolatry. Her sins had separated her from Jehovah and His appointments in grace. But she is yet to cry to Him, as here, "Give me to drink!" to find her thirst forever satisfied, as Isa. liv. gives it, "Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine Husband; Jehovah of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called." And all the words of Hosea ii. 14-23 shall come true to her when He as here brings her into the wilderness to speak comfortably to her and give her the valley of Achor, that is, judgment ending in victory, for a door of hope, and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth and as in the days when she came out of the land of Egypt. And she shall call Him Ishi, that is, my Husband, and no more Baali, that is, my Lord, So all through Hosea and Jer. iii., Ezek. xvi., Zeph. iii. and elsewhere, wherein this departure from Jehovah and His drawing her back to be as at first with all the glory of fulfilled promises upon her are recited.

To her the Messiah coming shall show her all things, restoring her to worship in righteousness and making her to sow the truth that all shall know Him as the Saviour of the world, when she shall take words with her and return unto Jehovah and her iniquity shall be pardoned and her transgression be put far from her.

Ver. 43. The two days abiding in Samaria confirm the

completeness of the testimony to the whole world, and dispensationally may set forth the things of grace for the church and for the Jewish remnant, prior to the restoration of Israel to be recovered from the sickness unto death. Though He has borne witness that a prophet has no honor in his own country He goes into it and it is known, for the Galileans received Him only as attested by their own measurement of His works. His honor was to be Saviour, nothing less, and surely this was not that. Leaving, then, that which corresponds to the present testimony in the world which Samaria sets forth, He goes next to those who are "beloved for the fathers' sakes," and to restore their King (vers. 46-54), by a second sign, a coming again into Cana of Galilee, where He had made the water wine. As our attention is drawn to these two events, linked thus by the Spirit, there must be a correspondence here. If the wine was the type of the thorough joy at the ingathering of all with Israel (Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people, Deut. xxxii. 43), might we not look upon this as the fulfilment of the words that follow in Rom. xv. 12, quoted from Isa. xi. 1, 10, that "there shall be a root of Jesse and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles trust." Indeed Rom. xv. 8-12 shows: First, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, to fulfil the promises made to the fathers; Secondly, that the Gentiles are to be blessed with them; and Thirdly, that the King shall arise, for a long time away and helpless, till Israel is with Him, to establish and accomplish all these things. The nobleman (*basilikos*) may have been the house of David, for whose sake God had sworn (2 Sam. vii. 11-16) that David's throne and David's house should be established forever. The case is extremely urgent. It is not the father waiting for signs and wonders, but the people, the race; for his faith is with David in Ps. cxxxii. 11, 17, "Jehovah hath sworn

in truth unto David; He will not turn from it. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. There will I make the horn of David to bud. I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed," and also Ps. cx., lxxii. "Come down ere my child die is the urgency of faith," which is answered by, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Men have spoken of a charmed life. Here is a life that carries the charm of a divine meaning with it in all its movements and actions, full not only for the immediate occasions, but in meeting them, showing the greater glory of the Son of God.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1. "After this" ("after these things") of this gospel is probably as distinctive as "and it came to pass" is of Luke, and the absence of both from Mark. It gives one the thought of Jesus acting according to a plan and times marked out "in the volume of the book" (Ps. xl. 7) and of which He renders account in chap. xvii. And these must be and they will be, found to be of the lofty grade accordant with His nature as the Son of God, fully revealing God and reaching in their scope through all the wreck and ruin of man and through all the purposes of God through the ages fulfilling every dispensational meaning, securing the glory of God so that there shall not be one method of God that shall have been in vain, though the rehearsal of them all in the first man was an utter failure and only serving to outline God's ways in redemption. "Righteousness, sanctification and redemption constitute the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 30), of which He was the embodiment, as He was and He is the Light and the Truth.

Jerusalem had been chosen of God as His dwelling place and the Passover had been instituted by Him.

But they both had ceased to represent anything of God. His own received Him not. The "feasts of the Jews" displaced the "feasts of Jehovah" of Lev. xxiii., and their barrenness and failure of blessing are disclosed: and God's own feast outside of all systems of men, the glory of and with His Son, is brought to notice in contrast. Thus it is that Christ is often found at Jerusalem, the city of solemn assemblies at the time of these hollow mockeries. It is peculiar that at the time of the presence of the Son of God here there was not the slightest sign of idolatry nor of the "high places," but, on the contrary, all the feasts and the Sabbaths were observed in man's way. There were the priests and the sacrifices and everything which Jehovah had commanded in former years when He dwelt among them, when they would not keep them. But though Jerusalem was the place where they gathered to worship, it was man's centre, not God's. These religious things were the tokens of their rebellion (Isa. i. 10-15, Mal. i. 6-8, iii. 7-11).

Their diseases were proof of their sins and of Jehovah's displeasure. (Ex. xv. 26, Lev. xxvi. 14-26, Deut. xxviii. 21, 29.) Yet, in wrath He remembered mercy. The pool Bethesda (the house of mercy), bore witness to this, that diseases could be healed. But like the law that is good if any can keep it, this was for those who by reason of strength, could get in first, the very thing requiring strength, which the impotent have not. And there they lay, a great multitude of blind, halt, withered, waiting, and the story leaves them there, waiting. And the poor Jews were waiting, too, under the law, hoping to make out a righteousness, not knowing that it was weak through the flesh. One whose years of disease numbered those of Israel's journey to death after they had taken the law in the wilderness, told their whole condition when he said, "I have no man, when the water is troubled to put me in."

The halt and withered and blind but expressed the moral ruin of Israel.

But infinite grace is there according to the truth. Where need is there must He be; for for this cause came he forth. And he whose helplessness is confessed has all done for him in one moment and goes forth "whole," as a conqueror, carrying the badge and symbol of his bondage and impotence, his bed. It had held him and now he carries it. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." Romans v. 5 giving us God's love in the heart by the Holy Spirit, Romans xiii. assures us that love is the fulfilling of the law.

Yet the law was appointed unto life, as the pool was for blessing. That is man's idea of mercy, helping you if you help yourself. How blessed to take the ground of utter weakness, thereby learning that Christ died for the *ungodly*. And Israel, whom this man represents, from the ends of the earth shall hear the voice of the Son of God, "Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house!" And they shall go forth into their land, their house and only theirs. (Isa. xi. 11; xii., xvii. 7.) "The same day was the Sabbath;" and what joyous one for Him who gave the wholeness as well as for him who received it. We may be reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath to Israel, a day of blessing and rest, was made after Jehovah had announced Himself as their Healer (Ex. xv. 26, xvi. 5, 23), and they were to eat the bread of the wilderness without providing or cooking it, this all having been done the day before.

Vers. 10-16. So this one, like his fathers of that day, knew not the bread, Jesus Himself, who announces Him-

self as such in chap. vi., but as they called it "manna" (what is this?) so he knew not. But Moses told them it was bread, and Jesus made Himself known to him by that one word about sin, for feeding on Him would keep from hungering for aught in the world. And, as the Samaritan woman, he departed and told them who He was. But though they could let this man lie in pain for thirty-eight years without helping him, they would interfere with his joy in his Deliverer and would kill Jesus for this act of grace, really a new creation, which would bring its own Sabbath keeping, as God rested. The Healer of Israel there, how soon the real Sabbath for all! If they would have only let Him, He would have healed the whole nation. Their answer to this is that He must be slain!

Ver. 17. "But Jesus answered, "My Father worketh hitherto and I am working." This was the story of all their Sabbaths. They had never had one with God and they were content to go on with the outside show, as though there were anything in that. Their departure from God and their need had kept God working, both Father and Son, instead of resting. The shadow therefore was nothing, the substance having come. It may be well to compare Christ's reply here with what the other Evangelists record of different times and the answers concerning His actions on the Sabbath. In Matthew where He is set forth as the Son of David, as King, it is "What did David do?" etc. (Matt. xii.) In Mark (ii. 27), "the Sabbath was made for man," service; in Luke (xiii. 15), "Doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass" (the Man, mercy); but here "Father and I" perfectly in character these. Now, Christ having ceased from His labors, we who believe do enter into rest with Him. He is seated at the right hand of God and God has made us to sit in heavenly places. It is the partaking with the Father and with the Son that makes our rest complete.

The Jews talked of a Sabbath while God was kept busy for them. But they despised this offer and for this sought to kill him. He had truly shown whose Son He was by entering into work with His Father, but they knew neither the Father nor the Son.

In the days when the candle of Jehovah shone round about them and God was among them, both Sabbath breaking and the assumption of equality with God should meet with stoning; but, little sensitive for God's mind or honor, they violated both by their idolatries; and God left them, never more to return until now in the Person of His Son. But now "swept" of idolatry by the hand of God, which as a house swept soon becomes filthy again and which did so, their pretentious assumptions proving idolatry of self, and "empty" of God and "garnished" with religious ceremonials, they used what would have been righteous in the day of their espousal, against Jehovah and His Anointed. They would stone Him whose every word and action proved He was the Only Begotten Son of God. Their charge was true, "making Himself equal with God." If He was not this, the arrogance of it was blasphemy. Let it be proved and attested by words defining His life; words which defining it, stand for succeeding ages and eternity, the profoundest exposition of that profoundest fact, "God manifest in the flesh."

But now for the proofs; are they able to understand them? Why not? they are occupying the place of their fathers, to whom the word of God came, the only ones on the earth who were taken as God's people to know Him. They ought to be experts in this kind of testimony. If so they will judge. He presents His credentials before the highest earthly tribunal, nominally. Their prophets all traced Him carefully, minutely testifying beforehand what He must be. Had these, their descen-

dants, a trace of their knowledge or spirit? The proofs are manifold and of a supreme style.

First (ver. 19): "The Son of God can do nothing from Himself (chap. xvi. 13 of the Holy Spirit) as proceeding from and originated by Himself. Otherwise, there would be two wills, two Gods. Man could act in his own will apart from God, alienated from the life of God, but the Son of God could not; for Him to do otherwise than as directed by the Father would at once deny His place and relation.

Secondly (ver. 20): "The Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all the things that Himself doeth." Could any one short of God measure God's mind? Could the Father, with the infinite depth of His heart toward man send any other, and show to any other His whole purpose? Man does not know God; he is especially incapable of apprehending the love of God. The new man learns by degrees, but he had to be made like Christ and have the Holy Spirit who is God, that he might know the things of God. But the Son must necessarily be of the same mind with the Father. They must be one. "And He will shew Him greater works than these, not for His own sake but that ye may marvel." There will be a giving out of His life, a taking of it back again, a voice from out the heavens approving Him, an ascension into Heaven, a coming of the Holy Spirit to attest all His life and work and Person.

Thirdly (ver. 21): "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them—even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." Could any but God give life from the dead? All this must be given to the Son exclusively, fully, if He be the Son on earth, surely.

Fourth (ver. 22): Judgment. The Father commits all judgment unto the Son. All these things must be that the Son may be honored as the Father is honored.

Not to honor the Son thus intrusted and certified to is not to honor the Father. These then are the divine definitions of the Son of God, abstractly stated. To be such down here these things must be true of Him. Could they be less? could they be greater? And yet how true and simple the statements! Is *He* this One?

Ver. 24. Gathering all, the knowing, judging and quickening into one, He announces the fulfilment of them in Himself, with the Amen, Amen, the two immutable things. "He that heareth *My word* and believeth Him that sent me hath everlasting life and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." His work quickens; His word judges, and that is final; no fear of judgment seat, for it will be His and He has already judged the believer, who has passed out of death into life, His own! The historical announcement was, As many as received Him became children of God. His assertion is the same. The Holy Spirit attests this in Rom. viii. with this triumphant challenge of the believer: "Who is he that condemneth? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's chosen?"

What an offer was made to them! What an assurance to the saint and offer to the sinner to-day! Doubtless all the works of the believer are to be judged; the word judges them now, and awards are to be given according to works, but the fact of his salvation and eternal life is Christ's work which can never be judged. It can never be a question whether the one who believes on Him, to whom the whole power of judgment is committed, is eternally saved. That is settled upon his believing, once for all. We look for the Son of God, not judgment.

Ver. 25. "Verily, verily I say unto you the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Yes, it is going on now. The gospel to the sinner is the voice of the Son of God to the dead here

spoken of. Who will hear it? "They that hear shall live." And this is eternal life; and this is the "hour." As the Father hath life in Himself so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.

Vers. 27, 28. And having judged us, "the first fruits," He will come to judge the world, and this authority is given unto Him as the *Son of Man*, also. The hour is coming when He shall call forth those that are in their graves, some to resurrection of life because they have it in Him, and some to the resurrection of judgment because all offers are rejected. This completes the matter of quickening and of judgment. If this be His prerogative, He is equal with God. He takes to the full as pertaining to Himself the essential characteristics of the Son of God which He had defined. (Ver. 30.) He could do nothing from Himself. He could not be independent of the Father. He heard from Him and judged accordingly. Serious work was this for the hearers, His judgment being that of the Father. He sought only the will of the Father and if He testified from Himself (ver. 31) His testimony would not be true. It would be independence, rebellion, falsehood. Thus far with these profound things predicated of the Son of God and taken up by him. But now for proof from others.

And first, John who had been sent to them, bore witness (chap. i. 34), giving the token that had been given to him that this is the Son of God; and this, when they sent a deputation to him. It was not that He depended upon the testimony of men, but here was one among them heralding Him who was to give the Holy Spirit and life, and to these things Jesus referred that they might be saved. This itself was a crowning testimony for He sought not honor of them but their salvation. Surely, this is God.

A second witness was that He did what the Father did; His works were the same, with the same end. To none

other could the work of God have been safely committed.

Ver. 37. The third witness was the Father Himself. He from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But alas! they would not receive from *Him*, for they had not seen His face nor heard His voice and what He spoke to their fathers they did not have in their hearts by which they might prove Him.

Vers. 39-47. The fourth witness was the Scriptures. "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of Me and ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." Of what use were the Scriptures if the heart was estranged from the Author? Tested by all these proofs it was found that they had not the love of God in them, for Him whom He sent they would not receive. He had come in the name of His Father, on His Father's errand of love, offering life, desiring children, desiring to bring into fellowship, and they would not. Another will come in his own name, him they will receive. It is the Antichrist. Such is religious man, seeking the honor of men and not of God. How *could* they believe, thus seeking honor one of another and not that which comes from God? And yet the world is tied to this; it knows nothing else than the pride of life. Why should the children of God follow them? These professed people of God were thus thoroughly exposed; what an hour for them had they but accepted and bowed to that judgment while the Judge was with them! By every statement He had made they were proved evil and from judges had sunk to criminals, accused by Moses in whom they trusted, for Moses wrote of Him who was standing among them, and had they believed Moses they would have believed Him. Thus while He who was God and bore the heart of the Father to them, yearning that they might be saved as the Holy Spirit in a later day urged the same longing (Rom. x, 1) they were left with this tender appeal

that He would not accuse them to the Father for even now they might accuse themselves in presence of all these proofs. If He be equal with God, if He be His Son, what an opportunity, what an outflowing of grace toward them; the whole transaction between God and them brought down to them! And in this day of the Holy Spirit what a gracious and pleading message is borne to all concerning Him who gives life and judges.

But men are deceived to-day by the same thought of building up man, the improvement of the race, the forming of character, holding on to themselves as though all that men need was change of direction. Man is himself evil, a sinner in nature, utterly alienated from the life of God. He needs life, a new one. For what else did Christ come but that he might have it? He is not to be received with honors such as men pay to high officials, for they are like the men who pay the honors; but He is from above and above all and has the eternal life to give. He needs emptiness for His fulness, sinfulness for His holiness, sinners for His salvation, death for His life; and he who can make out his case as lost and helpless gets all. It is not that men should do their best by leaving off vices and reforming and pay devout respect to the name of Jesus and to religious rites, adding this to their goodness for God's acceptance. It is that they shall be as the poor man in the beginning of this chapter, indebted to Christ for everything: they shall be receivers instead of givers. Receiving honor from one another vitiates the whole idea in regard to God and Christ. We honor Him only when we are saved by Him; when we let Him do all for us as needing all; then, as saved, worshipping and rejoicing in Christ Jesus the Lord.

All the time through the centuries Israel had been told the word that was now brought to them in the Son of God and His presence showed they had never known their own

Scriptures. The more He manifested God the less they received Him. So it is to-day. The more the truth is spoken, the fewer are they that receive it. Is the popular testimony of this day that man is a lost one, a sinner, and that only through Christ's death for Him and his death in Christ can he be accepted by God? Nothing but this will stand the presence of God in judgment. This anticipates the judgment; this is the judgment-seat of Christ and in this is life.

CHAPTER VI.

Vers. 1-4. "After these things" according to the Divine ordering, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, of Tiberias. Will he show judgment to the Gentiles or seek the scattered lost ones of the Tribes? A second time He is wearied with the unbelief and self-sufficiency in Judea. Alas! He has but little better with these, for they follow Him not because of faith but because they saw the signs upon those diseased. But were they conscious of the deeper disease? By no means, else He had stayed with them. But He went up into a mountain in another atmosphere, setting forth the elevation with the Father to which He retired for refreshment of spirit. While it is thus with the world speculating concerning Him and even seeming to follow Him in their fleshly wondering way, His own find their place sitting with Him above and apart. Blessed scene of fellowship!

The Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand; shall He offer the Passover of Jehovah to them? He does in the end (vers. 53, 54); but, first, all must be tested, the inefficiency of existing things be demonstrated. And will the disciples learn this? Now having seen Jesus moving in the region of Ex. xv., xvi., God's great ordinances when He began with Israel, having seen how

He would fulfil Moses in the deep spiritual way unto the people, we are to follow the wonders of Psalm cxxxii. Thus we find the law and the prophets until John, and since that time the Kingdom of God is preached and all press against it. He feeds the poor of the people according to Ps. cxxxii. 15, and they own Him as Prophet, and desire to make Him King, which shows their ignorance, for God is the One who is to seat Him on His throne (Ps. xxxii. 17, 18, ii. 6-9). And yet it is the order marked out; the crowning following the giving of the bread. They were right as to fact but wrong as to method, as if man could make Him King according to God. It was zeal without knowledge.

But let us look for a moment at this satisfying of the poor with bread. It first of all springs from Himself. He lifted up His eyes and saw a great multitude coming unto Him, and without a word from them, as sent of God to fulfil this word of old, He immediately inquires of Philip, who, as called on the second day of chap. i. 43, represents the faithful remnant of Israel who shall be his messengers and heralds to their brethren, "Whence shall we buy bread that they may eat?" Should not he know, who had followed Jesus and heard Nathaniel's confession of Him as King of Israel and Son of God? It was to test him, and his answer tells of insufficiency, the number two hundred probably giving that meaning (Josh. vii. 21, 2 Sam. xiv. 26, Judges xvii. 4, xviii). Israel, then, could supply nothing. But Andrew, first going out to Jesus as the Lamb of God, chap. i., entering into the secret of His presence, tells of the five barley loaves, the token of grace (as witness the number five all over the Tabernacle which was Jehovah's provision in grace), the barley giving the thought of littleness that is mighty (Judges vii. 13), and the "two" fishes were sufficient though "small." These things tell us how carefully the word of

God is written. But both disciples have yet to learn that all sufficiency is of Him whom God sent. He needed not two hundred pennyworth; He took the little and made it great to supply all. They sat down; as all who are refreshed by Him are at rest in the green pastures which His love provides. And the abundance of His supply is shown by the twelve large baskets full that are gathered of the fragments. Even the dogs eat of the crumbs. It is a rich supply for the Gentile. Have we not again a prefiguring of the church and Israel and the Gentile in their places, and the full governmental authority to supply as a King shown in the twelve baskets?

The mistaken fervor of their purpose to make Him King at that time when nothing is ready but is the effervescence of a belief in Him because they saw the signs. Was this that which they had heard at Ephrata (Ephraim, fruitfulness) and found in the fields of the wood (Kirjath Jearim) in the early days of Israel when Jehovah had chosen these for the place of His rest? In due time God shall answer the prayer of His servant David and announce with His whole heart, "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell for I have desired it. . . . I will also clothe her priests with salvation and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud. I have appointed Him for Mine Anointed." But not yet are the priests clothed with salvation; the people are not ready, and the Beloved must serve to the laying down of His life to make good His anointing. Thus far the Psalm.

Vers. 15-21. "When Jesus therefore perceived that *they* would come and take Him by force and make Him King, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." He is to be with the Father in the place that He alone could occupy, as He is now withdrawn from Israel, and really for us on high, while the little company of His own

in the evening, for it is the world's night, went down to the sea. And Ps. lxxvii. 13, 19 comes into fulfilment, God's way for Him being in the sanctuary, while for them it is the sea. And even so this remnant upon whom His heart is set are to learn the deep experience of Ps. cvii. 23-30, tossed in the sea of the nations in all their tumults, by reason of a great wind, the false doctrine of a false Christ, who if it were possible would deceive these "very elect." But for their sakes the time is shortened (Matt. xxiv. 22, 24), "but five and twenty or thirty furlongs," these gracious fives with God's own three, telling the whole story. Then they see Jesus walking on the sea; "in all their afflictions He was afflicted and the angel of His presence saved them" (Isa. lxiii. 9). They were on their way to Capernaum (the city of consolation) but their comfort was nigh them though they knew Him not until His own voice assured them and they willingly received Him into the vessel, and *then* they were at the land which they desired. To such the voice of Jehovah in Isa. lix. 11-17 is this, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted. . . No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah and their righteousness is of me." And even for the saints of the present time, to whom it is given to suffer for His name's sake, being not of the world and hated by the world, all these sweet principles of consolation apply. His presence bears them through all with triumph and a joy that cannot be taken away.

Ver. 22. "The day following" would give us "one of those days" of the Son of God. It is beyond the sea, the other side, whither Jesus and His disciples have come; beyond the rude blasts of evil, when according to Isa. lix. 14, 21, "truth failing and judgment turned away

backward, justice standing afar off and truth fallen in the street and equity not able to enter, He saw there was no man and wondered there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation unto him and His righteousness, it sustained him," And now the glory of Isa. lx. 1-8 must follow, and He shall lift up His eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together; they come to Him. The abundance of the sea shall be turned unto Him. Was this a foretaste, a sending by the Spirit of these that came in boats and hailed Him as now outside the camp. "Teacher, when camest Thou here?" And it was not to receive the answer and exhortation of Isa. lv. to find all in Him instead of spending their labor for that which was not bread? How rich in all that was marked out by the Spirit for Him in the law and the prophets is all this! Truly the word was hidden in the heart of Him who was the Word. Would God, down here among men and in the scene of ruined Israel, forget or overlook all these forecastings that none but He could fulfil? And would He, His fellow, commissioned with all authority to give life, to judge and to raise up, omit the jot or tittle till all be accomplished? It shall be all done though these transactions be but the rehearsals and reminders of the day of glory.

But they are more; He is actually to offer Himself as their life and already to do the work of His Father. But this as always brings out the ignorance and wilfulness of those to whom He came.

They had wrought for the food which He supplied, coming this wearisome journey for more. Man knows not of a gift. Hence they had thought they must go after it. It is different from coming because they saw signs, but it is dishonoring the Giver and the gift, though they confessed need by coming. The young man that came to Jesus said, "What good thing can I *do*?" The lost

son said "I will say make me as a *hired servant*, paying for what I get," and these ask, "What shall we *do* that we may work the works of God?" Both sides, God and men, are the same wherever we find them. The Scriptures that tell of them is the truth. And so the answer is that which follows a like question in Acts xvi. 31, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." How prone man is to do rather than believe, not that he does do, for all would have to start from himself, and what has he in him? On a level with men about us we may draw from resources within us, but to have to do with God, how then? Here was One from God, with the thoughts, the range, the boundless meanings of God. They knew what would sustain life among men; what would give and sustain a life for God and with God? How easy it is to believe men; would they believe God in His messenger? Would they believe on Him whom He sent? It is a serious question to which everyone has to answer. And He who in all His actions ranged through the volume of the book written of Him, touching, as we have feebly followed Him, upon every path of mercy and truth, of justice and judgment, mercy and truth (Ps. lxxxix. 14) marked out for Him in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, making salient by His word and His work what had been obscure in them; in the sweet grand consciousness of how all things there were committed to Him to judge, to give life, focalizes all in this. He was the Sent One; sent to fill to the full every overture of grace and peace, every offering for sin and uncleanness; to embody and be the pathos and energy and assurance of every plea and promise from the altar and ark and mercy-seat, and the lip of judge and priest and king and prophet. To take Him was to cancel the accumulated debt of the past to God, to meet all demands pressing on them, to still the denunciations of

wrath, to blot out all offences as a thick cloud, to establish them in righteousness and holiness and everlasting joy with God; every precious thing of their scriptures theirs, every bitter thing vanished. And He was there before them. What a moment was this! Would they believe on Him?

Vers. 30, 31. Their answer is, "What sign showest Thou, then, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost *Thou* do? Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." They would recede from the very position that He had given them of not seeking Him for the sake of signs but to be fed by Him, to receive something from Him. Now, they seek a sign. Their reference and quotation alike betray them, in the former using the word "manna" (meaning "what is this?") a name always used by their fathers, of wilfulness, persistently ignoring Jehovah's word "bread" and now uttered even though they quoted the true word "bread" which they had to say because it was so written. It is notable that they of old never called it anything at all but "what is this?" except when they despised it (Num. xxi. 5), and then they called it "light bread." And Jehovah named it "manna" in Num. xi. 7, when the mixed multitude fell a lusting for the flesh pots of Egypt. What lessons for us as to our thoughts of Christ, the bread of God! In Ps. lxxviii. 24, where God is recounting the evil ways of Israel through the wilderness, He calls it "manna," but in Ps. cv. 40, where all His mercies pass in review calling for praise, it is called "bread." Again we may say, what lessons for us!

Ver. 32. But Jesus answered with the solemn sanction of "Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." It fell with the dew and its

elements were of the earth, but this bread of God is He that came down from heaven and giveth His life unto the world. And thus drawing out their request for this bread, He announces Himself as the bread of life, and he that came to Him should never hunger and he that believed on Him should never thirst. But as the bread of the wilderness of old had been given to prove them of that day whether they would not live upon the bread but upon every word of God, so was this. They had already refused Him when they had seen Him. None wanted Him. They trusted Moses; they rejoiced for a season in John's light; they trusted in the scriptures after their manner, but they would not have Him. Many will receive ideas and thoughts but they will not receive salvation; they will not acknowledge the need of that.

Meanwhile all that the Father *gives* Him will come to *Him*. And He had come down from heaven not to do His own will. Man could do that, but He could not, for men were to be brought to God and He must bring them. And thus He declared the wonderfully gracious counsels of the Father and the Son in reference to His work. They are to know this that the Father's heart might be revealed. It was the will of the Father that of all that were given Him nothing should be lost. Not to accomplish this for the Father would be to prove unworthy of the mission. What gainers we are when we listen to the revelation of the heart of God. He has wanted us for Himself; He has sent His Son to bring us. And then to make all this intelligible and beyond all demurring as to not knowing whether they are given to Him or not, He defines those given as those who believe on the Son of God. Can any mistake that? Such have eternal life, always this, nothing less; and He will raise them up at the last day. Up to this time there had been given no word of the believer's hope of being caught up;

He gives therefore the general statement that as that was the Father's will, He would accomplish it. If any believer on the Son of God doubt that he is eternally saved he is impeaching the work of Christ, for He came down from heaven on purpose to give eternal life. And if one is saved now, He must be to the end, for He says He will raise him up at the last day. It belongs to this dispensation to know that we are saved, not to hope so. It is dispensational to hope for our Lord to come and take us to Himself. These things should be clearly distinguished.

They had asked Him for the bread of which He spoke, and He answered at once, "Here it is; I came on purpose that you might have it evermore." He must according to Ps. cxxxii. feed the poor. Were they poor? Does not every instance given in this book suggest this question—"Are you willing just as you are to be dependent on Him, to be indebted to Him alone?" Well, He came to meet that. He is bound to do it, is sent for it, and it is His Father's will.

To do the will of Him that sent Him was Christ's object always. This, and not "to do good," though doing the Father's will could be nothing but good. And should not this be the purpose of the child of God now? We are not judges of what is good or of doing good; and taking that as our purpose we shall go astray. It is not high enough. It leaves *us* as judges. But His will is the only thing. And how can we get to know His will? Simply by the word of God. It will be found that much that is called doing good is not according to the word of God and is of course not His will. Nothing can take the place of the word of God. The man of God is here "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Good is not what we think such or what any company of men, however devoted, think, but what God says. The work

of God must be done in His way, just as we insist upon our servants doing our work as we direct and not according to their own judgment.

Ver. 41. "The Jews then murmured at Him because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven." And this was the answer to His rich offer of eternal life! They had quoted of the bread given from heaven, and He had come from heaven on purpose to be the supply. Alas, they were but their fathers over again! Those had said, "What is this?" These say, "Is not this Joseph's son? How is it that He says, I came down from heaven?" Heaven must prove itself and heaven did prove itself in Him, as the last chapter, as every chapter, reveals. This offer was proving them. The bread of the time of Moses was given to Israel as the redeemed people of Jehovah not in Egypt but as strangers and pilgrims. It was the food of the mighty (Ps. lxxviii. 25) to give might, strength for the wilderness till they should come to the land of fruits and of every needed thing.

They were God's mighty ones, (Num. xxiv. 8) to whom He had shown His might by leading them through the Red Sea and by whom He would show His power in all the earth. The bread of God was to sustain them as such. So Christ is given to those saved by the power of God as their food, as His own in resurrection. It is Christ as He was down here, the Second Man. Man as a sinner feeds upon the first man, his literature, his habits, his ways, but the new man must have the life of the Son of God down here in the world to be his example, his method, his way, his walk. The presenting of the life of Christ as a model for the unsaved will not do. It is delusive and false and tends to build up the old man. He is not to become mighty nor be nourished as he is but to be crucified, and the new man, risen in Christ, can grow by occupation with Christ. It ought to be simple

and clear, but there is much confusion and false teaching. It is making every man by virtue of having been born a son of God, which is utterly contrary to the word of God.

Verses 44-47 state clearly that he who comes to Christ is the one that is drawn by the Father; that all taught of God according to the prophets, Isa. lix. 21, Jer. xxxi. 34, come to Him; that being taught of God is not by seeing Him but coming to Christ; that believing on Him is coming to Him and that such as believe on Him have eternal life, a series of statements that answer well to ver. 38, that He came down from heaven for that purpose. All is in His hands then, and so the fact is re-stated, "I am that bread of life." Though their fathers did not know (Deut. viii. 3) what was given them, they did eat it, but it was not for everlasting life; indeed it was for the body only, and they died.

Ver. 50. But this is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. Bread does not give life; it sustains that already given, and so this offer of Christ as though they were His people proves them not to be such. If they could live forever, it must be as His, having His life, for their own life was but death, utter separation from God, which of course could not mean extinction of being, for they had being now and were living on away from God. Being born anew, having life in Christ, He is the sustenance of that life forever.

In ver. 54 another statement is made, that the bread that He would give was His flesh which He would give for the life of the world, which looks on to the cross. That should bring life to be for the world, and it is proclaimed in the Epistles. At the present His living was in question; could they live His life—would they take Him as a model, as Teacher?

Vers. 52-55. It was impossible. They strove among themselves with the question and understood nothing. How the appeal of Rom. x. 6 is emphasized here. "Say not in thine heart," etc. It is the wrong place for counsel, for it always raises questions unanswerable. "How can these things be?" said Nicodemus. "Who shall ascend," etc., in Romans, when Christ had already descended into the grave and ascended into heaven and the word was nigh. It is always so. The work is already and altogether done, once for all, and there is nothing to do but to take the word as given by God.

Ver. 56. But it showed their need; they must know Christ through death. They must first know Him as crucified. There is no way to God but by Christ. There is no way to Christ but by His death. We do not form acquaintance with Him in His incarnation, for He is not the kind of man we are, as sinners. How can we get to be one with Him and know Him? Only in the cross. "Except ye eat the flesh of the *Son of Man*"—for He had to be man to die—"and drink His blood, *ye have no life in you.*" Flesh and blood separated, means death, for the life is in the blood. It is the work of the cross then. These had been pressed back by the announcements of the Son of God, until their true condition was exposed. They had asked for bread which sustains a life which they had not. They must get the life first, and then as Israel passed out of Egypt protected by the blood and through the grave of the Red Sea and then ate the bread, so he that is saved by believing in Christ (crucified and risen) can live on Him ministered daily and grow thereby; and not otherwise. Let there be no mistake here. Verses 56, 57 intensify this and show that the believer is one with Christ. It is Christ in him and he in Christ, and as the living Father sent Him and He lived by the Father, "so he that eateth Me shall live by Me." It is Christ to begin

with and Christ to go on with, the life given, the life lived by Him; He is all.

Ver. 59. "These things said He in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum." Why tell us that? The synagogue was a place of man's building, not ordered by God, and with the fact that it was in Capernaum, meaning "a city of comfort," walled in in this way, would express the building up of man in his own righteousness, as full and needing nothing, having provided all things to comfort himself. It is the whole story. But what have *we* gained from this interview there?

Ver. 60. Many of the disciples; not the twelve, they thus far seem to be with Him; could not abide this. They were Jews, while here the twelve seem to represent those taken off the Jewish ground. It was a hard saying to the Jew. It meant death and therefore the passing away of all their system, of themselves, indeed. But Jesus intimates there is still another way of knowing Him, the heavenly, as in heaven. "What and if the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" It is not the time to unfold this. He has to be there for the Church and for Israel's redemption. Here is the region of spiritual truth purely. It is for those who have followed Him in His death, knowing if He died we died also. It is fellowship with Him in this as ver. 57 gives it.

But death is now as then a testing word, a hard saying. They had invited it all by acknowledging Him as Prophet, by desiring Him as King. Could they bear the light upon this subject, for He must die to be King. What if He take humanity up (the Son of Man) where He was before? In the history of Israel there was the Passover which they ate, the Bread in the wilderness and the old corn of the land after they had gone into the land. The first sets forth Christ as crucified for us and we have fellowship with His death; the second Jesus down here, our model,

whose example we follow, as saved; the third is the Risen Christ in heaven, the Son of God, whom we consider in Hebrews as at the right hand of God, chap. iii., while chap. xii invites us to consider Him down here, enduring, lest we be faint in our minds, which is the bread of heaven. In Josh. v. 10-12, all are mentioned; the Passover kept in Gilgal and yearly afterward, the manna ceasing on the morrow, for now they were in the land and therefore they ate the old corn of the land. We partake of Christ in all these ways typically. No man can come to Him except drawn of the Father, but all drawing must be to Him. God never leads any of us to trust in himself.

Vers. 66-71. The Twelve drawn to Him by such a word and yet unable to take it all in, could only see themselves cut off from everything and hang on His word. It is the believer's place. "To whom shall we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." Here was the test, just what He was. And they that have not life go away, while those that stay are drawn by the Father more deeply to know Him as the Holy One of God; and Simon Peter represents such while Judas is known by Christ as the betrayer; and he, one of the Twelve!

CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 1-9. "After these things" what? He had gone very far into the matter of death in "these things," announcing things which would necessitate this in those that would follow Him. But still all testimony had been given and the hour had come according to the Father's mind, He would remain. The Feast of Tabernacles approaching was not the time for His death, but the Passover. Hence He walked no more in Judea for the Jews sought to kill Him.

It is but the Jews' feast, but His absence or presence would alike judge it, for if all things were committed unto His hands by the Father surely the feasts of Jehovah were. All that they had, only rejected God in Him, and how could He go up to their feast? As the One faithful to God, He must stay away.

Yet the feast of Tabernacles as given by Jehovah was the expression of His pure grace leading on to the glory. Belonging distinctly to the land, on the accomplishment of all He had set His heart upon doing for them, it was peculiarly linked with the Millennial glory and is to us a type of that. It was at the Feast of Tabernacles that Solomon dedicated the temple, and the time of his reign is typical of the reign of a Greater than Solomon. Then he stood and blessed Jehovah and blessed the people, saying, "Blessed be Jehovah that hath given rest unto His people Israel according to all that He promised; there hath not failed one word of all His good promise." "And on the eighth day he sent the people away and they blessed the King and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that Jehovah had done for David His servant and for Israel His people." (1 Kings viii.) At the restoration of the Jews after their captivity (Neh. viii.) this feast was kept and Ezra read in the book of the law seven days and they made booths, so that in the literal character of it it had not been so observed since the days of Joshua. And they kept the feast seven days; and there was great gladness. And on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly according to the manner set forth in Num. xxix. 12-40. It was particularly devoted to joy in God and rehearsing His abundant mercy.

But how different now when they would kill His Son; for now it seemed to be for the praise of man! The farther the remove from God the more does man

exalt himself (Rev. iii. 16, 17). This spirit was manifest in the brothers of Christ when they urge Him to go up and show Himself, declaring that every one who has done a work seeks to be known openly. How many a religious convention shows this. It is the word of Satan in the wilderness, of Matt. iv. 6; but as then, so here, there was no "pride of life" in the Holy One, and His answer is, "I got not up yet to this feast, my time has not yet come." Oh, what a day it will be when His time shall have fully come to show Himself to the world! To this all days are looking; for this, all believing, loyal hearts are yearning.

The world loves its own; it could not hate those who acted in its spirit. But it is a sad word "world," for those whose fathers had been the chosen of Jehovah separated by grace and power unto Himself. While His own people are of the world and going on with their imitation feasts, He must abide still in Galilee of the Gentiles. There He had been acknowledged and His work accepted. Emptiness and a dying child had borne witness of His power to meet the extremity of need (chap. vi).

Vers. 10-13. Then the Spirit bears us unto the feast, whither He went alone, as it were in secret. Shall there be any found to justify this secret and meet Him as did Nicodemus or the poor man at the pool, made whole and bound to Him forever? A spell of fear had been cast over the people, fear of the Jews in Jerusalem, so that they discussed Him and judged Him as the world has been doing ever since. He is either a good man or a deceiver of the people. This is true testimony; He has accepted the title of the Son of God, has taken authority to act for God in the temple, has grasped all that is contained in "the Son of Man" and made Himself the anti-type of the brazen serpent; the fountain of centuries

in Samaria; has asserted that He is the Messiah and been hailed as "the Saviour of the world." He has assumed to be the true Sabbath, wherein God could completely rest, committing life and judgment to His hands, and has invited others to take the same rest by offering eternal life. He has proposed to fill all the counsels of God; has affirmed all the characteristics of the Son to be His distinctively and exclusively; has declared that the Father bore witness of *Him*; that Moses wrote of *Him*; that the scriptures testified of Him; that His works were according to the Father. He had given bread as Jehovah did in the wilderness in the beginning; stilled the tempest; took the place of the bread of heaven come down from heaven; talked of the Father's will as familiar with it, with principles beyond the conscience and perceptions of those that sat in the seat of Moses. By His statement He was the Passover and the old corn of the land as well as the bread. He obligated Himself to raise up at the last day all who believe on Him. He took upon Him the massive, the infinite work of taking away the sin of the world; He entered the citadel of conscience, the secret place of hope, of sorrows, of love, and asked for a confidence in Himself as the fruition, the solace, the object of all these. He must therefore be the worst, if not the best. And yet the water did become wine, the confirmed invalid at His word leaped into strength; the loaves did expand to supply a multitude. Where they took up stones against Him God was not in it as in the early days of Israel, but with Him, for if He went apart into a mountain to be alone with God, He returned to be sanctioned and confirmed in the same works of His Father, His calmness and sweetness unruffled. No one was so much alone as this man living in a solitude of pure love and beneficence, with no taint of man's thoughts and motives; and yet no one was so much not

alone, but in absolute fellowship with the Father through all the word of God, searched to its innermost exactions.

And now He comes back to that place of which, once, Jehovah said, "Here will I dwell and I will make the place of my feet glorious," to know the world that hated Him. It is as "from the womb of the morning with the dew of His youth," as to grace and peace, He comes forth. Is He good? He has said to Jehovah, Thou art my Lord. He is His servant, His representative here. "My goodness extendeth not up to Thee" (Ps. xvi.) He was not reaching up but down to the set apart ones of God that were in the earth. So He comes secretly. Was *God* there any otherwise than as hidden? The path of life is shown Him and He is walking in it.

But it was from the delight of God's presence to a scene of murmuring, of fear, of man's passions, of threats and the valuing of man. Meanwhile, so much the more must He come to vindicate the feast of Jehovah, to make it possible for the chosen ones to enjoy the spiritual import of it.

Vers. 14-31. About the midst of the feast He went up into the temple and *taught*. It was rather of Ezra's and Nehemiah's day, a day of small things, of a possible remnant here, than as appointed for the richest outburst of praise, the multiplied offerings of thanksgiving, of Num. xxix. It was, instead, teaching; not to celebrate what they had not and knew not, but to listen. He carries the mind of God in this, confessing the ruin but opening the way to individual recovery. Their marveling, "How knoweth this man letters having never been taught?" discloses their state. Was it not a time to tell of God's doings rather than man? What were the schools to that? They tell their own shame. And is there nothing like this in our own day, a turning to the learning of man rather than to the word of God established from

eternity, ever true and ever applicable and made for the simple? And is there not a recompense in their own souls who thus do in the dryness and unfruitfulness and unspirituality that must come from criticism of God's word and looking at it intellectually rather than for the faith, the conscience and the heart? Of what worth can that be to our conscience that has to pass the tribunal of our judgment, sitting as though superior or equal to it. Can God's mind that deals with sin to its very root and with questions for eternity and His own glory be measured in the same way and by the same measure and scales as the things of man? By *faith* we understand, and faith comes by hearing, and he that receives the testimony of God hath set to his seal that God is true. The heart is estranged from God and His truth is addressed to the heart. If the intellect is away from God it is because of the blindness of the heart. (Ephes. iv. 18.) This day of the Tabernacles was prostituted and denied by that spirit of exalting man by learning, and hence they were barren and thirsty rather than fruitful unto God.

Vers. 16, 17. "Having never learned?" What was it to be saying and doing what the Father gave Him? Not to have it from Himself, not to have a will in the case, but to have the Father speak from heaven that He was well pleasing to Him in all things. "My teaching is not mine but His that sent me. If anyone desires to do His will he shall know the teaching whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." Let it be tested. It was a challenge to prove by learning of God and walking with Him. They were looking to human resources; but what has man brought from thence to lift a man out of being man, estranged from God, lost, selfish, harmful? Building up man is but making man greater as a man. He speaks what is his own, from himself, only the outflow of himself and seeks his own glory. All seek their own.

He that, out of self, seeks the glory of Him that sent Him, is true. They were professing regard for Moses only because he was so far off, and they minimized his exactions received from God till they accorded with their own desires. The ten commandments had lost their force, for they forbade murder, and here they were seeking to murder Him who would lead them to God, not away from Him, in whom there was no unrighteousness.

They were exposed; the stones had scarcely dropped from their hands with which they would have killed Him for healing on the Sabbath (chap. v.) and yet in all His answer at that time how had He pled that they might be saved. He had brought the overtures of peace and of exemption from judgment. Had not circumcision taken place on the Sabbath and should not one be made every whit whole on that day? Their judgment was inconsistent and unrighteous. Moses again judged them.

Vers. 25-27. The boldness, the directness of all this startled some of those of Jerusalem and they inquired if this be not the One whom they sought to kill, thus uncovering the purpose of the Jews although the people had but just said to Him, "Thou hast a demon and art mad! Who goes about to kill Thee?" But the presence of the Son of God brings out everything, even as it does now. He is the test of all teaching, all motive, all living. Everything is either for Him or against Him. "Could it be that the rulers had come to know that this is indeed the Christ; but *we* know better," they say, "we know whence this man is, but when the Christ comes no one knows whence He is." Why, herein was a marvel, and yet at His birth the scribes could tell that He was to be born in Bethlehem, sending the magi thither. But the Holy Spirit would publish abroad the half truths that were said in secret, especially charged as He is with the

things of Christ. What are the murmurings of a crowd at a feast of their own save that they reveal that all agitation is about the One whose history can never pass out of this world, He actually making all that in the end shall be found to have had significance?

Vers. 28, 29. And this introduces Christ's words as though answering their utterances. "Ye both know me and ye know whence I am." He had told them that Bethlehem and Nazareth had no part in His recital. He had come from heaven, sent of the Father for their sakes if they would receive Him. He had not come of Himself, but He that sent Him is true and they knew not the Sender. But He knew Him because He was from Him. These were the testimonies of Christ in the temple, more and more bold as the exigencies of their case demanded the boldness of grace, all things being in His hands, their salvation depending on Him. He ever kept His errand in view; He could not act out of it nor be swerved by circumstances.

Ver. 30. But each letting out of the truth of Himself to meet the truth about them the more brought out their purpose to kill. They desired to arrest Him, but God stood in the way who had timed all His movements. What safety, what elevation here!

Ver. 31. Other hearts were revealed, for many believed on Him and said, "When the Christ cometh will He give more signs than this man hath done?" So it is not failure on His part to do what He was commissioned to do, but a determination on the part of most to resist all proofs. There is not one thing in relation to Him or His work that is difficult or obscure if there be the sense of need. That need has been fathomed, and with the confession of it comes the complete satisfaction of all for eternity. The one need of every heart is precisely what He brings.

Vers. 32, 36. Jesus had answered the questionings of the people by telling of the One from whom He came: now the Pharisees and chief priests answer them on their side by sending officers to arrest Him. Meanwhile His teaching in the temple goes on, and the warning is given that in a little while the Light would be withdrawn. How often in their history had such warnings been given and judgment followed speedily upon the professing people of God determined to do without God. He would go to Him that sent Him. The conditions in this gospel are always His coming from heaven, from God to the world and returning to Him, leaving out all matters of earthly birth or starting point or destiny; like the sunlight passing from place to place, always sunlight, always illuminating. He visited Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem and Samaria, from heaven in each case, the manifestation of God as though He had just come down. He is not speaking therefore of retiring to any earthly home but of returning to the Father. Whither He went therefore they could not come, and though they might seek Him they could not find Him. And even now the seeking for Christ in worldly circumstances, mingling Him with the world's politics and religion and social life, but betrays the worldliness of His people. He is with the Father. There, fellowship with Him can be found.

Of course all this fell upon deaf ears and proved their deafness. A Christ that came from heaven and went back they could not understand. But they made it so that He must return, for they would not have Him as the Anointed according to God, to reign over them. To-day the tone of things is the reverse; they will not have Christ in heaven drawing all to Him there and speedily coming to receive such unto Himself, but insist upon making an earthly kingdom, converting the world now, and hence dragging down the church to earth.

And now "in the last day, the eighth, the great day of the feast, which ought to have been a solemn assembly in honor of all God had done, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." In the middle of the feast He had said, "If anyone desire to do the will of God"—and some believed on Him with their mind on His works; but now it is "If anyone thirst." It was a dry and thirsty land where no water was. But the Rock is provided by God, "Let him come unto me!" The Rock would be smitten; *He* would cry, "I thirst," to make good His offer here. Truth and grace are manifested; the Jewish things are being blotted out and He is to take the place of everything. Besides there is the power of the Holy Spirit which they who believe on Him should receive when He should be exalted to the right hand of God. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." There may be a reference to the rock which Moses smote and out from which rivers of water flowed, and also to Zech. xiv. 8 when living waters shall flow out of Jerusalem. Thirsting, we receive from Him everything, and then there is the flowing forth from the Holy Spirit in us, of blessing and refreshing to others. (1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.) This brings us into resurrection ground, which is shadowed forth in "the eighth day." And there we stand.

In chap. iii. it was the Holy Spirit giving a new nature; in chap. iv. the Holy Spirit giving the power of worship; in this chapter the Holy Spirit within us flowing out as rivers, the result of Christ being in the glory.

Vers. 40-52. The record gives us the effect of these words on the hearers, because the purpose of Christ's words is that they might believe. Some say He is the prophet, the One of Moses who should be raised up; others, that He is the Christ. These are the fruit of His

visit to the feast and the cause of it. Others show their utter ignorance by their objections, but no one yet lays hands on Him. Even the officers return to the chief priests without Him. Instead of arresting Him their own minds were arrested by His words, and they attest that never man spake like this Man. It may be these were trophies of His grace for the sneer and intimation of the Pharisees. It holds good that he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. So this chapter bears its fruit of His testimony. Other things are to be shown and other souls redeemed, so they could not yet lay hands on Him. It was needful that Nicodemus should utter his mild protest, really convicting the leaders of injustice. It was needful to show the pride of man as well as his slavery, that those rulers should ask, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" This shows, too, that they knew the meaning of the word "believe on Him," and knowing not Christ they come under a graver judgment than those whom they pronounced accursed as knowing not the law. It shows how a stultified conscience was satisfied with knowing the law and in this they rested (Rom. ii. 17). What a contrast in these states of mind! And so the chapter leaves them. Each one goes to his own house, these away from Christ and having no fellowship with His thoughts or doings and not coming to Him. He therefore goes up to His place in this book unto the mountain, characteristic of His elevation "above all" and a stranger here.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vers. 1-11. But He is ready to come down in grace. And so, early in the morning, He is found in the temple, teaching the people. And now, as in all these chapters,

there is shown a special connection between the incidents that introduce them and the teaching that follows; so it is here. It had been their religious observances heretofore; now it is their apparent care for the law of Moses. They had said, "This people that knows not the law is accursed?" Can *they* escape the curse? Do they care enough for it to be subject to it? He lets them have the force of it upon themselves by a single sentence, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." No one stayed to cast it. He that had most reputation to preserve and most sin to hide went out first, followed by each in the order of his age! She is to be stoned; "all right; let it be done by you." Is He by writing on the ground fastening her sin on the mould He took to bear it, that is, His being made flesh? In chap. ix. the clay for the eyes would indicate this; why not here? It is peculiar that He should thus stoop and write upon the ground save that Himself stooped by emptying Himself and humbling Himself in being made man and taking the death of the cross, there bearing the sins He remits. In Jer. xvii. 13, we read, "They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters." This tells of the righteousness of the Jews this written, and ephemeral, to be met by Christ coming down to take on Him the body prepared for Him. The two thoughts may be found here.

In looking at these incidents of Scripture, we need not ask if the objects of the grace act in the intelligence of the story. It is enough for us that here a sinner is exposed in the presence of Him who came to meet sin and put it away. Whoever takes the place of this woman meets the word that clears of condemnation, just as the publicans and sinners with whom Christ eats, in Luke xv., set forth this, that if one takes the place of the sinner and

the outcast, he is at once received. So with the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver. There is no intelligence of their condition, yet they set forth that which, if one take, it is repentance. To make it clear, one might ask, "Are you as sinful as this woman, as badly lost as that sheep or that piece of silver?"

But it may set forth the blessing for Israel, who surely has been taken in this very act as shown in this familiar figure in the prophets, and when she shall stand exposed, all confessed, she shall find her iniquities put away by Him who was wounded for her transgressions and who bore the chastisement of her peace. It is an instructive story, baffling and putting to shame the legality of her accusers. Had they remained and stood confessedly incapable of casting the stones, they, too, would have had the same word of "no condemnation" spoken to them.

And this simple story of the sinner purged justifies its introduction here in spite of all objections from literary critics. As well feel jealous for the honor of Christ bearing our sins and being made sin for us, as though it were allowing uncleanness or evil of any kind. It is the opposite. Were man to treat a sinner thus it would be conniving at evil, but for Him who died for it, it is the needed opening of the subject of this section, the Light of the world. And the "early morning" hour introduces the light.

But what a gleam and glow of light were here, making manifest what they were. The law had been dulled in its edge by them till they had become the greatest of transgressors. He touches it and its sharpness of edge is restored; and they felt it. Instead of taking Him by their guile they were convicted in their own consciences while they failed to convict Him of either indifference to the law or hardness. Grace reigning through righteousness establishes the law; and the cross shall demonstrate the righteousness of this act.

Ver. 12. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." This woman had walked into the presence of light, then no more darkness henceforth for her; the accusers had walked out into the darkness, concealing their sins. And their ignorance was exposed in regard to Him. Did He bear witness concerning Himself in saying what He was? Those who passed out bore witness to the power of the light by passing out; they hated the light.

Vers. 14-18. How should He do but assert what He was, as He was sent for that purpose. It was but bearing testimony of the Father and for Him. He knew whence He came and whither He went, but they, Pharisees, knew nothing. They judged after the flesh. Would it do for a man such as they to speak of being the light? He was not judging man but announcing according to another standard, intercourse and intimacy with the Father. He was not alone, though infinitely above their level, for the Father was one with Him. Their own law asserted that the testimony of two witnesses was true. Could there be any others competent to bear witness but the One who sent Him, and Himself, as sent, performing His work? They knew neither Him nor the Father. They could receive nothing from Him that they might join in this testimony. They had no spiritual perceptions; they knew not whence nor whither in regard to Him, and could not come whither He went. He was now in the temple, the place where of old God dwelt, and there He was manifesting God again in the treasury where nothing was laid up for God. Yet so great was the light that no man could lay hands on Him. God would withdraw the light when His hour should arrive. They could not quench it.

They should die in their sins, Himself and His words

being rejected. All was over. They were from beneath; He from above. What a wide separation, now fully demonstrated, His word being the test; and by this they should be judged in the last day, dying in their sins if they believed not all that He was. They had asked whither He would go, ignoring the Father of whom He spoke and His return to Him, and He had answered them. Now they ask (ver. 35), "Who art Thou?" and He answered, "First of all (absolutely) that which I am speaking to you." I am showing the light, I *am* the light; I am declaring the truth; I *am* the truth. Could other lips have spoken such a word? Of none other on earth could it be spoken. The child of God may be light in the Lord but he is not the light; he may speak the truth, but he is not the truth. He is nothing apart from the Lord who condescends to speak and act through him. What would we be if He were not all this, the very thing of which He talked? God, in sending Him, sent all He himself is. He has but partially declared the things to be told, for they could not bear the judgment of these things, for the words of light must judge. But He was true who sent Him, and the truth must be told. As the light would increase they would be more exposed in enmity to God, because man is man. But they understood not these things.

Ver. 28. His death would bring all out and they then should know that He was the Son of Man, a name of judgment here, for in every case it was associated with death. His death is the death of man forever disallowed before God, whose will He was doing in taking that death. Besides He that sent Him was with Him, in all things with Him, He doing always those things that pleased Him. Thus their darkness served as the background for the greater outbursting of the light. Do our hearts follow all this?

Vers. 31, 32. These words affected many, for they believed on Him, and to these He said, "If ye continue in my word ye shall be my true disciples," real representatives of Him, not simply saved but living His life. His word was His own life, and receiving it continually is the only way of growth. Then they would be free indeed, for all life apart from Him and His life is bondage to man, to Satan, to our own desires. Life with Him is liberty to go on with God in joy, knowing the truth, as is said elsewhere (Col. i. 9, 10) "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might *walk* worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and *increasing in the knowledge of God.*"

Vers. 33-37. But this raised the clamor from those around Him. "We are Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man!" Were they not the servants of sin? "His servants ye are to whom ye render obedience". (Rom. vi. 16.) His word is everything and it shows them slaves. His letting out the law upon them (ver. 17) had demonstrated that: and they left the house. The servant abides not in the house forever. Has he the freedom of the house as a child? Why could they not stay in His presence, sons with the Son of God, if they were such? Like stays with like, has fellowship with like. Here was the Son of God to make them free like Himself, free indeed. While the seed of Abraham, they were children of the devil, doing his works, seeking to kill Him who was the Son of God, because of His Word which had no place in them.

Vers. 38-42. And yet they repudiate this and say, "Abraham is our Father." How unlike Him were they, seeking to kill Him, which Abraham did not. In the knowledge and confidence of His oneness with God He speaks thus. Indeed He may have been one

of the three angels that Abraham entertained unawares, that tarried behind to impart His mind to Abraham as His friend. How thorough the falling away from all that, from being called the friend of God to malignant enemies! And if they had been the children of Abraham, they would have ministered to Him. So with a greater presumption they claim God as their Father! And yet they would stone Him for asserting this! Yet He was a descendant of Abraham, as they were. "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of Him." So they would have loved God's own Son. How clear these definitions, but this is the clear shining of the light.

Vers. 43-47. Why did they not understand His speech if they were children of God, for He spoke the language of the Father, told out what was told Him. Because they could not hear His word. They were children in whom was no faith; with no heart for God, no ear for His word, no desire to know His will, no standard by which to judge that which was divine. His speech was that of a foreigner; it communicated nothing. They were walking according to their own lusts, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were, by nature, children of wrath, "even as the Gentiles who were acting according to this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the devil (Ephes. ii. 2, 3). Rejecting grace and truth, they were led by him who was a murderer from the beginning and a liar in whom there is no truth. Christ, the Truth, telling and acting out what it was, they scorned; the devil acting out what he was, the liar, they believed. Alas! it is the world lying in the wicked one.

And because He who came from God with God's message told them the truth, they believed not. Charging Him with Sabbath breaking and blasphemy, which of them convicted Him? What was *their* Sabbath as a

test or *their* God as a criterion? He that is of God hears God's words; and not hearing was the demonstration that they were not of God. What a shaft of light, clean cut and incisive! And these principles are axioms and for this day, when that which is really of the Christ of God is ignored as antiquated. Development, evolution, progress in man springing from himself, have blinded and stupefied men to their need, and He that was given to meet man's deepest need, his sin and his sins, is rejected. "Whosoever transgresses (i. e., develops, the idea of man's culture,) and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ, has not God." (2 John 9.)

Vers. 48-50. The answer to this, "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a demon," but shows the truth of it. They saw no honoring of the Father in it all. They could not understand that to announce Himself as God sent Him was seeking the glory of Him who sent Him, and not His own. They could not see that, panoplied with love and righteousness, He was hiding Himself while being revealed, the very essence of the truth of God, who seeks and judges. Oh, woeful condition, exposed, without yielding; convicted, yet unbroken!

Ver. 51. "Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." The ignorance and obduracy of His hearers and judges must not hinder Him from telling all the truth, that which none other can or dare utter, and which must go out to the world as the way of life. In Him was life; He gave eternal life. His word was life, sustaining life before and according to God. Joining to God forever, there could be no death, which means separation from God. The body may die by the spirit leaving it, for the body without the spirit is dead. But the keeper of Christ's sayings can never be without God, in the world or in eternity. It is eternal life to know Him and Jesus Christ whom He

sent. It is not death to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

But they, from beneath, could not take in such grand truth as this. There was no capacity for it. Hence death to them meant physical decease, and they could only answer, "Now we know Thou hast a demon," as if Satan who brought in death could ever deny it and would ever teach of life eternal. They instance Abraham and the prophets whom Christ said all live unto God, for "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Matt. xxii. 32.) Their tossing about through the sea of ignorance is pitiful. But it is so always with the heart away from God; "the foolish heart is darkened." They ask, "Art Thou greater than our father Abraham and the prophets?" "Greater" is here used as in 1 Cor. xiii. 13, "the greater of these is love" with reference to duration; love shall endure forever though faith and hope fall off when we reach heaven. So here it is greater in age, reaching back beyond Abraham. They had asked a question that seemed absurd, a question according to their limitation, as though He were stretching out into things impossible. Whom makest Thou Thyself? He could not make anything of Himself or He would have been like them, like man; His honor would be nothing, for it would be independent of God. Angels, in leaving their principality, were making something of themselves. Man was asked to make himself something by Satan, and He yielded, but it was sin. But the Father honored the Son and they said He was their God, not knowing Him in any element of His nature. For Christ to assert He knew Him not would be to lie, for He had never turned from Him as Satan did, as man did; He knew Him. All that He was doing was but the expression of the Father's heart and mind and counsels. To say He knew Him not would be to deny all that He had

done and be a liar. The Father had given Him power to quicken, to judge all things, indeed. How could He put Himself on a level with them and say He did not know Him? Were all these works of His ignoring the Father?

Vers. 56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day (of glory); and he saw it and was glad." They little expected such lofty, infinite answers as these, reaching into divine methods and times and ways. It was a startling assertion, simple and natural, to be followed by one more startling on their inquiry, Hast Thou seen Abraham, being not yet fifty years of age? He had not said that but that Abraham's faith had seen Him. "Verily, verily I say unto you before Abraham was I am!" He that created all things could say that. He that was in the beginning, God over all, was but uttering the natural thing of His existence; His life always is, in eternity past, in eternity future. If we have the truth of Christ, we know He is God; and this is our joy and security. Children of Abraham indeed! Would they rejoice in Him as did Abraham?

Convicted at every point, answered into madness by the truth, they had but the one reply, they took up stones to stone Him. Turned upon by their full malice He passed by.

CHAPTER IX.

It is still Jesus the Son of God, the Light of the world, rejected, here in His *work*, as in the former chapter in His *word*.

In thorough hatred of Him they took up stones to cast at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple (their house is left unto them desolate), going through the midst of them and so passed by. What

a telling out of everything in a few words; the physical inability to see Him but expressive of the deeper spiritual blindness and insensibility of heart that did not know Him as He went through the midst of them. "And He passed by." It is a sad record. Grace scorned must leave for other objects. And soon an object is found. The light of the sun passes over the whole earth, leaving one place for another. Would they use the light while it lasted? They did not, and it passed away.

Vers. 1-8. "As He passed by He saw a man that was blind from his birth." It is the picture of man, not merely guilty, as in the instance in the last chapter, and there not condemned when exposed in the presence of God in the light; but blind from his birth, lost; and thus, sought out by grace, for the blind man solicited nothing of healing. It was not "Have mercy on me thou Son of David." Jesus is more than that here and He must act as God and at the bidding of the Father. Instead of the man looking to Christ, it is Christ looking on him. This is to be noted in this gospel. Who, in any of the stories of love and blessing, have asked? The Asker has always been the Doer, the One *sent* to do for God, who came down from heaven to do the will of the Father. This is delightful to consider.

But, first, man's legal thoughts of this blindness must be disposed of. Did he or his parents sin that he was born blind? It were easy to say that he or they deserved it all. But grace sees it only as the occasion for the display of itself, to "work the works of God." Not to judge but to save had He come, and to give His life a ransom. Does one get the thought that the Holy Spirit is charging against us in Ephes. ii. 1, that we were dead in trespasses and sins, or only stating the lost condition, that He may say also "When we were dead He quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together with

Him and made us sit together in the heavenlies, that in the ages to come He might show the *exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus; for by grace we are saved?"

He must work the works of God while it was day. None but God can make one see who was born blind; it was not to improve or help eyes, to strengthen sight, to mend man. There never had been any sight. This was wholly outside of man's resources, but the Son has the Father's work committed to Him to do. Thus we see the Son working and the Father sending. They are one in grace towards man. And while He was present, it was "day" and the "light" was shining; it was the time to work, for the night would come when none could work. It had ceased long ago to be a question of man's working, for that had brought the ruin. The man was blind; was born so; it was then the opportunity to show God. Power to see must be given.

The method of doing His work is important and hence it is told in its particulars. He made clay by spitting upon the ground and anointed the eyes of the blind man. Could He not have spoken a word and given sight? Had He not done it? Yes, but He was to show the work of God. "In this was manifested the love of God to us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." (1 John iv. 9.) How did He come into the world? As a spirit or an angel hovering over it? Or through prophets announcing and proclaiming, or by priesthood or by law? All had been tried and they were of God. Now it is God manifest in the flesh: "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The clay, the dust, of which man was formed, is the clothing of the Seed of the woman, the virgin, the Seed of David, of Abraham, a veritable man, "Whom we have seen with our eyes, whom we have looked upon

and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life," to deny whom as come and coming in the flesh is the spirit of antichrist (1 John iv.3), this is He; He must be that. So then the writing on the ground of the previous chapter, has seen our sins written on Him, borne by Him, and therefore, no condemnation, and therefore, peace.

But that is not enough. To do this might seem only Himself and of Himself. Did He do it thus? No; the man must go to the pool of Siloam (sent). Water signifies the word of God. And the word assures us that all is of God; He *sent* His Son. The sweet word of the gospel in Rom. x. 9, bears testimony of this. Confession with the mouth that Jesus is Lord, that is, that He must be man for death, and be raised from the dead to be Lord, thus following Him by the confession of the necessity of this, of His death for us, must be accompanied by believing with the heart, the only believing faculty in scripture, that *God* raised Him from the dead. The emphasis is upon "God." If He did not send Him to do this work, of what avail is it for God? Christ has wrought for one party (man) by becoming man and dying His death; now what of the other party (God)? It is complete in these two things. If the need is to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, that is, to know Him as dying for us, the need for perfect peace, for seeing with God is to know that the Father sent the Son. What emphasis we have found laid on the sending all the way through. He was *made* flesh; God gave His only begotten Son; He came down from heaven not to do His own will *but the will of Him that sent Him*. Having this we are with this man who "came seeing." We are in the light of God with our eyes open.

How this action holds with the repeated assertions in chap. viii. They are one: He is the Light; and this is the doctrine of the Christ. Men stumble at the Word

made flesh and will not receive Him as God, as though His giving Himself for them robs Him of all He was. But the word settles all this; in Heb. i. after He purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, and then He is addressed as God, ver. 8.

This healing, setting forth these things, raises questions at once, as this truth has, ever since. The blessing or doom of everyone hangs upon the reception of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. "By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself whether they be things on earth or things in heaven" is God's purpose. "We will not have this man to reign over us" is the response of man's wilfulness. The proofs of what He is, all are positive and perfect. Only a Divine Person could act as He did. But man has been found dead in the very faculty that would take hold of these proofs. He is "blind from his birth." And not until he receives sight can he look upon Him as the Son of God who is, Himself, the Light.

In a special way the blind beggar displays Israel. One of the most prominent figures in the prophets in regard to the moral condition of this people is blindness. In Deut. xxviii. 29, among the curses that should come upon them blindness is named in this pitiful way, "Thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness." All the way in their history in the full blaze of light from God they groped. Isa. xlii. bears testimony to the fact, "Who is so blind as my servant?" (Ver. 19.) Israel was the servant of Jehovah, but here Christ is looked at as the servant, taking the place of Israel, and His work (ver. 6) is to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. And in ver. 16 He says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not." Thus He responds heartily, and in this scene He is working according to that word.

In Ps. cxlvi. we find the path of their Faithful One marked out just as we have been following it in this wonderful book. Verses 3 and 4 tell of the failure of the princes, just what Israel was to be in the earth, and verses 5 and 6 point to the perfection of His work in whom they shall hope. 1. He made heaven and earth (John i. 2). 2. He giveth food to the hungry (our chapter vi.), looseth the prisoners (chaps. iv., v., viii.), opens the eyes of the blind (chap. ix.). Just as the woman of chap. viii. stands for Israel, charged with adulterous conduct all the way through the prophets, to be purged from all through Christ taking her sins upon Himself, so the blind one of this chapter gives the ruined condition of the nation, to have sight given to her by the same One becoming Man according to God's purpose. Then the foolish people that have eyes and see not (Jer. v. 21) shall see the King in His beauty (Isa. xxxiii. 17), the blindness which is in part (Rom. xi.), that has happened to them being forever removed. Surely the Father loveth the Son and hath committed all things into His hands. In these wondrous rehearsals of His work we learn His intimate familiarity with the whole work to be performed and the manner of it. We might say He is nothing but a copyist; He is only doing what was long ago marked out in Moses and the Psalms and the Prophets. That the full glory was not brought out in results, taking in the whole nation instead of only individual cases, was their fault. They would not receive Him although to do so meant all the riches of God's heart for them. He was "drinking of the brook in the way" (Ps. cx. 7), the Holy Spirit refreshing Him with the word.

But first, the further testing of religious man, by this new action and manifestation of the work of God must be shown. The thoughts of many hearts are to be revealed, for He is a sign that everywhere is spoken against

(Luke ii. 34, 35). The inquisition at first takes the form of doubting whether the man that came seeing is the same that sat and begged. (Poor Israel, instead of being a prince and leader of the nations, nothing but a beggar and blind!) But he at once settled that; then, how were his eyes opened? And this is answered, and then, where is He that did it? And this the man could not answer. He is leading the blind by a way he knows not. To know Him and His place he must have a further revelation; he but knew what was done unto him, and concerning the clay and the pool. These could not be gainsaid nor taken away from him.

The Pharisees must inspect the matter, but the leaders are struck dumb, except to find fault with Him and say that He could not be of God because He kept not their Sabbath day. But rest must follow work and here a work was done before Jesus could rest and the man with Him. God's Sabbath must be with His people and not either apart from the other. If Israel has sat begging through the centuries of blindness instead of blessing others, how about the Sabbath without the blessing? For we read that God blessed the seventh day. Was blessing sitting a mendicant in unmitigated darkness? The Pharisees may take it up and blunder and expose their blindness all the way through, to be rebuked by the simplicity and positiveness of him who has known the grace of God. They themselves were used but to bring out more confidently his faith and confession, this manifesting the works of God. And though that faith went no farther than that Jesus was a prophet, he clung to that and took his place as a disciple in the hour of His rejection, to learn more and to bring forth from his treasure, already, "things new and old." He knew that a prophet represented God and that the finger of God had touched his sightless eyeballs and His voice had sounded as in the

beginning "let light be" and "light was." And he might even now say with the Shulamite in Solomon's Song vii. 13 "At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for Thee, O my beloved!" Surely so; and he will directly bring them to His feet as a worshiper. How the presence of the light illuminates all scriptures, bringing into prominence and meaning, as the circling Alps are brought out from blackness and night by the rising sun, catching the smile of greeting that passes round the world! There is no meaning to all the word, but Christ Jesus the Lord, Son of God, the glory of God! It is a marvelous light even in the beginning of its rays, reflected by this assured one, but it shall shine more and more unto the perfect day when the opened eyes shall be adjusted to all glories.

Many things are disclosed of the state of those who called themselves God's people; the commanding place assumed by the Pharisees; the fear of them in the minds of the people; the thoroughness of their opposition to Christ that any confessing Him should be cast out of the synagogue; and their pretense to honor God at the expense of His Son who was doing His will. He is not allowed to be the author of His own work. Alas! the view is held to this day.

The opposition of these enemies of God and of His Son serves to emphasize the statement of how the healing came, twice by the man healed as well as the first history of it. So that the Holy Spirit would give it divine prominence, three times mentioned. And it is the important thing, as especially of God and according to all the need. And another important principle is being healed makes the disciple. "Will ye also be His disciples?" would suggest their blindness and beggary, for they had not life and they would not receive Him whom God had sent, preferring to be the disciples of Moses, whose they were

not, for He pointed to Christ, and had they been they would have confessed their condition and then would have been healed and disciples of Christ.

We see how the grace that brings the salvation teaches, in these marks of growth in this dear man, for he can bring forth copiously now from the scriptures, while the Pharisees are deaf and dumb in regard to God's word. What a ringing word is this—"Why herein is a marvellous thing that ye know not whence He is and yet He had opened my eyes! Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth. If this man were not of God He could do nothing." It is wondrous illumination. The work is well done as was that on the woman of chap. iv. But this growth and this testimony cost; for "they cast him out;" only, however, that he may find himself in the presence of Him who was cast out before him and who thus goes before His own sheep whom He puts forth, for it was for his sake that He was cast out. And there (vers. 35-38) learning more fully who this is whom he has confessed, according to his light, his full soul adores and worships Him as the Son of God and Lord, in whom he now believes. What a day for him and what a joy for his Lord!

Vers. 39-41. But this scene convicts the others, and He who came not for judging really judges the whole world "that they who see not may see and they who see might be made blind." If they had only judged their own condition now that light has come into the world; if they had only said, "we are blind also;" if they had seen their condition in this poor beggar's former one, they might have rejoiced in the Light as he did; but they refused to take their true place and their sin, remained. How is it to-day? How is it with the reader?

CHAPTER X.

This chapter continues the subject opened by the incident of the last chapter, and shows that Jesus has approved Himself fully according to God. Not only had He acted in faithfulness as apart from man, but in fellowship with the heart of the Father towards man, as the true Shepherd He was in the bosom of the Father.

There seems to be a pause and something of a retrospect, a closing up of the work of invitation, the offer of Himself among the Jews. This will be more positively seen in chap. xii., but here there seems to be a gathering up of what He was and what He had done. He has been presenting Himself according to the immense need of man and the need and purpose of God to have children, with some sample results. In chap. iii. Nicodemus learns about being born anew, of having eternal life. In chap. iv. the woman of Samaria is brought out of everything earthly to be linked with Him as a worshiper. In chap. v. it is the man at the pool being made whole and then associated with Christ. In chap. vi. those who have already believed are first cast on Him for food and then told of Himself as their food, and some believe. In chap. vii. the thirsty are to be refreshed by Him and have rivers of water flowing from them; and many said He was a prophet, and Nicodemus seems to be led along still farther. In chap. viii. it is guilt put away and no more to sin in the case of the woman brought by the Pharisees; but she is with Him, uncondemned and in the light. In chap. ix. it is the blind beggar joined with Him, of whom he had spoken so boldly. They are all drawn to Him to draw everything from Him. They come into His company apart from Judaism which had done nothing for them. This chapter explains this and tells what they are, either literally or representatively. Having taken

them out He must be their Shepherd as He was their Saviour.

What were His credentials? That He had not "climbed up some other way" into the fold. There had been false shepherds, plenty of them. Jeremiah xxiii. and Ezek. xxxiv. tell of such with many a word of reproach and threats of judgment, for Jehovah's portion is His people. The sheep may have been bad but the shepherds failed to go to them according to God. God's grand reserve and resource was His own and only Son. In Him all prophecies and ceremonials centered, as all rays of light proceed from and are traced back to the sun. Time, place, circumstances of His birth, peculiar condition of His mother and family line were all according to the word which had gone before. From His advent until the present each word of the Scriptures was literally fulfilled in Him.

1. He had entered into the divine method of grace according to righteousness, maintaining the holiness of God, yet opening out a love that was rich beyond all thought. This avowal does not come in the other gospels, as the fulness was not told by Him as Son of David nor as Son of Man nor as the Servant, perfect as He was in all these, thoroughly exhausting the meaning of these relations and titles in His life; but He where He is seen as the *Son* of God the *Word*. This righteousness and grace then was the door. It was God's way and He entered thus. The chief and robber think of themselves; He thought of the sheep. Grace empties itself. What a new principle as seen down here in this One, having a full supply to pour out on others! This was entering in by the door.

2. To such not only the prophets gave witness but they who had a revelation from God, as Simeon and Anna in His early days and John the Baptist at the

opening of His ministry. These, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, were prepared to open to Him. Such were the "porter."

3. "And the sheep hear His voice." He became man that they should. He spoke the word of God that they might know. Indeed, He was God speaking the word from the man's lips, for no man had seen God at any time. What He does for them is what they need, and they know their need by what He is and what He has done. He has measured it. And the needy ones must recognize, for faith, for conscience, for heart, that what He offers meets all, that it is just what they want.

4. He calls them by name. He addressed Simon by His new name as He does all who belong to Him. He knew Nathaniel under the figtree after He had called Philip. He had named His own for Himself and for the Father.

5. He goes before them. There was not an element of the false religion of the day of which He was not outside; hated, for there was no fellowship; sought after to be killed, for He rebuked it throughout. And these with Him were made free, were brought to God, had eternal life. And they know His voice but not the voice of the stranger. How foreign to all that the soul wants was all the garniture of the Judaism of that day. It was giving a stone for bread, a scorpion for a fish, "singing songs to a heavy heart" (Prov. xxv. 20). There was nothing in the way of light and love, of righteousness and grace; it was the voice of the stranger.

Surely these credentials will accredit Him. All the way is ordered of God, working in souls as either precursors or objects of His call. Each sentence of this parable is emphatic. It is as in chapter v. defining, there the Son of God, here the true Shepherd. The language of love, of interest in them, the heart of the One who owns

them is the attraction, and there is no attraction in others. The healed beggar exemplifies this. From the hour he had been met in grace he ceased hearing other voices; they had nothing for him; they were the voices of strangers. And he was led out of the Jewish fold, to be with the true Shepherd forever.

Ver. 6. "This parable spake Jesus unto them but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them." This just defines a parable. It is not a story to illustrate, to make clear, a truth, but rather the opposite. It is a truth concealed, put into a nutshell to be broken open for those who have a mind for the truth, concealed from all others. Yet left among them, "that seeing they might see and not understand." And so it was.

Ver. 7. And now the Lord tells of Himself as the "door," not of the sheepfold but of the sheep. He had entered into the Jewish fold by the door and had taken out His sheep. How had they become sheep? "Verily, verily I say unto you, *I* am the door of the sheep. (Ver. 8.) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the *sheep* did not hear them."

Ver. 9 answers the question as to how they became sheep. "I am the door; by me if any man enter *he shall be saved*." A saved one is a sheep. As in Matt. xiii. a kingdom is spoken of on a new ground, that of the word of God sown, so here it is a new people in a new way, entering by Him instead of being found there in either the kingdom or the fold. "By *Me*" settles that. Henceforth it is only in Him. As He came in the way of righteousness and grace, the door, so now Himself is the expression of these principles; grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; that is, through Him as having died and risen.

It is the simplicity of what is offered in His finished work, reconciling unto God through faith in Him.

Moreover, there is liberty; in this new ground, in Him "They shall go in and out." The former way was to be under the law, but a voice controls now and not a wall to keep the sheep within bounds. The range is as wide as His love that enfolds them. It is singular that this is what was proposed to Israel by Jehovah in *Exod. xix. 5*, "If ye will hear my voice." He had saved them out of the hand of Pharaoh and the Egyptians and had borne them on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself, so He would be among them to instruct and correct as occasion required, His voice controlling. But they evidently wearied of His presence and took the law, a series of requirements; as though a family of children would rather have their father hang up a list of rules, rigid and unalterable and then be away from them, instead of His own loving voice. And have not God's people acted in that way since? "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (*Gal. iv. 1.*)

Then, third, "they shall find pasture." He shepherds all that are His; making them lie down in green pastures, Himself becomes their food. This is by the word that is ministered to them, filled with the things of Christ. What more is wanted? In contrast with the thief that comes to destroy, He came that they might have life, that which the saints of old possessed through Him in whom always is life. But now the Christian blessing is to have it more abundantly, life in resurrection, in the New Man. And this belongs to us as in Him.

Again in *ver. 10*, He is the Good Shepherd, giving His life for the sheep. We become His sheep by being saved by Him and this through His life being laid down for us. It is not here in contrast with the robber, giving life instead of destroying; but the shepherd standing in

front of the danger and taking death in contrast with "the hireling" whose own the sheep are not, who seeth the wolf coming and fleeth; and this he does because he is an hireling. False teachers are compared to wolves in sheep's clothing. And it we are kept by Christ and in His companionship we shall be preserved from all the evil things that have been adopted from Judaism and heathenism and rationalism. At present all forms of evil seem to be entering like packs of wolves among the children of God. Besides legality, ritualism and worldliness, there are the denial of the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, thereby snatching away all that we have to tell us of God and of Christ, then the assertion that all men are children of God, thereby denying the need and efficacy of the death of Christ, besides many of the theories of the day, all of which would lead us away from Christ. What are the remedies against all? Two: the Person of Christ as the Son of God and the work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection; Christ only and always; Christ as set forth by the Holy Spirit in the word of God.

Vers. 14, 15. "I am the Good Shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine, even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." Wondrous intimacy! The knowledge existing between the Father and the Son is the pattern of that between the Shepherd and His sheep. This is one style of blessing with the "life more abundantly," the resurrection life in Him which we have; and intimates what is so richly unfolded in *Ephesians* and elsewhere, in which the Gentile believers share, the other sheep not of this Jewish fold. These He will bring (ver. 16) and they are to be one *flock* (not "fold"). It is the "one body," joined to the Lord by one Spirit.

Vers. 17, 18. Here, too, we have reached the thought

and purpose of the Father. Nothing short of this would do; and *therefore* does the Father love Him. It is according to His commandment. We are having the secret of heaven here. He was to lay down His life and take it again, and this of Himself; no man could take it from Him. Could such thoughts ever enter the human mind? What a flood of divine light we have in this! Laying down His life He was to take it up and us in Him.

Ver. 19. But what ears for all this to fall upon! They say, "He hath a demon and is mad," and there was a division. The natural man receives not the things which are of God. And to-day divisions come from not receiving the heavenly truth. But some speak for Him, affected by His words, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" Evil spirits will do harm, not good. Of Christ Jesus alone it is said He went about doing good. Moreover the shepherd character is not of demons. The judgment of these poor people who opposed Christ had become so blinded that they could not discern what was right.

Ver. 22. And this was at Jerusalem and at a feast, the one appointed by Judas Maccabeus in the early winter in commemoration of the dedication of the temple which he built. It does not seem to have been appointed by God or to have had His sanction, though a grateful heart may have felt like rendering service thus to God. But whatever is not of faith is sin. Men like religion though they hate God; and what they do in the name of their religion has little value for God. We find the Holy Spirit making mention of the temple and Solomon's porch; all revived except the reality of worship and the things that were for God. In the day of the building of the temple, the second, by the remnant out of Babylon, when even the word of God was sent by Haggai to encourage them and push forward the work for Him, it

was said, "If one uncleanly, a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai and said, So is this people and so is this nation before me, saith Jehovah, and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." (Hag. ii. 13, 14.) Even so was it then as Jesus walked amidst a splendor greater than that of Haggai's day, in a temple made by Herod, which had never been the temple of Jehovah. The only glory now was Himself and yet how little did the Jews apprehend.

Ver. 24. They came about Him saying, "How long dost Thou make us doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." They were utterly insensible to works that suited God and had His voice in attestation thereof, that followed as by a line the word of God in every particular, that brought those believing into fellowship with God and the delight of His love, that made Him more in all their lives. What more could He have said and done than He had said and done? If these be not the things that none other ever did, what would be? Many say to-day that the abundant proofs of the word of God and of Jesus as Son of God and of redemption, are not sufficient for their minds, as if their minds were superior to His who formed the mind and knows what it needs.

Ver. 25. And Christ did not reassert; for what is an assertion if there be no works to establish it? But He cast upon them that these works were in the Father's name and they bore witness of Him. But they believed not because they were not His sheep; they were still unsaved, with the door open before them!

Vers. 27-30. The security of His sheep is assured, because He gives them eternal life, and because none shall pluck them out of His hand, and because He and

His Father are one and none shall be able to pluck them out of His Father's hand. They are sheep who hear His voice and follow Him. Full, distinct, and without condition is this statement of the blessing of the saved ones; He gives them eternal life, not to be withdrawn by Himself; not to be forfeited by them, for they shall never perish (make themselves perish, Greek); not to be taken away by the adversary, for no one shall snatch them out of His hand; and not to be reversed or repudiated by His Father, for He is greater than all and He gave them and His ability is pledged for them. Neither the Father nor the Son gives and takes, but gives forever. What a Shepherd! He has gone out to the lost ones and brought them to His own Home, purely by His own power and for His own joy, and the lost are found, the dead are alive forevermore.

And what works to which to appeal and because of which they should believe on Him! They are the work of His Father, justifying fully the claim, "I and my Father are one." Suppose it were not so, what confidence could we have that God against whom we have sinned were satisfied, or that Jesus was not doing and saying that which could never be accepted?

And now again the stones are taken up to show the enmity of the heart that refuses salvation for nothing when the offer is authenticated as from heaven, and God is thus manifested as Saviour, made flesh and dwelling among them. The need has been shown to be greater than in the days of Moses and Elijah and the prophets, whom their fathers rejected in their times, and so last of all God sent His Son, whose good works proved Him. For which of these was He to be stoned? If it be for His making Himself God by being one with the Father, now for their sakes revealing what had always been true of God, would His works have been of worth or meaning

if His claim were not true? Would He otherwise have been more than Moses with his rod or Elijah with his altar restored, which had not brought salvation and liberty and access to God and fellowship with Him? Could no new revelation distinguish their day, opening heaven and disclosing the heart of God in infinite ways unheard of in former days? They called it blasphemy, but was it speaking evil of God to bring Him to them in love and pity and grace that could cover sins and give a true life? Had God revealed Himself hitherto as cold and vengeful and exacting and selfish, as the gods of the heathen, or was the righteousness of God apart from the law, witnessed by the law and the prophets, the righteousness which is by faith? Let them, if capable, gather up all the ways and promises and delights of God throughout their scriptures and mass them together in a person and who would He be but the One who now uttered, "Father and I are one?"

Christ's answer was an appeal to their knowledge of the word of God. If they to whom the word of God came were called gods (Ps. lxxxii. 6), and the scripture cannot be broken, why should He be called a blasphemer for saying He was the Son of God? If God give a title surely there should be response among men. But if He was definitely sent as the Son of God and did the works of God, should He not be received? How the reality of His claim comes out in the appeal to believe the works that they might know the Father's heart, and so knowing they would know the Father in Him and Him in the Father.

But again rejected he escapes out of their hands. Good works commend themselves to the world. The world is not angry at one for being virtuous and gentle and patient and benevolent; the religious world adopts these as the whole matter of piety. But when God is

asserted and that all possible good must come from Him and be arbitrated by Him, anger arises. If Christ did a good work, how could He do it but by having to do for God who only is good? In losing the Son of God what were they losing! The Jew of Judea is abandoned as finally settled in his hostility.

In going beyond Jordan to where John at first baptized it is offering the opportunity to those who as the remnant had come out by John's ministry, and their testimony now is that He is beyond John and all that John said of Him was true, and the wearied heart of Jesus is met by many believing on Him there. It seemed like beginning over again the work. It was separating an elect people unto Himself and a forerunner of the revival of Israel, which finds its forecasting in the next chapter. We are following the Holy Spirit's leading in regard to the person of the Son of God to see that He is the One, the worthy One, the One fulfilling all the work marked out, not yet seen, yet all accomplished. The accomplishment of all awaits His coming again, but He must here show the pattern, or shall we look for another? All these things must justify the proclamation from the heavens, "This is my beloved Son," and His response "All things are committed to my hands" and "I do always the things that please Him."

CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1-15. And now God would give for Him who was then rejected a final and clear display of His own personal glory; the grandest proof that He was the Son of God, who quickens whom He will. It is peculiar to Him, as such. The power was there to be drawn

upon, if there were faith for that; or to be expanded as the need was found.

He was here in absolute subjection to the will of His Father, and though there was a *human* call to ones whom He loved, the time of the Father must alone determine His going. His glory, too, was involved in all He did, and the sickness of Lazarus was for this rather than death, the common allotment of man (Heb. ix. 27). He was the bearer, and the revelation, of love, too; and love would be according to the higher purpose of God that gave Him that we might have life and that more abundantly, as life in resurrection would be vastly different from the healing and extension of the life which the sick one already had. The mention here of the act of Mary in anointing Jesus, putting her glory at His feet (ver. 2) brings us into the circle of richer thoughts than the mere stay of disease.

He abode therefore two days beyond the Jordan, where He was, for death touched upon the glory of the Son of God more closely than recovery. He must act according to deeper counsels than friendliness that man might show in ways remedial.

This was His "day" in which He walked and stumbled not. In Him was nothing but perfect light. Receiving the word not from circumstances, not from man's importunity, nor remonstrance, He says, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." If the eye be single the whole body is full of light. Seeing as the Father saw, He could remain and then go at the right time, And this was for the sake of faith in His disciples. His being in Bethany would have restored; His action now would take them into other thoughts of God.

Vers. 16-19. Did ever one walk in such entire loneliness as to spirit and sequestration from the mind of

man? He was going with His mind filled with thoughts of life and to give life; and Thomas proposes to go and *die* with Him. It was devotedness, no doubt, but from one who knew not the power of God. The pathetic visits of many of the friends journeying from Jerusalem to comfort the sisters only emphasized the sorrow, for sympathy is from like experiences and it tells but of the gloom of death for all. What would anyone have done to have him brought to life again and thereby place such a hope before themselves?

Vers. 20-38. Then comes the interview of Christ with the sisters, characteristic of their knowledge of Him. The one who had been cumbered with much serving on a former occasion, seeking to weariness and complaint what she could do for Him rather than doing best by receiving from Him who came to do all things for her, acknowledged that if He had been there her brother would not have died. But she does not know Him, giving Him only the place of one asking of God and receiving what He asked. This was true, but more was true, and at the grave something must be said to instruct her heart, when He said "I know that Thou hearest me always," for their sakes who had but Martha's faith at this time. Was not the death for her sake, then, that she might know more than that He could stay disease and bring back health? And her gain flows fast when she learns the vast difference between the resurrection at the last day and a resurrection out from among the dead and that He was the resurrection and the life, the living that comes by resurrection. But One could say this, and this calls forth her response, "I believe that Thou art the Christ the Son of God who should come into the world." She is in company with Nathaniel (chap. i.) and Simon Peter (chap. vi.) and with the blind beggar, now seeing (chap. ix. 35-38). How sweetly

His own sheep hear His voice! And with this she must become a messenger, too, for Mary must know this, as one who could enter into fellowship with such thoughts. She has faith but it must have its opportunity and schooling. And she who sat at His feet on that other occasion (Luke x.), drinking in His wonderful words and thereby refreshing Him, rises at the signal, "He calleth for thee." And she, too, falls at His feet with the same word of confidence that Martha had uttered, only not weakening it by other words; and He in response to this "wept." Though Son of God having power to quicken the dead, He enters deeply into the sense of death and its power and results here. He is the truth; He goes down into the truth in everything, in the scene into which He came to manifest the grace of the Father; He groaned in spirit, weighing everything in the presence of His Father. He knew that the Father heard Him always; He knew Himself one with the Father; but He knew man; He was the Son of Man. It is the perfection of sorrow, the full expression of the case according to God. Before coming to the cross, where alone expiation was made for sin, the havoc and ruin wrought by it enters into His own soul. With divine ease and naturalness He performs signs but there is nothing of the trained expert in them. God *felt* man's dreadful state and so came to us, not to show off how superior He was to us, but to reveal Himself for us. In Him was everything for us, and He took completely the place and conditions of man before God.

Vers. 39-44. And the answer came at once to His word of command "Lazarus, come forth!" and he comes forth; they see the glory of God. Even so the hour is now when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall live. But they that come forth now from death in trespasses and sins, at the word of God, come

not with their grave-clothes on them. Since that hour Christ Himself has gone down into the grave and come up conqueror, leaving "the linen clothes and the napkin." His resurrection involves and contains the glory above, and we are raised in Him. It is therefore the right of the believer to know not only that he is *saved*, but *where he is*. He is in Christ. This is the record that God has given unto us, eternal life, and this life is in His son.

But as Son of God, Jesus has to do with Israel, as we have already seen. And this wonderful scene is a rich sign of what pertains to that nation. She, too, like Lazarus, meaning "help of God," as she was to be the instrument of God for blessing to the whole world, was sick (Isa. i. 5, 6), the whole head sick, the whole heart faint. As Lazarus was of Bethany, the house of dates, fruit of the palm tree, so was Israel's glory linked with the palm. (Chap. xii.) It was the town of Mary, bitterness, and Martha, mistress; for Israel, though now in bitterness and rebellion, is, when restored, to be ruler of the nations. But it is the nation beloved of Jehovah, and, as Mary anointed Christ, Israel has in her day when at the feet of God spread the savor of His name. Her wonderful deliverance, her priests, and her worship have borne testimony, when she was nothing. And yet Israel with all her failures and departures from God was beloved from the beginning, "the beloved of His soul" (Jer. xii. 7), as this family was loved. But the sickness must come to death, total separation from Jehovah (Hos. ii. 6-9). It is remarkable how much Christ in this gospel journeys through the prophet Hosea, who has to say to Israel in regard to her sins and desolation and reviving, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help" (Hos. xiii. 9), seems to be the strain of all his prophecies. And while messages have been delivered over and again in reference to the sad

condition of the nation as Christ heard from the sisters, the true glory of God, the Almighty One of Abraham calling out a nation from the dead womb of Sarah, cannot be manifested in simply healing. In fact they would not be healed. (Hos. vii. 1.)

The tarrying two days away from the sick man, Israel, would indicate the time for the full measure of his ruin, and meanwhile He is occupied with the Church and the remnant of Judah, each having its day; and then His heart was for the return to the house of sorrow. And by this time Lazarus is in the grave. Israel is dead, the nation lapsed from the earth, buried altogether (Ezek. xxxvi.) among the nations. And now is to be wrought the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified thereby, manifested according to the life in Himself. As Son of God, He is to be the Head of Israel in resurrection as a nation, as He is the Head of the church as Son of God, the church being built on that character and title.

Ver. 16. As Thomas in chap. xx. sets forth Israel's day and Israel's mode of faith, he is here named, Thomas, meaning a twin, both in its Hebrew derivation and Greek equivalent; so Israel is appointed to a twin blessing, under the Son of God. The Scriptures state nothing in vain, or for the mere saying. It is unbelief in both instances mentioned. Israel through the four days of the four great world powers of Dan. ii., vii., has been in the quietness of the grave, awaiting the voice of power and of life.

The sad exclamation of the sisters, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," is true in regard to the nation, but they drove God out to the heavens when He would have remained with them. (Ezek. x.) He had chosen Jerusalem for His abode and them for His people, to go on with them forever.

And He drove them out of the land into which He had led them first, the ten tribes, and afterwards the two remaining tribes (2 Kings xvii., xxv.) Even the return of the latter did not bring back God to His temple nor place them where they were before. The nation might have been saved had they gone on with Jehovah or had the Jews welcomed and received Jesus. But He came unto His own and His own received Him not; they slew Him. It is the same people who through all their history have cast God upon the depth of His grace to meet them. And He will meet them. As the Son in full fellowship with the Father calls Lazarus forth from the tomb, so shall he summon all the tribes from all the ends of the earth, for this is the "loud voice" to which response shall be made when all Israel shall be saved. Out of Zion shall come the Deliverer turning away ungodliness from Jacob. God has included them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of Jehovah, or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed again? For, of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33-36, Isa. xi., xlix. 18-23, Jer. xxx., xxxi., xxxiii., Ezek. xx., Hos. i. 10, 11, xiii. 9-14, xiv. 4-9.)

Vers. 47-57. And now the Pharisees take counsel concerning His death. Before it had been individual hatred, seeking to kill Him; but resurrection power in Christ brings out more decidedly the malignity of Satan, him who had the power of death. The high priest gives the decisive word as head of the people, and it is the final, full sentence, "He must die." And God says it, too; but how differently; "for that nation and to gather together

in one the children of God scattered abroad." These two companies, the church and the nation, necessitate His death, and are to have Him the Son of God Head of the body and Head over the kingdom. All is morally ended with the Jews and He goes outside. Word is given that if anyone knew where He was, he should show it, that they might take Him.

Like the former cases of retirement from them until His hour should come, the place is significant, Ephraim meaning fruitfulness, the name given to the tribes in apostasy, in the prophets, forecasting thus what was in God's heart about them, even though they were in rebellion and ruin. Can anything exceed the grace of God, or anything but man's depravity and obduracy bring it into action and display and be a fitting cause and occasion for all its riches and wonders? Ah, they who have been met by God in this grace, are yet to meet Him in the glory of it, to know as all through the history of their sad failures they have been known. Thus we have in chap. x. the church gathered to the Son of God, and in this chapter, Israel; but He must die for this.

CHAPTER XII.

Vers. 1-4. Yes, He must die! All circles around that fact now. If life is given to others and he who had the power of death is annulled, it must be through death. And what a wonderful thing is death to us, and we may rejoice in it as the most precious of all things. By it we are delivered from everything that has affected us as children of Adam; and having been raised from death, we are brought into all that pertains to the New Man.

Thus, we see here a supper at Bethany, and Laza-

rus sits at the table with Jesus. It is the place of fellowship, of one raised from the dead in fellowship with the Lord of life who raised him. In Martha's serving now, it is not one that is cumbered with much serving and asking help from another, taking her thus out of the presence of her Lord, but something that is acceptable, in the joy of resurrection, the new life, unto Him who has given it all. Service is in its right place when we have first received all from Him. And the joy of it, as begotten by Himself, sweetly ministers to Him.

But that which is most dwelt upon is the action of Mary, bearing upon His death, led by the Spirit in grace. The pound of ointment of spikenard is "very costly," and it is all poured upon Him. He is worthy of all; He is more than all things. It is the valuing of the person of the Lord, as entering into the sense of what is about to be done to Him, for she anoints Him for His burial. Had her faith laid hold of that? The Lord says so. The faith that values Him beyond all things takes all that He is. In the sense of His glory she anoints His feet and wipes them with her hair, her own glory (1 Cor. xi. 15), and the house is filled with the odor of the ointment. Her silent act spreads around the savor of Christ as the One infinitely precious. She had learned much at His feet, by His words, as she listened; by being comforted and satisfied when she went out to meet Him to find His heart fully with her in the sad day of bereavement. And now in this act of adoration she is accepted as the one entering into the Father's purpose and the Son's own thoughts on His way to the cross. Worship is costly, for it involves the emptying of self, the apprehension of God's valuing of the walk and death of Christ Jesus and peculiarly of Himself; the Sent One meeting, to the full, the need of both God and man.

And in our day wherein there has been a recovery of the truth of the *Son of God*, it is well to notice that not the one showing fellowship and the one serving that received the commendation of the Lord, but the one occupied with His *death*. This occupation filled the house. So, where the truth is revived, ministry of the word is very precious and needful, but the real testimony is given when the Lord's table is set and we show His death. All ministry must aim at that; as we see in a larger sense the consummation of all ministry in Eph. iv. 12, 13, the manifestation of the perfect Man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. In no wise and no place has the laborer done his work till he has brought to this those who believe.

In this "supper," then, all the happy results of resurrection are made manifest, fellowship, worship and service, all with and to Him, the One who has done all. Here the heart gets its opportunity, the intelligence reaches to the work and walk of Jesus. When all is done to Him, it will give testimony that shall be known. The Thessalonians with faith, love and hope active, and serving God and waiting for His Son, whom He raised from the dead, illustrate this, for from them sounded out the word of the Lord through all Greece, and in every place their faith toward God was spread abroad. So that he who had taught them needed not to speak anything. It told itself. Occupation with the Lord Jesus is service, is guidance, fellowship, walk, and of itself tells all; "the house was *filled* with the odor."

His own are a family shut in with Him, of which He is the Head; and resurrection is the basis of all that they are and do. Each one has the position and blessing and joy of Lazarus, each, of Martha, and each, of Mary, not that one is a Mary, another a Martha and another a Lazarus. We all enter into fellowship, worship and

service. Many would make service to the world the great matter; but service is only to Him; "we serve the Lord, Christ." The order should be first worship and fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, then fruit, and then service, only in His presence. Martha's serving out of His presence brought rebuke; in His presence, to Him and those with Him, acceptance. In all we do for others, we must go with Him, do it under His eye. We engage our own servants to do things in our way, according to our explicit directions; and their dismissal follows their persistent carrying out of their own thoughts. Worship, too, cannot be acceptable unless according to the word of God, on the ground of assured condition, as saved, risen with Christ, having died with Him. How *can* we take our own way or do or offer that which pleases our taste, instead of keeping in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord, in the growing sense of His infinite love?

This scene at Bethany (the house of dates, the fruit of the palm, itself suggestive of resurrection and victory), should be a standard for us. Is it not much to us to find that which meets the mind of Christ and of God, so that Jesus shall say, Let her alone; she hath done it unto Me? We see, too, the position in relation to Christ, in which these exercises place us. Serving, we are near Him, yet going about for others with Him; in fellowship, we sit with Him, as, like Him, on His level through grace. But worship brings us to His feet, ourselves nothing; He, all. It does not ask anything of Him, it is simply absorbed with Him, adoring, filled, satisfied. Self is entirely negated: as we see in the epistle to the Hebrews, the book of worship, no writer is mentioned; it is not needful that he should be, for the Wonderful Person, the Son of God, kept before our vision all through it, authenticates the writing to be of the Holy Spirit.

This is a beautiful and fitting closing of this section that beginning on the first of the three days with the rapturous "Behold the Lamb of God!" as He walked, ends thus at those feet that have so walked during two of the days, on His way to the third, in Galilee, overwhelmed with what He is!

We have now learned that which is acceptable unto the Lord Jesus, that which is the fruit of His own work, the entering into it with Himself. We are to see how man esteemed all this; for he is to be seen here, too.

And first it brings out the selfishness of one who had accompanied Jesus, but cared nothing for Him, "Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who should betray Him." Any true valuation of Christ at any time calls forth the hatred of those who are of Satan. Here, as often since, professed philanthropy is the excuse for despising Christ in His death! Worship, so little understood, is often characterized as "getting together by yourselves, to enjoy yourselves when so much might be done for others." That which is done to God and to Christ is enjoyment to the true heart, but it is not for that end that it is done, but solely for Christ. And they who are most with the Lord will, in company with Him, be able to render real service to men. It is poor company to be in, with such remonstrances; for he who said, "Why was not this ointment sold and given to the poor?" was a thief and cared not for the poor. Three hundred denaries was almost the wage of a year, but upon whom was it expended, and at what time? The religious world was filled with malice against Him and seeking His death when Mary did this; and how it shines out to-day! Besides, "the poor ye have always with you."

A second effect was that many of the people of those who flocked to the house to see Lazarus as well as Jesus,

believed on Him. The scene subdued them, by its own power, which was of God.

A third result was the increased hatred of the enemies, consulting to put Lazarus to death, also, because that by reason of him many believed, going away carrying their faith with them, to fructify and refresh others.

In this lovely picture in which the Son of God is so prominently seen we must needs find the nation of Israel, as helped of God in Lazarus and having part at the table, and in the sisters in their places of worship and service, just what Israel as risen from the dust, shall render acceptably. The prophets are aglow with these things. Israel never served though called definitely for that purpose and named "servant." Had they served Jehovah, they would have served the world. Had they worshiped Him truly, they would have known His purpose and could have been used, going on with joy. But resurrection shall bring them into these things.

In the purpose of the Pharisees to destroy Lazarus we may see also what will take place after the full restoration of Israel and their thousand years of fellowship, service and worship in truth, when Satan is loosed for a season (Rev. xx. 7-9); he and his army will encompass the camp of God's people, His separated ones, but will be defeated. We do not find here that they did put Lazarus to death. But what a mapping out we have had as we have traced the Son of God in these scenes, His eye ever on that map and the chart laying out His course!

Ver. 12. And now the presentation of Him as King of Israel must cast its shadow before, for on the next day (days are dispensational in John's gospel) when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, the place of the display appointed, a great multitude took branches of palm trees (how associated with Bethany,

this!) and went forth to meet Him and cried, "Hosanna!" "Saved now" is near the meaning. It is a cry of triumph not of petition, for to the Spirit He is glorified and crowned. "Blessed is the King of Israel coming in the name of Jehovah!" Here, in contrast with the other accounts (Matt. xxi. 1-11, Mark xi. 1-10, Luke xix. 29-38), which are all in accord with the purpose of the several books they are in, He is called the King of *Israel*, because here He is Son of God. And here the prophecy of Zachariah (ix.), who is occupied much with Jerusalem and its reestablishment in glory as the joy of the earth, must be brought into notice, though the whole be but for a moment. It is predictive of His majesty and manifestation in peace, riding upon an ass.

Passing away without visible effect but given for His sake, the disciples understood not until after Jesus had passed into the glory. To Him in spirit this had already taken place, though the actual journey through death to the glory was yet to take place. Was it not for His sake the voice before the deed of the Canticles iii. 11, "Go forth O ye daughters of Zion and behold King Solomon (peace) with the crown wherewith His mother (Israel) crowned Him in the day of his espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart;" and Cant. vii. 13, "Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, the tender grape appear, the pomegranates bud forth; there will I give Thee my loves!" The following verses, 17-19, link all this with the raising of Lazarus, which is truly typical of Israel.

The Pharisees perceived that they were powerless here; the world had gone after Him. He is to die, but it will be by His own giving Himself when the hour shall come.

Vers. 20, 21. To complete the picture of the glory and make known to us what He carried in His heart

and purpose all the way, there were certain Gentiles among those that came up to worship at the feast, and they according to Isaiah lx. 3, when Jehovah shall arise upon them and His glory shall be seen upon them, then "the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising," came asking to see Jesus. They came to Philip, him of Bethsaida of Galilee. Why this minuteness as to name and place? Because Philip stands for the remnant in Israel's day and Bethsaida is the house of fishers—and Israel are used to be fishers of men, in the circle (Galilee) of God's working in grace. Philip tells Andrew. Why Andrew, but that he is of the first, the church day of chap. i. and then in chap. ii., Jesus and His disciples were invited to the marriage where the mother already was? Is there not the same finger writing these things as wrote the predictions of old; that can, here, by mere names hold our eyes to the fulfilment of all? Oh, the minuteness of the word of God!

Ver. 22. But that double glory can come only through death. As Son of Man He is to come in the clouds of heaven, which involves dying and rising. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die or abide alone. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, or itself (the fulness, Col. i. 20) is the way of God. It is as the first born from the *dead* that we join Him.

And in that path they must follow who would be with Him. Nothing will be built on the old creation of the old man. We must lose life, the whole of it, in this world. He that loves his life loses it, and he that gives up his life in this world keeps it unto life eternal. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." Then where He is the servant shall be, and such an one the Father will honor. It is the great principle of death, which fills

the Epistles. The cross gives us no reprieve nor the allowance of any bit of what we were, but rather it is our death, and faith reckons ourselves to have died there, "once for all." This is following the Lord Jesus.

And all things on the earth, too, are to be reconciled through the blood of the cross. And all under the earth are to bow to Him as highly exalted and having a name above every name.

Thus the whole work to be done and the need are fully before Him. In all these chapters they have been told out. There is in each of the three gospels before this one a point of time in which we notice this change in the history. Jesus is in the former parts offering everything according to God and according to the words they had in their hands and according to that for which He was sent. In this He proceeds as though all would be received until the rejection of Him in all would be manifest, and then all is seen and told as over. They will not have Him nor God. Then, as in Matt. xii. the rejection is acknowledged and He goes out as in Matt. xiii. stating the forming of a people on a new ground. The old is given up, and death must come in. In Matt. xvi. 21, Mark viii. 31, Luke ix. 22, it is definitely stated, and what comes after in the order of the books is given on the ground of rejection and death. Hence denunciations of judgment and woes and appeal to a remnant to deliver themselves from the death that is coming. There is no giving up or softening of the statements made in the beginning; but simply they must die to know these things.

In the gospel of John rejection is seen from chap. i. and all things that are enacted and spoken have the principle of death and the new creation underneath them. They could become true in no other way. In chaps. i. and ii. He must take away the sin of the world

by dying, the Lamb of God. Nicodemus could not be born again unless Christ died and he died also. In chap. iv. He could not be the "Saviour of the world" unless He died, nor would the woman be brought into the holiest as a worshiper otherwise. In chap. v. the man taking up his bed and walking is the picture of walking in resurrection life. So in chaps. vi. and vii. eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the river of living water, and the Light of the World in viii. and ix. are fully expressed in death and resurrection. In chap. x. He could not be the good Shepherd except as laying down His life nor take out from the Jewish fold and form one flock otherwise than in the scene of resurrection. And the repeated mention of the hatred of Him that meant death throughout these portions, as "the wolf" prowling on His steps ready to spring upon Him, casts forward the shadow of death that must come to Him. It shall be, here, of God, of Himself, and not of man, for when the time shall come He will lay down His life. If He raise Lazarus He must go where Lazarus lay to conquer death through death.

Hence in this chapter it is very definitely stated. It was the purpose for which He came that "through death He might annul him who had the power of death and deliver them who all their lifetime were subject to bondage through fear of death."

Ver. 27. The burden of the new creation is upon Him, and in His trouble of soul He has to do alone with the Father. What should He say? Ask for deliverance when the supreme hour has come? Nay, but the one thing of all which guided and moulded all His thoughts and doings, "Father, glorify Thy name!" This, above all things; this, in all things.

And then the heavens opened to Him and the Father responded. And since, that appeal for God's glory has

brought out the Father's heart for His own. It marks the meaning of life, begun at the cross and carried on in resurrection. The direct answer is, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." It was glorified in raising Lazarus. Jesus said this was for His glory and the Father accepts and confirms this. In the further work of gathering the Gentiles He will glorify it again.

But all this open intercourse with the Father on this most profound and awful matter was unintelligible to those who stood by. The professed people of God they knew not His voice, but explained it, man-wise, by natural causes, "It thundered!" "An angel spoke to Him." But it came not for His sake but for theirs to be a confirmation of all He said. He needed no encouragement but they needed faith.

Vers. 31-33. If the glory of Christ is beyond death then it is hopeless to look for anything in the world; it is judged. *Now* is the *judgment* of this world. It is not sanctified nor reformed nor reformable. The whole has been tried and found wanting. The best of it, that most taught and favored, and if possible, cultivated by God, the Jewish people, the orthodox leaders among them, those whose business it was to teach of God and represent Him, were found stupidly ignorant of any of His thoughts and ways, and entirely alien to His purposes of love. His death then demonstrates this, and hence the prince of this world, the one to whom they had given up themselves, the devil and so the world, is judged. Faith to-day asserts that the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world, little as it is practically expressed.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to Me." All that are included in those that receive Him; that are in the three days of chap. i.; in those that come to Him in chap. vi.; that are His sheep in chap. x.; all

that nation to be redeemed; children of God that are scattered abroad in chap. xi.; and the saved nations in the end. None will be delivered and join Him except by dying His death and in His death. Every effort of man is put forth to avoid the penalty announced in Eden. But God said "the wages of sin is death," and He who came to deliver did it by dying the death; and so the "all" with Him. They who will not accept this verdict take their place with the first thief on the cross, asking Jesus not to die, but to deliver them without death; the way that has always been man's, but which leads to the Great White Throne and the Lake of Fire. There is no escape from the sentence—the Cross or the Lake. And he that confesses this, and himself thus judged, is already at the Cross. There is much of making Jesus but a Leader among men, under whom men enroll themselves for improvement, instead of knowing that He must be lifted up from the earth and thus draw unto Him. We must die the death, die before God as sinners and guilty, to join Christ. We are crucified with Christ; nevertheless we live, for His death was ours.

Vers. 34–36. But the same opposing questions, cast off all this which offers life once more, a way out of all they were. And their reading of the law is their refuge against the truth. "Who is this Son of Man" that must be lifted up? was their query. "We have learned out of the law that the Christ abides forever." If they found that, they could have found that it was after death (Isa. liii.) that He was to be exalted and abide forever and His kingdom should never end. To-day, such is the turning aside from the truth of God in Christ, the same culpable stupidity is found, and men are satisfied with religious observances which flatter them with the thought that they are doing something, or their own multiplied efforts for the comfort or personal liberty and

advancement of mankind, that a Christ proceeding from death and pronouncing death upon all, is repudiated, and hence the life of the professing Christian is spent in longing instead of assurance of eternal security, praying even when professing praise in their songs. Witness the hymns most popular even among believers. And this is more and more so as years go on. The knowledge of the death we have died, the eternal life, Christ's own, that we have in Him, would delete from the popular hymn books many a song that lacks being "spiritual" (Eph. v. 19) in the fact that it implies a falsifying of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the sure word of God.

Moreover, many are at once up in arms against any teaching that means the cross, while they sing of glorying in the cross. "Buy the truth" is the exhortation of God, and the price is crucifixion. Since the professing church has become the world, let it not wound too deeply to be told it must come under this judgment.

The matter with many of this time, as with those of that day, is a riddle, as was Samson's to the Philistines (Judges xiv. 14), which means this very thing, through death, life. By death it looked as though Jesus Himself were cast out. It was really the prince, Satan, who should be cast out. They are warned that the Light is about going away and darkness should come. But they believed not on Him. Receiving the Light, they would be children of light.

And here we will do well to review briefly what has been offered to all and given to as many as received Him in this infinite book through which we have been travelling, though feebly apprehending its glories, eyes dimmed often with excess of light, and unable to take in much at a time. But these things we have learned. Chapter i., massing together what He is, the Son of God, Creator and

meaning and purpose all created, always God, Life, Light, Shedder of the glory, the Word, bearer of grace and truth, the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, gives through and from Him the place and relationship of born children of God, receiving of His fulness grace for grace; a new birth, eternal life (iii.); salvation and so worshipers, a spring of living water, within (iv.); made whole, past judgment (v.); fed and living by Him (vi.); the Holy Spirit (vii.); no condemnation, knowing the truth and made free (viii.); made to see (ix.); as sheep, kept by Him forever (x.); resurrection (xi.); fellowship (xii.). All these involve the confession of ruin and death and the helplessness and hopelessness of anything in self. All these things have been taught pressed upon them by Him and rejected, except by the few, who, as reprisals, have been drawn from the enemy; and they are tokens of what the grace of God that gave His Son can do, giving them all these fruits of His work.

There was the constant confidence of what He was, a constant testimony that life was in no other, a constant pressing on them of all that the Father's love and honor involved, life for eternity with Himself, the proposal of life to the nation with all their prophecies fulfilled to the ultimate degree. But they would not have them through Him. It was therefore the end of all testimony to them from Him living.

Vers. 37-41. Though He had done so many signs among them, signs indicative in every way of God's purpose of grace to them, *they would not believe*. The sign was more than the word if they had believed, for it brought the word out into living structure and form, anticipating the glory. But they would not believe and Isa. liii. 1 was fulfilled, "Who hath believed our report?" This plea is again urged in Rom. x. after His resurrection and the advent of the Holy Spirit upon His session at

the right hand of the glory. Can there be any sadder story than this of the obduracy of man, and his puny purpose to be independent of God, and lord of himself? This, against all overtures, all pleadings! "The arm of Jehovah" would have been revealed in all might to take them out of the hand of their enemies, delivering their souls first of all from bondage to Satan. But now they *could not believe!* Judicial blindness and hardness of heart were brought upon them, lest they should see with their eyes and understand with their hearts and be turned and healed (Isa. vi. 9, 10). It is as in Acts xxviii. 25-28, after the still further pleading of the Holy Spirit; and the word from the Apostle Paul is "Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear it." The fulness of the Gentiles must come in by their fall (Rom. xi.), and then the veil shall be taken away when they shall turn to the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 14-16). It was an awful era in their history. But may it not be found even in this day as the time of the Gentiles is closing, that offers are being made for the last time in this day of salvation; for a blinding, a "working of error" (2 Thess. ii. 11) shall be sent, "that they may believe the lie, that they might all be judged, who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness?"

Ver. 42. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess lest they should be put out of the synagogue." This stands in its own strong light as well as the terrible comment of the Holy Spirit, instructive for this day, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Vers. 44-50. Leaving Israel He goes out into the world. It is the token of the offer to the Gentiles, to man everywhere, and His cry is as though it would

reach all. "He that believeth on me believeth not on me but on Him that sent me; I am *come* a Light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." To the Jew first and also to the Gentile, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy." (Rom. xv. 8, 9.) How incomplete the character, Son of God, without this universal offer; how contracted the reading and fulfillment of the prophecies, if this be not added. Heathen religions are satisfied with national, sectional, local range, whether of a country or an island, the reach of their civil government, but Christ looks to the whole world that it be brought to God, that it might be saved. False religions offer diversion, occupation of mind, but Christ brings life.

And the first thing is light, disclosing God, exposing man; and in that light they can be brought together, man to God through the One sent from God. So thoroughly subject to God, being God, is He that with all judgment committed to Him, He came not to judge but to save the world. "If anyone hear my words and believe not, I judge him not." It is as Saviour that He comes out to the world. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses. It is the day when grace must have its opportunity and mercy rejoice against judgment. Having judged the Jews, the judgment of the Gentile is not in question, but the opposite.

But there is a "last day" and there is "One that judges" him that rejects. The word that He spoke will judge. "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not thee!" (Rom. xi. 21.) But what a wideness in the offer now and how simple the matter—*only to receive Him!* Surely no one has a right to be unsaved,

and if he be, for this he must account at the last; for this will be his crime. "For I have not spoken from myself; but the Father that sent me He gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak and I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." Has it not been well done?

Now, in the light of the coming of the Holy Spirit and the writings of the apostles, the fathomless meanings of what He spoke come to us, the wondrous love and righteousness, the clear disclosure of the heart and mind of the Father, in such a way that with adoring rapture we, learning ever, exclaim that it is worthy of God. No higher conception of Him is possible than what has in these chapters been presented, with the naturalness of One resident with Him from eternity. Told, as it is, in human language, with every new discovery of what it is to aid us, we find it reaching out in all ways beyond us, still attracting and refreshing the heart, sensitizing and illuminating the conscience, and so strengthening and satisfying faith as to make it more and more really the only walk, the only thing. Our full souls justify God in sending His only Begotten into the world as we repeat and still repeat, "He hath declared Him!" The Sender and the Sent are both revealed.

Adding a few words as to the dispensational truth in these two chapters (xi., xii.), it may be said that the three days of chaps. i., ii., upon which the whole book is built, are here quite clearly manifested. The disciples themselves, without a question of their intelligence of it or Him, for they had none, in their appearing with Him without taking any part, tell of the First, or Church's Day. To them He makes all His disclosures, telling the meaning of the sickness of Lazarus, the glory of God, and the glory of the Son of God. We must except Thomas

and his sad words, the representative of Israel in her despair and unbelief, however.

Then the household of Martha, with the raising up of Lazarus and the supper following, with its service, fellowship and worship, is attended by the reception of Christ as King of Israel, tells of the Second Day, Israel's, which here closes, and the way in which all is to be accomplished, through His death, completes the account.

Then His going forth to the world gives the Third Day. He is walking in the path set before Him, in the the day and not stumbling, for He is both the Life and the Light. How rich it all is!

CHAPTER XIII.

We here enter upon a new section of this unspeakably precious book, a section remarkably separated from what has gone before. It is as though we had left earth and the obdurate and self-satisfied world with its offensive religiousness, and gone to heaven. It is "His own" taken out of the world, in the company and sweet intimacy of their Owner.

In chapter i. we learn two things; that He came to His own realm and His own nation received Him not. And this has been demonstrated in the chapters ii. to xii. The second thing was, as many as received Him, the rejected One, the heavenly stranger, stranger because from heaven, are brought into the position of children of God. It shall be our happy employment to trace as we can in chapters xiii-xvii. His words and ways with and for and about these, and their peculiar portion and privilege, thus gathered out of the world unto Him, absolutely safe and untouched by the world.

And these men, the first fruits of His work, represent all whom we have seen in the preceding chapters who were linked with Him, from Nicodemus on, and are those of the First Day. Here we are shown the completeness of the church's blessing. He carrying them out of the world and fitting them for the new heaven and new earth.

This position was entirely new to them, they having been of the Jewish fold, the earthly thing which is now given up. Though these things are told them here, they do not enter practically into the spirit of them until the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in them. The blessed Lord is still with them, knowing everything that would befall them and the full value of the work He has done for them on the earth, including His death, which in spirit is involved here; for the great fact of death in the last chapter is here understood in the teaching. He knew what was in them and what they were; but He could not fail. He "loved His own which were in the world even unto the end."

And that end is leading and landing them in the Father's Kingdom, the Day of God, the new heaven and new earth, with the expression, Here am I and the children Thou hast given me; not His own children, but children committed to Him. And we should live not as expecting the millennial glory, but that beyond it all, the permanent, the infinite, with God.

It is Christ still down here and ready to go to the Father and saying these things on the ground of being absent, getting them ready for that new life and that new place. It is something of the nature of the book of Deuteronomy to Israel, a bringing to view of the things of "the land," while they are yet encamped near the Jordan, ready to go; now to be made familiar with the principles and glories of the land on the other side.

And first, having by His blood brought them as children into the Father's house, they must be suitable to that house. They must be kept clean in their habits, their feet, their ways. And He who knows the ways of the house turns servant for them. He, alone, who introduces them through His blood, can keep them from defilement there or cleanse them when defiled. They are in the world yet and they will need this, though they might be, without His office, ignorant or unconscious of how much they need. But He knows the occasion, though what He does they "know not now." The "hereafter" of that knowledge has come to us, now that He has ascended and the Holy Spirit has come. And we discern in this significant act the Advocate and advocacy. It is what He is doing for us now when we sin. As High Priest in intercession before God, which we may see farther along, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, not sins, but tendencies to sin because of being here and the pressure bearing upon us all the time: the weakness of ourselves, the strength of the adversary and his subtilty; the failure of faith, the loneliness of a way He walked alone, too; the appeal of all that is in the world and of it, to lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eye and pride of life. But, when we sin, He becomes Advocate for us, He *is* our Advocate. In all things pertaining to and flowing out from Christ our Lord we may say we never knew how much we needed, because we never knew His and the Father's side in the matter, until we found what He did, what He is doing and what He will do for us. We have needed all for His sake. He must present us perfect before the face of the Father as children suitable for His presence and communion, as well as the Church for Himself "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; a glorious church." Are we not everlastingly going to school to love as presented in Him?

Ver. 1. It was before the feast of the Passover when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father. All things had been tending toward this hour; and, till it came, His day lasted. Then, when it should be over and done, He would go as the Forerunner of these redeemed ones to the Father. But His heart was on them as left in any enemy's land that would defile if not able to destroy. The adversary had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him. But in the confidence of overcoming the world and Satan and that all things and all these dear to Him were in His hands, He at once takes the form of a servant for them. The supper was the representation of His death. It is as though rising from death. He cleanses the walk of His people knowing their need. *He came from God and was going to God*; it was altogether of and for God that He came and He must bring to God.

Possibly no words describe more exactly His work in its scope and entirety, covering all the time of taking away the sin of the world than this; and so the book of John is told out; which begins with His being God and with God, and then made flesh to accomplish all, and then, giving up all, according to 1 Cor. xv. 25-28, God is all again. There will be little occasion to look at these Days again in these five chapters which are occupied with His own, the Church, "even unto the end." It is all dispensational, but removed on high.

Ver. 4. He had much of His own to lay aside to gird Himself for this special service. Taking a linen cloth, He girded Himself. Next He pours water into a basin and begins washing the feet of His disciples and wiping them with the linen cloth wherewith He had girded Himself. It is the office of a servant; but love serves with comfort and desire and with thoughtfulness of need.

Water, in the Scriptures, sets forth the word, itself, as we have found already. The feet are used for walking and therefore would express walk, conduct, living, practically. It is the word applied to the walk of the disciple of Christ by Himself, the One alone who knows.

Ver. 6. So He comes to Peter. He is the one who in chapter i. seems to represent the Church, having His name, a stone, given to Him by Christ, as we are stones in His building. But Peter with human and not divine thoughts of the matter said, "Lord! Dost *Thou* wash my feet?" The way of the Lord is to serve us or we cannot first serve, as He first loved us. It is not simple, not humble, to refuse His way, His service. He evidently knew not what the Lord was doing and had to be told, "What I am doing thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand after, these things," clearly intimating that it had a meaning beyond the mere use of water and towel, and should not therefore be literally observed. It is told in chap. xv. 3, and there explained as the word that He spoke to them. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." (Ps. cxix.) "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to Himself." (Eph. v. 25-27.) It is therefore not an ordinance, as the Lord's Supper, to be literally observed, for therein it would lose its meaning; but the application of the word of God to cleanse from defilement in conduct, in the world. The word condemns the world, for the cross has done this effectually and faith so takes it. Every clause of Eph. v. 25-27 is found here. He loved them, the church; He gave Himself for them, the Supper setting forth that; that He might sanctify, separate to Himself, thus they were His own; and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the

word. It is complete, His constant, perfect provision for our being kept clean.

But Peter would not have it so; as millions have acted since as though by penance or prayers or sacrifices or trying to make amends to God, they could put away sins. His ignorance and unbelief reached far into the future. "Thou shalt *never* wash my feet!" And is not that the piety of to-day with many? "It is not right to trouble Him; he must do something in some way, to show that we are in earnest, that we are sorry, that we repent." Yes; but the thing to do is to let Him who knows all about the enormity of one sin, stand for the cleansing. The ground of fellowship stated in 1 John, is "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." The way of knowing our sins is by His advocacy. If any one sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins. The way of obtaining forgiveness and cleansing is "If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful (to Christ) and just (to His work) to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The word brings to light all things, for it is quick and powerful, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In every sin, we, children of God, commit, there are two things of evil: the thing done and the fact of doing it, which was leaving our position as saints and acting as sinners, which we are not before God. This is the unrighteousness of the matter. So this must be cleansed as well as the sin forgiven. But confession is a deep work, a real self judgment that nothing but the word of God proceeding from the whole work of Christ for sin and God's judgment thereof would produce. We get His judgment and bow to it in confession. It is vastly more than asking forgiveness of sins in a general or even special way. We are not told if we ask forgiveness we

shall receive it, but if we confess our sins. And no one can confess for another. A general sweeping "forgive us our sins" does not meet the case and has no warrant in scripture. It would be to trifle with sins. We must let Christ have to do with us according to the condemnation of sins on the cross.

The answer of Jesus to Peter gives us light on the purpose of the washing. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part *with* me." It is fellowship with Christ, having His judgment of the need and of the necessity of His washing, not our own, for it is as having died for these sins, this defilement, fellowship with Him as to the results of His washing, that we are every whit clean. If we do not judge with Him the sin, we become careless and indifferent and indurated in conscience, allowing the accumulation of defilement, and get away from the apprehension of grace which always reigns through righteousness. For washing is the farthest removed from being indifferent to sinning, keeping the cost of it ever before us, making Christ and His work more to the heart continually. Fellowship is as thoroughly a reality as sinning is. In a world offering itself to lusts and pride, presided over by Satan, built up for the natural man, how easy to become tainted and defiled, the eye leading the heart astray. We notice He does not say "no part *in* me," which would be to deny our being His at all; but "with me."

In Numbers xix. is given the provision for cleansing from uncleanness, among Israel. The ashes of the Red Heifer which had been consumed wholly in the place of the sin offering, were kept for the purpose of cleansing. This sets forth Christ as having been made sin for us. Upon the ashes running fresh water was poured and this water sprinkled upon the unclean person, thus showing the immediate connection with Christ's death; not that

He must be slain again, "else must He often have suffered from the foundation of the world," but the word of God founded upon that suffering meets the case. His death anticipated this very sin confessed. "If I wash thee not," then, is understood.

It may be well to notice in connection with Num. xix. how one became defiled. It was by coming in contact with death. In four ways is this named, the death of anyone in the tent, when every person and every open vessel in the tent was made unclean. Might this mean even our children with their open ears and eyes taking in all we do? Second, death by violence anywhere in one's presence and touching such a body; and we know what excitement will do for us.

Third, a bone, far removed from the original body but part of its very framework. Fourth, a grave walked over and not seen; when it came to his knowledge the man was defiled. In the desert what more common than the bones of animals or possibly of men and of graves which appear not? So the touch of that which was death was unavoidable, without constant watchfulness in many cases entirely unavoidable. "If we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 10.) The world is dead to us, under the condemnation of death. Mingling with it as part and parcel with it, is to contract defilement, act on its principles, yield to its allurements, imitate its selfishness. What more common than a bone in the path in the desert? What more common than falsifying among men, in self defense, for purposes of trade or admiration? What more constant than self defense? And yet self has been condemned and how can it be defended or allowed a moment's place? But death has been met by death; His death who takes His place at our feet to restore us to fellowship, the enjoyment of the presence of God having part

with us on the ground of sins forgiven and unrighteousness all cleansed and alone by Him.

But now Peter, standing for us all, misapprehends again. "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head." There is often the mistaken thought and expression found in some hymns that are popular, that when we sin we need to take the place of lost sinners all over again and apply by faith the blood of Christ to save. The believer is never a "miserable sinner," for that is the title, the nature, of the unbeliever, the enemy of God, the unsaved.

Now the answer of Christ settles all this. He that is bathed (all over, once for all) in the death of Christ, being made a new man in Him, having died and risen in and with Him, needs not to wash save His feet, but is every whit clean. Rather, then, let the believer know that He is a child of God, having an Advocate with the *Father*, for though he has denied his place, God has not denied His, He cannot deny Himself.

There are two occasions on which the Father is brought prominently to the heart—when we sin (1 John ii. 1), and when we are under discipline (Heb. xii. 5, 6). In both we might by our own thoughts think we are not but here the value of the title Father comes. In the former we have an Advocate with the *Father*; we have not lost Him as such. In the latter, He deals with us as sons; we have not lost our place; He has not cast us off nor lost us.

The priest, at his setting apart to God, was washed all over, and, as a priest, never again. But every time he went into the presence of God he had to wash his feet and his hands; he was not to be the judge of whether they needed it or not, nor to say he had walked a day or an hour without defilement; but to wash. The laver was there between the brazen altar, where sin was met,

and the dwelling place of God, and, as a worshiper once purged, he must have all defilement put away. The provision was made.

Christ is our perfect cleansing and we have none but Himself to show the need and the provision and the application of the word. He used a vessel and a linen towel with which He was girded. He uses vessels now, for He says we ought to wash one another's feet thus. In Col. i. 28 we have "Whom (Christ) we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." In the epistles of Paul we find what a faithful washer of feet he was, bringing the word of God to bear upon the Galatians and Corinthians and all that were out of the way, and how the secret is told to the Thessalonians that they were his joy and crown of rejoicing. How delightful the exhortation on this subject in Gal. vi. 1. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are *spiritual*, this is the vessel, restore such an one." "If a man purge himself from a vessel of dishonor he shall be a vessel unto honor, (this honor as well as any other,) sanctified and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work."

Only in heaven, when the saints are there (Rev. iv. 4, 6), do we find the "sea of glass" showing that there is no further need of washing by the water, for it is solid, when the walk down here is over. But, till then, the laver is filled with water to meet the constant need.

And so we ought to wash one another's feet, applying the word of God to the heart and conscience of the defiled brother in the same lowly way as we have Christ for an example, and not go around exposing one another's feet to others. How needful the lesson, when we are so apt to be lifting up the skirts of a brother and saying, "See there, how filthy he has become." Going to him alone

is the lesson of Christ, with the sense and confession of the thing to the Lord, of how it dishonors him. No self-righteousness, no self-occupation can do it, but the heart with Him. The servant is to do what His Lord has done and he that is sent is not greater than He that sends. It is a blessed service for His sake and in His name, though rarely appreciated by us. Happy indeed, if we, knowing these things, do them.

Ver. 18. But conduct cleansed is not salvation. And Judas, who was a demon, fulfilling thus the scripture, "He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me," though his feet were washed was not clean. One may live in a clean way without being clean within. How grave a lesson to those who would try to build up a life by the moral precepts of the word without first knowing death and salvation through the cross. Christ cannot be used until one has known Him as Saviour, the One who needs must have died.

It is like the man at the feast without the wedding garment, an insult to Him whose life was laid down for us that we might have life. If Christ be the Life, there is no life without Him. The old one veneered will not do. It is the worst kind of rejection of Him.

Ver. 19. In this solemn scene wherein this terrible difference is made known, Jesus the only One that could decide the matter makes it known. Everything must come out in His presence now, and by it they were to believe that He is. With authority He places His own in His position upon His leaving, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." It is to be His servant and to be fully commissioned and accredited as such by Him. The washing of the brother's feet is thus duly sanctioned in connection with all service as His. It is to be not a reprover but a healer;

not to press law but to act grace, and actually to do it. It is His own girdle of righteousness and yet human, linen, spring from the earth, that wipes the feet.

Vers. 24-30. And now the Lord with the double asseveration, "Verily, verily," the Father always with Him in these utterances, having disclosed the saddest of facts that one of them should deliver Him up and amidst the alarmed and spirit-stricken disciples, having made known to the one next to Him leaning in His bosom, who it was, Judas having received the bread dipped by the Lord's own hand, passes out at once, and it is *night!* All within is light; it is the holy place with the Lord; and the unsaved one is informed by the word of God that all is known.

Vers. 31, 32. And the glory is but beyond the veil, "that is to say His flesh." He announces that the hour has come. "The Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him." The Son of God was glorified in raising Lazarus, type of Israel and individually of the believer. But the Son of Man is glorified, and God through Him, in death. "And if God be glorified in Him," there was no glory for God in man alive, God shall also glorify Him in Himself and shall straightway glorify Him. All will come out in the richest glory, the full display of God in Christ and of Christ in rising from the dead. But here his death is before Him. He was to meet God in judgment for sin in death. In all the long history of man nothing less would honor God. And then God, honored, could honor Him to the utmost. This is being done now on high.

Ver. 33. In this He was alone: ~~they~~ were children here and He but a little while with them. They could do nothing for it or against it. The transaction and the hour were between the Son and the Father. What could they know of the path of death for sin or the de-

parture to the Father as the sin-bearer who had met all? "Ye shall seek me and whither I go ye cannot come." It was said to the Jews; it is said to them. His place henceforth shall be out of this scene; but love would make them like Him and all should know by this that they represented Him. None other loved as He, self utterly apart; for man loves himself and in the narrow compass of his own nature. He buys, he sells, he expects an equivalent for all he does. Only Christ gave Himself, and He was leaving them, the only ones who had seen and known this method, so foreign to man's way. *As* He had loved them is the measure, the new commandment. The old commandments had come to man who had nothing in him by which he could obey them. They were tests of His weakness, to bring out transgression. The commandment of Christ would be carried out by their being made like Him, one with Him in nature, and then having Him, the New Man, as the model. Against the New Man there was no law, everything was positive and encouraged to activity; for the old there was nothing but prohibitions, every word of God was against all that was in him. Love is the fulfilling of all in the new; and a new company of beings born of God, and so, lovers instead of hateful and hating one another, was to be left here for a season that His name and nature might be a perpetual testimony among men. Thus far, up to and in death alone, He would then be the Head of a new race. Should they follow Him it would be in death and their death would be nothing except as in Him, His own death which was for them and not for Himself; and so, in that they could not be fellows except by faith.

Vers. 36-38. But Peter in fleshly confidence would fain follow Him, not knowing the meaning of these things. It was but seeing a friend and lover and loved

one pass away from them, until all its infinite character should be unfolded by the Holy Spirit afterward. "Whither goest Thou? Why cannot I follow Thee *now*..." The Holy Spirit gives the answer by Peter Himself afterwards. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. Who His ownself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." And again, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter ii. 21, 24, iii. 18.) But then the Holy Spirit had come.

Here, however, he has to be told his true place, and not only that but his utter failure to stand where he was. The Ark in passing over Jordan had to be separated from the camp of Israel, for they had not passed this way before. Peter will be allowed, with Hezekiah in other times, to find what was in his heart, the possibilities of man's weakness, and so the need of that death in which Jesus must be alone. Blessed fact that Jesus meets the full judgment of God and the full power of Satan there; and for us who follow, there is no condemnation, no fear.

CHAPTER XIV.

And now these standing for all whom He has taken out of the world unto Himself, He must lead them into what they have in Him. He is altogether theirs and for them. He is going away and they are to be with Him. The new position and the new place are theirs forever in and with Him. What wonders! For us, as we learn the exceeding riches of God's grace toward us,

in Ephesians, the prayer is that we might be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we be rooted and grounded in love, in order to comprehend and to know the love of Christ. And they were the first heirs of all this, cut off to Him, to share His fortunes here and in the glory.

And what was their state of soul? They knew nothing as yet; they were sorrowful with the thought of His betrayal to death and by one of them; and their own infirmity was laid bare in His answer to Peter that he should deny the Lord thrice!

They were with Him; but if He died what then? On a former day they had said "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But they had thought of Him as down here. They had thought of heaven as the place of God from whom He had come; and He was to abide forever with them. They knew not that they were to abide with Him in His place. Their thoughts were not of the heavenly but of the earthly kingdom. But He loved them unto the end, and though they could not know until the Holy Spirit should come, yet He displays before them the things that shall be for their comfort, naming to them yet in the natural man that receives not the things of God, the rich and unique prerogatives of their new condition.

Much of the chapter is taken up with the questions of the disciples, showing the extent of their knowledge, seeing only the earthly things, and the answers leading them graciously into the heavenly. It is a transition moment from the one to the other, not then true of themselves until Christ should be gone; but they must learn these things from Him.

Ver. 1. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe

in God, believe also in Me." Cast as they were off from man, this was a word of peculiar solace. It let them know that they were the same to Him even though their weaknesses were thus brought out, even because of this. Man was not to be believed in; God was, and they did believe in Him. Himself was to go away from them for a season, that little word "now" told them of a being with Him afterwards but not now. He would be to them an Object of faith as God was. It was better; it was nearer. It would show that they were linked with Him, no matter where He was. They might not see Him; He would see them. They need not trust themselves; trust Him. The province of faith is to link us with the invisible, and in the new life in which they were to act all would be of faith. Were they afraid of God? He, Himself, had brought to them the love of God, and as God was all and He was God, to go to Him was the natural thing, having secured for Him those given to Him.

All that they had heard from Him as set forth in this character of Son of God was to have its proper meaning and setting by transferring all to heaven; and so, if He was to go to the Father, they must come, too. And love would bring them there, for He could not do without them.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if not I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place *for you*. And if I go away to prepare a place for you, I am coming and I will take you unto Myself, that where *I* am *ye* may be also. And ye know whither I go and ye know the way." They must have known of the "many abodes" for had they not read of the messengers of God that surround Him, the myriads of myriads? But a special people taken from the earth in a risen Christ must have a special place. There was no place yet for redeemed man; a new thing was to take place, *man*

brought into heaven! Man was not made for heaven but for the earth, and so placed here to till the earth and live upon it. By sinning he lost the earth and the earth shared the ruin. But by sinning he brought down the Son of God from heaven, who by His death opened heaven as the normal place for those believing on Christ, and so in Him. Henceforth earth was nothing but a waiting place. Waiting for whom? None other than the One to whom we were given and Who took up the whole case of our need and of His for us. He will not send any messenger but come Himself. What love, what consistency with His purpose and the will of the Father! As a man to whom a woman is espoused as his bride might tell her of his father having a large estate and many abodes there, but not one of them fitted for her and him together. And what would he not make the one house for her, putting all his means, taste and love into it? For Christ to prepare the place secures it according to all the exacting nature of the new man, for it is according to Himself, His wisdom, His love, His full purpose for us.

Here, then, is the beginning of the things of heaven, of which He made mention to Nicodemus and which have been kept in the revelations He has made in speaking to the Jews and Pharisees, letting them know their inability to enter into them. It explains the whole of His work and unfolds the Father's will and His own. To introduce man to heaven, He must come for Him. The spirit may be absent from the body and be with Christ, but the things of the new creation in their completeness necessitate the body as well as the spirit that the whole man shall be there. This tells not of manifestation with Him in glory, only the intensely sweet thing of being with Him for His love's sake. It goes farther along, too, clear into the final eternal condition and place. This is the scope of this book of John. The

order seems to be—caught up to Him, then manifested with Him to the world; then reigning, ruling with Him during the thousand years of His reign over Israel and the nations; then passing with Him into the new heavens and the new earth; ever with Him.

We know, then, thus far these four things: that He came down from heaven, that He was doing here the work given Him to do, and that He goes back to heaven fully authorized to bring His own to His own abode and that He will Himself come for them, and we may add that they shall be forever with the Lord. What a volume in these comforting words, for them and for us! This is the farthest remove from the common thoughts of the common Christianity of the day that if we hold out faithful, we shall be saved at last, dying and going to heaven thereby. It is that we are His now and forever and that we belong to Him where He is and death is not our prospect but to be caught up by His descending and taking us to Himself, His own joy.

In a general way this chapter states three great facts. 1. That He was transferring everything to heaven by going there. 2. That He would come again to receive them to Himself; and 3, That till then He would send the Holy Spirit and the Father would send Him, too, in Christ's name, faithfully and fully to represent Him and make up to them for Christ's absence, they being by Him kept in the scene where Christ is.

And these are three great prime facts of the truth now: That the new man belongs in heaven, the Head being already there; that Christ shall come to take us there; and that the Holy Spirit fills the whole time down here, making true to us the things of Christ. And now, ought it to be hard to stay here, if such be His will, for the little while, since He is coming so soon, and then "*Forever with the Lord!*" With such a prospect can we

not wait and does it not flood even the present with a glow of light, the reflection of the glory to come? Should we turn aside, then, to man's thoughts or the world's comfort or the culture of the old man or the making of things better down here in the world? Since He has left the world, will we not, in spirit, in mind, leave it, too? It should be no place for us since the new place is brought to view. And ought we not to insist that no One but the Holy Spirit, God Himself in us, can properly represent the absent One? That we are led by Him, walk in Him, and that His presence shall be manifested by always bringing Christ before us? He speaks and leads directly by the word of God. Take Him away and what would we understand of the scriptures? What would they be to us, or how much of Christ would we apprehend?

How thoroughly all these things furnish the reason why they should not be troubled; and so for us. Brought out of the world into Christ, at once the world is an enemy's land. But at once we are told where we belong and that He is coming to take us thither. There would be large occasion to be troubled were we left here, having nothing here, and knew not the infinite riches of that into which we have been cast. But we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen, are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. This is the realm of faith, the believing in Him as we believe in God, linked thereby with the invisible. What a comfort, what a massive one! What an exquisite sweetness in it all; and what a joy it gives that Christ has gone to the Father, by which we fall heir to such immense wealth! They had to be led into the knowledge of this gradually; we by the full enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in the word learn them at first.

Vers. 6, 7. These matters pertaining to this position are announced in answer to their questions, Jewish and earthly in their character, to be answered according to that into which they are brought. He had told them they knew whither He was going and the way. With eyes as yet unopened to the true things, Thomas, he the pattern of the earthly of the day of Israel in chap. xx., must express their ignorance. "We know not whither Thou goest and how can we know the way?" True, the Old Testament does not reveal it, saving for Himself in Ps. ii., cx., and in Ps. xvi. 10, 11, and xxiv. and viii. But no word is there of any other save Himself; no fellows; no bringing many sons to the glory; how could they know it? Only by knowing Him. "Jesus saith unto Him I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one cometh to the Father but by Me." They were learning more of Him than they had ever known, by His now being taken from them. He had declared Himself the Light of the world, the Good Shepherd, the Bread which came down from heaven, the Resurrection, the Door, the full, thorough Representative of the Father. Now all are revived in their thoughts, as being all these He is the way to the Father and to heaven. Heaven is just what He is for the Father is in Him, and heaven is, already; there is no long distance to travel.

He is the truth; not simply a truth teller, though when He speaks it He speaks but from Himself. All truth is in the New Man, and every element of the old man is not of the truth but falsehood, foreign, contrary, a lie. It is the standard at once constant and final. And everything must be weighed and measured and assigned accordingly. It is not a series of propositions but a living Person, a life lived before us according to God. See, for this, 1 Cor. xii. 3, "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can

say Jesus is Lord but by the Spirit," and 1 John iv. 2. His Person and His work; and His Person according to His work, having a new name because of it, commended to us as containing and carrying out all the purposes of God from everlasting to everlasting for earth and for heaven; this makes all simple, for the heart, for the conscience, the mind. Whatever matter is suggested, the only thought can be, How does this affect Christ Jesus the Lord? There is not anything that is true on earth or in heaven that is not connected with Christ, that will not honor Christ. The Christ of God is all, because He is the revelation of all truth. All the Old Testament is flush with life by Him, is looking forward to Him, foretelling His character, mapping out His way, His walk, the burden of His work. From the beginning when man failed God was content, leaning upon Him to more than restore while putting down the evil. The New Testament blooms and flowers with His excellencies on the earth and then gazes up at Him and looks forward for Him.

And He is the Life, the eternal life. "When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with Him." The true life that we have is He; the righteousness, the love, the peace, the patience, the holiness, the honesty, the grace, are Christ reproduced. For us to live is Christ; it is living out the life we have in Him. The more we practically deny the old man, the more will the Holy Spirit bring out our true living. We do not have to stir up the new life, the Holy Spirit does that.

"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." He was going to the Father; He was their life as having died for them and they in Him; and so this was the way to the Father and there is no other way. Heaven's company is made up of those who are in Christ, who were born not of earthly relationship but of God.

Ver. 7. "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also, and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." The new had come, death being understood here as past, and all was clear before them, only to be made so by the Holy Spirit. They had known Him, and knowing Him still more, they would know they had seen the Father in Him.

Vers. 8-11. To Philip's word, "Show us the Father and it suffices us" the answer is more direct, appealing to his own apprehension as he had followed Jesus. To him the word had been spoken "Follow Me," representing as he did the wilderness position of Israel. So there was an appeal to that wilderness experience, as to what he had learned from it in the "so long a while." Had Israel learned the meaning of the Cloud that guided them? Had not Philip more than they of old; and were not the ways and things and realities of God manifest all the journey to this moment, in Himself? It was as Moses to Israel in Deut. viii. 2, 3, "Thou shalt remember all the way Jehovah thy God hath led thee—that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah." And again in chap. ix. 3, "Understand therefore this day that Jehovah thy God is He who goeth before thee." Jesus had led them and He had made known the Father by doing all things of the Father, and He would still show the Father. Was not the Father revealed by the Only One who could reveal Him and did He not thus stand out to faith, fully known? How could it any more be said "Show us the Father?"

Faith alone understands this and a Philip must be raised into the place of faith by which all he had seen would be known as the "Father in Me and I in the Father," the word and the works all discerned, then; but especially the works, for if they were not of the Father, Jesus had

labored in vain and spent His strength for naught and in vain, though surely His judgment was with Jehovah and His work was with His God." (Isa. xlix. 4.)

And now as a proof of this and as a result of His going to the Father, two things should come to those believing in Him. First (ver. 12), the works that He did they should do and greater than these should they do. This took place in Acts ii. and following, all the way through, by the preaching of Christ risen from the dead. To make a man new every whit, spirit now and the body directly, already involved and due him at the coming of Christ for us, is vastly greater than to give new eyes or new limbs or call back from the tomb. Besides, the multitudes of all the years from Acts ii. till to-day, is a greater work given into the hands of His representatives and servants than the few He gathered. His work was to die and rise and make and be the way to God, and then carry on by the Holy Spirit, through those He should use, the greater works.

A second thing resulting from His going to His Father would be that His name should be the only availing one in prayer. Prayer had not found much of a place in the ritual service of Israel while in their place. The prayers of the Psalms refer to the condition of the people out of the land or out of their proper condition before God. But now, with Christ with the Father and the whole scene of living transferred to heaven and these yet here, the intercourse between themselves and God would be by prayer. And that it shall be direct and confident it is told that whatsoever is asked in His name shall be received. His name is both their position, for they are in Him, having lost their own, and a ground and plea. Indeed, the confidence of this standing and prayer is met by Himself, "I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." But could it be in His name if pro-

ceeding from, or ministering to, the old man? "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask *amiss* that ye may consume it upon your own desires" is the opposite of all this, for here it is solely for the Lord, and as His. He that answered them when they made mistakes, that gave without their asking because He was sent of God to give, will surely open out all things to those coming in His own name. And he that loves Him will keep His commandments. "This is love, that we walk after His commandments." (2 John 6.) "And this is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will that He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." (1 John v. 14, 15.)

Ver. 16. And now the precious fact is stated that the Spirit of the truth, another Comforter or Advocate, should come according to His asking, from the Father, One given as Christ was given, who should remain always. He would make the truth a reality, a living thing to them. Christ is the truth, the things of Him are the truth and the work of the Spirit is to make them enter into all these things. The world could not receive Him because it sees Him not, neither knows Him. Thus were they, and we, marked off from the world, a separated people, competent to take up the life given and to walk in all, so as to be in fellowship with all the things told. It is by the Spirit that all is removed from simple assertion of truth, becoming the natural life to the new man in Christ; everything that is accomplished by Christ wrought within, so that the life in Christ is as consolidate and complete and according to the son-place as the old was by the spirit of man, forming him for and making him at home in the wondrous blessings that the grace of God has bestowed in redemption. While Christ was on earth

the Spirit being in Him was among them, but on His session at the right hand of God, He should be in them as a gift not in answer to their prayer or effort, not to be alienated from them to take His departure and then return, but to remain through the age, forever. Could any one other than He answer the need of the new man?

Consider here the dignity, the glory of one of Christ's own. He must be indwelt by God the Spirit and then the Father and by the Son! Has he not been born into unspeakable riches, to be nourished accordingly, so as to share for eternal ages all that Christ has? He must be in communication with God and have a passport, a Name for this, and be brought face to face with God as a worshiper, for such is the pleasure of His will. Beyond all aspiration or prayer, beyond *all* that we can ask or think, we, taken up from the gutter, are to have all this, to know it as already possessed. Will we not delight to be schooled by such thoughts, such absolute facts as these? Will we not cheerfully abandon all other things, things of the world, being transformed by the renewing of the mind, that we may now prove this good and acceptable and perfect will of God?

Ver. 18. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." Had Jesus remained here what would have been accomplished for us? Really nothing, for no one would have been joined to Him; He would have been but another representation of the law whom it was not possible to imitate as it was not possible to obey that. Had He remained after His death and resurrection, how could He have been understood or followed? There would have been no power to live in Him. The Holy Spirit was necessary for this. We should have lacked the knowledge of the love that thinks of us all the time, that asked of the Father the Paraclete, that is one who takes the place of another, reproducing him. Thus the

Spirit does for Christ, filling us with Him; Christ in us instead of outside us; Christ ours; we, His; Christ the wholeness of our being; Christ coming again and thus our Hope! No orphanage this! "In whom, though *now* we see Him not, believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of the glory" as though He were present. He *is* present by the Holy Spirit.

Ver. 19. The world sees Him not, but we see Him thus and our life is linked with Him. Absence of body makes Him nearer to our spirit, and faith makes all present. The world cannot understand this, we may say, of course; it seems an impossible dream, but faith deals only with impossibilities. That which is impossible to men is possible with God and faith knows all things are ours. It is now the day in which all is known; that He is in the Father and we in Him and He in us.

Yes; and so we know the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, their relationship, their place and work. The Holy Spirit brings them to the heart as realities. We live with them, and no matter what or where we are on the earth, in spirit theirs is our habitation. We know more about heaven than of the world or the earth. No preparation is needed for departure on the signal, the Father having made us fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. If any depart from the body, we know all about them. We are not in communication with them but we are with Him by the Holy Spirit. We live the same life with the same peace and joy; the same opposition, surrounded by the same hatreds and stupidity to all good that Christ did, and we must have the same life and companionship and resources; and by the Spirit we have all. All things are ours.

All this spread before them in the sweet grand reality of it all; for them, and they sorrowful! To their eyes

He could not lift the veil concealing all, for He was not yet glorified; the Holy Spirit was not yet.

Ver. 21. And now He tells of this fellowship and the way of it. The Father's love is theirs and the Son's and He will manifest Himself to them. If the question comes as to how this shall be, for their idea of manifestation was at the day of the Lord when it shall be public and every eye shall see Him; how could there be any other? asks Judah. The answer is, "If one love Me he will keep My word." This is more than "words;" it is the whole matter revealed by Him, the substance of all that He is forming, the life practically; going on thus (and love we see here is action), "and my Father will love him." They are not far off, nor is heaven so far off; for this is heaven. There is nothing of religious ceremonials nor cleansings in this; it is simplicity, itself; walking, acting out in reality the life we have, the life of Christ, and so entertaining as permanent guests, the Father and the Son. All Christian life is so centralized, so unconscious of effort, of work, only absorbed occupation with the Beloved, whom the Spirit in the word now sets forth more and more as we follow on.

His word was the Father's, and he that loves Him not does not keep it. It is a test clear and decisive. It does not say such an one has not life, is not saved, but if he love or love not Christ the Son of God. And this is, after all, the life drawn to Him and moulded by Him. And yet He says, "keepeth not my *words*," here the words of grace from the Father's heart offering life and salvation. It is serious, for it is not coming to the light.

Vers. 25, 26. All these things He had spoken being yet with them. It was needful that they should get them all from His lips, in His own presence; fundamental truth relating to the new position, comforting and cheering, to be recited within them by the Paraclete, the full

Representative of Him, who would tell no new thing. He would teach all things and bring to remembrance all that He said. Again no effort on their part, all was done for them, all would be done in them by Him who would not leave them. "The love of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us."

All is committed to the Holy Spirit through the time of Christ's absence in the heavens. He will do all perfectly, so that not to have the whole truth vitally to the conscience and heart is to grieve Him. To live is to live in the Spirit; to walk is to walk in the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit. Naught else is acceptable, for anything else would be a denial of Christ's complete work.

Vers. 27-31. And now pronouncing peace and bestowing His own peace, a marvelous token of their oneness with Him, as He had already spoken of His love, He will open the way for their joy too by His going away, since all this heritage is thereby their own. Thus He already starts them in fruit bearing, love, joy and peace being the first three of the three times three of Gal. v. 22, of which we hear more in the next chapter. Fastening them in Himself for life and living and spreading before them what they shall have directly from the Father, who He says is greater than He and to whom He has brought them, He lets them know that they get exclusively from Him all these things, not to find them out by experiment and blunders, but only from Him. It is love's deepest plea that they may believe.

The chapter closes with the statement that the prince of this world comes and has nothing in Him. They will find nothing either in the world or its prince, Satan. But the world shall know that He loved the Father and He has done as He commanded; it is completed; the work all His, and they kept till He come for them; and so He utters the significant work looking to that, "Arise, let us go hence."

CHAPTER XV.

In the two preceding chapters there is given what Our Lord is and is doing for His own while away, as Advocate and preparing a place for them; and the further provision of the Comfort to abide with them till He shall come. In this, we turn to their side, to know what they, and we, are to be and do for Him, meanwhile. In the former chapters it was all grace in its fulness; in this it is responsibility, fruit-bearing.

And here it is all in association with Himself. They had been of the vine that proved false, Israel. This is now ended to them. "Rise, let us go hence," was the summons to leave all that was of the world and of nature. "I am the true vine" was the only thing for them henceforth. All they would be was to be in connection with Him and for the Father. "My Father is the husbandman."

While He had been down here He was the only Object of delight to the Father, who had repeatedly testified His good pleasure in Him, the Man of His delight and comfort. It was the only time in the history of the world that God had pleasure in man. Now they were to take that place; His death and resurrection would bring them into a condition in which they could walk and please God, an impossibility in the old condition as demonstrated all the way through this Gospel. The Father was yet to partake of the fruit, to be glorified in them as He had been in Him.

He would be looking for fruit. Every branch in Christ that did not produce fruit would be taken away; and every branch that produced fruit would be purged that it might produce more fruit. As to them, they were already clean (purged) by the word which He had spoken to them. Saved and cleansed by the washing of the word, they were to *abide* in Him. The subject is not obtaining nor keeping nor losing life nor the possibility

of it nor of *service*, but fruit-bearing as necessarily flowing out from life, of course, and distinct from what is called service, which is manward. This is wholly Godward. It is walk, conduct; the joy, peace, patience, gentleness, meekness, unworldliness that were in Christ, a sweet savor unto God, not the fleshly imitations of them, the product of the selfishness of the natural heart.

How could fruit be brought forth to the Father? Only by abiding in Him, Christ; having the heart wholly occupied with Him. That which comes out from Christ in us, refreshes the Father and suits Him; and nought else does. They, and we, are the branches of the Vine, Christ, and nothing that is not Christ will be acceptable to God. Christ becomes the test for everything, since Christianity is not the statement of certain propositions, a creed, a formulary, but life in and association with a Person. And if Christ be not everything to those who have confessed His name, how soon it will show itself in attention to ritual, religious forms and feelings, legality, a return to the old and false vine and not anything of the true; for Judaism had all these.

Apart from Christ they could do nothing. If a man *abide* not in Him, he is cast forth *as a branch*. It counted nothing; men gather dead branches and burn them. Ezek. xv. asks if the vinetree be of any use except to bear fruit or to be burned, and this is referred to here, doubtless. It does not say here that God burns, that is, consumes them, but it is the use men make of unfruitful vines. And in this there is instructive warning, for much more attention is given to meeting men's needs than God's thoughts; to what is called "work" rather than walk.

We were in Adam and produced to its fulness the fruit of Adam. Some were in Abraham and Moses, that is, under the law. If then the believer, who is in Christ, acts in the flesh, the old nature, he is practically acting

apart from Christ, though in Christ, for God is not unfaithful if he is; and if he takes the law of the ten commandments for his rule of life instead of Christ, he is apart from Christ practically. His fruit is not Christ-fruit but Moses-fruit. Is this satisfying to the Father? One can easily tell, it might seem, whether he is acting in Adam or in Moses. Both these conditions have been tried and found offensive to God. The law was, really, given to prove man rather than to get anything from him for God, for the law involved the two things, that man was living in the flesh and that he was a sinner. But we are not in the flesh but in the spirit, being in Christ.

In 1 Cor. xi. 30, "Many sleep," have died, on account of not producing fruit unto God in regard to worship. They are taken away as branches, though not lost. In Heb. iii. 6 there is a disowning of the house if the confidence and rejoicing of the hope is not held fast unto the end. These are "cast forth" as branches. He does not recognize them as His representatives, as one might say of his son who greatly dishonored him, "He is no child of mine," not representing him, though always his son. So the believer is born of God and is in Christ Jesus, fixed for eternity, as has so clearly been stated in this gospel of John, with the oath of the Father and the Son, "verily, verily." He cannot get out of Christ; but he can act out of Christ. All unrighteousness is sin. Does Christ sin? Whatsoever is not of faith is sin; does Christ fail in faith? "These things I write unto you that you sin not." The believer therefore can sin although it is not allowed, and so can act apart from Christ and thus produce no fruit such as Christ produced, in this thing. Acting out of Christ therefore is being fruitless to God, no matter how legal or how religious one might be in the meantime.

Now in Christ's absence the Father will want fruit such as has refreshed Him in Christ's life, and we have

this wonderful honor put upon us because we are Christ's, that we bring forth the same. This may be briefly pointed out in this chapter. In abiding in Christ fruit is produced naturally and without effort. Abiding in Him is being like Him. He did always the things that pleased the Father; they "bear much fruit" (ver. 5). He was always heard when He prayed (chap. xi. 12); they, by having His words abiding in them, ask what they will and it shall be done unto them (ver. 7). And surely the Father has desired, as every earthly father does, such intimacies as this; which He never received from angels or Israel. It is better fruit than "much serving." He glorified the Father on the earth; they do the same in bearing much fruit (ver. 8). He was loved of the Father abode in His love; they do the same, keeping Christ's commandments, the living out the New Man (vers. 9, 10).

He had continual joy; they are to have His joy in them, and their joy to be full (ver. 11). He by laying down His life had given the fullest expression of love; they were to love one another as He had loved them (vers. 12, 13). He was in the mind and counsels of the Father; they are henceforth *friends*, knowing what He does, doing *His* commands. (If under the Ten Commandments the life would be foreign to His.) For all these they have been chosen and appointed (not "ordained") to bear much fruit and that it might remain and they should be heard *always*. The continual bearing of fruit is thus looked for.

He had been hated all the way through; they get the same hatred, as not being of the world (vers. 18-22). He had borne testimony to the truth down here; they should testify of Him (ver. 27).

Surely, a cluster of fruits we may say. It were worth while for Him to have been down here, to bring all these to the Husbandman. But His being down here proved

that it was all over with the world. They had both seen and hated both Him and the Father. And the more simply we live as He lived bearing His fruit unto God, the more will the same hatred to Him be manifested. The life we live will bring out in contrast this opposition life of the world. And the dreadful thing is it was "without cause" to Him. Our fruitfulness will make manifest the same.

Now, a few words about fruit-bearing as presented by Christ. For this we were chosen and appointed. It is much to know who we are and the meaning of our lives, what our living should be. It is everything, indeed. While the thought of the work of Christ is contracted to our being saved simply, that is, made safe for happiness as to the future; or if it be to benefit the community as its object; or even to set examples for others, we are not in the way of producing fruit, for this is in effort, independence of Christ—it is being apart from ("without") Him. We are, first of all born of God and so like Christ and in Him. This is settled for eternity and ought never to be reviewed. But Christ being absent each of us as a child of God, is in His place. God cannot give up the sweetness of that fruit that He enjoyed in the Man of His heart, here. We are to render it.

Again, it is not the fruit of our labor; this would be service, which is not the question here. It is better than all that. He can command myriads of servants to do His bidding that stand in His presence on high, but that would not be fruit of the New Man. Now, see the fruit already enumerated; the first one, asking what we will and getting it. Does not every parent understand that, how intensely sweet it is to have one so close to him as to use such freedom and is it not more than all service? He can hire scores of servants and yet one son taking the

place of one and knowing his mind, entering into the liberty, the fulness of his heart toward him, gives most exquisite delight. God having yearned for company, confidence, fellowship from man, which He never received till Jesus was here, wants it yet from those who are one with Christ. It is what He made us for, for His own secret society. The one thing above all in life that He would have is our supreme confidence.

Another is joy, Christ's joy. He was ever showing that God made Him happy. So we are needed for this to spread around God's joy and Christ's joy by knowing Him better. Glorifying God, the thing asked for by men so often in prayer, is bringing out what God is; and how better than letting Him be all to us? The more He is to us, the more He does for us and the more will He be known.

It is important in reading this chapter so as to get the good of it that we know that it has to do with fruit-bearing only, it does not enter upon the matter of our salvation, that being understood; it cannot therefore be spoken of as being in any way in question or imperilled. Second, that it has nothing to do with good works which go out to man, but to that which is before God. It is thus in accord with the exhortations of the Epistles which are mainly with reference to walk; and not service to any great degree. Serving may never bring us into the place of persecution, but living to God will, because it makes us stand apart from things here in which man is engaged and takes us into heavenly things. But it shall turn out for a testimony in itself. They that think least of their testimony will probably give the best. Our testimony is our living; God's testimony is what He gives us to speak.

CHAPTER XVI.

As His, they were to be hated, then; the very religion of the world being brought to bear against them. He that killed them would think that He was serving God, bringing an offering to Him. This might be a *means of stumbling to those that had been Jews*; for, of old, a righteous Israelite was to expect honor, position, wealth. But the new place as associated with Him who had gone to the Father instead of reigning on the earth involves the hatred that fell to Him.

These things, therefore, He told them that they should not be scandalized. They were entirely with Him in all this. The world did not know Him nor the Father and they must except this. There is a sweetness in His telling them beforehand and not allowing the world to treat them in a way unexpected. It was a part of their inheritance. We should all stumble had He not informed us before it came to pass. His own presence was enough while He was with them; besides, He shielded them from the enemy, having all the enmity expended on Himself. His being with them was a wonderful thing and only blessing; but His going away would be a still more wonderful thing, bringing Him closer than ever because of faith; and because of the Holy Spirit.

But in spirit they had not yet entered into this. It would be real to them when He had gone and the Holy Spirit had come. As yet, sorrow filled their hearts, occupied rather with what they were losing than with what was to be their own wonderful standing and immeasurable gain. Nevertheless He told them the truth. The whole matter of their new place depended on His going away and the Paraclete (Comforter) coming to bring all to their minds, make all true to them practically. For His death meant not now the regeneration of the

nation, but heaven and a heavenly standing. He was to come after them to take them to their place, not leave them here to find it here. If this were their place, they would need no Holy Spirit in them. He would not make things better to them in the world but would demonstrate the wretched condition of things here. His coming was because Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God whom the Father had sent. He would therefore uphold both the Father in sending and the Son in all He did as sent. The world had not received Him but had crucified Him. And God entered His verdict in regard to Him and them by raising Him and receiving Him in heaven. Momentous facts! The Holy Spirit must be here for His sake and for the Father's testimony.

But what must He do to the world? Tell out these three things. 1. They had not believed on Him; this was their *sin*. 2. The Father had vindicated Him in righteousness, justifying all that He did and particularly in taking death, by withdrawing Him to His right hand not to supplement the work or die again. They should see His face no more because the Father was righteous, sealing His work thus as perfect. This is God's righteousness. But if so, 3, judgment has passed on the prince of this world and upon it. Satan has been manifested as this prince by leading men to do all against Christ. All testing of this world has ceased; there is no more probation; "last of *all* He sent His Son." And what will He do with those who cast Him out and put Him to death? "He will miserably destroy."

The Holy Spirit does not benefit the world. God was in Christ reconciling the world; but it refused. He is not in the Holy Spirit doing the same thing, but rather showing the iniquity of the world and telling of judgment. It is not "reprove" nor "convict" the world, as the world may not listen and take home these things;

it is rather make a display of this as the state of things, as though He said, and He does say it, "God sent His Son to give you life and you put Him to death. He was righteous in raising Him from dead and sending no more; but it leaves you the worse, for to the evil that brought Christ for you you have added His death. The world is judged."

But, thanks to God, judgment is not executed yet, and he that accepts these three things, bowing to God's judgment, is convicted, has repented and is met by the full virtue of the death of Christ for sin, according to God's grace, is saved. And thus this testimony of the Holy Spirit's work now is a door of hope for him who will say "I have sinned," who will accept from God the fact of his guilt and what Christ is to God. The fact that He will send Him no more declares the perfection of His work on the cross for sin and sins and that God on that account can righteously forgive and make new. If therefore this is passed by "there remains no more sacrifice for sin but a fearful looking for of judgment which shall devour the adversary. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer a punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified (that is, set apart as Saviour) an unholy thing and hath done despite to the Spirit of God!" (Heb. x. 26-29.) These three things of the Holy Spirit have in them salvation for him who accepts them, but they are the last offer.

But many are troubled by the question as to how they shall be moved by the Holy Spirit or how they shall know that He appeals to them; and some have been told, even, to pray for the Holy Spirit to move them, which is all wrong and self-contradictory, for

no one can pray properly without the Holy Spirit; and besides, prayer is the language of the child of God, his intercourse with the Father. How simple the matter is here. How do we know the minds of others but by their words, and how can we be influenced by them but by taking their words? Here are the things the Holy Spirit tells. Taking them as given here, the fact of being a sinner, of God's righteousness in accepting Christ's death for the sinner and of being under judgment, and the Holy Spirit has done His work. Christ has come and done His work and gone, and the Holy Spirit is here to attest it all; and Him, too.

Ver. 13. And while He is thus towards the world, He was to be *with* the disciples, guiding into all truth, speaking the things of Christ, glorifying Him; not speaking from Himself independently and separately. The Father sent the Son and received Him to glory; the Spirit comes from the Son and bears the message of Him to the heart and life of the believer. He has glorified Him in all that He gave to those appointed to write the Scriptures. All scripture is given by His inspiration. With this He brought to their remembrance what Jesus Christ had said and told them, the value and meaning of His death, and the things to come. The word contains what the Holy Spirit has to say to the believer and it is complete.

Thus believers would be kept filled with joy while here, having all things for life and godliness, and in a little while see their Lord again, He coming to take them to Himself. Death would not divide Him from them. More than ever He would be with them by the Holy Spirit's glorifying Him. All that the Father had was His; therefore the Holy Spirit should take of His things and show them. As He had testified of the Father, the Holy Spirit would testify of Him and He was now

testified of the Holy Spirit. It must be clearly understood that in simply coming into the world Christ did not reach man or touch him, for that could be done by angels who could not help man out of his place. Had not Jesus died, all would have been of no avail; had He not risen, no other life would have been possible; had He not ascended, the life down here, though like His, would have had no expansion or proper place of action; had He not gone above, no place would be prepared for us; had not the Holy Spirit come, no knowledge of what He was and what He did would be ours; no living the life we have; no hope held out; no Person to feed upon, to live in, to enjoy while waiting.

Now all these things are true for us and about us and Him, and if we walk in the spirit the full enjoyment of them shall be known. So richly shall they be known that there will be no resort to man's religiousness or the law; Christ will be all. There will be no restlessness, for the Holy Spirit ministering Christ, ministers His peace and the peace of God; no unmet longings, for Christ will be before us, the perpetual Man of the heart, and the One coming at any time to take us to Him and to our home. We shall have everything seen in its relation to Christ; we shall have what God thinks on every subject nameable. And how? In the word which the Holy Spirit has written, breathed out to us, making all that we are saved for present. The word well learned makes us wiser than angels that attend God, for they are but servants and know commands, while we are sons and know reasons, revelations, secret purposes, dispensations, the plan of the ages, the glory as the final cause.

Ver. 18. He was going to the Father, but the disciples could not follow His words, nor did they get the preciousness of the "little while" of His speech. Why die instead of being manifested to the world as King was

their former question. How, if He dies, come back again? How go to the Father and they see Him again in a little while? It all seemed a haze. "What is this that He saith, A little while? We cannot tell what He saith."

And Jesus answered by giving them more deeply the condition of things. He knew what infants they were, afraid of being orphaned by His departure. But it was not so, even while there would be to them a fierce unveiling of the spirit of the world by His going and the Holy Spirit's coming. But the Holy Spirit was for them. With all solemnity (ver. 20) He tells them they shall weep and lament but the world would rejoice to get rid of Him and they should continue sorrowful, but the sorrow should be turned into joy as a woman's sorrow is forgotten when her babe is born, for joy that a man is born into the world.

Ver. 23. Again with the solemn asservation of two witnesses, "Amen! amen! He says whatsoever ye ask the Father in My name, *He* will give it you." Since the word kindred to this in chap. xiv., He had brought the Father near to the heart practically when the Holy Spirit should come and so it is the Father petitioned and answering. He had said before, "I will do it," here it is "He will do it;" we taking in perfect faith His place, asking as His, only as in Him. What we are to the Father is just as Christ is. It is more than "for His sake" or "for Jesus' sake," closer and richer as being in Him and representing Him here. But it cannot want nor ask for anything that is not what He would ask.

This would make us understand why we would not use the prayer of Matt. vi., commonly though improperly called The Lord's Prayer. It is because it was given in the beginning of His earthly ministry to an earthly people with reference to an earthly kingdom. It therefore has nothing including what we have here, which involves His

death and resurrection and heavenly session and ministry. The Holy Spirit would be continually associating us with heavenly things; this and prayer with earthly. To pray as Jesus said there, "after this manner," is not to use the words; but as those words and petitions were adapted to, and the proper outflow of the heart for their then present condition while yet the offer was made of an earthly kingdom which was afterward rejected; so we should pray in accordance with our heavenly standing and position in Christ risen. The Holy Spirit having us in charge, this being His day, He must teach us to pray, while Jesus having them in charge as proposed King, taught them the "manner," not form.

Moreover, they had as yet asked nothing "in His name;" now they are to begin. There was no expression of joy as the result of that prayer; it was all anxiety, longing and fear of trial. Here, then, joy was to be complete, quite a contrast! There was no thanksgiving, we, in *everything*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, are to let our requests be made known to God, without any anxiety; in everything we are to give thanks, to rejoice evermore. While they are being called up out of the place of uncertainty and the lack of peace and impossibility of fellowship with the Father and the Son, shall we go down and occupy their old position and take their experiences and then their prayer? To meet our ignorance as to how to pray as sons because we are sons, the Holy Spirit is given us to hold us to the riches of that place. "And he that searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to God."

Nothing else than His pleadings within us will be according to God. A prayer for a day that is not the Holy Spirit's time, will not do, will not utter our desires or receive anything for us.

Ver. 25. As to His intercourse with them all that is given in this book was to these on the ground of the Jew, but parables; truths given and yet concealed from those who cannot or will not receive them; but to the ready heart that can take them in, they can be made known, as we see in Matt. xiii. 13-16. The parables there were not understood by His enemies and would not have been by the disciples, but He opened them. A parable is not a story to illustrate a truth; it is the truth itself. As though He would say, "It will not be received, but I will speak it nevertheless." It is like a nut, needing to be cracked open, but the kernel is there; and rich, too. Now He had spoken to them in that way. Many of the incidents that occur, as we have found, have truth in them that would be open only to the ear and eye of the new man, enlightened and exercised by the Holy Spirit.

He had said these things, whether they understood them or not; but the hour was coming when He would no more speak unto them in parables, but would show them plainly of the Father. That is now, by the Holy Spirit. There is no book in the scripture that is more full of teaching that requires fellowship with the subject, and the mind of the writer, the Spirit, to get it than this one. Wherein we fail, it is that we are so little in fellowship with Him. The deeper the fellowship, the more thoroughly we would understand all that had been told. That is, then, the reason for speaking in parables, but not doing it when the Holy Spirit comes. The Holy Spirit's business is to take of the things of Christ and tell them out and make them actually ours.

Ver. 26. At that day, the present day, they should ask in His name. This is the place of Christ Himself. We recognize the fact that we are brought into the place of relationship to God in Christ as stated in chap. i. 12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power

to become the children of God." If we have the place of children, the Holy Spirit must necessarily be given to us to make us act and pray and talk as such. It is really praying as in Christ the Son of God; to be in His name is to be in the person. In Ephesians it is "taken into favor in the Beloved." In both Romans and Ephesians it is "in Christ." In each of these our perfect liberty in prayer is spoken of. "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father," our God and Father. The holy intimacy that we have with God as our Father is through Christ; and it is real. Therefore He says, "In that day ye shall ask in my name." We are where we talk to Him face to face. There is no ceremony, no form, no ritual. It has nothing to do with forms. It is simply openness of speech before the face of our God and Father. "You shall ask in my name." How did we get there? In Christ Jesus. Who are we as there? Children of God; "as He is so we are in the world." Now if we represent Him here, we must talk as He does. We must have the same position and privileges, the same prerogatives. We can go to God as freely as He did.

"And I say unto you not that I will pray the Father for you." Here He had borne them up before God as their Leader and King and as Son of David. Now it was a very different relationship. He was not to ask for the people as David did. He says, "I say not that I will ask Him for you."

Ver. 27. "The Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from God." That is the result of that new position and the answer of the heart to Him, believing that He came forth from God and that these things He had told them were from God. It is showing the change from all that had to do with the kingdom. Thus the infinite intimacy that there is here.

Ver. 28. Here is the leading thought of what Christ is in John; totally different from what we have in Matthew. "I came forth from the Father and I am come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father." There was no such thought in Matthew; there He is the Son of David and comes to be King and to establish His kingdom on the earth, and so there is no word about going to the Father. Witness Matt. xxviii. 10, 16-20, "I go before you into Galilee," as though He were going to begin the kingdom on the earth at once with them. John has not a word of that. And we do not stay on the earth, either. We are taken out completely, to be up there with Him. "Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." Thus the Father's heart was displayed to them; but the disciples had not reached to that yet. No wonder that He had to say to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Vers. 29, 30. Now they believe that He came forth from God. In Luke He came forth from God; He was so announced and they can understand that; but that is not in John. Here it is, "I came from the Father's heart." A totally separate thing from other books. Do you see how he is limited by their thoughts that would be connected only with the earth? This is exceedingly important, as we are closing up the words of Christ to His own.

So He must test them a little with this (ver. 31): "Do ye now believe?" The believing what He had said would have to be brought out by what they would have to pass through. In other words, they would have to be cast upon the Father more to get hold of that. There is a multitude of things that we can never know except by passing through discipline and tribulation.

Ver. 32. On such a ground as that they would for-

sake Him. If that was all they had it would not hold them. Of course they would get more when the Holy Spirit came. But it distinctly shows the character of what He is saying, lifting Him up into another place. They would show how little they apprehended His words. If they had known the reality of what was told them they would not leave Him alone. We find how it came out in chap. xix., when Christ was before the Sanhedrim; they *all* forsook Him; Peter and John were there in the enemy's palace. They did not know Him as come forth from the Father and going back to the Father, transferring everything to heaven, though they had come as far as to believe that He came forth from God, but He told them He was one with the Father, and He should return to Him. What then? He could not be out of their interests nor they of His. His death and resurrection and the Holy Spirit coming and dwelling in them would make it all clear and a practical thing.

Yet He was not alone because the Father was with Him. He had kept with the Father in all things and He would bring them into such company and into that wondrous joy and glory, though now they could not apprehend it.

In the world they should have the tribulation; the testing would come and this chapter opened that way, that men would think that they did God's service in putting them to death. But they would have peace in Him. The fourteenth chapter begins by saying, "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." He is to be out of sight altogether. We have not anything to show for the things that we believe. Is not that the blessedness of it, that everything is invisible? Who does not know that it is the strongest tie in the universe? It is said, "I believed and therefore have I spoken; we also have believed and therefore we speak." Believing is getting

God, all that He has and is. He is now connected with the heavens; those invisible things and we can range through them all and tell them out. We know the absolute truth of what we tell now, because we have not found them out for ourselves. We have not gone through philosophy on a voyage of discovery. We have heard from Him. That is all; and all is clear. We are living in the range of the unseen and there it is as solid as God's throne! How much that comes in in every epistle, as the exhortation. In Romans we are told what faith does and what hope does. In Hebrews the exhortation is in regard to the assurance of faith and the assurance of the hope, because He is faithful that has promised. If there is a tendency to slip away we have to correct it, as in Galatians and Hebrews and Colossians, by being warned as to dropping the invisible. Look where He has placed us, the lofty position that He has put us in held to Him by a thousand links, Himself invisible.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation." Why not? He had nothing else. Strangers and mere pilgrims through the scene; changed from being citizens to being strangers; lifted out from here to be up there; knowing only God and His Son Jesus Christ, who was down here and has lifted us up there; moved only by the Holy Spirit and taught by Him; why should we not be treated as He was? "In this world tribulation." It is not necessarily persecution all the time. Tribulation is only the action of the flail to bring out the wheat. "But in *Me* peace!" Perfect peace in Him! How that covers the entire ground and ranges through every possible thing we shall encounter! We are to have the Lord's peace. We are to have peace in Him, the peace that He brought when He made peace and we have Him and He has us; and so, we have all things. This is the wonder of this position into which we are brought. How wide that word

becomes with which we started in this book: "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." We are born, not of any birth here at all. Look at the whole matter of birth here, what is it? It is either by blood or adoption, or one choosing his country. We are not there. We are not in anything that they call birth or privilege or right or title or place. Every one of them has been banished out of sight. We are linked with all up yonder; and all are ours.

This is a beautiful and fitting close, is it not? "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." What is our response to that? "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." God cannot say a thing, but we can say, "We have it; we are there." We have overcome the world by simply taking what God says. "Who is he that overcometh the world but He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" The way to lead people into practical action is to tell them more and more of what belongs to them. We are not to be occupied with their feet but with their Head. Get them to look up. Any man that walks the street will stumble if he looks at his feet. If he keeps his eye on a level with his head and looks ahead, he will not stumble. It is the same way here. If we can be occupied with the truth about Him, and He is more and more enlarged all the time, the walk will be consonant with what has been learned of Him. There is no need in lecturing people about their walk and judging it. The one that gets hold of Christ is judged more and more all the way through John. His life is the judgment upon everything. So keep Christ before the heart. Keep Him as God does in the grandeur of His Person, as He is, and this will form life and manners. It will take eternity to learn all these things, but we can know Him as we can take in by degrees what is revealed of Him.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Lord ceases speaking to His disciples, and now they (and we) are to be listeners to His own recital to the Father of the work He has done while here. It is, at once, giving them the place of friends. Knowing what the Lord does, they shall know the thoughts of God about that work. It has this peculiarity, that it is about us and about the whole work He has done, and it is given into ears that can take in the whole. There were counsels concerning all this before the Son came down from the Father. Have these counsels been carried out? There were rewards proposed to Him. Will they be asked for? Is all accepted as meeting all Divine wisdom and holiness and love could ask? Are they clearly and righteously brought to God who were given to Him?

Human sensibilities were too dull, human hearts incapable of understanding what the Lord told of His ways and words and works as sent of the Father, and He had to explain in many ways to them, and finally leave them to the Holy Spirit; but this He pressed upon all, that there was One who judged all, before whose face all must be brought; that He came down from heaven but to do all that the Father gave Him to do and say. And now the hour has come to render up the account. Can we appreciate the high honor of listening to such a history from such an One to such an One? Is there any higher privilege than can be conferred upon us than to enter into the secret of all, done according to the thing to be done, done to re-establish the glory of God, done for eternal ages, done that all may come out gainers? Shall we not hear more of God than the heart of man ever conceived, and more of ourselves than we could possibly ask or think? Here at last we find no halting

limitations in Speaker or Auditor, as things of infinite meaning are told from loyal Heart and tongue into an absorbed heart.

We notice that He does not mention His death; and yet all that He had done involves His death. There is nothing without it, but the counsels of God take in the profound results of the death. The will of God was looking to this glory in the place where He had been utterly dishonored. The purpose was to answer the lying insinuation of the serpent that God was not kind by showing the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us, not by lifting us up out of the degradation and vileness into which we had been plunged, and, cleansing, set us upon our feet to go on again, but to take us out of it all by making us, by a new life, a new nature, fit for His own company and fitted to it by an intelligence of it, to know as we are known, to be brought to Him, perfected forever. And the Son came to do that will, "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." (Heb. x. 10.)

Our estimate of His work here would be that He died that we might be saved; though often man's idea of salvation is simply the forgiveness of sins. That is not even mentioned here. No: but in the presence of perfect light we are to learn other valuing and estimates and results, that, measuring the work to be accomplished, gave into the bosom of God, sons, thought of and longed for before the ages, to be holy and without blame before Him in love, meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Bringing many sons to the glory was the object.

Besides, it is the opening out of His own heart in behalf of those whom He has brought into this position. He has been telling some of His thoughts concerning them to

themselves, but their ears were dull, their hearts were sad at His going away. Now He can lay them in the hands of Him who gave them to Him, returned to Him as He had asked and as the case demanded, confident of His being one with Him in all. What *were* those thoughts in the past glory when, Himself ever the delight of the Father in the scene of Prov. viii., His own delights were with the sons of men? How rich, how tender, how deep and full of meaning to make Him take their title, though another nature, ever divine, and call Himself the Son of Man?

We are not left in ignorance of them. Can *we* receive them any better than they who first stood as listeners? We ought to do so since "we have received the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given us of God."

Ver. 1. He "lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may also glorify Thee." The first thought was always the Father's glory; and He had glorified Him down here, doing only that which the Father had told Him. And now He asks to be lifted to the glory above the scene of the full manifestation of God that He may still further show out the Father. It is as the obedient One, to be set forth as the Son of God by resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness shown in meeting sin even unto death, thus accomplishing the will of God. Thus it is a new glory, won as Man. He had revealed the grace of God, made known the Father, and He is still to do it. But the richer revelation of the Father flows down to us through His being on high and the Holy Spirit here. And now what a delight to our souls that He acquires a special glory for having come for us and redeemed us to God. Have we not, by being sinners, contributed this special glory asked for?

Ver. 2. Authority has been given Him to give eternal life to all that the Father had given Him, and in making known the Father He had given that which is eternal life, the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He had sent. This is connected with the petition, "Glorify Thy Son." He had richly manifested the Father on the earth. He had finished the work which was given Him to do. This comprehends the whole of that for which He was sent, the details of which with reference to the Father and to the objects of His love are given as He goes on and are to be marked. This might be said also to be the first item of the account presented.

Ver. 4. He had a glory with the Father before the world was, and He asked that this ancient glory should be restored, for He had emptied Himself of the form of God and taken the form of man, of a servant. (Phil. ii. 6-8.) He must have all back again, beside the glory as the just reward of His work here. In all His work and humiliation, in the path of reproach and shame in which He had walked here, in the obedience unto death and in death, He must lose nothing and the Father must lose nothing; and this must be declared.

In asking then to be glorified, He is asking the judgment of God on His work. And God begins the judgment of works by judging Christ's work. In raising Him up and seating Him at His right hand of majesty, He declares His perfect satisfaction with His work. He asks "Glorify Thy Son," and in Heb. i. 5 the answer is immediate as He raises Him up, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." This, as Man, the seed of David, according to the flesh, the Messiah of Psalm ii. He asked for the restoration of His former glory as God, and Heb. i. 8 gives the answer to the full, "Thy throne, O God." The judgment of God is speedily pronounced

and with all honors from the ages as God, and modern as just and justly won, He the One filling all things is crowned, God delighting to lavish crowns and titles and splendors on Him, the holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners (Ps. i. 1), made higher than the heavens, hailing Him as a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedec, with no successor, as having no progenitor, ever having all in Himself, as heir of all the ages, of all things; as Advocate for those He has redeemed, against all the accusations of Satan, as the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

And what shall we say of all these garlands and honors and of diadems and of the salvation which they celebrate and the memorials of which they shall be forever? Is not God marvelously displayed in rewarding Him who saved us, ever taking a name to commemorate all this from the open tomb and the ascension on high, giving Jesus the titles of "Lord" and "Christ," and saluting Him as His Son and then glorifying Himself with the title of "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Have not these things pleas the strongest for our confidence? God's own joy in all is the most overwhelming thing to the heart, bearing away as a flood all doubts, all legal thoughts, all fears, and supplanting them with thanksgiving and confirmed confidence and joy. Such is His judgment of Christ's work, that the moment one takes the place of a lost sinner, resting on Christ's work, God justifies him from all things.

Ver. 6. And now what of His disciples? They take a new place henceforth as being taken out "of the world." He had manifested the Father's name unto them, the second thing in His account. This must needs be, for how could they believe on Him of whom they had not heard? How could they know His name until a Son tells of a Father? It is a new name for God to the in-

dividual. Though He had called Israel as a whole His first-born son, it was among nations not individuals. But now by all that the Son said and did as sent, He bears the Father's message and sign-manual, the broad, tender, sweet name of relationship. And then what a tender word for them! "They have kept Thy word. Now they have known that whatsoever things Thou hast given Me are of Thee." They are just like Him, from Him, His own self revealed. These things Jesus was pressing upon the Jews and the Pharisees with little result; but these received them. Little they knew how much they received yet; little they recked of the ever deepening meaning of their blessing in these unfoldings; but they were freighted with the Father's tenderest thoughts, to be borne in and then out to others by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the world He had glorified the Father and here were the results. These had "known" and "kept." Had there been but one, that would have been proof of the effectiveness of His work.

Ver. 8. He had given them the words which the Father gave Him, words of salvation, of grace to the lost and the needy, for their own blessing, and they had received them and known assuredly that He came out from the Father. So well had the former manifestation been given that they could recognize the Father in Him and that the Father sent Him, a fitting representative of Himself. This is all important for it links both Father and Son in all that is done. And this brings them into a place of special interest as distinct from the world, and prayer as such. It is as Abraham who believed God and it was counted unto him as righteousness. The revelation of the Father through Jesus Christ the Son of God received is salvation, and the relationship is established by their believing what was given

them. But the world not believing is not His and so not prayed for. How the unity of the Father and Himself comes out as at the foundation of all He did. "Mine are Thine; Thine are Mine," a truth told to the Jews and answered by threats of stoning; to His own and establishing their faith; to the Father as well understood from the beginning.

In these He was glorified; their lives would tell: being out of the world and absolutely His they would manifest His life, He being no more in the world. They are committed to the Father as *Holy*. What a wonderful fact that we are in the keeping of One who is not only gracious and strong and tender and thoughtful but holy. We are cast into His company who cannot allow an atom of evil. Are we glad for this? If not, we have not peace; His words have not been received. What if he were indifferent to our conduct? As belonging to the Father and the Son they were to be kept in unity in the Father's name. We are one in Christ by partaking of His nature, the New Man. We are one as having God for our Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The argument of the prophet Mal. ii. 10 for Israel, "Have we not all one Father? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?" is emphasized intensely for us, seeing we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This is the unity of *nature*. What we are as saved we are of one kind. "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) It is the reality of the place into which we are brought, having one life in Christ, involving practically one aim, one mind, one hope, one "as we are" the Father and the Son.

Ver. 12. The fourth thing He recounts is that He had shepherded them. While He was with them in the

world He kept them as owned by the Father, as given to Him in the Father's name, and now they are to be kept by the Father in His own name. The work of Christ is incomplete to our faith if we are not brought to know and confide in God as our Father. The heart is timid and apt to become doubtful of our nearness to God even while we confess the nearness doctrinally; but we honor Christ and His work by the clearness of our apprehension of our place as children; and the Holy Spirit is the spirit of the son-place to make us walk and pray and praise in the sense of the relationship. With regard to Judas it was the fulfilment of the scriptures. (Pss. lxi., cix.)

And now He was leaving them and these things were spoken in their hearing as they had been the burden of His declarations unto them, that His joy might be complete in them. And what infinitely wonderful things they are! Nothing less than that these poor feeble, failing men, and we like them and with them, are in Him! brought to the Father according to His purpose, and are "as He is" henceforth in this world.

And such He kept in the name of the Father, never to be out of the range and joy of Him who is Light and Love; faith, conscience and heart all engaged with the things of God. He had formed this atmosphere about them, nourished them with this food, the things of God the Father. He had kept them in a region entirely new, associated with the heavens, for He was the Good Shepherd, His goodness giving up everything for them, dying for them. And now having brought them thus to the Father He was leaving them, Himself to go to the Father. It was needful; was for their sakes; it was to bring them there directly, for they were, in His death and resurrection, fitted for that. This was the joy set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising

its shame; the joy of meeting the will of God and bringing to Him the sons for whom He yearned, sons in Himself.

Ver. 14. He had as a fifth thing given them the *word* of the Father. This is more than giving the words of the Father which saved them words of grace and salvation as in Eph. i. 13, "After ye heard the gospel of your salvation." But as believers, we need the word to take us along, to form our lives, to abide with us, that we grow up into Christ, and they had this. With what result? The world hated them. To be saved only does not bring hatred, but to live the word, to testify to the truth. And this hating world was that which professed to have the truth, as in this day. The word of God is a testimony against the world, and they that have it must needs be hated. In 2 Tim. iii. 12, we are told "they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The word makes them act like Christ and the world was enmity to Him.

And they are not of the world even as He is not of the world and hence their treatment of the world as crucified to it, and by the world as rejected by it. And this would occupy mind and heart with things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. There is no proper way of being not of the world as He is, but by being above it, not in fellowship with any of its plans or movements in any direction. The cross and open grave are very peremptory on that matter. Here it is as having the same testimony, the word of God, and as a general fact. In ver. 16 it is as those that are in the midst of evil and to be kept by the truth. He was, Himself, the word, the very thing that He said unto them everywhere. This could not be said of them, but that truth, God's word, must separate them from the evil. It is knowing the power of it over work

and life, thus being sanctified, cut off by the truth. (Ver. 17.) The truth given them for which they were hated must practically separate them. They were not actually, in body, to be taken out of the world until He came for them, but practically to be out of it in motive, heart, enjoyment. Staying here to represent Him, to be as He is, to walk as He walked, to represent Him to the world as fully as the Holy Spirit represents Him to them and us, and as He represents us in heaven. It is a wonderful reality and all the elements well weighed.

Ver. 18. And then, the sixth thing He has done: He sent them into the world even as the Father has sent Him. Is not this a sweet persistence in the change that He has wrought in us, so taking us out of the world that being in it at all, we are sent ones in it? The cross has several all links with the world. Christ was sent, the Holy Spirit is sent; they did not and they do not belong here. We are in company with the Holy Spirit then; He will return to the heavens when His work is done; so will we. The errand we have here is not to improve the world, for that of the Holy Spirit is not this. He testifies of Christ and against the world, as we saw in the previous chapter. Then so do we. And He ministers to us, in this more fully honoring Christ and feeding us upon Him. We can take nothing from the world and we can do nothing to help it. Testifying of Christ is telling of death, of the condemnation of the world. It has become a foreign land into which we have come as ambassadors for God, for Christ. But our message being of mercy through the death of the cross, we can have no affiliation with anything as it is. We live for God in a world that hates Him, live as strangers flitting through it and on the lookout for Him who is to take us out of it in body and together. This is simple. The trouble is it is not taken as a literal fact.

Ver. 19. And now in the glory, He *sanctifies*; the seventh thing; that is, sets apart Himself that we may thus be set apart. He has told of this, now He shows the example of separation; He is the model in heaven as He was on earth. What a verdict on the world for the present, that we may be set apart from it as He is, Christ having nothing to do with its finest movements; sending His own into it to take others out of it as fast as possible! And when they are saved, they are as much out of it as if He had caught them up to the heavens! The truth is to sanctify us practically, for it is founded on the cross. Christ, the Son of God, the Risen One, is the truth. And we have poorly read the word of God if it have not the effect to make all our interests His and in heaven. There is nothing selfish in this for it is not looking at ourselves but Him; not our glory but His. While here, He thought of the Father; while here, we think of and act for Him; and filled with thoughts of Him we are daily drawing away from all this scene where lust and pride find their incentives and gratification. But the sweetness of all these clauses—"Sent into the world as I was sent into it." "I set Myself apart, their example." "That they may be set apart by the truth." "Thy word is truth."

Ver. 20. And so they are prayed for and all believers to come after till He come; but the world is not prayed for; no movement of philanthropy, no "cause" for general advancement, no congresses nor conventions, no political associations nor battlefields; for the world has been put under condemnation and there is nothing for it but to accept that sentence, taking the truth demonstrated by the Holy Spirit. O, if it only would! Will it if we do not stand to the truth as Christ did, as Christ does now? We are sanctified by the truth.

Ver. 21. And here we find that we of later days

are included in all that is asked for them of that time, that all may be one; one as out of the world; as set apart to Him; as living in Him; one in character, standing, nature, likeness to Him, the word coming to us with the same meaning and power as that which they heard from His mouth. We are so one that we are just as they were, with the same testimony in life, that the world may believe that the Father sent Him. The sending must accomplish the same results, form the same people now, and nothing but that sending of the Son can do this. Adam began one race; Christ another. Every man in Adam tells of Adam; so everyone in Christ tells of Him, the Sent One, not one growing out of Adam, as an improved Adam, but entirely from without. He did not ask for a manifested ecclesiastical unity on the earth, though as one in Christ we are to give all diligence to keep, not make, the unity of the Spirit, which cannot be manifested until the glory above, and further He prays next:

Ver. 22. The eighth thing which He had done is that *He gave the glory which He had won*, the Son of God glory, of Him who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. Though we are now children of God it will not be manifested until He is manifested. He has given this glory to us. How humbling to the heart is this, for we so little live with it in our hearts! He makes us like Himself, in the full measure and meaning of it all. It is what the Father meant and it is what is done. "Whom He justified them He also glorified." What a drawing aside of the veil and a rich showing of the family in its oneness. "I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." This will prove that He was sent of the Father. That He really has a people in the glory before the Father, according to the yearning of His own heart, and has taken them out from among men and exalted them on high, is the proof.

But is that all? "The praise of the glory of His grace" is the ultimate purpose of God in and by us; "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us." And the world is to *know* that the Father has loved us as He loved Christ. He has put us in the same place to be manifested as one. That will show out how rich and deep and constant and intense the love of God is to us; just what it was to Him. Then, inasmuch as it is to be manifested to the whole world, we ought to know it ourselves, now. We read here the manner and the measure of His love. We have a right to boast that we are thus loved and the world will know it after a while. They will know while they behold us that we were men of like passions with them, and as they were, but God has in infinite grace lifted us up into that place, and that there is no difference between the love He has to His Son and the love He has to us, because to love us at all it must be according to that measure. There is nothing now but being children. The moment we are saved, it is fellowship and heaven, or else it is nothing. It would be so delightful if all believers knew this, so that they would not be interested in trying to mend up matters here. We have nothing to do but to be like Christ; nothing short of being like Christ will suit God. And we ought with the boldness that such grace gives to respond that nothing will suit us and nothing hold us to our place and bring out our life into conformity to Him but knowing that He loves us as He loves Christ. We may have very different dispositions naturally, but here we are all of one kind. In vers. 22 and 23 it is a oneness that shall be manifested. That is the thought that many are exercised about and are crying out for in making denominational unions. But this unity is to be manifested in the glory. All we are is Christ and He is in us and the

Father in Him. "For me to live is Christ." We are the expression of Christ down here. "I in them and Thou in Me;" that we may be one in that way. It is up to the standard of what God is and what He requires and what pleases Him. What a future opens before us! What a present! All this made true to us by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us! The life that we live down here we are to live on that grade and according to that tone and according to that wealth; taking it up in its sweetness and blessing throughout.

Ver. 24. Can anything go farther than this? Not for display, certainly; but there is an exquisitely sweet thing for our own hearts in that which is asked for last, or rather demanded as growing out of it all by necessity, for the word is different here from "pray" previously used. It is (thelo) "I will," not (eroto) "I request," comporting with the dignity of the glory of which He speaks and the authority that was His. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory which Thou gavest Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Which shall be the most precious to our hearts, to be ourselves manifested with Him for His sake to the eyes of the whole world then redeemed, the universe of glory, or to see Him as He is, all glorious with the well-earned glory that is conferred upon Him by the Father's hand for all He suffered here; and the glory He had before the foundation of the world? Surely, we know how thoroughly He has probed the very depths of our hearts and named the desire of desires in this.

And it shall be. In all this priceless account of Him as the Son of God, the highest position of all, here alone does He express His own will and we lie at the bottom of it. He had come down from heaven to do the Father's will, for which He was sent. And He has done it and

here is the account fully rendered, and at the last He says *I* will. "For Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of a world" takes us to Prov. viii. 23-31, "Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His words of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there was no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth. While as yet He had not made the earth nor the fields nor the highest part of the dust (particles) of the world. Then I was by Him a master workman (or one brought up), I was daily His delight, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." And here He gets those in whom He delighted, and for them He asks with boldness the place He had in the Father's heart and that they may have what He has, have Him as the Father saw Him, as the Father sees Him, all things by Him and for Him. And should we not grow more into these things by learning more what He is, with a deeper sense of the love that won us, having meant from the beginning to have us for His own, the bride, the jewel of His heart? Such is the *manner* of His love. This is the work of the Master Workman! *Now* we are children of God and we know that when He shall be manifested we shall be like Him, for we *shall* see Him as He is. Such is our portion; such, our hope in Him. Now for the result, practically; now for the purifying of ourselves even as He is pure.

Ver. 25. But the world after all has not known the Father, and the world is left in the hand of the Righteous Father, as these, who have known Him, are committed to the Holy Father. These had known that the Father sent Him, and the Father is made known to them.

To the last the swelling fountain of His heart sends

up still richer desires for us that the love that the Son had and enjoyed from the Father might be in us and He in us. This for the stay down here, during the "little while" we await His coming. It is enough! But the chapter, as the love that is in it, is exhaustless.

Taking it as the account of His work rendered to the Father, upon which He is to be exalted to His right hand, we have found eight particulars.

1. (Ver. 4.) He had glorified Him on the earth.
2. (Ver. 6.) He had manifested His name unto His own.
3. (Ver. 8.) He had given them His words.
4. (Ver. 12.) He had kept them as a shepherd.
5. (Ver. 14.) He had given them His Father's word.
6. (Ver. 18.) He had sent them into the world as He was sent.
7. (Ver. 19.) He had set Himself apart that they might be.
8. (Ver. 22.) He had given them the glory given Him.

But there is no mention of sin. For them He has taken that away. The first portion of His work is done. Philippians has no mention of sin.

As a declaration of what He had brought them into, in association with Himself, we may notice the use of the little word "as" with instruction to our hearts. It will be understood that we have passed through death as He has; that we are risen as He is; that as He is our life, that we have the same life as He has; these things we have learned before, and like His own death and resurrection in this chapter, they are understood as passed.

Here, then, we learn, 1 (ver. 11), our union "as we are" in purpose, object, love, everything. 2 (ver. 13), the same joy as Christ has. 3 (ver. 14), the same separa-

tion from the world "even as I am not of the world." 4 (ver. 18), sent into the world as He was sent into it. 5 (ver. 21), the same actual unity as the Father and the Son. 6 (ver. 22), the same glory as He has. 7 (ver. 24), the same love as He receives from the Father. Surely this is "being as He is." Here is perfection; and well may we rejoice with the fulness of joy.

As to the matter of prayer in this chapter, it is exceedingly rich and instructive, beginning by asking (ver. 1) for the glory which He has earned, and (ver. 4) for the glory of which He emptied Himself to come to us, and ending by asking for us the beholding of it, and then making confident request for us (ver. 9) as not of the world, definitely distinguished from it; (ver. 11) that we be kept through the Father's own name and (ver. 15) from the evil, though not taken away; (ver. 17) that we may be sanctified, separated practically from the world by the word which is truth; and then (ver. 24) to be with Him forever.

We should learn from this how to pray for the saints. (Eph. vi. 18.) It must be on the ground of what has been done for them. Here it is as having eternal life, and as having had the Father's name, manifested unto them, and therefore they *are* saved, *are* children of God, as having had the word of God given them and belonging to God as standing in Christ and as hated of the world themselves, being not of it but clearly apart from it in position, hope and destiny.

The Holy Spirit gives us in Eph. i. 17, ii. 1, a sample prayer on the ground of what has been done for us, and the whole petition is that we might know these things, and very wonderful they are, all telling what God did for Christ, raising Him up from the dead and seating Him in heaven, and then seating us, too, in Him. Then, in Ephes. iii. 14-21, that we might be strengthened with

might by the Holy Spirit in the inner man to take in all these wonders. Then in Col. i. 9-14, it is asked for us, (1) that we might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (2) that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; (3) that we might be fruitful in every good work; (4) increasing in the knowledge of God; (5) strengthened with all might according to the power of the glory; (6) to all patience and long suffering with joyfulness; (7) giving thanks unto the Father who *hath* made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we *have* redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Without looking further, it might be asked if this is the tone of prayer now; if there is the confidence, the comfort, the peace, the assurance of these things, or whether some of them instead of being acknowledged as possessed and the only petition being that we might know them, are not asked *for* instead. We should ask according to all that Christ said He had done, confident and rejoicing in them all.

One other matter in the chapter is what is said of our relationship to the world. In ver. 6 we are given to Him out of the world; in ver. 9 we are prayed for and not the world; in ver. 11 Christ is no more in the world but we are in it; in ver. 12 He being in the world kept them through the Father's name; in ver. 13 He speaks these things in the world that they might have His joy; in ver. 14 the world hates them because they are not of the world, having His word; in ver. 15 He prays that they may be kept from the evil that is in the world; in ver. 16 they are not of the world even as He is not of the world; in ver. 18 He sends them into the world even as He was sent into it; in ver. 21 He asks that they (and

we) may be one that the world may believe that He is sent of the Father; in ver. 23 He adds that we may be in the glory that the world may know that we are loved by the Father as He is loved by Him; in ver. 25 the world is said not to know the Father, but we do. What a thorough matter it all is, making sure what is given elsewhere (Gal. vi. 14), that the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world.

Now all these wonders of this profound chapter are told out in the epistles that follow in the New Testament and no more, in principle and effect, saving that the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension and intercession of Christ are mentioned, here all understood. May God give us grace to consider well all these wonders!

CHAPTER XVIII.

After all the transcendently wonderful things of this book of the SON of GOD, the simple sublimity of the history, the grandeur, the glory of the Person, how is it possible to give that which in other accounts of this marvelous One is called a trial and a death? How bring HIM to the bar as a criminal or have His actions and word adjudicated who is the One unto whom all judgment is committed, who raised the dead, gave eyes to the blind from birth, was addressed audibly from heaven and approved in all things by God, openly? On what charges, before what tribunal, between Him and whom could an issue be joined, any more than with the sun in the heavens, for He has walked in the dignity and consistency of a purely heavenly life and life giver, Himself being life, the only one for God, through all this book. Can He be touched? Can He be incriminated? Can He be put to death? None but the Holy Spirit could

write of these things, for man has not wisdom to appreciate the elements of the case.

As the last section (chaps. xiii., xvii.) involves His death, it must take place. He has given in His record to Him who sent Him, whose counsel had determined before what was to be done, and whose prophets showed before that Christ should suffer (Acts ii. 23, iii. 18, iv. 28); and now that must be which makes all these assertions true. Without these two chapters, therefore, none of the precious things which have thrilled the heart in the previous chapters could be possible; nay more, none of His own assertions as to what He would be and do, of giving eternal life, of having any out of the world, of coming again for them, of sending the Holy Spirit, of preparing a place for them, of having them in the glory with Him, or of having that glory at all; there would be no assembly of God, no restoration of Israel; no gathering of the nations; no millennium; no new heavens and new earth; no adjustment in righteousness of the "creation of God" of which He is the beginning; no display of grace; no salvation; no revelation of God. All these and more were contingent upon His death and His resurrection. Without these all things in this book drop out and leave a blank, the blackness of darkness.

And now the hour has come and no man lays hands on Him, malignant as they were and clamoring for His death daily when He was in Judea on former occasions. It is to be of Himself and a matter according to the counsels of ages back, from everlasting, between the Father and Himself. All must be consistent with the glory He had already and the glory He was to win and add to His own and the Father's. We may follow a little the matchless recital.

There was a garden here as in the other gospels, but no agony in it. Did not John know of the sweat and

the cry, of the kiss and the question of Jesus? Most assuredly, as He was one of the three that were nearest to Jesus on that occasion. But those who were used to write these books did not give according to their own selection the facts of Christ's life and ministry; but as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, who, in each one, had his peculiar design. And each book carries forward Jesus to death, the character of which is consonant with the design of the book; and so with the resurrection and the interviews with His disciples afterwards.

Instead of the agony here we see the glory and dignity of God's own Son, in the soldiers falling backward upon the earth when they came to take Him. If none had power to take His life but He laid it down of Himself, none had power to arrest Him, but He gave Himself up, acting the Shepherd to His own that were given to Him, meanwhile saying, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way." Matthew must have known of these things but it was not given to him to record them. Jesus knew all things that were to come unto Him, but He neither retired nor exercised power to hinder or delay them.

The iniquity of Judas and the poor, feeble and foolish act of Peter in using his sword as well as his subsequent denial of the Lord, have a vivid setting, in view of who He is who is thus betrayed and defended and denied. He is neither precipitated into nor shielded from His death. For this cause came He unto this hour. It had come and He was ready. He gave Himself *for us*. It is interesting as showing the exactness of the Holy Spirit in everything, to notice the different accounts of Peter's act. In Matt. xxv. 51 Jesus says, Put up thy sword. Can I not ask of my Father and He will send me twelve legions of angels? The dignity of asking is there. But the scripture must be fulfilled. It is God's King. In Mark xiv. 47, the incident is merely mentioned. In

Luke xxii. 50, 51, He touches and heals the ear. And this is thoroughly in character, merciful. In John where He is the truth, the disciple's name is given as well as the servant's and that he is the high priest's servant. Besides, Jesus says, "Put up thy sword. The cup which my Father giveth, shall I not drink it?" The cup must be taken from His Father's hand, not man's. It is the mode in John's gospel, not by his own design but by the Spirit's leading, that while Jesus is moving so much among men and their hatred is so constantly uncovered by Him it is impotent of harm. There is always opposition, but it forms no blockade to Him who has but the will of the Father, the way of the Father, the time (?) of the Father, to accomplish and to meet. And this will and this time and this method of the Father were found in the Scriptures. Did the voice come from heaven, it was not to give Him any new directions, but to approve of what He had done and to testify to those about Him. Thus far, from His infinite exaltation of mind, having fulfilled to the letter everything written of Him, generally as the Man of God, and specifically as the Sent One come down from heaven, in His life; there remains a series of directions in regard to His death, for "thus it is written and thus it behooved Him to suffer and to rise from the dead;" to lay down His life and to take it up again; and this was the path of life shown Him (Ps. xvi.). It was He who said "Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance (part) and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless Jehovah who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the right seasons. I have set Jehovah always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my

soul in hades (sheol); neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. THOU wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand pleasures forevermore." Ah, read the precious cluster of Psalms (xvi.-xix.), and a multitude of others, to know how He is so largely the embodiment of the Psalms, from birth here to glory at the right hand of God and to His reign over the earth and the world, was led by a clear light, a right way. While in the heart of the fool was no God (Ps. xiv.), and all His thoughts are without God (Ps. x. 4), here was One, the Only One, who delighted to do the will of God, and within whose heart was His law (Ps. xl. 8).

In this law, then, He is to walk to death, every adjunct and condition associated with it to be fulfilled to the letter. He is never to be left to man's will nor whim, nor for man to frame or fashion the circumstances. But One Will to guide, One Mind and Heart to please, and all written in the volume of the book; this is the way in which He is to walk, hearing the word behind Him (Isa. xxx. 21) from the hour when all was purposed and accepted. All that hate Him may whisper together against Him, devising His hurt; ye, His own familiar friend in whom He trusted, who did eat of His bread, may lift up His heel against Him, but His enemy does not triumph over Him (Ps xl.)

This and the following chapter are as much between the Father and the Son, then, as chap. xvii. How it lifts the gloom from them, arranging all the other characters in their places only as they may be necessary to carry out the events of "the hour" to which all things looked forward; to which now all look backward to gain their meaning.

Ver. 12. But they bound Him; the captain and officers of the guard bound Him, who could bind the

sweet influences of the Pleiades and loose the band of Orion; who could bind the unicorn, tread down the wicked in their place; hide them in the dust together and bind their faces in secret (Job xxxvi. 31, xxxix. 10, xl. 12, 13). They could offer this indignity to One who gave Himself up to them; the One who, listening to the voice above, submitted that He might set us free of deadly bonds. He is brought before Annas and then Caiaphas, the high priest, the rather to expose him than to be judged, for he instead of the nation had already sentenced Jesus to die. Then the disciple, so forward in promising, denied knowledge of Him, linking another with himself, they both warming themselves by the fire that the enemies had kindled; a warning to us that off of our ground and away from Him we are liable to fear and fail; indeed we have failed in being there.

But He cannot deny the disciples. When asked concerning them and His teaching, He still shields them, for their time of exposure to persecution shall come when He has departed and they shall be upheld by the Spirit of truth. But of His teaching, as having come into the world, it was ever spoken openly. They that heard Him were the ones to testify, for they knew what He said, though the prejudiced did not understand His speech, it being heavenly and they being of the earth.

For this He was smitten, smitten when bound! with the palm of one's hand. God's hand is used for blessing, coming near to help; He smites with a rod; but the hand of man knows no mercy.

But unlike one of His own, an apostle (Acts xxiii. 3-5), there is no anger or heat in His response to this, and He does not have to plead ignorance of the high priest, though he before whom He stood has not God's title to that office.

All this passed in the night, the night that began when Judas went out, now passed to near morning, the cock-crowing, that Peter may have his bitter part, as representative as well as in person, in emphasizing the words of Jesus that He is left alone. The act of false valor in the garden is even ignored through fear, when this is given as proof: "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" Not His disciple, and yet he smote off the ear of Malchus (a king)! What a ground we stand on, when it is only manliness or friendship or courage or truthfulness!

Ver. 28. And now is Christ's own saying to be verified as to His death; they hated Him without a cause; they should deliver Him up to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified; all is to come in its order, for man if true in nothing else is true in his hatred of God and the Son of God, and this with all his religiousness, which has never, then or since, taken in God. They deliver Him to the judgment hall of Pilate, afraid of contamination with evil by going in themselves. He has cared for His nation, acting for them according to God's purpose in all holiness and grace, and now they hand Him over to the heathen whom they hate and despise and fear for their cruelty, with no accusation against Him, that One despised by the despised Jews might be speedily dispatched. But this is God's ordering and not man's. Pilate would send Him away to be judged according to their law. What had He done to Caesar that He should be brought to his judgment seat? They are bent on His death. They have gotten entirely away from God and are, thereby, worse than the heathen, and He is so full of God in all He does and says that they cannot endure Him. He must be put out of the way. And the power of administering judicial death is out of their hands; their vassalage and bondage there confessed.

And now Pilate is to be judged. He is handling One who is a real King, the Anointed of God, and is confronted and awed by a word of that which is kingly, "to bear witness unto the truth," a matter of which he knows nothing. Idolatry, a lie, with the devil, the liar, behind it all, and the Jews, once the depository of the truth of God, utterly false in conduct and testimony, he but utters the sad question of the world, "What is truth?" for it knows none.

There being no charge against Jesus, Pilate must ask of Him to find why He is thrust upon him, and this interview as recorded by John under the Holy Spirit's leading, for John was not present, gives us what is peculiar to this book, that as Son of God Jesus is King not of the Jews but of a wider realm. In the other accounts, when asked if He is King of the Jews, He answers that He is. Here the Holy Spirit notices for us that He first asks, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself or did others tell thee of Me?" tacitly admitting it though more is to be brought out. "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation (not alone the Jews), and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not from this world; if My kingdom were from this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered up to the Jews (Peter had shown this, not knowing), but *now* My kingdom is not from hence. Pilate saith unto Him, Art Thou a King, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest: To this end was I born and for this cause camest into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." We have before seen that while as Son of David in Matthew, and Son of Man in Luke, He *is* King of the Jews and acknowledges it; as Son of God He is a King, really waiting for Israel.

Thus while the visible fragment of the nation were giving up all hope for the kingdom of Israel to be restored, though their prophets were full of it, saying in their abasement and unbelief, "We have no king but Caesar," He alone was standing for God, "witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate" (1 Tim. vi. 13). The Jews are utterly unfaithful to every word God had given them and are here exposed. They have been on trial at a high court and are condemned, while He whom they would have the world to convict of evil is acquitted by its representative, whose verdict is, "I find no fault in Him at all," He has had no trial. In presence of the Sanhedrim He is asked concerning His disciples and His teaching. Here He is asked if He is King. The challenge is given in the presence of the former to ask of those who heard Him, what He taught, but no accusation is against Him. The civil court has nothing to say against Him either. All parties are being tried and convicted except this One, who stands for God and who has so stood; the Son of God.

It is peculiar that while in the other three Gospels, in the presence of the Sanhedrim, they record His testimony that He is the Son of God (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64) Mark xiv. 61; Luke xxii. 72), in this book written for the purpose of showing this, full everywhere of this, no record of such a question or answer is given. In those records that gave His life in other aspects, it was needful this should be told as the crowning thing, but here it is left for the chief priests to tell that He made Himself the Son of God, that they too should stand convicted, by the word of God, for not examining this claim.

Pilate's offer to release Him, according to a custom at the time of the Passover, possibly a memorial of the nation having been released from Egypt, is met by a refusal that adds the indignity of choosing Barabbas,

a robber, instead. But God records it that the Giver takes the condemnation and death that poor man who has robbed Him and preyed upon his fellow man from the beginning may go free. It is to be noted that the name of this one, Barabbas, "son of the father," is descriptive of man as sprung from him who first sinned. In Matthew he was "a notable prisoner;" in Mark, in the rebellion, had committed murder; in Luke the same, being in revolt. He is by his name the representative of the antichrist, or of Satan who inspires him, chosen instead of Jesus. Let the enemy live, but destroy Him whose only crime is He does good and teaches it, that He has brought back God to a people who profess to know Him, had utterly forsaken Him and cannot endure the exposure which the Light brings. It is a sad day for them when they consummate their hatred by delivering Him to die and choose the one whose name travesties the rejected Son of God and presages the wicked one who is to come. Truly He came unto His own and His own received Him not.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1. Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head and they put on Him a purple robe and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they smote Him with their *hands*.

One question springs from the heart on reading this. How could it be? Where is the lauded Roman justice in this scourging of a bound prisoner of whom the judge says, "I find no fault in Him at all!" Why is an uncondemned one given into the rude hands of Roman soldiers

for them to mock and smite at their pleasure? Where is the cool judgment of Pilate, that a little while ago refused to take action lest injustice be done? Why is Jesus treated in a way wholly unparalleled as far as we know? What is the secret of it all? The answer is clear; no such trial was ever set before; no such parties ever met officially to settle the question of sin and guilt. Against no defendant was there ever so much to be charged; not here, for man's charges were baseless; but He must bear the sins of many, taking their place. All this singular cruelty and injustice undisguised and forever without apology, must be, because this is the Son of God, and man hates God; the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, without reason, without excuse, without mitigation, without cessation. It is its nature. Each of us knows how to answer the question, by knowing what we were. He must take away the sin of the world. The world must be there with its sin, then, and sin is without excuse. In how many forms has it already been presented here, each one without reason, without special temptation or pressure, as the natural effluvia of a corpse because it is a corpse. In how many ways shall it yet be exposed, no element better than any other, all alike man, simply man, man the enemy of God. All offences are to be met in the death of Christ; all must gather about Him, then, as though each had its peculiar pique against Him. Besides, Satan has his hour and the power of darkness.

The thorn must encircle His head, for it stands as the memorial of sin; the robe enswathe Him, as our sins covered Him, and of royal color, for the sovereign thing of man is sin; "sin reigned unto death." Their hands smite Him, for all the works of man are unrighteousness and He must bear their iniquity. Yes, these things must be; for He, the Truth, brings out the truth

And with all this and the marks of it upon Him, Pilate brings Him forth again, that the Jewish leaders may know He is still faultless before human law. And then, coming forth with the insignia of man's shame covering Him from head to feet, Pilate exclaims, "Behold the man!" and the sentence falls, Crucify! Crucify! The heavens have heard it and are silent. For a third time, God's own number, three, the verdict of justice is "I find no fault in Him!" "It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief."

They say He must die because He made Himself the Son of God. It is true; and He would have given them that position had they believed on Him. But even for that He must suffer; and it must be told, for who else could bear sin, Himself having no sin?

Here is a matter that Pilate could not handle; nor could He bring answer from Jesus as to whence He was. No one knoweth the Son but the Father. But, all disorderly as the matter of human government is shown to be, God would have a statement from Him who is truth, as to it, and Pilate's statement of His authority to crucify or release brings out this, for how does Jesus stand to that which though rendered unjustly is still government, which is God's appointment? He upholds it, placing the blame not on the authorities but on him who delivered Him up. There shall be no lustre lacking in this Only One of God. But how different again man's verdict, for though Jesus lets Pilate know he has the right as governor to act for or against, they say, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself king, speaketh against Caesar." They had announced Him worthy of death by their law, which made Pilate feel the deep responsibility of the case, and now they would judge for Pilate the political question. Both of these were false, for how

could one asserting Himself to be King of the Jews do harm so long as he did not rebel against the government of Caesar? Besides, He had said to Pilate that His kingdom was not from hence and no fighting was to be done.

The voice of the Jews, however, prevails. Their biting words though untrue cause him to come down to their level, indicated by his bringing forth Jesus to the place called the Pavement, the name being given in two languages to render the statement emphatic, as did the lost, wretched Ahaz with the sea that Solomon had placed in the temple (2 Kings xvi. 17), the token of his surrender to abject apostasy.

It was the preparation for the Passover; theirs, not Jehovah's, else their thoughts would have been of His delivering them from Egypt and Pharaoh, and there would have been tenderness flowing from their gratitude to Him. But, impatient of interruption in their religious occupations, when Pilate says, "Behold your King!" they cry in disgust, "Away with Him, crucify Him!" It was an awful method of execution, reserved for slaves and the worst criminals; and the word seems to startle Pilate, as he asks, "Shall I *crucify* your King? But they are entirely infidel, throwing off all allegiance to any but Caesar, and cry that they have no other king. It is purely of the Jews, the whole transaction, for they consign to the most cruel death Him whom the Roman government would have let go. This is man's religion, and it will in the end enthrone "the wilful one" and bow to his image (Rev. xiii.), having cast off every filament of truth, corrupting the nations as it always has done.

Everything at this supreme moment shows the need of Christ's death. All crime culminates at the cross, as if in mute inverse appeal, only exhibiting its possi-

bilities, hastening to appoint Him to death, the only thing to meet and wipe it out forever. Was ever description briefer and yet fuller of meaning?

Ver. 16. "Then delivered he Him *therefore* unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place called a skull," a possible hillock but not a mount. There is no "Mount Calvary," which is the Latin for the word here, meaning skull. Again there is an emphasis in giving the word in Hebrew. May it be in all these instances of double naming that God is giving His in the words He used with His people and man is giving his in the language of the world? Moreover, this death is for both Jews and Gentiles. There is a reason for every word which the Holy Spirit records.

Then "they crucified Him and two others with Him; on either side one and Jesus in the middle." He was with the wicked in His death, "numbered with the transgressors." So it must be. How would it have been with us whose place He took? There is no difference, for all have sinned. Then Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS," and God ratified it, for it was in three tongues, and for three hours, that the world might know He was and He is King. And to this Pilate adheres, God holding him steady to what he had written. They *did* crucify their King.

And now He who had walked in all clearness according to the scriptures must have them gather about Him to illuminate and illustrate the pathway through death that we may know that He and the word of God accord all the way. The soldiers, ignorant heathen as they are, as if they had before them Ps. xxii., which accompanied all the circumstances of the scene, fulfil

their part by parting His raiment and for His vesture casting lots.

But it is not in John that we hear the cry of being forsaken of God. This death is for God, and there is the manifestation of victory over all pain, in that thoughtfulness for His mother, in committing helplessness to love, of which He was the pattern and expression, as the token of His love to His disciple, who was to say in later years, "We love because He first loved us." In this was manifested love, because He first laid down His life for us. Everything has this in it, its substance and meaning. It transcends all that is human, for it is marking for the first time in human form what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God, and what in a deeper sense is that will which, written in the volume of the book beyond human thought, perfected us forever and brought us to God, accepted as He is, accepted in Him.

And then in the perfect calmness of the Son thinking only of His Father's word yet to be fulfilled by Him, He says, "I thirst;" that there may be given to Him a sponge filled with vinegar, for this had been written concerning Him (Ps. lxi. 21), and it must be. And when He had received it, He said, in reference to all that was appointed for Him, to the letter, and all the value of His offering, "IT IS FINISHED!" the complete and triumphant answer to all man's and Satan's rage, and the perfect work which meets sin in the place of judgment; finished as God would have it, as the prophets foretold it, as the ceremonials outlined it, as heaven and earth demanded; the one act that raises man to significance in that this had to be done for him. And then He (not "dies," but) delivers up His spirit (pare-doke); He had power to lay down His life. Truly this man was the Son of God!

Fulfilling with the most exact obedience, as a Son, the scriptures concerning Himself in His life, the Holy Spirit calls our attention to their still further fulfilment after His death. Not a bone was broken (Ex. xii. 46), and He was literally pierced, that they may look on Him whom they pierced (Zech. xii. 10). Thus the scriptures cannot be broken, and what a minuteness and depth of meaning they show by His passing through them. And thus the Father's glory and His own are richly set forth in every way. He who thus directs the whole account gives the further word that He was "with the rich in His death" by bringing for His burial the two timid and belated believers, Nicodemus, now in the open daylight confessing Him, with Joseph of Arimathaea, to lay their wealth and dignities in the tomb of the One upon whose wounds they looked.

Thus it was written and thus it behooved Him to suffer. But may they not, in this fact that they having been hidden are now by the death revealed, the one Joseph of Arimathaea (meaning the added one on high) and the other Nicodemus (the people's ruler) tell of how Israel looking on Him who died for that nation shall at once emerge into the eminence among the nations, which from the beginning Jehovah meant for them? All things are significant that emanate from this Wonder of the heavens and the ages.

CHAPTER XX.

Here, then, are given in a characteristic way the incidents following the resurrection of Christ, and the most blessed results of it are made to pass before us rapidly, in their order, taking us along to the millennium in the next chapter.

In Mary of Magdala, out of whom had been cast seven demons, we see one who could not do without Him who had loved her. She seeks Him, ignorantly, no doubt, for she seeks the *Living One* among the *dead*; but her heart is wholly His; and, first at the tomb, while it is yet dark, she runs for those who ought to have known the most about Him, with the word, "They have taken away the Lord." She knew not that none *could* take Him away, and yet she could own Him as her Lord. But what did Peter and that disciple who is ever nameless in this book and only characterized with the disciple's designation, really belonging to all, necessarily to be used by the writer, for this gospel necessitates such a reference, the "one whom Jesus loved," the Holy Spirit giving this, not the writer; what did they do who had been so long time with Him and heard Him say that the third day He would rise again? We see that accompanying one does not give intimacy with him. He had called them friends, but they had not yet entered into His thoughts or doings.

They ran to the sepulchre to know for themselves if it were as told them, possibly in alarm; they see the orderly arrangement of the napkin and the linen clothes lying apart from each other, as He the Head has gone up to the heavens first, and we, His own body, are to follow at His coming; and thus they see that neither friend nor foe had taken away His body; and they believed on the evidence of their sight, a belief of no moral value and of no power over them, for they went to their own home. It is peculiar that the chief priests and the Pharisees remembered against Him, as a "deceiver," that he had said he would rise again after three days (Matt. xxvii. 63), but His disciples did not seem to remember it of Him as Son of God having power to take up again His life.

In the calm dignity of a conqueror He took up His

life again, as He had laid it down, thus casting off and laying aside the things of the grave, in due order. The clothing is the external life—the habit, the way of the earth. He, apart and first for the heavens, our forerunner, and then we follow; in spirit, now; literally, after the little while. According to the scriptures His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His body see corruption; but those who saw these things knew not the scriptures. “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”

So they would do without Him, while Mary, as ignorant of the scriptures as they, stood without the sepulchre weeping. What was home, or all the world to her without Him, the one need of her heart? She knows no place beyond the tomb. Its emptiness is not understood; but *He* had been there and there she confesses Christ, not according to the truth, for Christ is risen, but according to a soul wrapped up in Him. Oh, for more of this!

She had been the object of a wonderful deliverance. In this dire possession of the seven demons, she was, doubtless, a picture of the Jews in the last state of evil that shall come upon them (Matt. xii. 45), she being completely given up to the adversary. As she stands now, looking down into the grave, she is the representation of the beloved remnant of Israel, ignorant of His power and of resurrection, at the grave’s mouth, with a soul thirsting for Him. “And they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.” There is no evidence that she had been an unclean woman, but completely possessed by demons. She was of Magdala, a tower, showing her worth and dignity; just what Israel was to be and what they shall be when the demon of idolatry is forever cast out. From those of them that were purged as Saul (Paul) of Tarsus, God forms the assembly, he being used as Mary (bitterness, sorrow) to call them.

She turns away from an empty grave, telling out more fully the absorption of her heart with the One Object by her speech to Himself, who she supposed was the gardener: "Sir, if Thou have borne Him hence, tell me where Thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." *Him?* as if anyone would know whom she meant; as if everyone would be occupied with just her one thought — *the Lord is not there!* As if there could be anything else to think of at such a supreme moment! This is beautiful, indeed, and sunk into welcoming ears. And Jesus at once reveals Himself unto her, calling His own sheep by name. And then His voice is known and answered, "Rabboni," my Teacher!

But He is not to dwell on earth and be in relationship with the remnant here; and so He says, "Touch me not." In Matthew the other women "held His feet;" altogether in character in the book that tells of Him as the earthly King; it is a pledge of His bodily presence with Israel in the latter day. But here He is the Risen Son of God and is to take His place with the Father; and all must be detached from the earthly thought or contact. We touch Him up there by faith, are linked with the Invisible. He had not risen to re-establish His kingdom then. All this will be done in due order, after the heavenly family is called out and caught up.

The grand scene is heaven now. "I am not yet ascended to my Father." "Though we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now, henceforth, we know Him no more." There is a better thing introduced, union with Him above, as risen with Him. The "corn of wheat" has fallen into the ground and died. Henceforth, it abides not alone.

"But go to my brethern and say unto them I ascend unto my Father and your Father; to my God and your

God." They have become brethren, or represent those who have, on another than Jewish ground, of the flesh and an earthly remnant waiting for an earthly kingdom. It is a relationship in resurrection; they are His brethren, not He their "elder brother," a notion purely fleshly and sentimental and untrue; for He has not come down to be a brother to us and to partake of our nature, else He would have been a sinner, Himself, in reality; but He takes us up into His place, to be of His nature, and so He is not ashamed to call us "brethren." They are brought into the same position with Himself before God His Father, their and our God and Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Christian position; that in Matthew xxviii. 9, the Jewish.

It is sweetly instructive to see that she, whose heart was fully set on Christ, after seeing angels and after seeing Christ fully revealed to her, being the first to see Him, becomes the first messenger of His resurrection! Happy errand! She is here a type of the Holy Spirit gathering the assembly of God.

And so (vers. 19-23) this testimony gathers the disciples, His own in this world but not of it, together. It is on the ground of their union with Him, though they may not have acted in the intelligence of it; the scene represents it. There is, first, the statement that they are in the same relationship to God as their Father as Himself by being one in and with Him. For this He had come into the world; for this He had prayed; for this He had died, that He might gather them into one, and for this He had risen. They were to be the first fruits of all His work, first-born with Him the First-born from the dead. And then there is the being assembled together out of the world on the first day of the week with the door shut. Then Jesus came and stood

in the midst and so fulfilled His word. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I, in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) The world may not by its religiousness and its selfish occupation block the way. The door that shuts out the world with its Judaistic ways, its legality, and ceremonials, however solemn and impressive to the flesh, shuts Him in, giving assurance of the very thing that so many refuse by their rites and forms, that is peace.

1. He said "Peace be unto you," and showed them His hands and His side. It was He, the same that had died; and their peace of conscience came through the blood that flowed thence; and, as belonging to Him, as risen, they must be forever established in peace. It is an essential thing and characteristic of the new position, as well as what follows, in testimony. The blood from the side expiated their guilt, told of life through His death; the water cleansed from defilement, and so daily (1 John iv. 9, 10; v. 6).

2. Again He says, "Peace be unto you;" this in regard to everything in the world, for they are not to go at once to heaven with Him, but to abide in a scene of opposition to Him and them, where there is no peace. Then they must have His peace because lifted out in spirit into His companionship and none other save the Father's.

3. Then they are sent, their occupation already intimated and involved in the peace bestowed; but as He was sent by the Father, they taking His place of being above the world, representing Him as members of Him. This is apparent in regard to the different word that is used in regard to His being sent, which means, authorized for a mission, dispatched on a commission (*apestalle*) and left as transmitted (*pempo*) or let go. It involves less of service so called

than walk, being for Him. It does not suggest authority nor state anything about the world. The assembly of God, as such, is here wholly for Christ. Has there not been a diversion from the thought of serving God and waiting for His Son, to serving the world? They that do exactly what they are appointed unto will meet God's mind vastly better than in their own efforts at doing. God certainly has the world in His purposes and He had the assembly of God there, too. The commission to go and preach is not in this gospel but in all the others. Here He is Son of God, and we are for Him alone, shining as lights in the world that He may see, and the Father also.

4. Then He breathed on and said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." This is like God breathing into the man in the beginning and his becoming a living soul. It is prospective, for Jesus was not yet glorified so as to send the Holy Spirit. Indeed, all the items of blessing so peculiar and distinctive are for the future to them; present, now to us. But it definitely marks the new condition of things upon which they were to enter, the Holy Spirit's time to begin when Christ should be on high at the right hand of God.

5. Again, the power of discipline, to remit and to retain sins. It has nothing to do with the person or his standing before God. It is a picture of the assembly of God, the body of Christ, gathered alone to and with the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 5-11), with authority to administer discipline. It is not by the apostles, but it was the disciples as such only that were gathered together. It is pure assumption to say it is apostolic when the word says differently. As well say the washing of feet, the word of His coming again, of bearing fruit, of praying in His name, of being hated by the world, and the wonderful union with Himself and all the special

privileges named in the section xiii.-xvii. were apostolic and official. Even the word used for "sending" here is not to the apostles. So we see all these to belong to the saints, those who really are Christ's, as Judas is not of them. If one is received from the world, on the ground of his having become a child of God, that is by action remitting his sins, if one be excluded, that would be retaining his sins. It has nothing to do with the nature sin; a man cannot be excluded because it might be thought that he is not saved, but for some act which he will not judge, such as is named in 1 Cor. v. 11. He and his sin must go out together. It is retained. If one becomes broken and judges himself before God, upon confession he is restored to his place, and this is remitting. It is not, therefore, the once for all judgment upon sins and the sinner at the cross, which can never be repeated after a man has eternal life; it is administrative, the discipline which the whole assembly was to exercise, not certain ones in authority, assumed or granted by suffrage; and after it was formed it was called upon to do this as 1 Cor. v. shows.

But distinguish this from what our Lord gave to Peter (Matt. xvi.), the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and then said, "Whatsoever *thou* (not "ye") shall bind or loose," etc. The kingdom began in the first few chapters of the Acts, and there the whole administration was given to and exercised by Peter, as will be seen, he having opened the doors to the Jews in chap. ii., and offered the kingdom to Israel in chap. iii. 12, 17-25, and then opened the door to the Gentiles in chap. x. But in the assembly of God it is not "thou" but "ye" (Matt. xviii. 15-18; 1 Cor. v. and here). And what a responsibility this is and how suggestive of the holiness and grace that become God's house. There is nothing here of Laodicean indifference, being neither cold nor hot

in reference to Christ Jesus the Lord. With Christ in the midst, how can evil be allowed? And this is true in a day of confusion and general looseness, when possibly only two or three can be found gathered in His name in any place.

Here, then, is represented in this first meeting of Christ with His disciples, those who have first to do with Him dispensationally, the assembly of God, corresponding to the first day of chap. i. 35-42, which was noticed in its place.

As this happened on the first day of the week, it may be instructive to notice that the first day of the week is that which peculiarly belongs to the new people, the assembly of God, the body of Christ. It was on the first day of the week that the Holy Spirit descended (Acts. ii.), the morrow after the Sabbath (the seventh day), being the feast of Pentecost, according to Levit. xxiii. 15-21, that He came, and He has remained since forming the assembly, baptizing its members into one body (1 Cor. xii. 12-13). Besides, it was on the first day of the week that they met to break the loaf (Acts xx. 7), according to custom. (See also 1 Cor. xi. 17-34; x. 17) a scene of worship and joy, the distinctive occupation of the assembly.

In the next scene, the second time of the appearing of Christ, to His own, there is a representation of Israel's day, after the assembly has gone. A full week of seven days, a complete time representing the whole period of the assembly of God, has passed, and on the eighth, the day beginning a new portion of time, a new series of things which eight properly represents, Jesus again meets His own. But this seems to be especially devoted to Thomas, "a twin," and for His sake; a twin company in partaking of the blessing of the resurrection. But while the sight of the Lord by the former represents the faith

of the believer, the spirit's sight, this must be accompanied by actual contact, the demand of Thomas and the permission of Christ as in Matt. xxviii. 8. This second company must be of the same character as Nathaniel of "the day following" when Jesus would go forth into Galilee, of chap. i. 33-49. There is no thought of "My Father and your Father," which is the faith of the first gathering, but "My Lord and My God!" How appropriate and how rich this is with reference to the resurrection of Israel in the day of the Lord's coming can be seen by a few scriptures, all of them referring to that time and full of these two names, ever and again applied to Christ in the New Testament. In Ps. xlv. 6, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and forever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." (We are the "fellows!") Then Israel, looked upon as the earthly bride, is spoken to thus (ver. 11), "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is Thy Lord, worship thou Him." In Ps. cii., "This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created (here is resurrection) shall praise Jehovah."

Ver. 20. "To hear the groaning of the prisoner (Israel), to loose them that are appointed to death."

Ver. 21. "To declare the name of Jehovah in Zion and His praise in Jerusalem."

Ver. 24. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; Thy years are throughout all generations."

In this, Lazarus who was sick and then was raised from the tomb is a type (chap. xi.). Ps. cxviii. 17 is an answer to this last, "I shall not die but live and declare the works of Jehovah."

Ver. 24. "This is the day Jehovah hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it."

Ver. 25. "Save now (Hosannah)! I beseech Thee, O Jehovah! O Jehovah, I beseech Thee, send prosperity."

Ver. 26. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah." This was in the song at the entrance into Jerusalem (chap. xii).

Ver. 27. "God is Jehovah who hath showed us light." (Isa. xxv.9). "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our Lord, we have waited for Him; and He will save us; this is Jehovah, we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." See also Isa. xxvi. 12, 13; xl. 3, 5, 10, 28; lxiv. 4, 8, and many other passages, to show the exactness of the exclamation of Thomas as the type of Israel in the day of His appearing to restore them, whether in the figure of a widowed one or one who had been unfaithful to a husband, or a sick and dying or even dead nation now brought to life, as we have seen through this book.

Ver. 28. "Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee; my God and I will exalt Thee."

Like everything in the scriptures this is perfect.

The confession of Thomas does not involve sonship, but owning Jesus as Jehovah, the covenant name of God to Israel; so he adds "and God."

We find that nothing is written in the word of God simply for information or to gratify curiosity, but for our own profit and to bring us into fellowship with God's own delights. His great delight is this One whom He has set forth in this profound book. He has furnished us His own record according to His own mind, giving us that which sets Him forth as the *Son of God*, and that believing we might have life in His name. It was not enough to tell us of Him, but He tells His heart toward us

in the latter clause, "that we might have life." And he that received Christ as set forth in this book *has* eternal life. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. To receive His testimony is to live; to refuse it is death.

CHAPTER XXI.

Following the two days marked in the previous chapter there is here the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. He could not go to the Father until He had confirmed all that was written concerning Him in the large dispensational line of work marked out for Him, in the matter of taking away the sin of the world. This third meeting sets a wider bound as to that taking away than the other two, and it is as distinct in dispensational meaning as they are. The first one set forth the assembly, those who have first to do with Christ risen; the second, Israel in their day of deliverance when they shall have Him as the Object of their sight, looking upon Him down here, knowing by touch, and then believe. The third meeting gives that which follows Israel's re-establishment, the gathering of the Gentiles, already glanced at in this book, seen in happy consummation in the marriage feast of chap. ii.

And now names come into place, for they are given for our instruction. There were together seven of the disciples, three of whom are named and two others definitely designated. But there must be seven, God's number of completeness, for all His work must have perfection stamped on it. But it will be only by Christ Jesus, the Son of God, risen from the dead.

We have handled these names before and have found

Simon Peter connected with the first day of chap. i., being the one brought to Jesus, to whom the name of "stone" was given, indicating the assembly, the building of God, of which we are stones. The name Simon, "hearing," intimated faith, by which we become joined to the Lord. Then Thomas, in the second day, tells of Israel being companion to the assembly; his name being "a twin." And Nathaniel of chap. i. standing for Israel, too, as the gift of God and of Cana of Galilee; and the two sons of Zebedee, "a gift," unnamed, though we know them. Now is there not the sweet teaching here that the assembly and Israel being already given to Christ, He must have them with Him in the joy of the full gathering, as we saw in chap. ii., the disciples (the assembly) invited to the feast, for the church is not at home on the earth, and the "mother" (Israel) there already, for Israel belongs in the earthly scene.

It was while they were fishing that Jesus first met several of His disciples and made them His followers. In Mark i. 14-17, while He was in Galilee, to which He went at once to begin the whole matter of the kingdom, He announced that the time was fulfilled and the kingdom of God at hand, that He met Simon and Andrew casting a net into the sea, and told them to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men. Galilee, "manifestation," as we have seen before, is the place of beginning His kingdom, and Cana of Galilee (chap. ii.) is brought in in connection with these seven, two of them being from there. After His resurrection He meets them under the same circumstances. If this fishing is indicative of being fishers of men, it is for nothing till He joins them. It was night and only toil.

But when the morning comes, after all the season of testimony of Israel was fruitless (as the wine was out in chap. ii.), Jesus stood on the shore, the earth

upon which He will be seen, the thing which He shall have then established, whereto the gathering out of the Gentiles shall take place. In the beginning when He first found Peter fishing, his net broke (Luke v. 6). Israel, the fragment of them in the land, the Jews, as then known, could not be used; but now in the new kingdom established in resurrection, they became really co-workers with Him. It is He that tells them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. They cast and now they are not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Israel can be used when redeemed. It only shows, "Lo, I am with you always," is the necessity of success in gathering. It is the fulfilment of Ezek. xlvii. 8-10, the gathering of the Gentiles. It is the fulfilment of Isa. xlix, 3, 4, 6, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then (as these disciples) I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah and my recompense with my God. And now saith Jehovah that formed thee from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, and that Israel be gathered unto Him (for I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God is become my strength); yea, He saith, it is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth."

When they came to the shore they found the Lord already had fish there and a loaf of bread and the fish upon the fire. It is His own portion already gathered and judged through the fire (?) and able thus to minister to the refreshing of others. It is the token of how Israel shall be made ready, the remnant especially, for the blessing to the Gentiles (Zech. xiii. 9), or is it a

representation of which in the days of David, Itlai and Araunah of the Gittites and other Gentiles and Cornelius in the beginning, were foretokens, of those gathered to the kingdom? Afterward He will gather the full number of the saved among the nations as set forth in the number of fish in the net, one hundred and fifty three! This, in this portion in which all is symbolic, must be taken according to the value of the numbers; and it certainly contains the sum of three, God's own number, and twelve, Israel's, as well, the number of governmental completeness on the earth, and these squared before being added (9 plus 144 equals 153), to show the fulness of all for the earth, God using His people of the earth to bring in the multitudes of the earth to Himself.

And then (ver. 12) the invitation of Jesus, "Come and break your fast" (not "dine" for they had no other meal), tells of His fellowship and their refreshment; and they partake of that which He had provided, entering into His joy in the glory of this "third time," at the opening of the day, *the full accomplishment of taking away the sin of the world.*

It precedes the gracious interview with Peter, in which his full restoration takes place. This, too, may have a typical or symbolic meaning as to the way of Christ with His people as a whole, who have so greatly denied Him in their cowardly fear of the world so that the real children of God are found in the apostate thing that professes to represent Him. He does not say "Peter" but "Simon, son of Jonas," for he had acted as the natural man. See also Ezekiel xvi. 3. It surely has an individual application of the way in which there is a cleansing from all unrighteousness. To Peter personally there was a restoration of conscience through the resurrection of Christ, seen in his hastening to the Lord,

the first, as he first and deepest had sinned; and then His eating with Him; a restoration of heart, after the thorough searching by Christ thrice, and the acceptance of his love in the fond word which Peter used persistently, and even on the ground of Christ knowing all things. And this assurance must precede all real restoration; if anything is hidden we walk in darkness and "do not the truth." Then there is a restoration to ministry of a special character, too, for He commits to him the sheep gathered out from the Jewish fold, both old and young, to feed and to shepherd, that which He had Himself done while here. And then a deeper, richer token of restoration in allowing him, who in the flesh had boasted that he would die with and for Him at the end of his (brief) ministry, to die for His sake and thereby glorify God. All, again, is perfection which He does.

There is, doubtless, vast instruction for us in this incident appended to the closing event of all Christ's work here, in this chapter, which seems to be an added matter, where all is typical; a glimpse at the peculiar ministry of Peter, who was to administer the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xvi. 19) before the assembly in its heavenly character was manifested, and that of John whose testimony is to go on to the coming of the Lord, as in "Revelation," speaking of these things in full and this Gospel being a vision throughout of the Son of God above the world. Jerusalem as a center and the apostleship to the circumcision, as such, pass away, and John carries us to the coming of Christ.

Meanwhile, distinct from both, is the ministry of Paul, the secret ("mystery"), Christ and the Assembly which is in heavenly places and of course has no mention here. Thus there are three characters of apostleship: Peter's, Paul's and John's. Peter begins the work of the kingdom, but upon the rejection of that by the Jews

and the Israelites, Paul begins with the revelation of the truth kept secret from all the ages and made known only to him (Eph. iii). In that we are now, awaiting the things told to John (Rev. i.-xxii. 8).

And then the Lord and the disciples vanish with the word to Peter, "Follow Me!" the word that called them at the beginning of His ministry in the other gospels, but which is superseded by their going out to Him and abiding for that day (chap. i). Now it seems as though the invitation was to the glory in the resurrection. The wondrous work has been done that makes all possible and heaven becomes the end, secured to them and to us through grace.

It is but a little while and we are to follow Him thither, keeping till He comes the word of His patience. Whether it be they who are put to sleep through Jesus, as Peter, or we that are alive and remain to His coming, as the ministry of John does, this is distinctively our hope, to be caught up to meet Him in the air. Well may we follow in the path of suffering and trial and service, which He has worn for us, awaiting but His voice.

Thus we have feebly passed through this book of infinite riches, displaying Jesus as the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, made flesh and dwelling among us, and now gone to prepare for us to come to Him; who in all this was manifesting to eyes that were opened the glory of God, and who, filling all things and for and by whom are all things, it would be surely impossible for all things to be told, were the world filled with volumes about Him. And this is He who loved us and gave Himself for us and with whom we are to be forever! FOREVER!

"Follow Me!" Whither? Into the new heaven and the new earth, for the three days are accomplished in which he takes away the sin of the world as the Lamb

of God. Shall we miss Him because He has gone into the higher place and invited us with Him? Did the disciples in the 14th chapter lose Him or anything when He became an object of faith rather than sight? Did Peter lose Him when he said, "Whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now seeing Him not, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of the glory? To pass out of this scene into the millennial scene, to reign with Him a thousand years, into the day of God, will be but to come to that for which all other days were appointed and are preliminary.

THE END

*Thy work, one will, Love's will, to do,
To give us life, e'en Thine;
In this lost world make all things new,
Establish peace divine;
To cast down Satan from his throne,
Bring all to God, now fully known;
Fixed never to decline.*

*Before Thee, the wild centuries!
Before Thee, Satan's wrath
And Death, the last of enemies;
Thou marched'st on Thy path!
Charged with th' invincible decree,
With grace and truth Thy panoply,
Thou conquered'st Death through death!*

*O Christ! We'll spend eternal days
Within the marvelous range
Of thy glad presence and shall praise
Perfection's wondrous change
From glory unto glory; though,
Because Thy love so well we know,
'Twill not to us be strange.*

*God! Christ, our Lord! The heart must bow
In speechless ecstasies
More and more overwhelmed, more low,
While heart, while being is;
At Thy feet, Owner, Autocrat
Of all within us, we fall flat;
There is no thought like this!*

*There is no second; for this fills
Immensity alone;
None other Object; this expels
All others, where Thou'rt known*

*All that with awe can man inspire
However great, must now retire
Before Thee; there's but One!*

*And then the end, when good alone
Has settled into calm
And constant life, with deepest tone
Of joy, with hymn and psalm;
The end; but the beginning, too,
No sin, tears, darkness; all things new,
Thou, God, the blest I AM!*

*But the beginning! There's no end
To Thy supreme display;
Nor to the years whose lustrous trend
Accompanies no decay;
How all shall be reversed we've known
Of sorrows that by sin were sown!
Ah, this is endless day!*

*O day, to which all other days
Preliminary are!
All tender and unselfish ways
As signals seen afar;
How holds the heart to this, through time,
How, up through evils, all hopes climb;
Of all desire the Star!*

*Oh day of days for earth! How well
That Other Man than he
Who brought the ruin, wrought the ill,
The Head and Lord should be!
Thou, Christ art He; the King of kings
And Lord of lords; above all things
Worthy exceedingly!*

(From "The Christ of God.")