

Our Daily Homily on John

OUR DAILY HOMILY GOSPEL OF JOHN

F. B. Meyer

John 1:50

Thou shalt see greater things than these.

God's dealings with us are always on an ascending scale. If we see clearly the lowest rung in the heavenly ladder, whilst we behold, the veil of mist will part, and we shall see the next above it, and then the next, and, in due order, the next; and so the steps that slope away through darkness up to God will always be beckoning to greater and yet greater things.

Have you known Christ as the Word? He is more; both Spirit and Life.

Has He become flesh? You shall behold Him glorified with the glory He had before the worlds. Have you known Him as Alpha, before all? He is also Omega.

Have you met John? You shall meet One so much greater, that the latchet of his shoes the Baptist shall deem himself unworthy to unloose.

Do you know the baptism by water? You shall be baptized by fire.

Have you beheld the Lamb on the Cross? You shall behold Him in the midst of the throne.

Have you seen the Spirit descend as a dove on one head? You shall see Him come as a fire upon an unnumbered multitude.

Have you followed the Christ to the slight booth in the Jordan Valley? You shall enter with Him into mansions of eternal glory.

Do you acknowledge Him as King of Israel? You shall hear the acclamations that salute Him as King of the worlds.

Live up to all you know, and you shall know more. Be all you can, and you shall become more. Do all that your two talents permit, and you will find yourself ruler over four cities.

John 2:10

Thou hast kept the good wine until now.

The world gives its best first. As youth and beauty are ushered into the banqueting-room of life, the world spreads the table with its best. The zest of enjoyment is keen in those young days, but it is soon satiated; the delicacies with which the table is spread pall, and the appetite, unduly stimulated at the first, demands coarser and more passionate delights to stimulate. At last the table is served with provision, from which, in the first days, the banqueters would have turned away disgusted.

But if you let the King lead you into his banqueting house, beneath his banner of love you will find yourself feeding on dainties which never satiate nor pall — which whet the appetite and give the taste a more delicate appreciation of the vintages of heaven.

You may say this of the Word of God. — At the beginning of Christian life it is full of meaning and inspiration; but as the years pass, and we realize ever more of its helpfulness, we repeat the refrain, "Thou hast kept the best until now!"

You may say this of Christian love. — Let two love in Christ, and instead of their affection waning, as so often happens in the world, they will discover that the fellowship, which began in comradeship, will end in a sacramental meal; truest, purest, deepest enjoyment being kept for Paradise.

You may say it of heaven. — Neither hath eye seen nor heart conceived the things, even now and here, that God has prepared for those that love Him. But so soon as the redeemed spirit shall awaken in the untreated glory of God's presence, it will exclaim, "The half was never told; Thou hast kept the best until now." At every moment and always God is giving his best.

John 3:27

A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven.

After six months of marvellous ministry, in which the Baptist had seen the whole land at his feet, had gathered a band of disciples, and introduced the Messiah to the Jewish people, he found the crowds dwindling. His disciples viewed with feelings of chagrin the transference of popular interest from their master to Him of whom he had borne witness.

What John the Baptist meant by it. — He realized that the crowds, the hushed attention, the swift response, the power of speech, the message, the deep repentance, the office of morning star heralding the Dayspring from on high, had been the gift of God. He had nothing which he had not received; he would have received nothing, except God had given it to him. Whether these things went or came was a matter altogether beyond his control. His part was to receive and use what God gave; and then return to Him, at his bidding, the saved talent. This forbade alike pride and despondency.

What we may learn by it. — Humility and peace. Humility. Is this the time of your prosperity? Crowds wait on your words; mighty movements circle around you; glorious results follow on your plans! Do not be puffed up. Boast not yourself. "Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Peace. If it is not due to your lethargy or sloth that the crowds have ebbed away, and that the tide of conversions has dropped below its former level, be at peace. These are things which the Holy Spirit worketh, dividing to each one severally even as He will.

John 4:10

If thou knewest the gift of God....

There are wonderful contrasts here! He who gives rest sits weary on the well-head; He who was the Jews' Messiah utters his deepest lessons to a woman of Samaria; He that gives living water asks for water from the dark, cool depths that lay beneath them.

God's best things are gifts. — Light, air, natural beauty, elasticity of the spirits, the sense of vigorous health, human love, and, above all, his only begotten and beloved Son. Among all other gifts is there one to be compared to this? The living spring of eternal life, which Jesus opens up in our hearts, and which so greatly differs from the pit of outward ordinance, is an altogether unspeakable bestowment. Nothing can purchase it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for it, it would be utterly condemned. It must be received as a gift, or not at all.

God's gifts must be asked for. — "Thou wouldest have asked, and He would have given." This is the law of Heaven. Prayer is a necessary link between the Divine hand that gives and the human heart that receives. We have not, because we ask not. There is nothing in our Lord's words of the dreamy and languid pietism which refuses to ask because it will not dictate to the perfect wisdom of God.

If we had fuller knowledge we should pray more. — "If thou knewest ... thou wouldest ask." If thou knewest who He is that stands beside thee, in thy hours of private prayer — if thou knewest all the possibilities of the life of prayer — if thou knewest what gains would accrue to thee on thy knees, thou wouldest give thyself to prayer, as though it were the main object of thy life.

John 5:20

The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth.

Heaven stands open to me, my Lord, in these deep and holy words. Through the open door I see the source of the golden light that shone around thy earthly life, and detect the secret of the music that ever sounded around thy path, as the music of the golden bells when Aaron passed to and fro.

The Father loved Thee, not only because Thou wert his Son, dwelling in his bosom, but because Thou wert his obedient Servant. And I would inherit a similar love; not only the love of my adoption, but of service; for Thou saidst, "If a man love Me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him."

The Father was ever showing Thee what He was doing in the unseen and eternal depths. Indeed, it seemed that Thou wert more occupied in beholding the things which were unseen than those which were seen. Thine eye was ever on the dial-plate of eternity, and thine ear attent to the note of the tide on its shore. Thou didst nothing that was not in the pattern shown Thee on the mount of fellowship; but whatever was wrought there Thou didst here. Teach me to live like this.

Thy Father led Thee to ever greater works. First the daughter of Jairus, then Lazarus; first the Sermon on the Mount, then the prophecies of the closing days; first the Mountain of Transfiguration, then of Ascension. So would I be led forward, from Cana to Calvary; from Bethlehem to Bethany; from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the world. Ever greater things, because with profounder humility and deeper insight into the meaning of thy death. Deeper and therefore higher; nearer thy cross, and therefore reaching further.

John 6:27

For Him the Father, even God, hath sealed.

The seal is the mark of authentication. The Book of Esther often refers to the importance of the royal seal as giving validity and authenticity to documents to which it was appended. So at the waters of Jordan God authenticated our Lord; first by the voice that spake from heaven, and secondly by the holy anointing that came upon his head, setting Him apart for holy service. What the Father did for his Son, He does for his sons. "He that stablisheth us with you into Christ, and anointed us is God, who also sealed us." In other words, God waits to authenticate us to ourselves and to the world, as his beloved children, in whom He is well pleased.

The conditions of sealing. — In the case of our Lord there was entire subjection to the Father's will, although it involved his leaving the blessed home of Nazareth and identifying Himself with the sins and sorrows of men, by baptism in waters where they had confessed their sins. We, too, must be prepared to obey utterly, even to death.

The agent of sealing. — The Spirit descended and abode upon Him; He was filled with the Spirit, and returned in his power to Galilee. We, too, are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise; who stamps us with the die of our Savior's image and superscription. Simultaneously with his gracious work upon us, we may detect his loving voice within us, witnessing with our spirits that we are children of God.

The effect of sealing. — Secrecy, safety, and assurance. Secrecy, Song of Solomon 4:12. Safety, Matthew 27:65, 66. Assurance, Romans 8:15, 16, 17. There is also a daily assimilation, though we know it not, to the glorious likeness of our Lord; so that those who see us bear witness that his name is on us.

John 7:39

The Spirit was not given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Calvary must precede the Ascension, and both must come before Pentecost. The glorified Lord was the text on which the Spirit was to discourse, and the text must be complete before the sermon can commence. Moreover, it was only when our Lord had ascended to the right hand of the Father, that He could receive or transmit the Divine Comforter. It was needful for Him to be by the right hand of God exalted, before He could ask for and receive, and shed forth the Holy Spirit of promise. The one Paraclete must finish his work, and be withdrawn, ere the other could come to take up and finish his work on earth. The Son must sit down on the throne, or the Spirit could not descend to sit on each of the disciples.

But there is a deep inner lesson for us all in these words. We sometimes wonder why we have not received the Spirit, and why our lives are not channels through which He pours in mighty rivers to make desert hearts and lives blossom and sing. How gladly would we part with all beside, if we might be conscious that not tiny streamlets, not one river of holy influence merely, but that rivers were issuing from us as the waters from the temple threshold!

Is not the reason to be sought in our neglect to glorify Christ? We have never yet abandoned ourselves to Him, content to live the branch-life, with no other aim than to realize the one purpose of his most blessed life, the glorifying of the Father. We have never seriously made it our life-purpose to glorify the Lord Jesus. There has been no triumphal entry into our hearts, no enthronisation, no challenge to the gates of our soul that they should lift themselves up to admit the King of Glory.

John 8:31

If ye abide in my word. (r.v.)

1. We shall be approved as Christ's disciples — "Then are ye truly my disciples." Of some the Master asks, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And He drives these from Him, saying, "I never knew you." His words are the supreme test — the fire which detects the ore; the winnowing-fan that finds out the wheat. Our treatment of our Lord's words discriminates us: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, is he that loveth Me.

2. We shall know the truth. — God teaches us differently from men. They deal in peradventures and surmises; He with certainties — "Ye shall know the truth." They talk about the truth; He gives us the thing itself, and we know because we possess. They deal with circumstances and externals; He with the heart and root of matters. They give to the mind and soul; He to the spirit. We know the truth, because the Truth is in us, and we are in the Truth. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true."

3. We shall be free. — "The truth shall make you free." Just as we are free from the terrors which belief in witchcraft and ghosts was wont to breed, because we know that the spirits of the dead do not haunt dark and dangerous places; just as we no longer fear the fatuous light over the marsh, or the death-tick, because science has attributed these to natural causes; so, as Jesus teaches us the truth about God, and the future, and the forgiveness of sins, and the broken power of Satan, and the impotence of death, we are delivered from the bondage of fear, and walk with God in perfect peace.

John 9:4

We must work the works of Him that sent Me. (r.v.)

Is not this exceedingly tender and beautiful? The Lord does not hesitate to describe Himself as specially designated to do a certain work. In every part of this Gospel He speaks of Himself as the sent One; but He graciously conjoins his disciples and friends in it, saying, We must work. It is as though He said, "I have a designated work which must needs be done; but I cannot do it alone. We must do it, you and I, together."

Fellowship with God the Father is the law of all industry.— Every crop that goldens in the summer wind is due to the summons of the God of Nature to the husbandman, "Come and let us work together, thou and I." Every achievement in factory or mill of textile fabrics is due to the combination of the Divine laws and the human agency. We must work, is God's constant appeal.

Fellowship with the Son is the law of the Kingdom.— We have been called into the fellowship or partnership of the Son of God. He does not say, Go, but come; not, Do this, but, Let us do it. He has set his heart on the glory of the Father, and He calls us to co-operate with Him in bringing back men to God. In some way we must contribute to the final result on which Christ has set his heart.

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit is the law of all successful service — The closing words of the benediction that refer to the communion of the Holy Spirit are specially significant. "We are witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost." The Spirit and the Bride say Come. As Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell. Oh for pure hands and a clean heart, that we may be worthy of this Divine confederacy!

John 10:41

John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this Man were true.

This is full of rare interest and beauty. John the Baptist had been dead some two years at least, and the memory of good men is apt quickly to pass from the mind of their contemporaries, especially when they are eclipsed by some greater successor. Who thinks of the morning star when the sun has risen! But as the crowds came back again on the spot so closely identified with Christ's forerunner, he was recalled to mind; and they used of him the words ascribed to them in our text.

Your life may be without miracle. — It may pass on with nothing to distinguish it above the lives of myriads around. There is no sensation-making note in your voice; no extraordinary intellectual calibre in your mind; no aptitude for wielding vast influence over the crowds. The years pass on with even monotony. Life is one dead level.

But mind you speak true words of Jesus Christ — Point to Him and say, Behold the Lamb of God! Say of Him, This is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. Announce Him as the Bridegroom, and be content to be the Bridegroom's friend. Say that He has his winnowing-fan and axe in hand. Be careless what men think of your accent, your gestures, your way of stating the truth; but go on bearing witness to what you have known, tasted, and handled of the Word of Life.

After your death, your words may come to mind again, and be the means of bringing souls to the Lamb of God.— As corn-seeds, buried in mummy-cases, now bloom on English soil, so may words be carried in the memory through long years, and bear fruit after the speakers death. What an epitaph for the grave of a Christian minister or teacher!

John 11:40

Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believest, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Yes, we shall see the glory of God. We shall see the graves give up their dead — not only at the last day, but now. Thousands around us are dead in trespasses and sins, in which they walk according to the course of this world. Alas! more than this, they stink in the putridity of their lives and speech. Around their graves gather their friends and relatives, bathed in tears, but unable to arrest the progress of decay. But, if we will believe, we shall see the glory of God.

But how shall we believe for this? It seems easy for some to believe. The Marys who sit at the Lord's feet, feeding on his words, find the life and light of faith in his beloved presence. But others, like Martha, are distracted with so many things, that faith seems impossible. And this is the very point where this story is so abundantly helpful. Jesus must have the co-operation and sympathy of some one's faith before this miracle could be wrought — and these He found, not in Mary, as we might have expected, but in Martha, the harassed housewife.

In educating Martha to this stupendous act of faith, (1) The Lord gave her a distinct promise: "Thy brother shall rise again." (2) He drew her attention from his words to Himself, who lay beneath and behind them: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." (3) He forced

her to confess her faith. To express it would confirm and increase it: "Believest thou this?" (4) He compelled her to act on the faith, He had created, by allowing the bystanders to remove the stone. All her soul woke up as she remarked these preparations for her brother's resurrection. She believed; and in her faith gave the Lord the pivot on which his leverage might rest.

John 12:24

Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone. (r.v.)

The East came to the cradle; the West to the Cross. Sunrise becomes the Orient; sunset the Occident wave. These were not Hellenist Jews, but pure-blooded Greeks, whose life and philosophy were in the present, in as much joy as nature, art, and amusement could yield. It was startling to be met with the grave announcement of death. But how wise to send them to read that earliest divine book of Nature. Hear the parable of the corn of wheat.

Its loneliness. — Before sowing, it is by itself alone. It lies on the barn floor, beside myriads more, but there is no vital contact between it and them. They are just so many isolated units: as foreign to each other as the stars, between which millions of dividing miles intervene. So if you save your life, nursing it in selfishness, dreading and avoiding all that savors of self-denial and self-giving, you will be utterly and drearily lonely.

The falling into the ground to die. — If we compare ourselves to a corn of wheat, we may say that the seed-germ cannot bury itself; but it can choose burial. It can be willing to be cast forth. It is not a pleasant experience for the little seed. As soon as it finds itself entombed, it is seized upon by chemical agents, which pierce and tear its delicate waterproof sheath, and eat their way to its vitals. Death is no child's-play.

The fruit-bearing. — Presently the rootlet shoots downward, the tiny frond upward, and, almost without knowing it, the stalk begins to blossom and bear fruit, which, with every sowing, reduplicates itself. Such may your life become, if you will let God have his way. Via Crucis, via lucis: the way of the cross is the way of light.

John 13:36, 37

Thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards. (r.v.)

Heaven desired. — We often say it. When the pressure of life seems unbearable; when the door opens just wide enough to admit our dearest, and shuts before we can follow; when we want to see Him whom we love — we find ourselves using Peter's words again: "Why not now?"

Heaven delayed. — "Thou canst not follow Me now." The emphasis is on the cannot. It is as though the Master said, "The hindrance is not in some arbitrary edict of Divine power, but in the infinite knowledge and wisdom that cannot err." Peter was not fit to go. There were lessons of the utmost importance waiting for him to acquire in the near future. He must learn to know himself, and Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit. When he proudly vaunted that he would lay down his life for Jesus, he gave incontestable evidence that he did not know himself; and there was every reason to think that he was similarly deceived when he supposed that he was fit to quit earth's discipline, and enter on heaven's blessed enjoyment. He must exchange his own strivings and resolvings for the gracious indwelling of the Spirit of Pentecost; he must learn the glorious energy of the indwelling Savior; he must be girded by another, and carried whither he would not; and only then would the time of his putting off of the tabernacle of the body arrive.

Heaven guaranteed. — "Thou shalt follow after wards." There could be no doubt about it, since Jesus had said it; and often, in after days, these words must have been as a cordial, "Thou shalt follow afterwards." But what the Master said to Peter He says to each who believes, Thou shalt follow Me afterwards, "unto fountains of waters of life."

John 14:1

Believe also in Me.

Were we less familiar with these words, we should be more startled by their immeasurable meaning. One who seems a man asks all men to give Him precisely the same faith and confidence that they give to God. He would not abate his claims, though He was the humblest and meekest of men. And the irresistible conclusion is forced on us, that He was and knew Himself to be "God manifest in the flesh."

1. Faith in Jesus is the cure of heart trouble — It is of little use to say, "Let not your heart be troubled," unless you can add "Trust Christ." Only if we can trust can we be still. Only if we can shift the responsibility of our life on the care of our neverfailing Redeemer can weeping be exchanged for radiant and unspeakable joy.

2. Faith in Jesus conducts to the knowledge of God. "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." Philip said,

“Show us the Father.” Jesus answered, “Believe, and thou dost behold.” The world says, Seeing is believing; Jesus says, Believing is seeing. The true way to know God is, not by arguing about or seeking to verify his existence by intellectual processes, but by obeying the precepts of Jesus; following the footsteps of Jesus; holding fellowship with Jesus.

3. Faith in Jesus will make our lives the channel through which He can work.— “He that believeth on Me, the works,” etc. (John 14:12, 13, 14). The Gospels are included in the one clause; the Acts and all the marvels of the following ages in the other. Jesus is always the worker; and the man who yields himself most utterly to Him in obedience and faith, will become the channel through which He will work most mightily.

John 15:4

Abide in Me, and I in you.

The unity between the Lord and his members is beautifully set forth in this exquisite parable; which was perhaps suggested by the swaying of a vine in the evening air, as they essayed to go from the upper room towards Gethsemane. In certain conservatories the pliant branches are trained along roof or wall for vast distances; yet one life pervades the whole plant, from the rugged root to the furthest twig and leaf and cluster. Thus there is one holy life pervading all who have belonged, or shall belong, to Jesus. They live because He lives. His life is theirs.

We are in Christ by grace; but we need to realize and accentuate the union by meditation and prayer. Waiting more absolutely for his impulses in intercession and action. Being silent for Him to speak Drawing on Him by the constant appeal of faith which becomes as natural as breathing. Looking away to Him for his commendation. Seeking only his verdict on what may have been said and done So closely joined to Him, that He may produce in and through us whatever fruit He will for the refreshment of men and the glory of God.

We are in Christ for ever, so far as our standing is concerned; but we may be “taken away,” so far as our opportunities of ministry are concerned. How many of us have failed to be what He desired, so that He has had to bestow elsewhere the luxury of ministering to Him!

We are in Christ, not because we hold Him, but because He holds us; therefore we must expect the Father's pruning. Yet do not dread the knife. It is his Word, wielded by a Father's hand; and if we will yield to the golden pruning-knife of the Word, we shall escape the iron one of sorrow.

John 16:23, 26

In that day.

Thrice in these closing words the Master refers to that day (see John 14:20). Without doubt He refers to the Day of Pentecost, and the era it would introduce.

The Holy Spirit reveals the relation between the Father and the Son (John 14:20). — And this not as a matter of speculation merely, but for our holy living. The model of our union with Jesus is his union with the Father. As He is in his Father in perpetual and most blessed union, so are we to be in Him.

The Holy Spirit's presence answers our questions. — “Ye shall ask Me no question” (John 16:23, r.v., marg.). Whilst the Lord was with them, they were constantly breaking in on Him with their questions: “Lord, are there few that be saved?” “Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom?” “When shall these things be?” This is always the symptom of the earliest stage of the religious life—perpetual questioning and worrying. But when the Spirit comes, his presence is the sufficient answer. He does not teach our intellects to know the truth, but gives the truth to our hearts. We need not question, because we see; we possess; we can taste and handle for ourselves.

The Holy Spirit's indwelling teaches us how to pray. — “In that day, ye shall ask in my name” (John 16:26). To pray in Christ's name is to let his nature pray in and through our lips. Of course such prayer prevails. The one condition of successful prayer is to bring yourself into a line with the thoughts of God, to breathe his spirit, to be swayed by his impulses; this is only possible through the gracious operation of the Spirit of God. Has the blessed day of Pentecost broken upon you? Do you live in its light? Have you received all it was meant to bring you?

John 17:1

Father, the hour is come; glorify the Son, that the Son may glorify Thee. (r.v.)

In one form or another we are constantly asking the Father to glorify us. Glorify me, O Father, we cry, by giving me the largest congregation in the town; by commencing a great revival in my mission, by increasing my spiritual power, so that I shall be greatly

sought after. Of course, we do not state our reasons quite so concisely; but this is really what we mean. And then we wonder why the answer tarries. Is it not because our Father dare not trust us with glory? He knows that we would become proud and self-conscious; that we would ascribe our success to the strength of our arm and the swiftness of our foot. Nothing would be more harmful to our Christian growth. But when we desire glory only that we may be able better to glorify Jesus, then there will be no stint in what He will confer on us. Glory, like a golden river, will pour into our hearts and lives.

Oh for this absorbing passion for the glory of Jesus! To be able to pray “Thy kingdom come,” without reference to our share in securing its advent. To be as glad when another scores a great success, as though it had been ourselves who had won the laurels. To pray as eagerly for the success of others as of ourselves. Here is an ideal which seems inaccessible, as it ridicules all our natural attempts to win it. To be pleased to suffer, to fail, to be counted nothing and nobody, if only our dear Lord is extolled, exalted, and made very high — is this possible?

Do you choose it? Then be of good cheer. This is the hunger which God has promised to satisfy. He never shows you your lack of a grace without pledging Himself thereby to realize it for you. Yes, this blessed experience shall come even to you. You shall be taught the blessed lesson of perfect love.

John 18:36

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.

Well might Pilate ask if Jesus was a king. Thou poor, weary, rejected Nazarene, art Thou a king? A strange contrast, surely, to the Herod that built those halls of judgment! Thy people, at least, fail to recognize thy royalty! But Jesus did not abate his claims. “Thou sayest that I am,” He answered, “a king.” And as the ages have passed they have substantiated his claim.

The origin of his kingdom. — “My kingdom is not of this world.” The Lord did not mean, as his words have been too often interpreted, that his kingdom had nothing to do with this world; but that it did not originate here. The “of” means out of. Jesus is King, not by earthly descent, or human right, but by the purpose and counsel of the Father, who said, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee: yet will I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.”

The method of its promulgation. — It is not spread by armed force. His servants do not fight. They are priests clad in the white robes of immaculate purity, and bearing aloft their banner with the inscription, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Like their Master, they bear witness to the truth; and as they do so those who are of the truth are attracted to the Lord, as steel filings to the magnet.

There is true royalty in bearing witness to the Truth — Humbly we may appropriate our Master’s words: to this end were we born, and of this cause are we left in the world, that in every act and word we might bear witness to the Truth. As we do so, we manifest a royalty which is not of human gift or descent, but which has been communicated by the reception of the Christ — nature, through the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

John 19:30

When Jesus had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished.

Comparing the Gospels, we discover that these words were said “with a loud voice.” It was the shout of a conqueror, who has fought through a long and terrible day, but greets victory as evening closes in.

Finished, the long line of sacrificial rite. — From the gates of Eden the blood of sacrifice had begun to flow, augmented by the confluent streams of the years. From that moment, however, not another drop need be shed. The types were finished now that the Antitype had been realized.

Finished, his fulfilment of prophecy. — How contradictory some had seemed! Ancient of Days, yet a babe; the Mighty God, yet marred of visage, and led to the slaughter; Son of Man, yet scion of David’s stock; ruling in the midst of enemies, yet a bruised and broken Sufferer. But all of them, even to the last pathetic intimation of his dying thirst, fulfilled.

Finished, his mortal life. — Never again to be weary, hungered, tempted, buffeted, or to bear the contradiction of sinners. Never again to sweat the bloody sweat, or bear the accumulated faults of men. Nevermore to die.

Finished, a world’s redemption. — He had wrought out and brought in a perfect salvation. The world, so far as God could make it so, was already reconciled. Sin was put away.

Finished, the perfect obedience. — He alone of all born of woman was able to say that there was nothing which the Father had asked that He had not given; nothing that the Father had imposed that He had not gladly borne. He had finished the work given Him to do.

John 20:16

Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

Many had called her by that name. She had been wont to hear it many times a day from many lips; but only One had spoken it with that intonation. In his mouth its familiar syllables had a sweetness and tenderness which lingered in her heart; as the fragrance of the Roumanian rosevalley clings for many a day to the clothes of those who have entered it.

Her eyes had deceived her. Startled by the sudden glad expression which had passed over the features of the angels, who sat sentry in the sepulchre, she had turned herself back to see the source from which the radiance had gleamed; but even with that hint to help her, she had failed to recognize her Lord. But her ear could not mistake; the voice carried immediate recognition.

We sigh sometimes for “the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still”; but we shall hear those voices again. Our mortal body is to be fashioned according to the body of Christ’s resurrection; and evidently in that body there were the old familiar tones. May we not, therefore, certainly infer that the voices which welcome us on the other side will be those that hushed us with their lullabies when we were babes; asked us for our love and assured us of theirs when we attained maturity; whispered their dying messages in our ears, and sent us their Godspeed as we went down into the river.

The Master knows our names, and calls his own followers by them. There is one response, which He waits to elicit — one which alone will satisfy Him; one in which the love and devotion of a life may be summed up. Like Mary, let us turn and say to Him: Rabboni! that is, Master!

John 21:7

That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

This miracle was also a parable. When we go fishing apart from Jesus, we may indeed toil all the night and take nothing. But when through the darkness Jesus comes, and speaks to us across the wave, and tells us where to let down the nets; when we are in blessed partnership with Himself; when, though we see Him not, we obey his slightest promptings — then the nets are filled to their uttermost.

Those who are loved, love. — It was the consciousness that Jesus loved him which made John the Apostle of Love. Love casts such a wondrous spell over its objects, that they begin to shine in its rays and reflect them. Nothing will make a coal glow with Beat but to plunge it into the heart of the fire. Do you want to love the Lord Jesus? — dwell on his love to you.

Those who love Christ see Him. — Not Peter, the man of eager action, but John, the man of devoted love, saw the Master amid the haze that lay on the lake shore. Love will penetrate every disguise; will detect Him by the slightest sign; will strip from our eyes the film that sense and sin draw over them. If you loved Him more, you would see his hand in that disappointment, that crushing sorrow.

Those who seek Christ cannot keep it to themselves. — They must tell it out to their next companion, with beating heart and thrilling speech. John said unto Peter, It is the Lord. How often has the affirmation of a pensive, quiet heart been the torch to ignite all the soul of another, who was more fitted to execute than plan. Is not this what we may all experience as we draw near to eternity? Shall we not see Jesus standing on the shore, with preparations beyond all thought, to welcome us as we arrive from the night cruise?