

# Spurgeon's Exposition - Gospel of John

GOSPEL OF JOHN  
EXPOSITION BY C H SPURGEON

## JOHN 1 COMMENTARY

John 1

Joh 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, —

Christ the Word has existed from all eternity. He is the eternal Son of the eternal Father; he is really what Melchisedec was metaphorically, “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.” “In the beginning was the Word,” —

Joh 1:1. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Word was as truly God as the Father was God, and as the Spirit was God:” these three are one,” and ever have been one. “Very God of very God” is that Jesus whom we trust, and love, and adore.

John 1:2-5. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

The light of Christ shone many times amid the darkness that enshrouded the world before his coming to live here in the flesh, yet comparatively few recognized that light, and rejoiced in it. Christ’s light shines more brightly now, but the dark, benighted soul of man perceives not the brightness of our spiritual Lord until the Holy Spirit works the mighty miracle of regeneration, and so gives sight to those who have been blind.

John 1:6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

What a descent it is from “The Word of God” to the “man sent from God, whose name was John”! Jesus himself said concerning John, “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist;” yet, from the greatest of prophets, what a climb it is to get up to Jesus Christ, the Son of God! “ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

John 1:7-9. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

That John could not do, he could only bear witness to Christ, the true Light, who alone is able to illuminate, in a larger or lesser degree, “every man that cometh into the world.”

John 1:10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him and the world knew him not.

Oh, what terrible estrangement sin has caused between God and man!

What dreadful ignorance sin has created in the human mind! The world was made by Christ, yet “the world knew him not.”

John 1:11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

To those who were chosen as “his own” out of all the nations upon the earth, to those to whom he was specially promised of old, to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, — to these Jesus came, yet they “received him not.”

John 1:12. But —

This is a blessed “But.” Though Christ’s own nation, the Jews, as a whole “received him not,” there was “a remnant according to the election of grace,” there were some who received him. “But” —

John 1:12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

How came those persons to receive him when others rejected him? There must have been some great change wrought in them to make them different from the rest of their countrymen; and truly there was, for these were twice-born men, —

John 1:13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So that those who receive Christ, those who truly believe on Christ, are people who have been born, as others have not been born, by a new birth from heaven, a supernatural birth, so that they are a people set apart by themselves as those who have been twice created, first as human beings just like others, and then as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

John 1:14-18. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

There is no way of knowing God, and being reconciled to God, except as we receive Jesus Christ, his Son, into our hearts, and learn of him, through the Holy Spirit’s teaching, all that he delights to reveal to us concerning his Father.

John 1:19-23. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice —

Not the Word, but “the voice” by which the Word was to be made known:

“I am the voice” —

John 1:23-27. Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not, He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

See the true humility of this faithful servant of Christ. He does not dream of putting his own name side by side with his Master’s. The unloosing of shoe latches was work for a slave to do, but if we are privileged to perform this work for Christ, it will make us as kings before him. To do anything for Christ, to have even a menial’s place in his palace, is better than being an emperor among men. May we have the portion of those who are not ashamed to unloose the latchet of Christ’s shoes!

John 1:28-31. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordon, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not:

“When first I saw him,” —

John 1:31-34. But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Since John’s time, many others have borne similar testimony. We also have received him, and rejoice to say that he has baptized us with the Holy Ghost. All that John said of him is true, and much more than John said is also true. He is the Lamb of God, who has taken upon himself the sin of all who believe in him, and therefore he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Oh, that all men would receive the testimony concerning him which we find in this blessed Book, and which we delight to repeat in his name!

May the Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, inspire us through them as we read them!

John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word.

The divine Logos, whom we know as the Christ of God. “In the beginning was the Word.” The first words of this gospel remind us of the first words of the Old Testament: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Even then “the Word” was; he existed before all time, even from everlasting.

John 1:1. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

I know not how the Deity of Christ can be more plainly declared than in his eternal duration. He is from the beginning. In his glory he was “with God.” In his nature he “was God.”

John 1:2. The same was in the beginning with God.

As we have been singing —

“Ere sin was born, or Satan fell;”

ere there was a creation that could fall,

“the same was in the beginning with God.”

John 1:3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

He that hung upon the cross was the Maker of all worlds. He that came as an infant, for our sake, was the Infinite. How low he stooped! How high he must have been that he could stoop so low!

John 1:4. In him was life;

Essentially, Eternally.

John 1:4. And the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

It never has done so; it never will. You may sometimes call the darkness, the ignorance of men, or the sin of men. If you like, you may call it the wisdom of men, and the righteousness of men, for that is only another form of the same darkness. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

John 1:6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

How very different is the style of this verse from the one that precedes it!

How grand, how sublime, are the Evangelist's words when he speaks of Jesus! How truly human he becomes, how he dips his pen in ordinary ink, when he writes: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Yet that was a noble testimony to the herald of Christ. John the Baptist was "a man sent from God."

John 1:7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

Dear friends, if you and I know our real destiny, and are the servants of God, we are sent that men might, through us, believe in Jesus. John was a special witness; but we ought all to be witnesses to complete the chain of testimony. Every Christian man should reckon that he is sent from God to bear witness to the great Light, that, through him, men might believe.

John 1:8-9. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

There was no light from John except what he reflected from his Lord. All the light comes from Jesus. Every man who comes into the world with any light borrows his light from Christ. There is no other light; there can be no other. He is the "Light of the World."

John 1:10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

This is a sad verse. He was a stranger in his own house. He was unknown amidst his own handiwork. Men whom he had made, made nothing of him.

"The world knew him not;" did not recognize him.

John 1:11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

That favored circle, the Jewish nation, where revelation had been given, even there, there was no place for him. He must be despised and rejected even by his own nation.

John 1:12-13. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To receive Christ, a man must be born of God. It is the simplest thing in all the world, one would think, to open the door of the heart, and let him in; but no man lets Christ into his heart till first God has made him to be born again, born from above.

John 1:14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

They who saw Christ on earth were highly privileged; but it is a spiritual sight of him alone that is to be desired, and we can have that even now.

How full of grace, how full of truth, he is to all those who are privileged to behold him!

John 1:15-16. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

I wish that we could all say that. Even out of this company, many can say it; and linking our hands with those who have gone before us, and those who are still with us in the faith, we say unitedly, "Of his fullness have all we received," and we hope to receive from it again tonight, for it is still his fullness. There is never a trace of declining in him. It was fullness when the first sinner came to him; and it is fullness still; it will be fullness to the very end. "And grace for grace." We get grace to reach out to another grace, each grace becoming a stepping-stone to something higher. I do not believe in our rising on the "stepping-stones of our dead selves." They are poor stones; they all lead downwards. The stepping-stones of the living Christ lead upwards; grace for grace, grace upon grace, till grace is crowned with glory.

John 1:17. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

We know that the law came by Moses. The law has often burdened us, crushed us, convinced us, condemned us. Let us be equally clear that grace and truth come by this divine channel, "Jesus Christ."

John 1:18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

We do not want to see God apart from Christ. I am perfectly satisfied to see the Eternal Light through his own chosen medium, Christ Jesus. Apart from that medium, the light might blind my eyes. "No man hath seen God at any time." Who can look on the sun? What mind can look on God? But Christ does not hide the Father; he manifests him. "The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

John 1:19-22. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. Then said thy unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice--

Not "I am the Word," but "I am the voice." Christ is the essential Word; we are but the voice to make that word sound across the desert of human life.

John 1:23. Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

You see, even as a voice, John was not original. That straining after originality, of which we see so much today, finds no warrant among the true servants of God. Even though John is only a voice, yet he is a voice that quotes the Scriptures: "Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." The more of Scripture we can voice, the better. Our words, what are they? They are but air. His Word, what is it? It is "grace and truth." May we continually be lending a voice to the great Words of God that have gone before!

John 1:24-27. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

Ah! Dear friends, although it was a lowly expression that John used, you and I often feel that we want something that goes lower even than that. What are we worthy to do for Christ? Yet there are times when, if there is a shoe-latchet to be unloosed, we are too proud to stoop to do it. When there is something to be done that will bring no honour to us, we are too high and mighty to do it. O child of God, if you have ever been in that condition, be greatly ashamed of yourself! John was first in his day, the morning-star of the Light of the gospel, yet even he felt that he was not worthy to do the least thing for Christ. Where shall you and I put ourselves? Paul said that he was "less than the least of all the saints." He ran away with a title that might have been very appropriate for us. Well, we must let him have it, I suppose; and we must try to find another like it; or if we cannot find suitable words, God help us to have the humble feeling, which is better still!

John 1:28-29. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John preached a sacrificial Saviour, a sin-bearing Saviour, a sin-atoning Saviour. You and I have nothing else to preach. Let each of us say —

"Tis all my business here below

To cry, Behold the Lamb!"

John 1:30-31. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not:

Although John knew the Saviour personally, he did not know him officially.

He had a token given to him by God, by which he was to know the Messiah; and he did not officially know him till he had that token fulfilled.

John 1:31-33. But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

John would not know of his own judgment. No doubt he was morally certain that Jesus was the Christ. He had been brought up with him; he knew his mother, he had heard of his wondrous birth; John and Jesus must have been often together; but he was not to use his own judgment in this case, but to wait for the sign from heaven; and until he witnessed it, he did not say a word about it. When he saw the Holy Ghost descend upon him, then he knew that it was even he.

John 1:34. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Hear ye, then, the witness of John. The Christ, who came from Nazareth to be baptized of him in Jordan, he on whom the Holy Ghost descended like a dove, "this is the Son of God." This is the sin-bearing Lamb. Oh, that you and I might fulfill John's expectation, for he spoke that we might believe. He, being dead, yet speaketh. May we believe his witness, and be assured that "this is the Son of God"!

John is the majestic Evangelist; he is the high-soaring eagle with the piercing eye. His is the Gospel of the Son of God.

John 1:1-3. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

We cannot describe the Deity of Christ in clearer language than John uses. He was with God; he was God; he did the works of God, for he was the Creator. If any doubt his Deity, they must do so in distinct defiance of the language of Holy Scripture.

John 1:4-5. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Christ is still not understood, Jesus is still not known. How should darkness understand light? It opposes light, it has to flee before light, but it does not, it cannot understand light. O God, work a miracle in our dark hearts, and fill them with the light of Christ!

John 1:6-7. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

That is our business, too. We who are ministers sent from God bear witness of the Light, that all men through him may believe. Oh, how often we go home, and cry, "Who hath believed our report?" We do not ask you to believe in us; no, but in our Master, whose heralds we are. If we can lead you to faith in him, we shall be glad indeed; but, if not, we will sorrow because we have missed our mark, and failed in our purpose.

John 1:8-9. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

If any man has saving light, true light, he gets it through Christ. There is no other light; all other light is but darkness visible. The light in which we see God comes from Jesus.

John 1:10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Strange was it that the Creator came to his own earth, and yet he was unknown. Men mistook him, they hated him, they crucified him whom they ought to have entertained with sacred hospitality, and worshipped with holy loyalty.

John 1:11-12. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

All men are not the sons of God; the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood is utterly untrue. They only become the sons of God who receive Christ, and believe on his name; else are they heirs of wrath, even as others:

"To them gave he power to become the sons of God."

John 1:13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

There is another birth beside the natural one; never does the birth of the flesh make us Christians. If our ancestry should be a line of saints yet are we born sinners; we must be born again if we are to become saints. If we could trace our pedigree to a perfect man, if such there be, yet the birth by the flesh would not avail us. Sons of God are." born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 1:14. And the Word was made flesh,

Here was the incarnation of him who made all things. He that is God “was made flesh.”

John 1:14. And dwelt among us, (and we —

The apostles —

John 1:14. Beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Oh, all ye who would know Christ, learn that he is worth the knowing! He is full of grace for your sinnership, and full of truth for your ignorance. He can cleanse and he can teach; there is everything in him that you need. You shall not be deceived, for he is full of truth; you shall not be rejected, for he is full of grace.

John 1:15-18. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time;

He is too high, too spiritual, to be perceived by human senses.

John 1:18. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

What of God we need to know, we may see in Christ; enough to save us, enough to sanctify us, enough to make us all like the only-begotten Son of the Father.

John 1:19-20. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

With indignation he must have repelled the idea that he was the Messiah:

“I am not the Christ.”

John 1:21-23. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice —

Humbly he reduces himself to a voice; but he was not “a voice and nothing more.” There was much that was mighty and wise in that voice.

John 1:23-27. Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

How John hides himself behind his Master! He was a most worthy man, a truly great man; but he counted himself unworthy of the most menial service for Christ, and felt honoured by filling the office of a slave to unloose his Master's shoe's latchet. It is better to be the slave of Christ than to rule vast empires; he who truly serveth him is glorified thereby.



John 1:28-29. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Now is he bringing out his message; now is he pointing out his Master.

John 1:30-31. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not:

John knew Jesus very well; but he did not know him as the Sent One of God, the Messiah, till after he had received the sign and token at his baptism: "I knew him not."

John 1:31-34. But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Jesus and John must have been well acquainted with one another; they were closely related, but John was not to know anybody as the Messiah till he received the token from God. When he saw that token, then he officially knew, and he bore instant witness: "This is the Son of God."

John 1:35-36. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked,

With holy reverence, with loving awe, gazing upon this extraordinary Person "as he walked", —

John 1:36-37. He saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

This is our one business tonight, to cry, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

John 1:15. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

He was not before John in the order of human birth, yet he was truly before John, for he had an eternal pre-existence, as he was none other than the uncreated Son of God.

John 1:16-21. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered; No.

As they meant, "Art thou, literally, the prophet Elijah risen from the dead?"

"John said," "I am not." "Art thou that prophet of who Moses foretold?"

"And he answered, No." John gave short, sharp answers to these cavilers.

He was not a man of dainty words and polished periods, especially in dealing with such people as they were.

John 1:22-23. Then said they unto him, who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice--

Not "the Word."— Christ is that, but John was "the voice."

John 1:23-37. Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

In the third chapter of the same Gospel, we have yet another testimony by John the Baptist concerning Christ.

This exposition consisted of readings from Mat 3:1-12; John 1:15-37; John 3:22-36.

John 1:19-28. And this in the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto Him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet, I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Was that the place where the Israelites caressed the Jordan? It is said to have been so; and truly this is the place where we cross the Jordan too —come out of old Judaism into the true faith of the revealed Christ.

John 1:29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

I think I hear the Elijah-like tones of that son of the desert, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:30. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Ah! how infinitely before John; how before him? Having no beginning of days, before him in his exalted nature, before him in his superior rank and office!

John 1:31. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

It was by baptism that the Christ was to be known. John knew more of Jesus Christ than anybody else, yet he did not know him to be the Lamb of God until he had baptized him.

John 1:32-33. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me. Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

I doubt not that John had assuredly guessed that Jesus was the person; but he had nothing to do with guesses: he was a witness for God, and he could only speak as God revealed things to him.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 1:19-33; John 19:1-16.

John 1:19-20. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou ? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

“I am not the One anointed of God to save mankind.”

John 1:21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias ?

“Art thou Elijah come back to earth?”

John 1:21. And he saith, I am not.

For, though indeed he was the true spiritual Elijah who was to come as the forerunner of the Messiah, yet, in the sense in which they asked the question, the only truthful answer was, “I am not.”

John 1:21. Art thou that prophet ?

The long-expected prophet foretold by Moses?

John 1:21-23. And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice –

That is all; a voice and nothing more. John did not profess to be the Word;

he was only the voice which vocalized that Word, and made it audible to human ears. He came to bear witness to the Christ, but he was not himself the Christ: “I am the voice”

John 1:23-27. Of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. and they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

How wisely does God always choose and fashion his servants! John is evidently just the man for his place; he bears testimony to Christ very clearly; he earnestly turns away all attention from himself to his Master; and he has such a reverent esteem for him of whom he is the herald that he puts all honour and glory upon him.

John 1:28-30. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the-sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me

cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

You know, dear friends, that Christ existed from all eternity, so, in very truth, he was before John; you know, too, the glory and the excellency of our Divine Master's person, so that, in another sense, he was and is before John and all other creatures whom he has made.

John 1:31-34. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

The secret sign of the descent of the Spirit, in dovelike form, upon our Lord, was given to John; and as soon as he saw it, he knew of a surety that Jesus was the Sent One, the Messiah, and that he must point him out to the people.

John 1:35-36. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

This was the same text from which he had preached the day before, and it was the same sermon, somewhat shortened. So should it be with us.

His only righteousness I show,

His saving truth proclaim;

'Tis all my business here below

To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'

John 1:37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Thus John was losing his own disciples. By his testimony to the truth, he was sending them to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and he did it well and gracefully. There are many who would find it a hard task to reduce the number of their disciples; but it was not so with John.

John 1:38-46. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye ? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou ? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. and when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

It was all a seeing gospel. John said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Then Jesus said, "Come and see;" and now Philip says the same. Faith is that blessed sight by which we discern the Saviour. Whoso looks to Christ by faith shall live.

John 1:47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

“There is no craft or deception in this man, as there was in Jacob; he is a true Israelite, like Israel at his best.”

John 1:48. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me ? Jesus answered and said unto Him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

What Nathanael had been doing there, we do not know; probably he had been meditating, or he may have been engaged in prayer. But this announcement was a proof to Nathanael that Jesus could see all things, and read men’s hearts, and know what they were doing in their chosen retreats: “When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” Christ knows all of you who came in here, tonight, in a prayerful spirit, seeking him. And whenever men are seeking him, be you sure that he is also seeking them.

John 1:49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

“Thou sawest what I was doing in secret; and by that token I perceive that thou art God’s own Son.”

John 1:50. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou! thou shalt see greater things than these.

Those who are ready to believe Christ, on what may be thought to be slender evidence, shall “see greater things than these.” “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” They shall gaze upon a wonderful sight by-and-by.

John 1:51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

“Thou art a true Israelite, and thou shalt have Israel’s vision. Thou shalt see the same sight as thy father Jacob saw when he fell asleep with a stone for his pillow, only thy vision shall be far grander than his. Christ always knows how to meet the needs of our hearts, and to give us something in accordance with our own expressions, and to make his answers fit our requests, only that he always far exceeds all that we ask or even think, blessed be his holy name!”

This exposition consisted of readings from John 1:19-51; and Mat 4:12-24.

John 1:29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of god, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John lost no time. He had no sooner discovered the Saviour than he bore witness of him. “The next day.” As soon as ever his eyes lighted upon Jesus, he had his testimony ready for him. “Behold!” said he, “the Lamb of God.”

John 1:30-33. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me: And I knew him not: but that he should manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not:

At first.

John 1:33-34. But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.

Notice how very clear John is. There is no mistaking him. He repeated himself lest there should be any possibility of an error, and he gives the detail of the mode by which he recognized the Saviour, in order that all might be persuaded to accept Jesus as in very truth

the Messiah and the Son of God, so that we are to preach very plainly — not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but with demonstration of the Spirit and with power. What have we to conceal? Nay, we have everything to reveal and our business is that men should be convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and should come and put their trust in him

John 1:35-36. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God?

There is no objection to preaching the same sermon twice if it be on such a matter as this. "Behold the Lamb of God," he said one day, and the next day he did not vary the phraseology. He had no new metaphor — no new figure — with which to set forth Christ, but, as striking a nail upon the head and the same nail will help to fasten it, and may do more service than bringing out a new nail, so he gets to the same word and the same subject — "Behold the Lamb of God."

John 1:37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

They went beyond their teacher. And oh! what a mercy it is if our hearers can go Christward far beyond us. John was well content to be left behind if they followed Jesus; and so may any minister of Christ rejoice if his people will follow Jesus, even if they go far beyond his attainments.

John 1:38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?

Christ wants intelligent followers: so he asks the question, "What seek ye?"

John 1:38-39. They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see,

Which is often his answer to enquirers — "Come and see." "Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good." Learn by experience. Do not merely hear what I say, but come and see.

John 1:39-42. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus,

This is how the kingdom began to grow — by individual effort. "Andrew findeth Simon": one convert must bring another: "and he brought him to Jesus."

John 1:42. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone,

There was a meaning in the change of names, for there was about to be a change of character — the timid son of a dove soon to become a very rock for the Church.

This exposition consisted of readings from Isa 40:1-17; Isaiah 25-31. John 1:29-42.

John 1:29. The next day —

This chapter is a record of the events that occurred on different days. Sometimes God does great things in a single day; one extraordinary day may have more in it than a hundred ordinary years. It is well for us to try to live by the day, and not to let any day pass without some good action having been done in it. Let us never have to cry, "I have lost a day."

John 1:29. John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

We ought never to be slow in delivering such a message as that which John the Baptist uttered. I do not wonder that, as soon as ever John knew that Jesus was the Messiah, he told the good news to others. Hast thou found Jesus? Tell thy brother tonight; or, if not tonight, go as soon as thou canst, and bid him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1:30-34. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am. I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

John was acquainted with Jesus, for they were related to one another, and were brought up together, but he did not officially know him as the Messiah until he saw the Holy Spirit descending and remaining on him; for that was the Lord's token by which he was to recognize him. He refused, therefore, to follow any knowledge or judgment of his own. He would not know Jesus as the Christ until he saw the private mark for which the Lord had told him to look. As soon as he saw that, then John said that he knew him; and as soon as he thus knew him, he began to preach him. Has the Lord given thee in thy soul a token that Christ is thy Saviour? Dost thou know him by the witness of the Holy Ghost? Then go and speak of him to others and, like John, say, "Behold the Lamb of God." Let this be your one business between here and heaven.

John 1:35-36. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

"Again the next day." See how the Evangelist goes by days in his record. John preached the same sermon two days running, and if you proclaim Christ and him crucified, you may preach him two hundred days running, but you will never preach him too often. If you preach Christ as the Lamb of God, the great Sin-bearer, you may be always at that blessed work. There are some who very seldom preach Christ as bearing the sin of men; so that others of us must do it all the oftener to make up for their shortcomings. As for me, I can say with Charles Wesley, —

"His only righteousness I show,

His saving truth proclaim;

'tis all my business here below,

To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'"

John 1:37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

It is hard preaching when you preach away your congregation, but John did this deliberately. He wished these two no longer to be his disciples, but to become the disciples of Jesus. He had mastered the meaning of his own words, "He must increase, but I must decrease," and he was quite willing that it should be so: "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

John 1:38-39. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see.

He gave them a full invitation to come to the place where he tarried, and see for themselves. That is what Jesus still says, "Come

and see." If any of you want to know him, "Come and see." You are perfectly welcome to "Come and see" all that Jesus has to show you.

John 1:39. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

The best part of that day was the portion which they spent with Jesus it was the best day they had ever enjoyed, for they lived with Jesus. It was also the beginning of better days for these two disciples; for, having once lived with Jesus, they learnt never to live without him. Oh, that we also may abide with him!

John 1:40-41. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

Where should missionary work begin? A brother should begin with his brother. It is all very well to have a desire to go to the heathen in Africa; you had better begin work as a missionary in England, and then go to Africa. He who cannot win his brother is not likely to win anybody else. "He first findeth his own brother Simon:" this Andrew, who was afterwards to bring so many to Christ, must begin at home, and succeed there. If we are not faithful with one or two relatives, how can God trust us with a pulpit and a congregation?

John 1:42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona:

"Simon, son of a dove, thy name may point thee out as being timid; mind where thou dost wing thy flight."

John 1:42. Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.

Something more solid than the son of a pigeon; something more stable than the son of a dove. Christ changes men's names, and changes their natures, too. He can make the most fickle of us to become firm and steadfast. Oh, that he would thus work by his grace upon us!

John 1:43-44. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

"The day following." See, friends, what a wonderful chapter this is. There is a book called, The Book of Days; I call this chapter the chapter of days. Every day seems memorable for some great event. "Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter," was a poor, miserable village; but God greatly honoured it. Great works often begin in little places. The best of beings came out of the despised town of Nazareth, and three of the best of men, Philip, Andrew, and Peter, came out of Bethsaida.

John 1:45. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

True faith may make blunders. Jesus was not the son of Joseph, except by reputation, and he was Jesus of Bethlehem quite as much as he was Jesus of Nazareth; but true faith is accepted of God even though it makes some mistakes. It believes God's Word, and it believes God's Son, and therefore it shall be accepted.

John 1:46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Christ had said, "Come and see." Now Philip used the same words, "Come and see." It is always right to follow the example that the Lord Jesus has set us.

John 1:47-48. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael



saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?

You may remember that, a short time ago, I preached a sermon upon Nathanael. He was a kind of Jewish John Blunt, a man who always spoke his mind. He had a mind, and he had a mind to speak it, and he spoke his mind. So, the moment that Christ spoke of him, he asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" He was conscious that Christ did know him, and being a man who was altogether free from cunning and craftiness, he pointedly asked how Christ came to know him.

John 1:48. Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

What was he doing under the fig tree? Jesus knew, and Nathanael knew, but nobody else knew, and perhaps nobody else ever will know. That was a secret between Christ and Nathanael. He was doing something there that he regarded as quite private, and the Saviour's allusion to his being under the fig tree was the plainest proof he could have of Christ's divinity. "Oh!" thought he, "he who can remind me of that secret transaction must be God."

John 1:49-50. Nathanael answered and saith unto him: Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

You who are honest in heart, you who can be convinced by a single argument, — and, mark you, one good argument is as convincing as twenty good arguments, and a great deal better than a hundred bad ones, — you who are willing to be led by a single thread shall be led. If you are willing to believe on what is clear evidence, you shall have more evidence: "thou shalt see greater things than these." God will show much to that man who has eyes with which to see it. He who will not see, and does not wish to see, shall grow more and more blind, and the darkness shall thicken about him.

John 1:51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

He could see actually what Jacob saw only in a dream, when he beheld that wonderful stairway of light which leads from earth to heaven, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who by his manhood and his Godhead bridges the distance between us and God.

## John 2 Commentary

### John 2

Our Saviour had lived on the earth for thirty years, and had worked no miracle. There was the hiding of his power. He had been subject unto his parents, and had lived in obscurity. Now he has broken through the obscurity, and he begins his public ministry by working a miracle.

John 2:1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee;

"The third day." John keeps a kind of diary for Christ. In those first days there was something for every day, and they were a specimen of the whole life of the Saviour. He could never say, like Titus, "I have lost a day." Every day had its deed, glorifying to God, and blessed to men. Let us also try to labour for Christ every day; let there be no day without its mark. May God grant that there may be something to make every day memorable! "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee." The first miracle of our Lord was not wrought at Jerusalem; but away there in the back settlements, in "Galilee of the Gentiles." It was necessary for him to be seen, and to work miracles which might be seen; but he began in an obscure region, among a despised people.

John 2:1. And the mother of Jesus was there:

This expression leads to the belief that there was some kind of kinship between the bridegroom or the bride and the mother of

Jesus, for it is not said that she was invited to be there, but that she “was there.”

John 2:2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

Happy marriage, where Christ is invited to be present! Where Christ goes, his disciples go. If they suffer with him, they also rejoice with him. If he goes to a feast, they must go, too: “Both Jesus was called, and his disciples.” They were only five; but five is a large number to add to a poor family’s wedding party. It shows the generosity of their heart that they invited Jesus to come and bring his disciples; and he went to put honour upon marriage, especially as he foresaw that the day Would come when the apostate church of Rome would reckon marriage to be dishonourable, and not permit one who was married to officiate as a minister.

John 2:3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

I notice that John calls Mary “the mother of Jesus.” I suppose he had in his mind the dying word of Christ, “Behold thy mother!” Such things make a deep impression upon us; and we are apt, when writing, to use the phrases that have been burnt into the memory. “The mother of Jesus.” Because she has been too much exalted in the Romish church, I fear that we run to the other extreme, and think too little of this woman to whom the angel Gabriel said, “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.” “They wanted wine.” They had not been long married before there was want in the house. Even in the brightest days of life, they wanted something more; and the mother of Jesus saw that they were in want, and that the marriage festival would be dishonoured; so she went to her son and she said, “They have no wine.” I fear she spoke a little like an ordinary mother addressing her son; but the time had come when that discipline was to end. Mary was not his mother as the Son of God. He was about to work a miracle, and he would have her and all his relatives know that he would not use his miraculous powers merely for their advantage; but for the glory of God and the instruction of men.

John 2:4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

It was a very difficult position for him to be in, to act the part of a loving and obedient son as far as his manhood was concerned, and yet, as the Son of God, by no means to compromise his divine character, but to stand out there as being under no influence of the flesh. Just as we are not to know Christ after the flesh, so he no longer knew mother, or brother, or friend, according to earthly relationship; and when Mary intruded her motherhood upon him, it was but right and fitting that he should say, “What have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.” The Saviour had an hour for everything; an hour for suffering, and an hour for working; and he did everything punctually, promptly to the minute. That was one of the beauties of his life: “Mine hour is not yet come.” Perhaps he meant, “My hour to work this miracle is not yet come;” and he would not be hurried by anybody. Beloved, it is not easy to be familiar with Christ, as I trust we are, and yet always to maintain humble deference to his sacred will. Never let us pray as if we were dictators, or his equals. We must keep our place, however near we come to the dear bosom of our Lord. He is still in heaven, and we are upon earth. He is the Master, we are the servants; and if we are as favored as his mother was, we must not go too far, as she did.

John 2:5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

This holy woman took the rebuke in silence. She said nothing; she felt the force of Christ’s words, she proved that she did by now fully believing that he would do something or other. Had he not said, “Mine hour is not yet come”? Did not that mean that the hour would come, and that he would do something by-and-by? So she quietly accepted his reproof. Oh, you who are in great trouble, you feel as if you could force the hand of Christ; but you must not think of doing that. Even if you could have power over him, you would be very foolish to use it. Let him alone; he knows best how and when to show his grace towards you. Keep silence before him, and in patience commit your way unto him.

John 2:6. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

I admire the accuracy of the Holy Spirit. John does not know exactly how much these vessels held; they were not made to measure things in, so he writes, “containing two or three firkins apiece.” Let us always speak correctly; sometimes, “almost” or “thereabouts”

will be words that will just save our truthfulness. Let us not speak positively when we do not know; and when the accuracy of a statement is necessary, and we cannot give it in terms that are definite, let us give it in words like these, "containing two or three firkins apiece." These were great "waterpots of stone." Stone will not, as a rule, hold the flavour of anything that has been in it, like an earthen vessel would do; so these pots, which had contained nothing else but water, could not be suspected of having any lees of wine concealed therein, or any flavouring material that would make the water taste like wine. No, they were genuine stone waterpots.

John 2:7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

There was no fear of anything but water being there: "They filled them up to the brim." They obeyed Christ to the letter. If Christ says to you, "Fill the waterpots with water", fill them up to the brim. Never cut down his commandments; carry them out as far as the largest interpretation can go.

When you are bidden to believe in him, believe in him up to the brim. When you are told to love him, love him up to the brim. When you are commanded to serve him, serve him up to the brim.

John 2:8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

"Draw out now." "Now." He had not turned the water into wine by any incantation. He simply willed it, and it was done. He said, "Draw out now." He did not want to leave it unnoticed, because he had not worked a miracle before, and he could not say whether this was one. He was sure it was; so he said to the servants, when they had filled the waterpots with water, "Draw out now. Do not bring it to me for me to taste it; I know what it is. Take it to the chairman of the festival, to him who sits at the head of the table, and is the judge of the wine: "and they bare it." The holy confidence of Christ is admirable. May we be able, by faith, so to work, with a calm consciousness of divine help! But notice this. Whenever the Lord fills any of you with a blessing, think that you hear him say, "Draw out now." He does not fill these pots that they may keep full. "Draw out now." Did you have a good time last Monday night at the prayer-meeting? Some of us had. "Draw out now." Have you lived near to God of late, and are you very happy? "Draw out now." If he has filled you up to the brim, draw out now; for, if you try to store it up, it will become useless. Selfishness will poison it all.

John 2:9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

There was no collusion, for the governor, who tasted it, did not know where it came from; and the servants, who knew where it came from, did not taste it, so that they did not know what it was like. If anybody objects to the Saviour making wine, I think that the best reply is that all the wine which is made of water will do nobody any hurt, and the more of it the better; and this was so made, certainly. They say that there is a devil in every grape. There were no grapes here; and I am afraid that there is not much of them in most of the wine that is made nowadays; there is something worse than devil in that.

John 2:10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

That the governor of the feast did not understand, but he admired it and here is a picture of what our Lord always does. He gives his people the best last. At first, the wine of the kingdom is mingled with much bitterness, salt tears of sorrow flow into it, but it improves as we go on; and when we shall drink it with him, in the kingdom of God, what will it be like? The joy of Christ's love on earth is heaven, but when we get to heaven, and drink it fresh from the everlasting spring, what will that joy be? Oh, the blessedness laid up for the people of God! We pluck some of the fruit from the trees, and eat it; but the fruits laid up in the fruit-chamber, to get ripe by-and-by, are the very pick of the fruit of the tree of life. You who live for the world have had your best already; but, as for our feast with Christ, we go from good to better, and from better to the best.

John 2:11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory;

Moses turned water into blood; Christ turned water into wine. One brought a curse upon the common things of daily life; the other put an added sweetness and blessing into them.

John 2:11. And his disciples believed on him.

They did believe on him before; but now they had ocular demonstration of his divine power and Godhead; and they believed as they had not believed before. May you and I often make distinct progress in faith, so that it may be said of us also, "His disciples believed on him"!

## John 3 Commentary

John 3:1-3. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

There must be a new birth because a new name is absolutely necessary for the discernment of spiritual things. The natural man cannot comprehend spiritual things, they must be spiritually discerned. The new birth is therefore necessary that we may have a spirit within us which can see or understand the kingdom of God; but until a man is born again, "he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:4-5. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old/ can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

We understand the passage to mean, "Water, that is, the Spirit;" but it may refer to the purifying influence of the Word as symbolized by water. I do not think that baptism is referred to here at all.

John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;

Parents may be the most devout people who ever lived, but that which is born of them is only flesh.

John 3:6. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

It is only then, as we are born of the Spirit of God that there is any spiritual life in us whatsoever.

John 3:7-8. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He undergoes a mysterious change, he becomes a new man, he enters into a new life which others cannot comprehend; though they hear the sound of it, they cannot tell whence this man's new life comes, or whither it goes. He has become a spiritual person, not comprehended of natural men.

John 3:9-10. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knoweth not these things?

"So learned in the law of God, art thou ignorant of the Spirit of God? Hast thou read the law so many times, and yet not found out that natural births and outward washings are of no avail in spiritual things?"

John 3:11-12. Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

“If, at the very entrance to the kingdom of heaven, you say, ‘How can these things be?’ what will you say if I take you into the central metropolis of truth, and introduce you to the great King himself?

John 3:13; John 3:15. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

This exposition consisted of readings from Num 21:1-9; and John 3:1-15.

If you were sent for to visit a dying man, and you wished to select a chapter which would set the truth before him very briefly and very clearly, you could not make a better choice than this 3rd chapter of the Gospel according to John. So, as we are all dying men and women, let us read it with that same desire, and may the Holy Spirit apply it to our hearts as we read it.

John 3:1-2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,—

That was better than not coming at all. “Better late than never.” Better come to Christ in the dark than not come to him at all.

John 3:2. And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

This was good reasoning on the part of Nicodemus. If he did not at first go as far as he afterwards did, it argued well for him that he went as far as he could. O thou who art troubled with unbelief, believe as much as thou canst; and then cry, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief; and, especially, help me to get rid of it.” Confess to Christ what thou dost believe, and he will add more to thy belief.

John 3:3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom, of God.

He cannot understand what it is; he cannot know anything about it; he cannot see it.

John 3:4-5. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

If the “water” mentioned here relates to baptism,—which I greatly question,—then, certainly, it shows the way of entrance for a believer, publicly, into the kingdom of God. But if it relates to the purifying power of the Spirit of God,—as I believe it does,—then it teaches us that no man enters into the kingdom of God, and becomes a partaker of its privileges,—which is something more than merely seeing it,—except the Spirit of God shall be to him as water purifying him from sin. This is the reason why a man cannot enter into the spiritual kingdom until he is born again, born from above.

John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;

And “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”

John 3:6. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

And only the new creature, which is thus born, can, by any possibility, understand or enter into the possession of the spiritual things which belong to the kingdom of God.

John 3:7-8. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is mysterious, like the wind, and so is the creature that is "born of the Spirit." The spiritual man often cannot understand himself, he is so mysterious a being;—how then shall he be able fully to comprehend how that wondrous new life is created within him? All we know is that he is a new creation, as much the work of eternal power as our first creation.

John 3:9-10. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

"These things" that lie at the very root of everything. "Art thou a Rabbi and dost thou not know this?" Alas, good Master, there are still many Rabbis who do not understand this; many, who have taken the highest degree the University can give them, yet do not know in their own souls what it is to be born again!

John 3:11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Spiritual men declare that there are spiritual things. They know them, and have seen them; and they have a right to be believed, for they are not liars. They are honest men, and speak what they do know; yet, often, their witness is not received. They need not be surprised at this, for it was the same with their Master.

John 3:12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

If these elementary truths about the new birth stagger you, what is the use of my going on to anything higher? You would not understand it, or receive it.

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

He alone knows the secrets of God who has been with God, who has come from God, and who is still with God.

John 3:14-18. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

God give us, even now, deliverance from condemnation through faith in his dear Son, and prevent our being condemned through our unbelief, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

If we were asked to read to a dying man who did not know the gospel, we should probably select this chapter as the most suitable one for such an occasion; and what is good for dying men is good for us all, for that is what we are; and how soon we may be actually at the gates of death, none of us can tell.

John 3:1-2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,

We do not know the names of many other Pharisees, but we do know the name of this one because God had loved him with an everlasting love, and therefore with lovingkindness did he draw him to the Saviour's feet. "The same came to Jesus by night." Possibly, he was too busy to come during the day. Anyhow, it was better to come to Jesus late at night than not to come to him at all. From the fact that, after our Lord's death, it is said that he was the man who "at the first came to Jesus by night," I gather that he did come then partly out of timidity and partly also out of candor. He wanted to know more about Christ before he committed himself, so he came privately, to see and hear for himself. It does not matter if any of you also come to Christ by night if you like. Our Saviour has a night-bell to his door, and he is quite willing to be the Physician of your soul, even if you ring him up at midnight.

John 3:2. And said unto him, Rabbi,

He begins very respectfully, and so far, so good; but then, Judas said, "Hail, Master," and kissed Christ, when he went to Gethsemane to betray him.

John 3:2. We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Dear friends, if any of you do not know all about Christ that you wish to know, or that can be known, make use of what you do know about him. Nicodemus had not yet learned the truth of Christ's Deity, but he knew that he was a teacher sent from God, and that God was with him.

John 3:3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Christ's formula, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee," was a new style of speech for the Pharisees to hear, for they quoted Rabbi this, and Rabbi that; but Jesus gives himself as his own sufficient authority, with an egoism which cannot be blamed, and which no true disciple of his ever questions, for Christ is himself the truth, and whatever he says is to be humbly received by all his followers. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He has no notion of what it really is; he cannot even see it, for he is blind to it until he is born again. It is for this reason that our most lucid explanations of the gospel are altogether lost upon unregenerate men and women. However bright a light God may make our ministry to be, bright light is of no use to blind men, and they must be born again before they can even see the kingdom of God.

John 3:4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

His questions proved that he could not see the kingdom of God. He blundered over the letter of Christ's message; he misunderstood the metaphor that Christ used; but did Jesus therefore not give Nicodemus any further instruction? Oh, no; listen: —

John 3:5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

There must be a purifying operation upon his heart and mind, he must be spiritually washed and cleansed, and the Spirit of God must create him anew; otherwise he cannot possibly enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

So that the best child who ever was born, even though he were, like Saul of Tarsus, "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews;" yet even he, inasmuch as he "is born of the flesh, is flesh," and not "spirit." Everything which comes to us by our first birth can be nothing better than flesh, and what can you get out of flesh but flesh? The only "evolution" that can come of

the flesh is corruption. There must be another birth if you are to get anything but flesh: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Fleshly things are understood by the flesh, and spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; hence the absolute necessity of a second birth, a Spirit birth, that we may first see and then enter the spiritual kingdom of God.

John 3:7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

This ruler of the Jews was full of astonishment at this strange doctrine, so Christ said to him, "Marvel not."

John 3:8. The wind bloweth —

That is, the Spirit bloweth —

John 3:8. Where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

This is a great mystery, and our Saviour connected it with the most mysterious thing in the whole realm of nature, — the wind, — a thing which has never been seen, and which must remain a mystery to us, at least while we are upon the earth. Christ uses this mysterious force as an emblem of the Holy Spirit, and of those who are "born of the Spirit."

John 3:9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

He was puzzled and perplexed, like a man in a maze; the Saviour had given him something to think of; and I wish that, when we preach to a congregation, or when we talk to individuals, we would not aim at dazzling them with our fine phrases, but would seek to set the truth before their minds, that it might lie there, to be studied, and thought of, and to be like seed which, in after days, would germinate, and bring forth a harvest to God's praise and glory. Our Saviour is an example to all of us who preach; and, in this instance, he shows us the wisdom of not keeping back the mysteries of the kingdom. I am greatly afraid that many preachers would have begun by talking to Nicodemus of some point that was common to both Judaism and Christianity, and that they would have gone on to apologize for the peculiar mysteries of Christianity, all of which would have been waste of breath, and worse than that. Do not so, my brethren; but speak out the truth boldly, and leave the Eternal Spirit to make use of it as he pleases.

John 3:10-12. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

The Saviour as good as told Nicodemus that he did not come to argue or to reason with him, but to bear witness to absolute certainties, of which he himself was absolutely sure. So he said to him, "If you do not receive our witness concerning these things, which lie on the very threshold of the kingdom," — yet, mark you, he had been speaking about regeneration, the great mystery of the new birth, — "it is of no use going on to still higher themes." So it is evident that the kingdom of Christ requires great faith, — faith on the very threshold of it — to believe the wondrous mystery of the new birth, and still greater faith, as deeper truths, the more heavenly things of the kingdom are revealed to us.

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Now Nicodemus must have been indeed puzzled. Here was a man who had come down from heaven, yet who had gone up to heaven, and was still there, although he was at that moment talking to Nicodemus! Without the Spirit of God to explain the mystery, he could not make top or bottom of it.

John 3:14-15. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever



believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Mark, dear friends, the blending of the different truths in this wonderful chapter; there is no keeping back the necessity of the new birth, and there is no cutting down of the glorious doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus, he puts the whole matter as broadly as it could be put.

John 3:16-17. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

If any one of you says, "I cannot cause myself to be born again," that is quite true; yet listen to this message in the same chapter which speaks of the new birth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:18. He that believeth on him is not condemned:

That is a grand truth.

John 3:18. But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

His not believing is the master-sin, the surest evidence of his being, in his heart, an enemy to God. If he refuses to trust Christ, the matchless gift of the Father's love, he must be desperately set on mischief, and he "is condemned already." These two truths of the necessity of the new birth, and of the fact that everyone who believes on Christ is saved, are quite consistent and in perfect harmony with each other. God grant to us the grace to know them both by experience! Never talk about "reconciling" them, for they have never fallen out with one another. God grant that we may find them both true in our own lives, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

If you were called in to see a person who was dying, and wished to read a chapter from the Word of God, and you were afraid that the sick one did not know the way of salvation, you could not select a better portion than the one we are about to read. I have chosen it in the hope that some may now learn from it what they must do to be saved.

John 3:1-2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,

Perhaps he was very busy during the day. It is better to come to Jesus at night than not to come to him at all. All hours are convenient to Christ; you may come to him when you are at home tonight. When everybody else is asleep, Jesus is still awake. In all probability, however, Nicodemus did not wish to commit himself by coming to Christ by day. He had not yet tried and tested him, so he would not be thought to be Christ's follower till he had first had a quiet private talk with him. As a ruler of the Jews, he was wise in acting thus discreetly.

John 3:2. And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

He admitted the truth as far as he could see it. The miracles of Christ proved him to be a divinely-commissioned teacher. Always be willing to go as far as you can go in the pursuit of truth. If you cannot see everything at once, see all that you can see. Be not of a cavilling spirit; be frank and teachable as this man was.

John 3:3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

It is such a mystery, a thing of such a marvilous character, that his old nature cannot see it. He must have new eyes, be must be a new man, be must be born again, before he can “see the kingdom of God.” Have you caught this idea, my dear hearer? Do you understand that you cannot polish yourself up to a certain point, and then see the kingdom of God? You must be born again; there must be a radical change in you, a new birth, a birth from above, if you are ever to see the kingdom of God.

John 3:4-5. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

At first Jesus said that a man could not see the kingdom of God except he was born again; now he tells Nicodemus that a man cannot enter the kingdom except he is born of water and of the Spirit. There must be a cleansing; he must be “born of water.” There must be a spiritual life; he must be “born of the Spirit”, or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;

Nothing more. However godly your father, however gracious your mother, all that is “born of the flesh is flesh.”

John 3:6. And that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

There must be, then, a Spirit-birth, or else you have no spirit; you belong not to the spiritual realm; and you cannot see and you cannot enter the spiritual kingdom.

John 3:7-8. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,

The sounding of the wind blowing through the trees, —

John 3:8. But canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:

Where it begins, whither it goes, or where it comes to an end, you cannot tell.

John 3:8. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

You do not know where the spirit-life begins; and you cannot tell to what it will lead. There are heights to which the spirit-life can carry you, of which you have never dreamed; this is a mystery beyond your ken.

John 3:9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

He did not deny that they might be; but he asked how they could be. Ah, many a man has asked the same question! “How may I be made anew? How may I become a new creature?” Only he that makes all things can make all things new. The new birth is as great a wonder as creation itself; and there is as much, and a great deal more, to be wrought upon you to make you a Christian, as has been wrought upon you to make you a man.

John 3:10. Jesus answered and said, unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

These truths lie on the very doorstep of our holy religion. There are deeper and higher mysteries than these.

John 3:11-12. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things,

Common-place things, the lower things of faith. "If I have told you these,"

John 3:12. And ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

There are mysteries in our holy religion which we would not tell to everybody. It would be casting pearls before swine to mention them to unregenerate men. Christ tells Nicodemus that the primary truths must be believed before the more advanced doctrines can be revealed.

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even, the Son of man which is in heaven.

It is Christ who knows everything. He understands all mysteries; he can teach all truth, for he has been in heaven, he came down to earth, and he has gone back again to heaven. Now, perhaps, some of you will be saying, "How are we to be saved? If there is no salvation without the new birth, how can we obtain the new birth?" Listen. The same chapter which tells you of the mystery of regeneration, tells you of the simple way of salvation by faith in Christ.

John 3:14-15. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"Whosoever." If you believe in Christ, you are born again. If you trust him, you have the new life. This simple way of salvation is not contradictory to the way of salvation by the new birth, it is the same thing stated in a form that we can comprehend.

John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This text has saved thousands of souls. The constellation in the heavens, called the Great Bear, has in it the two pointers which direct the eye of the observer to the pole star; and this verse points to Christ so clearly, so distinctly, that many have found him by it, and have lived. Let me read it again: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:17-18. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn, the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already,

Not, "shall be condemned at the last," though that also is true; but "he that believeth not is condemned already," —

John 3:18. Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

May the Lord bless to us the reading of this very simple gospel chapter, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

John 3:1-2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

When enquirers come to see any of you who are Christians, do not begin talking to them, but let them begin by telling you what they

have to say, for it will probably guide you as to what you shall say to them in return. Our Lord Jesus could read all hearts, and he needed no one to tell him what was there, yet, for our sakes, he sets the example of letting Nicodemus speak first. This man was a Pharisee, and consequently was apt to attach too much importance to the outward part of religion, so observe how the Saviour deals with him by dwelling on the inner part of it, upon the necessity of the new birth. He has less to say to him about believing, and more about experimental godliness, and the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Our main business, in dealing with men's souls, is not to teach them what they want to know but what they really need to know, bringing forward ever that truth which, if it be not the most palatable, shall be the most profitable to them.

John 3:3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

"He has no idea of what it is; he cannot perceive it; he has not the faculty by which he could see or understand the meaning of the kingdom of God."

John 3:4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

His religion was external, you see; he could not grasp the spiritual idea which Christ had set before him. This matter of the new birth is very simple to all of us who know what Jesus meant, but it was exceedingly difficult to Nicodemus; as it has been to all but those who have experienced it.

John 3:5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The entrance into that kingdom is by a new birth in which water and the Spirit of God are both needful. There is a cleansing, and there is a new creation. There is the cleansing water of the merit of Christ, and there is the divine operation of the Spirit of God. Or, if the Saviour only means entrance into his visible kingdom, then it is through baptism that the man outwardly makes his profession of faith in Christ. It is through the Spirit of God alone, however, that he really enters into the kingdom of God. Note the distinction between seeing the kingdom and entering into it; no man can even see the kingdom of God, much less enter it, except by that new birth which is wrought only by the Holy Spirit.

John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;-

No matter who the father is, nor who the mother is, there is no such thing as inherited godliness. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and nothing more; all that is born of the flesh cannot rise beyond its original source. However much the man may improve himself, our Saviour's words will still remain true, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" —

John 3:6. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Everything is according to its birth, and according to its nature. The Spirit of God must, therefore, operate upon us, and we must have a new birth, if we are to see and to enter the kingdom of God.

John 3:7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

"Do not wonder at this, for it must be so. The first birth, at its best, can only give you flesh; there must be another birth, a birth from above, to bring you into the realm of spirit that you may understand and share in spiritual things."

John 3:8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He is a mysterious personage, not to be understood by carnal man. You see his outward life, but you cannot see the hidden spring by which that life is moved and controlled, for that mysterious inner life is only discerned by those who possess it.

John 3:9-10. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knoweth not these things?

“Dost thou profess to teach others, and hast thou never been taught this first great spiritual truth?” Nicodemus was not the last Rabbi who did not understand what it is to be born again, and it is greatly to be feared that there are still many, who are teachers of others, who yet have never experienced this all-important change. The Lord have mercy upon them!

John 3:11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

The testimony of Christ, and of his apostles, and of all true disciples of Christ is this,—that there is such a thing as a new birth. Men may not believe that it is true; but, for all that, it is as certain as any other fact in the history of the world. It is foolish for any to deny it because they have not experienced it themselves. Although they have not experienced it, others have, and those who declare that they have been born again are as honest, as reasonable, and as trustworthy as any other people in the world. If any counsel had to prove his case, in a court of law, by the mouth of five or six witnesses, I am sure that he would not want better witnesses than those who declare that they have been born again. Many of them are well known people of high repute, and their testimony ought to be believed. But it is not a question of six, or a dozen, or a dozen thousand witnesses. There have been hundreds of thousands of men and women who have borne witness that a miraculous change has taken place in them, by which they have been born into a new world, and have received a new life, and the testimony of these witnesses ought to be believed. It was hard that Christ should have to say, “Ye receive not our witness.”

John 3:12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

For regeneration is, as it were, one of the commonplaces of the Christian religion. It is a thing that very often takes place among men; but if this foundation truth is not believed, how can men expect that yet higher truths shall be revealed to them?

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

So far, this chapter speaks of the new birth, and there are many people who are much perplexed because they cannot comprehend this great mystery. They ask, “How, then, can we be saved? Is there no way of salvation without the new birth?” Assuredly there is none, yet the way of salvation is very simple and clear. It is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” and it is very significant that this chapter, which, beyond any other, teaches the doctrine of the new birth, with equal clearness teaches the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ. Listen: —

John 3:14-18. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

That is the proof of his condemnation; he must be an enemy to God who will not believe on his Son. He who refuses to believe the witness of God is, by that very fact, convicted and condemned; and if he had no other sin, it is sin enough to sink him to the lowest hell to deny the veracity of God, to make God a liar by refusing to believe in Jesus Christ his Son. See, then, how these two truths are blended. “Ye must be born again,” and “he that believeth on him is not condemned.” Why is that? Because he is born again; that new birth has taken place in him, and eternal life is his, because he has believed on the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:19-21. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Now, my friend, art thou willing to come to the light,-to the light of Scripture,-to the light of Revelation? If so, so far well. God grant us grace to feel that light is our friend, that we do not need to shun it, but desire to walk in it!

We can scarcely find a chapter in which the gospel lies so compact and so plainly stated.

John 3:1. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

Christ's door is open at all hours. You may come to Christ by day. You may come to Christ by night. There is never a time when Christ is from home. He that seeketh findeth, and, to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. "The same came to Jesus by night." Perhaps he was timid. It is just as likely that he was prudent, and did not wish to commit himself till he had seen what it was that Jesus taught. Perhaps, too, he was busy, and had no time except at night. Better come at night than not come at all. "The same came to Jesus by night."

John 3:2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

The miracles were accepted as a proof of Christ's mission, and if they do not seem to be quite such a proof to us at this distance, they were a most marvelous and necessary proof at the first. Perhaps they have ceased because, that first work being done, the testimony can now stand upon its own strength, and men reading it may judge it to be of God if they will. But to Nicodemus it was quite clear that Christ could not have worked his miracles, except God were with him.

John 3:3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Here is a greater miracle than I have wrought in the outside world. Here is a spiritual miracle. This is what you must receive as well as others. You cannot even understand my kingdom, and know what it means — you cannot see it, except you are born again.

John 3:4. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Thus do men interpret Christ's figures literally, and this has been the basis of a great many mischiefs and false doctrines. When he is using metaphors to make the thing plain, they straightway use the metaphor rather as a cloak to hide the meaning than as a glass through which to see it. This is the reason why the doctrine of transubstantiation has come up. Because our Saviour said, "This is my body," men have not been able to understand that he meant, "This represents my body. This is a figure." Truly "the letter killeth." It is the inner spirit that gives life.

John 3:5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

He cannot be Christ's professed disciple except he receive the Spirit, and except he be baptized — if the water here relates to baptism at all, which we judge it does not. He must be renewed, and washed, and purified. That must be the water; and he must have the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, or else, as he cannot see, so he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

A man may have the best parents that ever lived, but all that is born of the flesh is flesh, at the very best. Your father may be a saint, and your mother a saint, but thou art born in sin, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and unless thou be born of the Spirit, thou canst not understand or see spiritual things, and thou canst not enter into the spiritual kingdom, for thou hast no spiritual capacity. "The carnal mind discerneth not the things that are of God, for they are spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned." Therefore we must be born again so as to receive that Spirit by which spiritual things are discerned and entered into.

John 3:7-8. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

There are mysteries in nature. There are mysteries in grace. Every now-born soul is a mystery, he cannot explain himself. He can scarcely understand himself.

John 3:9-10. Nicodemus answered, and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

These simple things — these elementary principles — these rudiments of the school book of believers.

John 3:11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen: and ye receive not our witness.

This was an additional hint to Nicodemus of the unbelief that still lingered in him. "Ye receive not our witness."

John 3:12. If I have told you earthly things,

Things that have to do with men while here below.

John 3:12. And ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

If I lift the veil, and talk to you about greater mysteries still, if you do not believe about regeneration, where will you be if I begin to talk of any Godhead, and of all the inner secrets?

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

A riddle, doubtless, to Nicodemus, which in after days he understood.

John 3:14-15. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Oh! that blessed "whosoever"! Hear it, ye sons of men, and tell it to your neighbors — "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16-18. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned:

He may be very faulty. His conscience may accuse him, but he is not condemned.

John 3:18. But he that believeth not is condemned already,

Hear that, "condemned already"; not in a state of probation. Never was there a greater mistake than to say that men are in a state of probation. That probation has passed long ago. They have been proved in the world, and, if they are unbelievers, they are condemned already. "Condemned already."

John 3:18-19. Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation,

The condemnation — the head and front of it.

John 3:19-20. That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

This is the secret of infidelity. This is the reason of all opposition to Christ. It is love of sin. Trace it home to its den and lair, and you shall find that it is love of sin that breeds hatred of Christ. Men do not see because they do not want to see. They do not want to see too much lest they should be uneasy in their present state of life. So they kick against Christ, and try to put out the light of his gospel, lest they be reproved by it.

John 3:21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

God give us the heart that seeks the light, and sooner or later we shall find it. We shall find it in Christ.

Let us once more read together part of this blessed soul-saving chapter. I suppose that more souls have been saved through the reading of this chapter than through almost any other portion of Holy Writ.

John 3:1-2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,

He could not have come at a better time; the business of the day was over, and all was quiet.

John 3:2. And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.

It is always well to go as far as you can in your avowal of belief in Christ. Nicodemus confessed what he knew to be true, and he drew from it the thoroughly accurate conclusion that Christ must be a teacher come from God because of the miracles which he wrought. Dear hearer, if thou dost not yet fully know Christ, take heed that thou dost not trifle with the truth which thou dost know. If God has taught thee a little about him, prize that little, and thou shalt have more, as we have often said, "He that values moonlight shall yet have sunlight." Thank God if thou knowest as much as Nicodemus knew, and ask him to teach thee more.

John 3:3-4. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Staggering at the symbol, he stumbled at the letter of Christ's saying, and did not perceive its inward sense.

John 3:5-6. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;-



Flesh, and nothing more; and it never can be anything more than flesh. The first birth brings no one any further than that. The children of the most godly parents, so far as their sinful nature is concerned, are in precisely the same condition as the offspring of the most ungodly. If they are ever to be numbered amongst the children of God, they must be born again, because "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" —

John 3:6. And that which is born of the Spirit-

And that alone —

John 3:6. Is spirit.

Now, the flesh cannot enter into the spiritual kingdom, only the spirit can enter that realm; and hence the need of a new birth, that this spirit may be created in us.

John 3:7-8. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He is a mystery. The effect of the work of the Spirit upon him is seen in him, but no man understands what the Spirit of God is, or how he works, any more than he knows whence the wind comes, and whither it goes.

John 3:9-10. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

A very similar query to that might be put to some who are living now "Are you profound philosophers, students deeply learned in classic lore, or wise concerning many of the mysteries of nature; yet know you not these things? What will be the good of all your knowledge if you do not know how to gain admission into the kingdom of heaven? It would be better for a man to be ignorant of all other things, and to know this one thing, than to have all possible human learning, and yet to miss this knowledge which is the most essential of all.

John 3:11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee,

Christ speaks with an authority that no mere human teacher can ever possess.

John 3:11. We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

In a certain sense, every true minister of Christ and every true child of God, can say this, for we know that there is a spiritual kingdom. We have seen it, we have entered into it; and we can testify that there is another life which is as much superior to the ordinary life of men as the life of men is superior to that of the brutes that perish; and we know that we have that superior life. We have other eyes than these eyes that are visible, and other ears than the ears of our flesh. There is a higher and better life to be enjoyed even now, and he that believeth in Christ has that life. "We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen;" and yet, though our testimony would be believed if we gave it concerning anything else, we are not believed when we witness concerning this higher and better life.

John 3:12. If I have told you earthly things,-

Things that take place here below, such as the new birth, —

John 3:12. And ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

Christ will not go on to teach us the deepest doctrines of the Christian faith if we will not learn that which is simplest. Shall the boy be taught the classics if he will not study the spelling-book? If men will not believe that there is such a thing as the new birth, shall they be taught the doctrine of union to Christ, and all those higher truths that rise out of it? They would not believe these things if they were taught them.

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

There was a nut that Nicodemus could not crack, a riddle that he could not solve; and the Saviour left him thus puzzled, for the time being, that he might learn that, unless he was taught of the Spirit, he could not understand the teaching of Christ. You and I, who have been taught of the Spirit, understand the meaning of these words, but Nicodemus did not, though he was "a master of Israel."

Now follows another passage of Scripture which I always rejoice to read in this chapter. There are two great truths revealed here; the one is, that we must be born again, and the other is, that whosoever believeth in Christ is saved. Sometimes those two truths seem to come into conflict with one another. A man says, "You say to me, 'Only believe, and you shall be saved;' and then, by-and-by, you tell me that I must be born again. Are both these statements true?" Yes, they are both true, and they are both in this chapter. We have been reading about the necessity of regeneration, now comes the glorious freeness of the gospel of Christ.

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

You must be born into a new life if you are to be saved; how are you to have that great blessing? There is life for a look at Jesus Christ lifted up upon the cross, and lifted up in the preaching of the gospel. Look to him, then; and, as surely as those who were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness were healed the moment that they looked at the serpent of brass, so surely shall every son or daughter of Adam, who gives a faith-look at the crucified Saviour, be saved at once and for ever.

John 3:16-17. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

There was no necessity for Christ to come here to condemn us, for we were condemned already by our sin. Why, then, did Jesus come? He must have come upon an errand of mercy, to bring salvation to the lost. It is even so; God sent him for that very purpose, that he might give eternal life to as many as believe on him. Oh, the glorious freeness of this precious gospel! Surely they deserve the deepest hell who will not have heaven upon such terms. They must forever perish if they reject life when it is set before them in this truly gracious manner.

John 3:18-19. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation,-

The very first form of it, the proof of it, and the reason for it: "This is the condemnation," —

John 3:19-21. That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Those who love their sins cannot at the same time love the Saviour; they must love the one, and hate the other; and it is a terrible choice when they deliberately reject the only Saviour; "the Light of the world," and choose the darkness of sin, the darkness of woe, the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

This is a very wonderful chapter, because, while it teaches the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of a great moral and spiritual change, it yet also reveals the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, — a very wonderful combination, which puzzles many who read what is here recorded. Many have been staggered by one or other of these great truths, yet they evidently agree together, for they are taught by the same unerring Teacher, and they are preserved to us by the Spirit of God in the same chapter.

John 3:1-2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Nicodemus was very candid; he went as far as he could go. If he had not yet learned to believe in Christ as his Saviour, he did at least admit that Christ, upon the evidence of his miracles, was “a teacher come from God.” There is always hope of a man who is willing to see all that he can, and who acknowledges what he can see. He will see “greater things than these” if he is willing to use his eyes.

John 3:3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Without a new birth, “he cannot see,” he cannot comprehend, he cannot understand, he cannot know anything about “the kingdom of God.”

John 3:4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?

Ah, me! our blessed Master taught much by parables, and parabolic teaching is the best of teaching; but you see how readily it can be misunderstood, how men can take the emblem in a carnal way, and not understand its spiritual meaning. This is how the false doctrine of transubstantiation is taught. When Christ says of the bread, “This is my body,” the Romanists take his words literally, and so miss their spiritual meaning. It was in the same way that Nicodemus fell into error concerning Christ’s teaching.

John 3:5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

If the water here signifies baptism, — mark you, if it does, — then, observe, that there is no entering into the kingdom without it. I do not think that baptism is here intended at all, but the purifying influence of the Word of God symbolized by water. We might read the verse “Except a man be born of water, even of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” There is a great change of character necessary for entrance into the kingdom; seeing it is one thing, entering into it is another matter; yet one cannot even see the kingdom of God without being born again, or born from above.

John 3:6-7. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Nicodemus was well born, no doubt; probably, he was a pure Jew; yet he must be born again. And you may have descended from a long line of saints, your parents may be in the Church of Christ, and your parents’ parents, too; but still the truth remains, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” at its very best. It cannot rise above that which gave it birth, it is but flesh. “Ye must be born again.” There is no hope for you apart from the new birth from above. You cannot see, and you cannot enter, the kingdom of God merely by your first birth. Birthright-membership is a great delusion, for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh;” and only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

John 3:8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

It is a mystery. Thou canst never fully understand it, but thou canst enjoy it. If thou art born again, thou wilt know what it is; but thou canst no more discover thy second birth than thy first birth, except by its results and effects. May God give you to know what it is to be born again! There are many doctors of divinity and men of great learning who know nothing about this new birth, and there are many who are mere babes in Christ who nevertheless enjoy the fruit of this blessed regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

John 3:9-10. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

These A B C truths, which are taught in the very first school-book used by Christ's scholars, — "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

John 3:11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

This is true of all faithful ministers of the gospel; we do not preach theories, we preach facts. We do not talk about speculations; we speak of a new birth through which we have ourselves passed. If there be no such thing, we are liars unto you; but there is such a thing, and this is our witness: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." The fashion, nowadays, is to make statements upon religious matters with great caution, expecting to have them disputed; but we need exercise no caution when we state what we know to be true. We will be positive, we will utter our "verily, verily," when we speak what is a matter of fact to our own consciences: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

John 3:12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

Regeneration is a work that is wrought here on earth, and belongs to this present life. High as the mystery is, it lies but at the very threshold of the temple of divine truth: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" No doubt, unbelief hides much of heavenly truth from us; but if we begin to doubt the very elementary doctrines of our holy faith, how shall the great Master take us on and up to the higher science that he is ready to teach us?

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

This saying must have puzzled Nicodemus; he had, doubtless, read a great many riddles, but into the meaning of this riddle he could not enter; yet, beloved, any child of God, though he was converted only yesterday, may know what Jesus meant. Now observe that, as the first part of this chapter sets forth the need of a great and supernatural change, the latter part of the chapter shows us the door of mercy wide open, and tells us that faith in Christ will save us.

John 3:14-15. And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

There is no contradiction here to what we have been reading. He that believes in Christ receives the new birth, receives eternal life, and thus by faith, he gets that which is essential to a sight and entrance into the kingdom of God.

John 3:16-18. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned:

What a charming sentence! What comfort it ought to bring to the mind of every sinner who will now believe in Christ!

John 3:18. But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of

God.

“He that believeth not is condemned already.” If you have heard of Christ’s salvation, and you have not believed in him, that is evidence enough of your condemnation. There is no need to prove your evil works, no need to fetch your diary, and turn over the record of your life. If you have not believed in Jesus Christ, it shows a natural want of holiness, a lack of love to the loving God; and by that evidence you are condemned already, because you have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

John 3:19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The dislike of Christ is caused by a love of sin. If men did not hug their sins, they would embrace the Saviour.

John 3:20-21. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

If you do not like self-examination, be sure that you are wrong. If you do not like reading heart-searching books, or listening to a faithful gospel ministry, be sure that you are wrong. If you do not like that part of the Word of God which judges you, and makes you tremble, be sure that you are wrong. The man in business, who cannot bear to look at his books, most probably has good reason to be afraid of his books. He shuts them up because they would shut him up if he were to pay attention to them. O sirs, there is no more damning sign of human’s condition than his endeavor to avoid the light. Search and see, look and examine. Make sure work for eternity, whatever you trifle with, trifle not with your souls. Take other things on hearsay, if you please; but not your condition towards God. Let that be searched into with all earnestness and sincerity; and be not satisfied till the truth has satisfied you.

John 3:22-24. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.

We ought to be thankful that God’s ministers are not silenced in this age. May the Lord raise up, in these evil days, many a John the Baptist, who shall faithfully declare his testimony concerning the Lamb of God!

John 3:13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that come down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

We are in the stairway now between heaven and earth; Christ has come down; Christ has gone up, and yet he was always there; a mystery, but one that is true, and new. Today we can go up by thought and prayer, and blessings can come down; and Christ is always there. “He is at the Father’s side, the Man of Love, the Crucified.”

John 3:14-15. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

What a glorious word! Here is the gospel in a verse, the whole Bible in a line or two. If we believe in him this morning, we have eternal life; not merely life, but life similar to the very life of God himself — eternal life. We have in us that which will outlast the world, the sun, the moon, and the stars; we have a life which, being like the life of God, we shall live for ever and ever.

John 3:16-17. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Condemnation does come to the world through Christ, because the world rejects him; but that was no part of God’s design in sending him. His design is salvation — salvation only. Oh! that we might so believe as to answer to the divine purpose in the sending of his Son. “He that believeth on him is not condemned,” not even now, notwithstanding every sin he has committed, he is not

condemned; “but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” Unbelieving is the condemning sin; it seals upon us the condemnation of every other sin. If thou dost not believe in Christ this morning, my hearer, thou art not in a state of probation, thou art condemned already; he that believes on him is not in a state of probation, he is not condemned, he is already acquitted, he is at this moment free from condemnation before the judgment-seat of God.

John 3:19-21. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

You see why men do not come to Christ; they do not want to give up their sin; they do not want to be made uneasy in it; they are afraid of being reprov'd. You see why saintly men do come to Christ, for they take a delight in beholding him, and in having their faith and their grace made manifest, both to themselves and to onlookers.

John 3:22-24. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea: and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.

So he was busy until he was cast into prison. He would not waste an hour while he had an opportunity of doing good; he did it with all his heart. John! are you here in this sanctuary at this moment, not yet laid up, not yet obliged to keep your bed? Work while you can then; spend every moment in your Master's service.

John 3:25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

Is it not a come-down — from reading about looking to Christ and loving, to a contention about purifying? There always are in the Church more or less idle quarrels about the dress of the preacher, about the mode of administering sacraments, and so on — a discussion about purifying.

John 3:26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

“They are leaving you.” They felt an envy on behalf of John, because his influence appeared to be declining. John was quite a stranger to this feeling; he loved to see his Master grow, even at the cost of his own effacing.

John 3:27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given Him from heaven.

No spiritual power, no power to bless his fellow-men, except it come from God. Shall I quarrel with God, therefore, if he gives to this man more power than he gives to me? Shall I dispute about it? It is God's sovereign will, and he does as he pleases.

John 3:28-29. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

They were vexed, but John was joyful; he loved to hear of Jesus prospering.

John 3:30. He must increase, but I must decrease.

So he did. This is John's one song, last of his utterances almost. He preaches no more sermons that are recorded; he must now go

to prison, and there lie in a silence which he could scarcely bear. It was very hard for John to be quiet; he had an active, noble mind, and he became the victim, we fear, of doubts when he was shut up in prison. The breezy air of the wilderness suited him much better than the dull, heavy atmosphere of a prison. I daresay some of you may feel this at this time; do not set it down to spiritual results, to spiritual causes; set it down to the atmosphere, for so it is. We feel dull and heavy often, but heaviest when the heart is in a heavy air; every wind that rises blows away despair. So we must not think too much of our feelings, which even the wind can change.

John 3:31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

However good a man may be, he is earthly; there is flesh and blood about him, akin to the earth; and even if he handles heavenly things, the earthiness of the preacher peeps out every now and then. Christ had nothing of that about him; he was above all.

John 3:32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

Sad note! The news that all men went to Christ pleased John, but the fact that none received his testimony, comparatively none, grieved his heart.

John 3:33-34. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

There is an infinite spiritual power about the words of Christ; they are the words of God, and the Holy Spirit concentrates all his energy in those words.

John 3:35-36. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

So John's last words are thunder; his dying speech has in it the word most terrible to all of you who believe not in Christ, "The wrath of God abideth on him."

John 3:14-15. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

"Whosoever." Note that word, for it means you, and it means me. No matter though you are near to death's door, crushed and broken, bruised and mangled, look to the Crucified One, and, looking, you shall find that there is life eternal for you. Though your soul has been ready to choose strangling rather than your life, yet there is a better life for you by trusting in Christ. Choose that, and rest in him. Say, from your heart, the last lines of the hymn we sang just now, —

"Jesus, to thy arms I fly;

Save me, Lord, or else I die."

John 3:16-17. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Now this, which is good teaching for those who have but lately come to Christ, or for those who are seeking to come to him, is the very same teaching which will bring comfort to the most advanced and best instructed of the saints. How I love continually to begin with Christ over again as I began at the first! They say, when a man is sick, that it is a good thing to take him to his native place, and

when a true believer's soul gets faint and unbelieving, let him breathe the air of Calvary over again. The learned Grotius, who had spent the most of his life in theological disputations, —not always or yet often on the right side, — when he was dying said, "Read me something;" and they read him the story of the publican and the Pharisee. He said, "And that poor publican I am; thank God, that publican I am. 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" That was the word with which the great scholar entered into heaven, and that is the way in which you and I must come to God. May the Holy Spirit help us to come to him thus!

Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from Job 7, and John 3:14-17.

John 3:22-29 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bare me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am Sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

"I have introduced the Bridegroom; and, henceforth, it will be my part gradually to disappear from the scene."

John 3:30. He must increase, but I must decrease.

As fades the morning star when the sun himself arises, so was it the joy of the herald of Christ to lose himself in the supreme radiance of his Lord's appearing.

John 3:31-34. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit it by measure unto him.

Did not the Holy Spirit descend, and remain upon him, and that without measure or limit?

John 3:35-36. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:

He has it now; and he can never lose it, or else it would not be everlasting. He has a life that must exist for ever and ever.

John 3:36. And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;

He shall not even know what spiritual life is, he shall not be able to understand it, or to form any idea of it. While he is an unbeliever, he is blind to spiritual things. What a dreadful sentence that is! "He shall not see life;" —

John 3:36. But the wrath of God abideth on him.

God is ever angry with him because he has rejected his own GOD, and refused the great salvation.

This exposition consisted of readings from Mat 3:1-12; John 1:15-37; John 3:22-36.

---



## John 4 Commentary

I have often read this chapter in your hearing, and you have often read it yourselves; but the Word of God is not like the grapes of an earthly vine, which when once trodden are exhausted. You may come to Holy Scripture again and again; it is like an ever-flowing fountain, the more you draw from it, the more you may draw.

John 4:1-3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Observe here that our Lord at first shunned conflict with the Pharisees. When he knew that they were jealous of him, he went away from Judaea to a more remote district, "into Galilee." May he help us always to take that which may be the wiser course in every emergency! He was not guilty of cowardice; that, he could not be, for he was the bravest of the brave; and sometimes it will be most courageous on our part to shun a conflict. When you believe it is right to do so, never mind what anybody may say; but do as your Master did on this occasion.

John 4:4. And he must needs go through Samaria.

It is true that it was the nearest way, yet he might have gone round about; but he would not do so, for there were souls in Samaria who were to be blessed by his presence. He had a constraint upon him, an inward impulse, so that "He must needs go through Samaria." Dear friends, whenever you feel the drawings of the Spirit in any particular direction do not resist them, but yield yourself entirely to his gracious influence, even as your Lord did.

John 4:5-6. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

About twelve o'clock, in the middle of the day, at high noon. You will observe, dear friends, that our Lord spoke to Nicodemus at night, but when he was about to talk to a fallen woman alone, he did it in the middle of the day. There is a time for everything; so let those who serve God be careful as to the best time of their service. Our Lord had a tender delicacy about him which led him instinctively to do the right thing at the right time.

John 4:7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:

That was not the usual time for drawing water; women generally went to the well in the morning and in the evening; but this poor fallen creature was not one with whom other women would associate, so she came alone, at the hour when the sun was hottest, and when nobody else would be likely to be there.

John 4:7. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

This was quite a natural way of beginning a conversation; and they will best touch other people's minds and hearts who do not harshly interject religion, but who wisely introduce it, leading up to it with a holy dexterousness such as our Lord always exhibited. He begins, not with any remarks about the woman's life, or her sin, or even about his great salvation, but with the simple request, "Give me to drink."

John 4:8-9. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

But our Lord did not come to maintain these distinctions of race and caste. It is altogether foreign to the spirit of Christianity for

nationalities to be despised. We sometimes hear people say of a person, "Oh, he is only So-and-so!" mentioning some nation that happens to be in the background. Christ was cosmopolitan, he loved men of every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people. To him, there was neither Jew nor Samaritan; all such distinctions were banished from his mind. The woman might well say what she did, but her words would have sounded strangely out of place from the lips of Christ.

John 4:10-11. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Holy knowledge is very advantageous; it often is the means of breeding prayer: "If thou knewest .... thou wouldest have asked... , and he would have given." Therefore, beloved, let us teach the truth to all who come in our way, for it may be that we, too, shall meet with many of whom it can be said that, if they know what the gift of God is, they will ask for it; and if they ask for it, Christ will give it to them.

John 4:12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which have us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Ah, she did not know how infinitely superior Jesus was to Jacob! There could be no comparison between the two. Jesus is the true Father of all Israel, and in that respect he is like to Jacob; but he is immeasurably greater than "father Jacob."

John 4:13-14. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 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 well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Hence he will always be contented. He who has grace in his heart is a happy man; he grows more and more satisfied with the grace as it wells up increasingly in living power in his character and life. Oh, if you have never received that living water, may God give it to you just now! You shall never regret receiving it; but you shall rejoice over it evermore.

John 4:15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Up till now she has not imbibed a single idea from Christ. The Lord has spoken to her in parables, but she has not seen through the thin veil, so she has missed his meaning. Now he fires another shot, and deals with her in another fashion.

John 4:16-18. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

It was needful to arouse this woman to a sense of her sinfulness. It was no use putting on plasters where there was no knowledge of a sore, and no use attempting to fill the void where there was no feeling of emptiness. So first she must be brought low, she must be made to see herself in the glass of truth, and then she would begin to understand her need of salvation.

Oftentimes, in seeking to bless people, the kindest way is not to build them up, but to pull them down; not to begin to encourage their hopes, but to let them see how hopeless their case is apart from sovereign grace.

John 4:19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

She did not deny Christ's charges; she could not, for they were so accurately descriptive of her whole life.

John 4:20-23 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus

saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:

It is not the place which makes the true worship; it is the heart. It is not even the day; it is the state of a man's mind. It is not that the place is said to be holy, and therefore prayer is accepted; every place is equally holy where holy men worship God. All distinctions of buildings are heathenish; or, at the best, Jewish; they are done away with by Christ.

John 4:23-26. -For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

And she believed it, for what she had heard had prepared her mind for this declaration. Christ's reading of her heart had convinced her that he was the Messiah. How many have been brought to Christ's feet by having their characters laid bare in the preaching of the Word! The very thing they did in secret, ay, the very thought of their heart which they never communicated even to their best-beloved friend, has been told them. Their dream has been revealed to them, and the interpretation of it, too; and they have been convinced that he who can thus read their hearts must be the Son of God.

John 4:27-28. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, —

So that blessed interview was broken up by Christ's own disciples, What a set of blunderers we are! We sometimes come in between Christ and poor sinners whom he is going to bless. There is many a lover of stern doctrine, with an unsympathetic heart and a harsh tone of speech, who has intruded just when he was not wanted. If we cannot help poor souls, brothers and sisters, let us never hinder them. What Christian would not wish to help a poor sinner to her Saviour? Yet these disciples, unconscious of what they were doing, had by their very looks driven this poor woman from their Master; but she "went her way into the city," —

John 4:28-29. And saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

May we be made useful, even as this woman was, in bringing others to Christ's feet, for his dear name's sake! Amen.

John 4:1-4. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.

When he was wanted in so many places, he did not care to stay among the Pharisees where he was not wanted. They would not receive his message, so he quitted the lordly professors, and went to look after a fallen woman. Christ's estimates of usefulness are not always the same as ours. We think it a grand thing to be the means of converting a great man; Christ thinks it a worthy work to convert a great sinner.

John 4:5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

You remember how the patriarch said to his favourite son, "Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." This was "the parcel of ground" which was near to Sychar.

John 4:6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well:

What could the wearied Saviour do? Why, he could save a great sinner; and now that he is no more wearied, what can he not do? Brethren, when you go to preach or to teach, you like to feel fresh and vigorous; but do not think that this state is at all necessary.

Your wearied Master won the woman at Samaria; so may you win souls, even in your weariness. Let us not make excuses for ourselves because we do not feel fit for our work.

God may bless us more when we feel weary than he does at any other time.

John 4:6. And it was about the sixth hour.

Twelve o'clock in the day, I suppose. Was that the time when the women usually came to draw water? No; but it was the time when a woman, who was shunned by other women, would be most likely to come; and the Saviour knew that. She had to take odd times to get to the well, for her neighbors did not care to be seen in the company of such a reprobate as she was, and she was probably just as anxious to avoid them.

John 4:7-8. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Or, "food."

John 4:9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria ? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

The woman seemed to say to the Saviour, "You Jews will not own us until you want something from us. Now that you happen to be thirsty, you do not mind asking for drink from me; but, at other times, you will have no dealings with us." This was a tart reply to our Lord's request, but he did not answer the woman in the tone she had adopted. When you are dealing with a soul, you must not lose your temper because of a sharp word, a hard saying, or even a blasphemous reply. Soul winners must be very tender and gentle; God make us so!

John 4:10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Oh, that ignorance, that baneful ignorance! "If thou knewest thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee." Sometimes, my brethren, the key of a man's salvation may lie in your instructing him in the simplest matters of the gospel, for, if he does but know, he will ask, and Christ will give. Great issues may depend upon this, which seems but the turning of a straw. Therefore, go and tell men the way of salvation; for, in the most of cases, ignorance, alas! bars the door. I mean not among those who have long heard the gospel, but I mean the outsiders who do not know anything about it. Tell it to them, and you may thereby open to them the kingdom of heaven.

John 4:11-14. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 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 well of water springing up into everlasting life.

So you see, my dear hearer, if you get grace from Christ, you really possess it, and it is of that nature that it remains in you, and becomes itself a spring within you, "springing up into everlasting life." It is not that temporary, trumpery salvation which some preach, which saves you for a quarter of a year, and then lets you perish; it is everlasting salvation. Once received, it does not pass away like that little dribbling shower that watered the pavement just now, and is gone, but it shall be in you a well of water, springing up, a living and enduring principle; or, to use another scriptural expression, "incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever." This salvation is worth your having ; then, get it. It is worth your pining after, and praying for, and believing. Oh, that you might have it, even you! As soon as you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, it is yours, and yours for ever.

John 4:15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

The woman had not even the faintest idea of the spiritual truth of which Christ had spoken to her. The fact is, conviction must come before conversion. No sinner is made alive till he is first killed. You cannot clothe him till he is naked. So now the Saviour began that conviction work in this woman; and he did it very wisely. He did not at first charge her with criminality, but he led her to accuse herself.

John 4:16-17. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband.

And, as she said it, no doubt she tried to look as innocent as possible; but a guilty flush stole over her face despite her attempt to keep it back.

John 4:17. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

Always give people credit for what is well said. If you want to win them, you must mind that you are not rough with them, but admit what you can of the truth in their utterance: "Thou hast well said, I have no husband."

John 4:18-19. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman said unto him, Sir, I Perceive that thou art a prophet.

It would have been better if she had perceived that she was a sinner. Perhaps she did perceive it, but scarcely liked yet to confess it openly, so she said, "I-perceive that thou art a prophet." Now she has a religious difficulty; and what man or woman is there in the world, however far gone from morality, who has not some religious difficulties? And the more immoral they become, the more difficulties they are pretty sure to have. I hate that style of preaching which is everlastingly pandering to difficulties which never would exist except in a dissolute generation like the present. We preach a plain gospel; and when men's hearts are right, it is all plain to them. To him who desires to understand, difficulties soon cease to be a trouble. We had better deal with men's hearts and lives than try to answer their quibbling questions. This was the woman's dilemma,--

John 4:20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;

That is, Mount Gerizim,--

John 4:20-23. And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

You see, brethren, all the difficulties that arise are but temporary. Put them away, and get to the great spiritual business that concerns us all, the seeking truly after God in spirit and in truth. If you really want to find God, you shall find him. He is already seeking you, and your very desire after him is the proof that he has already had dealings with you by his Spirit. Therefore, come unto him, and come at once, "for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

John 4:24-27. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples,--

This gracious work of the Master had been done in private. Christ knew that such a person as this woman was not to be spoken to

in the presence of his disciples, who were scarcely sympathetic enough for such service. But her heart is now won by the Messiah; so, now you may come in, you disciples! Providence shut the door, and kept them waiting a while until this delicate piece of work was done.

John 4:27. And marvelled that he talked with the woman:

These men who had themselves been picked off the dunghill marvelled that Christ spoke to this woman! So have I known some, who were themselves grievous sinners once, yet they have become horribly conceited some years after conversion, and they have thought that other great sinners might not be saved as they were. God deliver from such abominable pride any soul that professes to be saved! Every believer should feel, "If the Lord has saved me, he can save anybody;" and that state of mind ought to be ours always.

John 4:27. Yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

They had some sense left, sense enough to keep silence.

John 4:28. The woman then left her waterpot,-

Possessed only with one thought, going to tell others the glad news she herself had believed, she "left her waterpot,"-

John 4:28-29. And went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did.- is not this the Christ?

They must have been surprised to hear her talking about good things. There was no more likely messenger to win men, or to strike them with curiosity, than such a woman as this.

John 4:30-32. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

So has every man who lives to win souls for Christ. There is a larder which he enters where the very delicacies of God are brought before him, and his soul is sustained and his strength is renewed by the dainties that the Lord has provided for those who do his will. Brethren and sisters, may we often feed upon this heavenly meat! Amen.

John 4:1-4. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.

And, surely, not only because it was the more convenient way, but because he had designs of love for some souls there that his Father had given him. There is many a needs be in divine providence because of the needs-be of divine grace.

John 4:5-6. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Wearied, and needing rest, yet there was no rest for him, except that he found his sweetest rest in winning immortal souls unto himself.

John 4:7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

That is practically what Jesus still says to the sons and daughters of men: "Give me to drink." He asks for your love, for your trust, for your confidence. It is his meat and drink to bless your soul, and to give you the blessing that you need, and it is a refreshment to his spirit when you give him the opportunity of thus blessing you.

John 4:8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

It was a great mercy that the disciples were out of the way just then; had they been there, they might have tried to keep this poor woman from speaking to the Saviour; and, sometimes, brethren, it may be well for us to be laid aside. God may do more good without our presence than with it; who can tell?

John 4:9-10. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

See, then, the evil of spiritual ignorance, and see also how the chain of grace works, "If thou knewest . . . , thou wouldest have sought . . . and he would have given." When God gives the knowledge of Christ to the soul, then there comes the spirit of prayer, and then consequent blessing.

John 4:11-12. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

She took the Saviour's figure literally; and there are still many who cannot see the spiritual meaning of God's Word, and run their heads against the hard stern letter which killeth, instead of seeking and finding the inner living spirit which giveth life. These are the people who build their hopes of salvation upon outward ordinances, and who impute saving power to "sacraments." Would God that they knew better!

John 4:13-15. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 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 well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

She was still unable to see the inner meaning of the Saviour's words; the outward sense still held her fast. She needed to have her conscience aroused, for that would prove to be the way into her heart. Christ has different doors for entering into different people's souls. Into some, he enters by the understanding; into many, by the affections. To some, he comes by the way of fear; to another, by that of hope; and to this woman he came by way of her conscience.

John 4:16-19. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Something had come home to her conscience through what the Saviour said to her, so she began to speak about what he was, not about what she herself was. This often happens when the preacher is enabled, by divine grace, to come home to the conscience. The result is, that the hearer says, "What a wonderful preacher he is!" But that will do no good, that is not the point at which we are aiming. "The woman saith unto him, sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet," and off she goes, at a tangent, to enquire about various forms of religious observance. Evil liver as she was she was still a person who wished to be regarded as a religious woman; and it is strange how often a certain religiousness will flourish even in the most depraved heart, — not true godliness, however. So she propounded this difficulty to the Saviour: —

John 4:20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

“There are so many sects, can you tell me which is the right one?” That is the question which men often put to us when we begin to touch their consciences.

John 4:21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

This question is of very temporary interest. The hour cometh, when neither of these places, nor yet any other, shall be considered saved.

John 4:22-24. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

No longer is any consecrated building necessary to true worship; indeed, no building can be consecrated. No longer are we to be confined to canonical hours. No longer is God to be sought with the sensuousness of sweet music or of fragrant incense; but he is to be sought with the heart, and soul, and spirit.

John 4:25-26. The woman saith unto him. I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

This great truth burst upon her with all the force of a divine revelation, and faith came with the information. The words that had gone before had prepared her to expect this manifestation of Christ to her soul.

John 4:27-34. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will, of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 4:1-3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Our Saviour was not a man of strife; he was quite ready to contend with the Pharisees on fit occasions, but just then he avoided an encounter with them. Besides, one woman of Samaria, whom he was going to save, was worth more to him than ten thousand Pharisees who would not be saved by him. Most of the learning and culture of Palestine was possessed by the Pharisees, but Christ thought nothing of it in comparison with the soul of the one poor woman of Samaria whom he was going to save.

John 4:4-7. And he must needs go through Samaria. Thence cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

“The sixth hour” means noonday, and that was a very unusual time for a Samaritan woman to go to draw water; but the reason why she went at that unusual hour was because she was one whom other women shunned so that, if she went to the well at all, she must go alone, for they would not be seen in her company. What a wonderful thing it is that this woman, who was not thought to be fit company for her fellow-creatures was nevertheless thought by Christ to be worth looking after and saving! But those who are the castaways of men are often among those who are the sought-out and chosen ones of Christ.



John 4:8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

This was quite a right thing for the disciples to do, for meat must be bought for men to eat. No doubt it is better to pray than to eat; but if one never ate, he would not long be able to pray. I have heard these disciples condemned for their worldliness and carnality, but I fail to see anything of the kind, it does seem to me necessary that somebody should go into the city to buy meat, and although it is not the noblest kind of work, yet, being necessary, it may be the stepping-stone to higher service.

John 4:9-10. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God,

How much we lose through ignorance! Ignorance is often like a great stone laid upon the well, so that the flocks cannot be watered, blessed is everyone who helps to roll away that stone. It is a great thing to know the gift of God: "If thou knewest the gift of God," —

John 4:10. And who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

There are two things worth knowing, — what grace is, and who it is that gives it. Want of this knowledge often leads to lack of prayer, and lack of prayer leads to lack of receiving. Perhaps someone asks, "Why does not God give without prayer?" Because it is not his will to do so. His will is that we should pray about everything. Did you ever notice that, even when the harvest is ripe, it cannot be gathered in without prayer? Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Prayer seems indispensable; it is part of God's necessary machinery; he has pleased to make it so. But what condescension of love it is that the prayer of man should be necessary to effect the purposes of God! God even says to Christ himself, "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." So that, from the woman at the well up to the Lord Jesus himself, prayer seems to be the indispensable requisite of blessing.

John 4:11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

You who reverence the majesty of Christ's Deity, the perfection of his humanity, the glory of his atoning sacrifice, the splendor of his resurrection power, you who know whence he has this living water, the power to save and to bless, worship and adore him with all your heart and soul.

John 4:12-14. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: —

You know that there are some who preach of a salvation that does not save; they teach that one may be a child of God today and a child of the devil tomorrow. That is like the water in Jacob's well: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." But Christ's salvation is of a very different kind: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." —

John 4:14. But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The grace of God is a living thing, a springing and abiding thing, an everlasting thing, and he that hath it in his heart hath that which hath saved him for ever.

John 4:15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Christ's words were coming true. He said that, if she had known, she would have asked; and, then, in her poor groping way, she began to pray, hardly knowing what she was asking for. I advise you also to pray even before you quite understand your own prayers, before you are sufficiently instructed to know what you really need. Ask God to give you what you need. Very often we make a discovery of our needs through having them supplied.

John 4:16-19. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

She perceived that there was something about him which marked him out as a prophet, so she seemed to say to him, "As thou art a prophet, solve me this riddle:" —

John 4:20-24. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Let us never forget this. Even if we all believe it, we do not always act according to that belief. For instance, we sing through a hymn, but it might almost as well be an old song, for our hearts do not go with the words; or while our heads are bowed in prayer, mayhap our thoughts are back with our children, or our shops, or far away in some foreign land. Yet there is no benefit in coming up to a place of worship, or in listening to sermons and prayers, or joining in the singing of sacred songs unless our heart is there. Let us always recollect this, and sigh and cry rather than rejoice if we have been up to the holy assembly, and yet have not worshipped God "in spirit and in truth."

John 4:25-26. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Now she had made the greatest of all discoveries, for the Messiah himself had come to her, and told her "all things." This was her test of the Messiah, and Christ had answered it.

John 4:27. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

They had too much respect for him to ask such questions, except in their own hearts, but their Oriental prejudices made them marvel that he was talking with a woman!

John 4:28-33. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

They did not like to ask him plainly; although they were very curious about the matter, they scarcely dared to pry further into it, and his next words may have deepened the mystery still further.

John 4:34-35. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

“Look at those Samaritans trooping out of the city, drawn by that woman’s testimony concerning me. They are coming, at her invitation, to learn more about the Christ.”

John 4:36-38. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

The prophets had spoken and written concerning the Messiah, their words had prepared the minds of the Jews, and also of the Samaritans, to receive the gospel, so the great success of the apostles must not be traced merely to their teaching, but also to the preparatory work of the other labourers who had gone before: “Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.” The Church is always ready to praise her reapers, let her not forget her sowers. There are some of us, who bring many souls to Christ, who are greatly indebted to the work which was done by other men who preceded us. There are some who, perhaps, have few conversions although they preach the gospel faithfully, they are sowing, and there shall come others, by-and-by, who shall reap bounteous harvests as the result of their sowing the good seed of the kingdom. No matter who sows, or who reaps, the glory of the harvest shall be unto the Most High.

John 4:39. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

John 4:1-3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

Our Lord knew that the Pharisees would assail him now that he was prospering, and gathering disciples. He, therefore, went away from them; as he did on other occasions. Whenever the cause of God grows, Satan is sure to be violent against it. Notice that our Saviour did not himself baptize his followers. Now, if baptism depended upon the character or the office of the baptizer, Jesus would certainly have done it; but to show us that the person baptizing does not impart any grace to the person baptized, our Lord baptized not, but left that work to his disciples.

John 4:4. And he must needs go through Samaria.

Men say that, “Must’ is for the king;” but our King puts himself under an imperative “must”, under a divine necessity. Though obliged to do nothing, yet he obliges himself to do deeds of mercy and grace.

John 4:5-6. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there.

Holy men often impart an interest to the very place, which they inhabit. We should not have cared anything about Sychar, or its well, if Jacob had not been there. Where godly men have been, the ground is sacred. How much more so where the God of men comes to visit us!

John 4:6. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Only half a day spent on his journey, yet he is weary. See, brethren, how he was compassed with infirmity. Our Great High Priest so truly took our flesh, that he was wearied with his journey. He that rolls the stars along was weary in the middle of the day. So weary was he that he sat in the very attitude of weariness, as best he could, on the curb of the well: “Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.”

John 4:7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

Wonderful words of condescension! The Creator is asking drink of his creature. Perfect holiness is asking of a sinner, He, without whom there were no clouds, or rain, or springs, or wells, saith to a sinful woman, "Give me to drink."

John 4:8-9. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

In effect, the woman said, "Now that you are thirsty, you can ask drink of me; but at another time, proud Jew that you are, you would not speak to a Samaritan." Surely, this was rather a brusque answer, if not really rude. If she had known who it was to whom she was speaking, she would not have answered him thus.

John 4:10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Something better than the water from Jacob's well. Though thou hast denied him a simple draught of water, he would not have denied thee something infinitely better, namely, living water. She little knew what that living water was.

John 4:11-12. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

That last word, "cattle", lets us see wherein the water of Jacob's well could never be compared to the living water that Jesus gives. If beasts can partake of it, it is not that high and spiritual thing which immortal souls need, which Jesus came to give. Unwittingly, the woman had answered her own question, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?"

John 4:13-14. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 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 well of water springing up into everlasting life.

If Christ gives you grace, it is eternal life that he gives you; it is not a life that can die; it is not a grace that you can lose. It is everlasting life; a supply of living water, which turns to a spring or well, and always remains within the heart that receives it.

John 4:15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

She had caught the Lord's meaning so far as the perpetuity of the water was concerned, but still she did not know what the living water was. It was all a riddle to her, as I am afraid it is to some of you. There is many a Doctor of Divinity who cannot explain what the living water is.

John 4:16. Jesus saith unto her,

As she had apparently learned nothing by his instruction, he now tried another plan with her, and began to deal with her conscience.

John 4:16-17. Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

Praise people whenever you can. There was nothing good about this woman, but she had spoken the truth: "Thou hast well said, I have no husband." Our Lord purposely laid the emphasis on the last word.

John 4:18. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

What an exposure of the life she was living! Jesus laid bare what she and her companion in sin may have thought that no man knew: "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

John 4:19. The woman. saith unto him, Sir,

She is getting more respectful now. When conscience begins to work, men treat the ministry with greater deference.

John 4:19-20. I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain:

How pleased she was to get away from that unpleasant subject of her five husbands and the man who was not her husband! How anxious people are to salve their consciences by discussing religious matters of a general character! When you come a little too close to them, they edge off if they can; so this woman said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain."

John 4:20-21. And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman believe me,

Our Saviour gave the woman good gospel advice, "Woman, believe me"

John 4:21-22. The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

They have the oracles of God. The Saviour comes of the Jews. They are right as far as they follow the instruction they have received; and you Samaritans are wrong in keeping to the law of Moses alone, and rejecting the rest of the Scriptures.

John 4:23-24. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth

All the true worship in the world is of God's seeking. None would ever worship him aright if he did not lead them to it. He seeks them, and then they seek him.

John 4:25-26. The woman saith unto him I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Now were her eyes opened. That last word had made her see.

John 4:27. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman.

How big they were, how wise in their own conceit, to be astonished that Christ was talking with a woman! The followers of Christ often get much too big for their places, and too big to please their Master, too. Though "they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman," as the Revised Version translates it,--

John 4:27. Yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

They dared not do that; they had too much awe of him. But, do you know, I have often wished that they had done so? I should like to

have read what Christ would have said to them. How he would have reproved them for thinking that he had degraded himself by talking with a woman, or with anybody. Our Saviour would have vindicated woman's place in the world in a way that one might have liked to have heard.

John 4:28. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city,

Why should she stop any longer? The faces of the disciples did not look pleasant; but their Master had comforted her. She would not stop to lose that comfort by hard words from the disciples: she "went her way into the city."

John 4:28-42. And saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto Him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

Two days of Christ's personal ministry-what might not come of that?

John 4:41-42. And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Would God that many might be brought to know that Christ, the Saviour,

tonight! Amen.

John 4:1-6. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Do not be surprised, dear brethren, if you sometimes grow weary in the Lord's work. I trust that, even then, you will not be weary of it, but that you will believe that our blessed Master can still use even his tired servants, and bless their labours. The Lord Jesus Christ wrought great marvels even when he sat wearily on the brink of Jacob's well; and you, perhaps, are at this moment as fatigued and worn as you well can be; yet, will you not awaken all the energies of your soul if you should see an opportunity of doing good, even if it should be to some poor fallen woman, as in the case here mentioned? It is a blessed thing never to be too tired to pray, and never to be too tired to speak to an anxious enquirer.

John 4:7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:

Providence was at work so that, when Christ reached the well, this woman was on her way thither. It was very late in the day for anyone to go to draw water; but, probably, the other women, who went to the well early in the morning, were not willing to associate with her, so she had to go by herself. Late as she was, however, she was all in good time, for she reached the spot just when Christ was waiting to bless her.

John 4:7-8. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Or else they might have drawn water from the well to refresh him.

John 4:9-10. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

See the deadly mischief of ignorance concerning spiritual things. If she had known, she would have asked, and Christ would have given; but the first link was missing; and, hence, the rest of the chain was not drawn on. Sometimes, all that people need is a little wise instruction, and they will then trust the Saviour; God grant that we may ever be ready to give it! Alas! there are some who need much more than that; but Christ could truly say to this Samaritan woman, "If thou hadst known, thou wouldest have asked, and I would have given." O dear hearers, do not perish through ignorance! You have your Bibles; then, search them. You have a gospel ministry among you; take care that you give diligent heed to what you hear from the servants of the Lord.

John 4:11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Christ told the woman that he could give her living water, but it puzzled her to know how he could get at it. The well where they had met was deep, and he had nothing to draw the water out of it; how, then, could he go deeper still to get the living water of which he had spoken? She could not understand his simile, and to this day it is the same with many of our hearers. The simplest language of God's ministers goes right over the heads of the people; they take our words literally, when they ought to see that they are spiritual, and, on the other hand, I have known them spirit them away when they ought to be accepted literally. Such is the perversity of man's mind that, often, he will not understand the truth.

John 4:12-14. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 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 well of water springing up into everlasting life.

These words set forth the wonderful nature of divine grace. They certainly greatly err who suppose that we can ever receive it, and yet, after all, be left to perish without it. Nay; but when it is once imparted to us, it continues to spring up within us, like a well that never runs dry. It is the living and incorruptible seed, "which liveth and abideth for ever." It is of the very nature and essence of the grace of God that it is indestructible, it cannot be taken away from the heart in which it has been implanted by the Holy Spirit.

John 4:15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

This was an ignorant prayer on the part of the woman; but it is one which I would commend to every enlightened soul: "Sir, give me this water." Do you want a form of prayer? Here is one for you: "Sir," Lord,—“give me this water.” The Lord is ready to hear that petition, and to give this precious living water even now.

John 4:16-17. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband.

The Lord Jesus knew all about her character, and here he touched the weakest point in it. His plainest teaching had so far missed the mark, for he had not reached her conscience; but he was about to do so.

John 4:17-18. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

You can imagine her astonishment — her blank amazement as the secret story of her life was thus repeated to her.

John 4:19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

It would have been a sign of better things if she had said, "Lord, I perceive that I am a sinner;" but that confession had to be made a little farther on. How apt people are rather to think about the preacher than about themselves! If half the criticisms which are passed upon ministers of Christ were bestowed upon the hearers themselves, how much sooner they might receive the blessing they need! The woman then asked our Lord a question about religion which was strangely out of place from such a woman as she was. Yet, often, those who have least morality will have the most ceremonialism and concern about the externals of worship.

John 4:20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; —

This Mount Gerizim; —

John 4:20. And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

This she thought was a very important matter.

John 4:21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

"There shall be an abolition of all specially-holy shrines, for all places shall be alike holy. There shall be a putting an end to all your traditions, and your forms of worship, for God shall be worshipped after another fashion than that which is merely formal and superficial."

John 4:22-26. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

That majestic word of Christ carried conviction with it; the woman believed it there and then.

John 4:27-28. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, —

She was too glad, too happy, to recollect so poor a thing as a waterpot. It was much to her before, but very little now. As one who finds a precious pearl forgets some trifle that he carried in his hand, so she "left her waterpot," —

John 4:28-29. And went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Her notion was, that when Christ came, he would tell all things. Here was a man who revealed her innermost secrets; — was not he the Christ?

John 4:30-32. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

O beloved, there is a wonderful fascination about the blessed work of soul-seeking! When one is really anxious to bring a sinner to the Saviour, eating and drinking are often forgotten. As the hunter of the chamois, in the heat of the chase, leaps from crag to crag,



and is oblivious of danger, and forgets all about the time for his meals, so he that hunts after a precious soul, to win it for Christ, forgets everything else. He is altogether absorbed in this holy pursuit; the Master was more absorbed in it than any of us are ever likely to be.

John 4:33-35. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are but four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.

That was probably an old Oriental proverb, used by lazy men who never thought it time to get to work; but Jesus said, "Do not use the idler's language any longer; now, at once, there is work for you to do."

John 4:36-42. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The Lord bring us all to trust in him, for his dear name's sake! Amen.

## John 5 Commentary

John 5:1-9. After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

I hope to speak on these miracles in my discourse, so only briefly refer to them now; but this Sabbath afforded another memorable instance of our Lord's healing power. In the ninth chapter of John's Gospel you have the remarkable story of the man born blind. (See John 9:1-14)

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-36; Luk 6:6-11; Luk 13:10-17; Luk 14:1-6; John 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

John 5:1. After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

For he had respect to the Law. As long as the Law lasted, Christ observed it. Oh, that we were as careful to obey the rules of the Gospel as our Lord was to observe the ritual of the Law! Moreover, he went to Jerusalem because he had an opportunity of addressing great numbers of people there. While I have been resting at Menton, I have been very glad to be of service to a few friends who were either seeking the Saviour, or needing some guidance in their spiritual life; but I cannot tell you how happy I am to be once more in the Tabernacle, preaching to the great congregation. Fisherman like to cast their nets where there are plenty of fish; and fishers of men delight to be where there are many men who may be enclosed in the gospel net. "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

John 5:2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

This pool of Bethesda was rightly called “the house of mercy”; but it might have just as truly named “the house of misery”: for its “five porches” were the abode of many who were in misery, and who needed mercy.

John 5:3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,

Invalid persons, diseased, and scarcely able to move.

John 5:3. Of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

What a sight for the Great Physician to look upon! The whole world must have been to him like one huge hospital, full of “impotent folk, blind, halt withered.” Wherever he went, he was surrounded by the sick, and sad, and suffering, those who were afflicted physically, mentally, and spiritually. But there was a special reason for the gathering together of so many sufferers at the pool of Bethesda.

John 5:4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

It was the last remnant of miracle. Such things were common enough in Judaea in her better days; but now the times of the prophets had ceased, and the day of miracles was almost over. Here, at Bethesda, were just a few relics and remnants of the good old days. Only one was cured, he that stepped into the pool first after the angel had troubled the water. It was but a scanty power that was left to the troubled water; but it was quite enough, if only one in a thousand was healed, to bring a crowd of people to wait around the pool. If only one person in a year were saved, I should not wonder if you thronged the place to hear the gospel that saved him; but your privilege is much greater. Here all who come, if they will hear and believe, shall find healing. It is not the first only, but even unto the last who shall step into the pool, that shall be healed.

John 5:5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

That was a great portion of the man’s life. If he was a full-grown man when he was attacked with the infirmity, he had now become old and gray. What a long time to be afflicted, thirty and eight years! Have we not with us at this time some who have been afflicted with the soul-sickness of sin more than thirty and eight years?

John 5:6. When Jesus saw him lie.

The Great Physician fixed his eye on him, for his was an extraordinary case. Probably he was known and talked of as the man who had been paralyzed eight and thirty years. Note that it does not say, “When the man saw Jesus,” but “when Jesus saw him.” He did not know Jesus; possibly he had not even heard of his healing power and compassionate love. He was not seeking Jesus; but Jesus was seeking him. It was so with many of us;

and therefore we sing —

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,

Wandering from the fold of God;

He, to rescue me from danger,

Interposed his precious blood.”

When Jesus saw the impotent man, — And knew that he had been now a long time in that case, And a long time in that place, too, — He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? That must have seemed a strange question. What was he there for, if not to be made whole? But I will show you, by-and-by, that there was wisdom in the question of Jesus. It was no idle curiosity that moved him to enquire of the man whether he was willing to be made whole.

John 5:7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming,

Shuffling along, as best I may, to the water's edge, —

John 5:7. Another steppeth down before me.

Then, of course, the curative miracle is wrought, and the curative power of the water is gone until another season, when the angel troubles it again.

John 5:8-9. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

This is our Sabbath. Oh, that we might have the same miracle wrought here tonight, upon many spiritually impotent folk!

John 5:10-11. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured,. It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed, He answered them,

And he did answer them, too. It was a crushing answer.

John 5:11. He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

That was his warrant. None but God could have made him whole. God can set aside any of his laws if he pleases; at any rate, whatever he commands, must be right.

John 5:12. Then asked they him, What man is that which saith unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

They asked, “What man” had given this command. Why, if it had been a mere man who had said it, the impotent man could not either have taken up his bed, or have walked!

John 5:13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

He never sought notoriety; but avoided popular demonstrations in his favor. The man who had been healed had exercised faith in Jesus, but he knew very little about him. A certain something in the air and mien of Christ had won his faith; but he did not know his name, or who he was. How small may be your knowledge, and yet you may be saved by true faith!

John 5:14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Probably, this man's illness had been caused by sin. Christ bids him henceforth keep clear of sin, lest a worse calamity should come

upon him.

John 5:15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

Full of joy, full of delight, he must tell out the name of him who had cured him, as grateful patients like to sound the praises of their physician when he has been the means of healing them.

John 5:16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

This was a mere pretense, an idle excuse for their enmity. They not only hated Christ; but they must besmear him with their calumnies, and make him out to be an evil-doer although he was goodness itself.

John 5:17. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

The whole work of nature is continued on Sabbath-days as well as other days. Stars shine through the Sabbath-night, and the sun rises and sets on the Lord's-day as on all the days of the week. God's work continues. "My Father worketh," saith Christ, "and I work." "My work is my Father's work, and that goes on whatever the day may be."

John 5:18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

They did not understand him to preach Unitarianism; they understood him to proclaim his own true and proper Godhead, and he never contradicted them, for he was God.

John 5:19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Christ's work runs parallel with that of the Father. The Father and the Son ever work in perfect harmony with one another.

John 5:20-22. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

The Son as well as the Father, is the Quickener of the dead. The Son is also the Judge of all men.

John 5:23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

As the universal Judge, the Lord Jesus is to be honoured by all men, "even as they honour the Father." Whatever others may do, or not do, we will honour the Father, we will honour the Son, and we will honour the Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three, the one God of Israel, for ever and ever.

John 5:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, —

If we truly believe the word of Christ, and trust in him who sent his Son into the world, we have at this moment everlasting life.

John 5:24. And shalt not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

What a grand verse this is! It is worthy to be written in letters of gold at every street corner; would that we all knew the fullness of its meaning by heartfelt experience!

John 5:25-30. 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: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Christ as Mediator did the will of the Father, and yet also did his own will, for his will was always the same as his Father's.

John 5:31. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

He did bear witness to himself by his miracles, but that was not the witness upon which he relied, nor was it the only witness to the truth of his mission.

John 5:32-40. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 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.

They were great Bible-readers, great students of the letter, but they would not come to Christ; and hence the Scriptures themselves became a sepulcher in which they were entombed.

John 5:41-44. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

Some men find it difficult to believe in Christ because they are always seeking honour for themselves; desire for the praise of men often blinds the mind and prejudices the spirit. How boldly our great Master speaks! There is no flattery on his lips. He is the faithful and true Witness, the very Word of God. Oh, that all men would give heed to his message!

This exposition consisted of readings from Gen 45:9-28; and John 5:24-44.

## John 6 Commentary

John 6:1-6. After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

That verse is worth thinking over. How often does Christ seem to ask us riddles, and place us in difficulties, so that we begin to say, "What will come of this? How shall we escape from this temptation; or how shall we stand under this trial?" He himself knows what he will do; and it is a very blessed thing when our faith being tried, it shows itself to be strong enough to leave the burden with him who can bear it, and to leave the difficulty with him who can meet it: "He himself knew what he would do."

John 6:7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

That is our way. When our faith is little, we begin calculating the pennyworths that are wanted, and we make them out to be so much more than we possess or can possibly scrape together. That is not faith, it is reason, — poor, dim, shallow reason, which forgets the Infinite, and begins to calculate its own limited and insufficient forges.

John 6:8-10. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

When Christ bids men sit down, he has a dainty carpet for them to sit upon: "There was much grass in the place." One might have thought that some of those people would have refused to sit down, for it is not everybody who will sit at a table that has nothing on it. But God knows how to move the hearts of men, and so these people. If they had not strong faith, yet had they faith enough to do as they were bidden. I wish that we all had as much faith as that.

John 6:11. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

"As much as they would." Note those words, for they are the rule at Christ's feasts. Of earthly things, he gives us as much as we need; and of heavenly things, as much as we would! "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." "According to your faith be it unto you."

John 6:12-13. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

"Waste not, want not," Heavenly economy is to be practiced in the things of God. Christ is no niggard, but he is no waster.

John 6:14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

They were convinced through their stomachs. They came to this conviction merely through eating and drinking, and that faith which comes by the senses is no faith at all, or it is a sensual faith which cannot save the soul. These people, who came to this belief through eating, were very poor followers of Christ, as he said to them, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

This exposition consisted of readings from John 6:1-14; John 6:30-45.

John 6:1-2. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

Many of them curiosity-mongers wanting to see more wonders wrought, others of them sick themselves, and anxious to be healed. Wherever Jesus went, a throng went with him.

John 6:3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

That was his frequent posture when his disciples were gathered around him. He sat at his ease, and talked to his hearers. He was not very demonstrative in his oratory, but spoke calmly and quietly, and left the truth to find its own way into the minds and hearts of men.

John 6:4-5. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

They were in a lonely place out in the wilderness, where the people had no means of obtaining food, and Jesus knew that they would soon be faint with hunger, so he consulted with Philip as to what was to be done. It is great kindness and condescension on our Lord's part to consult with his followers; he often did it, not that he needed their advice or help, but because they needed to be taught how to think and how to act for the good of others.

John 6:6. And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Observe the complex character of Christ; as man, he consulted with Philip; as God, he knows beforehand what he will do.

John 6:7. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Two hundred pennyworth must have seemed an enormous amount to poor Philip, for all Christ disciples had made themselves poor by following him. The bag that Judas carried probably scarcely ever had as much as that in it. If it were all spent, it would not go far towards feeding five thousand men, beside the women and children.

John 6:8-9. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

These small fishes were commonly cured and dried by that lake, little fish very much resembling sardines or anchovies, and they were eaten dry as a relish with bread. This lad had five barley cakes and a couple of these little fish, that was all.

John 6:10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down,--

Jesus would have everything done decently and in order. The people obeyed Christ's command, and sat down, we are told by Mark, "in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties." "There was much grass in the place." Our Lord has a carpet in his banqueting hall, such a carpet as Solomon in all his glory could not have made. "There was much grass in the place. So the men sat down,"-

John 6:10-11. In number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks,

Among the Jews, it is always the master of the house who gives thanks. They do not call upon a child to say grace, but the father of the family, like a priest in his own house, stands up, and pronounces a blessing upon the food. It is a beautiful thought that Christ thus made himself, as it were the Father of that large family, the Head and Provider for those man; thousands of people.

John 6:11. He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

"As much as they would." That is Christ's measure for those who gather at his table; it is only your own will that limits the amount of grace that you may have.

John 6:12-13. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments, of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

I am sorry today that it is a mark of very poor people that they are often very wasteful people. These beggars, who had come only to be fed, were not satisfied to eat till they were satisfied, but they threw down pieces of bread, just as I frequently see, in the streets of London, great pieces of bread thrown away. It should not be so, for bread is the staff of life. Among the Egyptians, they are always peculiarly careful that never a portion of bread should be wasted, nor should it ever be as in a city like this where there are so many persons who are starving for lack of bread. But while I see the carelessness and wastefulness of the crowd, I also notice the carefulness and economy of Christ. He who could make food enough to feed the thousands at his will yet would not waste a crust. I think a large-hearted liberality should always be consistent with a strict economy. I have heard of one who called at a rich man's door to ask for a subscription, and he heard him scolding the servant for wasting a match." Ah!" he thought, "I shall get nothing out of him." Yet he received from that very man a larger subscription than from anybody else upon whom he called during that day. Christ would give anything but he wasted nothing; let us imitate his example.

John 6:14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

But the faith that comes by the way of the stomach is not worth much. If people are converted by loaves and fishes, bigger loaves and bigger fishes will make them go the other way; converts made thus are of small worth.

John 6:15-17. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

Then it was very dark. Ah, my dear friends, perhaps you know what it is to be in trouble, and to mourn an absent Lord. This is a direful description of a specially dark night for the disciples: "It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them."

John 6:18-19. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

Do you wonder that they were filled with fear? It seemed so strange a sight, - a man walking on the waves of the sea.

John 6:20. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

Then they must have felt at ease at once as soon as they knew that it was Jesus who was walking towards them upon the water. Lord, if it be thou, fear would be foolish on our part; we are only too glad to have thy company.

John 6:21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

No sooner was Jesus with them than they were where they wanted to be. The presence of Christ works wonders for us, we are soon at our haven when the Lord of heaven comes to us.

John 6:1-5. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him,

They had been hearing him all day, and he had withdrawn a little from them, but they pursued him up the hill, and I doubt not that as they toiled up the hill they showed their faintness and their weariness, which led the Saviour to see how much they needed



refreshment.

John 6:5-7. He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

Men's calculations concerning divine things generally terminate in a deficit. Two hundred pennyworth is not sufficient. But Christ's calculations always terminate in a balance over, as we shall see. "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing may be lost." We, at our best, fall short of the mark. Our blessed Master not only does enough, but in his house there is bread enough and to spare.

John 6:8-10. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. —

Or lie down, as it is, for they were accustomed to do that at feasts, and Christ would have them take their ease as well as enjoy their refreshment. "Make the men recline."

John 6:10. Now there was much grass in the place.

So it was a splendid dining-room. It was carpeted luxuriously. We learn from this that it was the Eastern spring time, for there is not much grass else; and there was therefore in Christ's banqueting hall the ceiling-was of blue, and the floor of green grass. What more could they want, except the meat?

John 6:10-11. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves:

— Common, coarse loaves of barley, not much esteemed even then as food.

John 6:11. And when he had given thanks,

Though out of doors, and "in the rough," as we say, he did not forget that. I know some that fall to their meals, like so many swine, and have not as much grace as chickens, that are sure to lift their heads whenever they take a drink, as if to bless God for every drop they receive.

John 6:11. He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down;

— Or reclining.

John 6:11. And likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

That is one of the rules of Christ's feasting always — as much as they would. According to your appetite, according to your will, according to your faith, so be it unto you.

John 6:12. When they were filled, —

Had all they could desire.

John 6:12. He said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Economy in the midst of bounty. However much we have, we are never warranted in wasting a single crumb. They had as much as they would, but they were not allowed to cast away the fragments.

John 6:13-14. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

Men are often convinced by the argument of selfishness. They had been fed, and now they believed. But faith that depends upon a full stomach will despair when they get hungry again. Always beware of that religion which is in dependence upon loaves and fishes. You know how it was with the children of Israel.

“Now they believed the word,

While rocks with rivers flow,

Then with their sins they grieved the Lord,

And he did bring them low.”

Oh, but we must not have a faith that depends upon what it can see, and upon what it can eat, and what it can drink. Oh, far the confidence in the blessed person of the Lord, and in the spiritual riches which he can communicate.

John 6:15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, To make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

What, could 'he not have used his kingship for the best of purposes? Might he not easily have routed the Romans, restored Israel to all her glory, conquered the Gentiles, and subdued the world, and set up a glorious church and state, with himself for the king, and himself at the head of the church? Ah, that has been the idol of a great many, and, like G will-o'-the-wisp, it has led many of the true people of God into bogs and sloughs, where they were likely to be lost. But our Master knew better than this, and was not to be tempted away from the true method by which his church is to be set up in the world. Therefore “he departed again into a mountain himself, alone.”

John 6:16-17. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

That is a sentence that I should think some very gloomy people might hang upon, and about which they might groan in unison, “It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.” Have you never been in that condition? Dark, dark, dark, as to circumstances, and as to feelings, and Jesus was not come to them. Now, something comes beside that.

John 6:18. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

Misfortunes never come alone. An absent Saviour, a roaring sea, and a bellowing wind. What will they do now?

John 6:19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus—

Here he is. Here is the first of their blessings. The first mischief is removed, and the rest will soon go. They see Jesus.

John 6:19. Walking on the sea,

Oh, what a sight! A grander sight than to see him on the land; and it is a more glorious sight to see Christ in the time of trouble than it is in the time of prosperity. He is always sweet, but he is more marvelous when they see Jesus walking on the sea.

John 6:19. And drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

Afraid of their best friend — trembling at their deliverer.

John 6:21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

The sea and the winds knew how not only to spare the vessel, but to carry it instantaneously to the place where they wished to be. But how often have you and I been rowing about, five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, and we did not seem to be getting out of the storm at all; but the moment Christ has come, we have been where we wished to be. Oh, glory be to his name; there is no difficulty that you can be in, dear friends, but Christ can get you out of it in a moment, and bring you where you should be.

John 6:22-24. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

Was not that a pleasant sight? So it seemed, but it was not. "Seeking for Jesus." That is a good description of a man — seeking for Jesus. Ay, but they were only seeking for more bread. They looked at Him as a bread-giver, and they were after him for that.

John 6:25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

They could not understand how he could have got there. Jesus answered them, and did not answer them. Some of Christ's answers are evidently no answer at all. That is very often the best answer you can give.

John 6:26. Jesus answered them and said,

What, did he explain to them how 'he got there? No, he would not gratify their curiosity. He came not for that end. He therefore gave them a home stroke, and said: —

John 6:26. verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me. not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

You are loafers — loaf-hunters. You seek not me, but mine. It is not for the good that! can give your souls, but it is that you may have another meal, that you are here. Yours is cupboard love. You come after what you can get.

John 6:27. Labour not for the meat which perished, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Now, you quite understand what Jesus meant? Seek after that: which will feed your souls. Do not hunt so much after bread for the

body. Yet the Saviour puts it very curiously. This is a double-shotted perplexity, a singular, curious kind of word. You are not to labour for that which you cannot get without labour, and you are to labour for that which you cannot get by labour. The Saviour liked to put things in that sententious way, so that they might remember what he said. If they misunderstood him it was their own fault, for it is plain enough. God grant us grace to practice the meaning of these words. Why are ye so eager to get a bit of barley bread and a fish? Oh, that you were half as eager to come and get the bread which comes from heaven which will make a man live for ever, and which will be food to him as long as he lives.

John 6:28-29. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, —

The chief work, the greatest work which you can do.

John 6:29. That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

This is the point. You would like me to work miracles. You would be glad to have very wonderful, mysterious experience, but this is the thing you ought to seek after — the grandest, greatest thing that you can have, :’ that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

John 6:30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

Are you not wonderfully struck with the patience of Jesus? These people had seen his miracles, and they had eaten loaves and fishes, and yet they say to him, “What sign showest thou, then, that we may see and believe thy work?” Oh, the matchless patience of the Lord, and the marvelous provocations of men.

John 6:31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat,

Plainly hinted that they wanted more food.

John 6:32-34. Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then they said unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Not understanding him, and praying still for bread, but not for grace.

John 6:35-37. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

What a striking truth that was, with which to reply to them. You only come after me for bread, but you do not come after spiritual things. You do not believe in me. But, even if you do not, I shall not be disappointed, and my work will not fail. God has an election of grace, and that election shall be carried out. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” And then, as if to cheer them up again, he says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

John 6:38-41. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

And there you see Christ has got no farther with them, but to leave them murmuring. And I believe that often the tame minister of

God must expect to see no other result come of faithful testimony than for the people to murmur at him. But what if it be so? Will his Master blame him? No. No more than he blamed the Only Begotten. It trust be so that there may be a separation between the precious and the vile — that God's chosen may be drawn out; while such as believe not, shall be judged, and, in their own consciences, shall be condemned.

John 6:14-15. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Our Lord Jesus had just wrought the miracle of feeding the five thousand men with five loaves and two small fishes, so he was very popular at that time. The people even wanted to come and take him by force, and make him a king, but he escaped from them, for he knew the value of that popularity. What was it but a puff of wind? Probably, many of the very people, who tried then to crown him were among the crowds in Jerusalem who cried, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And, nowadays there may be a great deal of anxiety to hear the gospel, yet very little result may follow from it. A crowded house of prayer is certainly a very hopeful sight, yet it may end in disappointment to those who are looking for souls to be won for the Saviour.

John 6:16-26. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh unto the ship and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

How faithful and truthful the Master was! There was in him nothing of the politic concealment of his knowledge, and the endeavor to please everybody, which we see in so many. He speaks the truth whether it offends or pleases his hearers, and so should his servants do. "Ye seek me," said he, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

John 6:27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.

He rebuked their excessive ardor in seeking meat for their bodies, and urged them rather to seek food for their souls. But did you ever notice what an extraordinary piece of advice our Saviour gave to these people? It is one of his paradoxes. He bade them not to labour for the very thing which they could not get without labouring, and to labour for that which they never could get by labouring. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth:" yet how else can we have it? But for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." It is a free gift, and not the reward of labour, yet Christ told them to labour for it. Did he not mean just this, Let not your greatest efforts be expended upon the things of time and sense, but let them go out after eternal and spiritual blessings.

John 6:28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

"What is the noblest work that we can do? What is that work which will please God most?"

John 6:29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

The grandest work that any man can do is to believe on the Saviour whom God has sent. There are some who despise faith, but Christ was not of that number. He honoured it exceedingly when he said, in effect "This is the Godlike work, the work which is nearest to God's heart, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Dear friend, art thou struggling after that which is high and

noble? Wouldst thou do the best day's work that was ever done in any mortal life? Thou run not to this or that invention of thine own, but be content to believe on him whom God hath sent. This is the first, the highest, the noblest work, the work which gives to God the greatest pleasure.

John 6:30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

What strange questions for them to ask when he had amazed them with his wonderful works.

John 6:31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

They talk about "bread" again, how they persist in coming back to that! You know the questions that men of the world are always asking, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" This is the worldings' wretched trinity.

John 6:32. Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;

Moses did not give Israel the manna, God gave it. And it did not from heaven; that is, from the celestial sphere, in the sense in which Christ, the true Bread, came from heaven.

John 6:33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from 'heaven', and giveth life unto the world.

The Bread of God is Jesus Christ himself. The man who would feed so as to satisfy his spiritual nature, and live thereby, must feed upon Jesus Christ himself.

John 6:34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

They did not understand the meaning of their own prayer. Sometimes, in our services, when people are very quickly convinced of sin, and fall to praying on a sudden, a wise conductor ought to enquire carefully whether it is not a mistaken prayer. I do not doubt that many of the cries and many of the professions made in enquiry-rooms are mistaken ones after all, and that we put down as the results of our work much of which we shall have cause to be ashamed when it comes to the time of testing.

John 6:35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Hear this, poor starving people; the wants of your soul can all be met by Jesus Christ. If you have him, the hunger of your spirit shall be appeased, and the thirst of your heart shall be quenched.

John 6:36. But I said unto you. That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

How the Saviour brings the truth home to these people, and he might do the same to some of you. You pray, "Give us this bread;" and he replies, "I have given it to you, yet you have not eaten it. You have seen me, you have heard me, you know me, and yet you do not believe on me." If Christ were to appear in this building at this moment, might he not say to many of you, "You have heard of me from your childhood, and you know all you need to know about me, yet you have not believed in me"? Would God it were not so with so many of you!

John 6:37-40. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all

which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is the glorious gospel of the blessed God, — that everyone, who looks to Christ with the eye of faith, hath everlasting life, and though his body may die, yet even for that there is everlasting life too, for Christ will raise him up again at the last day, Oh, that you would all believe on Jesus Christ and so find that life eternal!

John 6:22-26. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks) when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Mixed motives bring multitudes together. How true our Master was, how outspoken! He never tried to win a disciple by keeping back the truth; and often he spoke very plainly indeed, as on this occasion: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”

John 6:27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

He seemed to say to them, “Do not come to me for bread and fish; I have given you that. Come for something better; come to me for spiritual food, food for your souls, food for eternity.” It is with that object that we should go to the house of God; not to listen to this preacher or that, but to hear the Word of God, that we may live thereby.

John 6:28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

“What are the best works that we can do? What are the most acceptable?” I wonder what they expected Christ to say. I am sure they did not look for the answer that they received.

John 6:29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

The greatest, the best, the most acceptable work in all the world is that you come and trust Christ. This saves you; nothing else will do so: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

John 6:30-31. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

See how they came round to the old subject again, bread to eat. The Lord Jesus Christ may point them to something higher and better; but their carnal minds always return to that congenial topic, something to eat. Their stomach was lord of their heart.

John 6:32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

“That which will really feed you, and feed you for all eternity.” Moses could not give the people that bread; the Father only can give “the true bread from heaven.”

John 6:33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

“The bread of God is he.” What a strange expression, yet what a true one! The bread of heaven is Christ himself. You must come and take him to yourself, and trust him for your salvation, and in that way feed upon him, or you can never have the heavenly bread which both gives life and sustains life.

John 6:34-39. Then said they unto him, lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

See how the salvation of Christ reaches right to the end of all things. You and I may die; but though we lie a while in the grave, the salvation of Christ will preserve us, to raise us up again at the last day. There shall not be a bone nor a piece of a bone, of a true believer, left in the enemies’ land.

All Israel and all that belongs to Israel, shall come out of this Egypt, through the blood of the Lamb; not a hoof shall be left behind.

John 6:40. And this is the will of him that sent me that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

May all of us see the Son, and believe on him, that we may have everlasting life, and that he may raise us up at the last day, for his dear name’s sake!

Amen.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psa 89:1-37, And John 6:22-40.

John 6:22-24. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that the disciples were gone away alone: (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither the disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

Everything looked very favorable, did it not? These people put themselves to considerable trouble in order to get where the Saviour was; they were not satisfied to be away from him; they were “seeking for Jesus.”

John 6:25-26. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

He did not gratify their curiosity by telling them how or when he came there, for that was no concern of theirs. Neither is it the business of Christ’s preachers to spin ingenious theories about the gospel, or to tell pretty tales to amuse their hearers. Their business is to deal faithfully with men’s hearts and consciences as their Master did when he said to these people “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles.” They said that at first, no doubt. Christ’s miracles dazzled them so they sought him in order to see more miracles wrought by him. This was not the highest motive for seeking the Saviour, but they had found a still lower one; they were now following him because they “did eat of the loaves and were filled.” Yet the Master did not reveal them, and thus he teaches us that it is better to follow him from the lowest motive than not to follow him at all. Perhaps some of us have been too severe upon certain people. We have said that they come to our place of worship out of mere curiosity. What if they do? It is well that they come at all, so let us not cut even the spider’s web that links a man in any sense with Christ. That web may grow into a thread, that thread into a cord, that cord into a cable and there may yet be an unbreakable union between that man and Christ. That which begins in an inferior way may lead to something higher and better. Still, it is wise to let people know that they are not deceiving Christ, even



though they deceive themselves as to their motive in seeking him. So he said to them, —

John 6:27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

They laboured hard in order to get the bread that perisheth, so Christ made them devote their energies to a better object. This is a very extraordinary verse if we regard the letter of it, and not the spirit. Christ told these people not to labour for that which they could only get by labour: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth." Yet few men get their daily bread or meat without labouring for it. And then Christ told them to labour for that which nobody ever does get by labouring: "Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." This is an instance of how the mere letter of the Word killeth. We must take the spirit of it, and then we understand that what the Saviour meant was this: "Do not be spending all your energies to get that which will melt away when you get it; but spend your time and strength in seeking after that which will last through all time, and be yours to all eternity."

John 6:28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

They wanted to do the greatest of all works; for, by "the works of God" they evidently meant the most important, the most sublime, the greatest of all works: "What shall we do in order to work such works as these?"

John 6:29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

This is a wonderful statement, which is just as true now as when Christ uttered it in Capernaum. The greatest and best work that any of you can do is to believe on Jesus Christ; though, in another sense, this is not a work at all, but ceasing from your own works, and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. But if any man would do that which is most acceptable to the thrice-holy God, let him believe on Jesus Christ whom God hath sent.

John 6:30. They said therefore unto him, what sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

This was a shameful question to put to Christ when they had so recently been miraculously fed by him, and so had received the best sign of his divine power in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

John 6:31-34. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, he gave them bread from Heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

This would have been a good prayer if they had understood the meaning of the Saviour's words; but, as it was, it was a blind prayer. They did not know what Jesus meant when he spoke of the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven. They were thinking about the bread that perisheth, the bread for the body, so they prayed blindly when they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Do you not think that many a prayer which children are taught in their childhood, and which men and women continue to pray for years, may be as blind a prayer as this one was? They know not what they ask, and the question very naturally arises as to whether it is a prayer at all.

John 6:35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

"I will take away his need by removing his hunger; I will take away his pain by removing his thirst."

John 6:36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

See, then, how little there was of advantage in the mere sight of Christ. Many seem to think that it must have been much easier for people to believe in Christ if they had actually seen him, but it was not so. There were multitudes that saw him, and saw his miracles, and even ate the bread which came from his wonder-working hand, yet they believed not. Faith does not come in that way, for it does not come by sight, but sight comes by faith. Seeing is not believing, but believing often is seeing; it opens the eyes so that they are able to see what before was hidden from them.

John 6:37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;

God's own elect shall surely come to Christ; they shall all believe in him, and be saved by him.

John 6:37. And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

"Whoever he is that comes, I will never reject him. Whoever he may be that accepts me, and believes in me, he is mine, and I will never cast him away from me."

John 6:38-44. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

"I did not expect that you would receive me; I did not imagine that you would believe me. You have not yet been drawn to me by the Father, so I knew that you would not come unto me." But he who is drawn by the Father will come to Christ, and Christ tells us what will be his future lot: —

John 6:44-46. And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

He corrects the notion into which they might have fallen that they could ever see the Father as he himself had seen him. Into that vision none of us can ever enter, for there is a peculiar divine relationship between Jesus and the Father which we cannot know.

John 6:47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, —

Jesus uttered this great truth with very special emphasis: "Verily, verily, I say unto you," —

John 6:47. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

That text is worthy to be printed in letters of gold, and then the letters would be far inferior to the message itself. If it be written on all your hearts by the Holy Spirit, you will not need any other sermon than this divine text: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

John 6:48-51. I am that bread of life. Your Fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Here we have the doctrine of the great atoning sacrifice by which sin is put away, and that is not merely Christ incarnate, but Christ yielding up his life, dying in the room and place and stead of guilty sinners. That is the food, whereof, if any man eat, he shall live for ever.

John 6:52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

These Jews were still stumbling at the letter of Christ's words; still in their blind carnality misunderstanding Christ.

John 6:53-56. Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Do not any of you interpret this teaching of Christ as the Jews did, after a carnal fashion, and fancy that we literally eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ when we come to the communion table. The Lord's supper was not instituted at the time that our Saviour spoke these words, and he was speaking of quite another matter, the spiritual reception of Christ, the real and true feeding by faith with our spirit upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 6:57-59. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught it in Capernaum.

These people had crossed the Sea of Galilee, and gone to Capernaum, "seeking for Jesus." It seemed a very hopeful sign that they should be willing to make such efforts to find Christ, but see how the Lord Jesus himself regarded it.

John 6:25-26. And when they had found him on other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek; me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

What very plain talk this is! Our Lord does not try to gain popularity by the concealment of truth, but he tells these people to their faces, "You are only following me because of what you get out of me;" "Oh!" some worldly-wise man would have said, "that is a very imprudent speech; it will drive the people away." Just so; and Christ seemed to say, on more than one occasion, "If people will be driven away by the truth. let them be driven away." John the Baptist had declared that Christ; had his fan in his hand, and that he would thoroughly purge his floor; and if that floor is to be purged, there must be a driving away of the chaff Our Lord's example should teach us to speak in his name nothing less and nothing more than the truth in all love and kindness. After thus pointing out the true motive which made the people seek him, our Saviour uttered a very singular paradox: —

John 6:27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Is it not strange that Christ says, "Labour not for the very thing which you cannot get without labouring for it," and then he says, "Labour for that which you cannot get by labouring for it"? He virtually tells us that it is so, by adding the words, "which the Son of man shall give unto you," plainly proving that it does not come as the result of human labour, but as the free gift of the Son of God. He that is wise will spell out the meaning of the paradox; but he that is blind will stumble over the letter of it, and not discern the spiritual interpretation.

John 6:28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

"We want to do the best works, the noblest works, the most acceptable works in all the world; tell us what we: should do in order to

perform a Godlike work.”

John 6:29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God,

“The highest and best work which you can accomplish is”

John 6:29. That ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Faith is the noblest of the graces; it is the very essence of true worship; it contains within itself the germs of all excellence; and the man who believes in Christ has done that which is more pleasing to God than anything else in all the world.

John 6:30-31. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from, heaven to eat.

Do you see the drift of their talk? They are still looking after the loaves and fishes; and, therefore, whatever Christ may say, they turn the discourse round that way. If they can get from Christ something to eat, they will believe in him; what groveling, earth-bound creatures they were!

John 6:32-33. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

“The best and noblest bread,— the bread which has Deity in it,— the bread which can feed your souls, and sustain you with everlasting life, ‘the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.’”

John 6:34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

They said this, not knowing what they said, and not understanding what he meant. Bread for the body was all that they wanted; their cry was, “Give us bread, and we are content;” they had no spiritual appetite for Christ, “the bread of God.”

John 6:35-36. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

These were the very people whom he had fed on the other side of the sea; yet they were craving for more. That kind of bread cannot stay their hunger for long. They had not received him as their Saviour, else they would have been well content with him, and would have asked for nothing more.

John 6:37-39. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Christ will not lose one whom the Father gave him, nay nor any part of one. He will not lose the body of any one of his people any more than he will lose the soul of one.

John 6:40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Christ will never have finished his work upon believers till he has raised their bodies from the grave, and glorified them like his own

resurrection body. He will never cease from the work which he has commenced on any one of his people till he has laid the topstone in the glorious perfections of heaven; and this truth is: the joy of our hearts even now.

John 6:41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

They muttered, murmured, whispered, growled amongst themselves at this saying of Christ.

John 6:42. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the, son, of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

This is just the way with men, they judge by outward appearances; and if the gospel comes to them as a thing beloved of poor men, if it be preached with much eloquence, if the service be without; the attractions of sweet; music or of gaudy attire, straightway they say there can be nothing in it. O blind bats, when God veils himself in human flesh, can it be otherwise?

John 6:43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

"I never thought you would believe in me; I never imagined that I should win your confidence."

John 6:44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. —

"You are not drawn unto me; therefore it is clear that you are not the subjects of divine grace. You think you are judging me, but in so doing you are really judging and condemning yourselves." Whenever men sit in judgment on the gospel, they soon let us know what kind of spirit possesses them. It is not Christ who is on his trial, it is they themselves; and when they rail at him, they do but prove that the grace of the Father has never drawn them to him: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:" —

John 6:44-46. And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

"Do not suppose that, even when you are taught of God, you will know the Father as I know him, or see him as I have seen him." That divine glance at, Deity is not for us.

John 6:47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

This was how our Lord spoke straight to the face of those who had derided him, and said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" With the strongest asseveration which he was in the habit of using, he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

John 6:48-51. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh, down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:30-32. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Jesus did not say to them, "I gave that bread to your fathers in the wilderness," as he might truly have said. It was not Moses who fed their fathers in the wilderness, it was God who had fed them, and if they would but think, they would clearly see that it was so.

But the Master took them on to another tack, and led their thoughts to a higher topic.

John 6:33-34. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Not knowing the meaning of their own request.

John 6:35-39. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will —

Many want to pry between the closed leaves of God's secret purposes, to see what his will is. Now this is it: "This is the Father's will" —

John 6:39-44. Which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know! how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven; Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:

Note how that doctrine of sovereign grace is used by Christ. He seems to wave it, like a lighted torch, in the faces of his adversaries, as if he said to them, "I did not expect you to understand me; I did not expect you to receive me. Do not think that you surprise me by your action. Imagine not that you frustrate my eternal purposes by rejecting me. I knew that you would not receive me; and that, as you are, you could not come to me, for 'no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'"

John 6:44-45. And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

May we so hear, and so learn of the Father, that we may come to Jesus Christ!

This exposition consisted of readings from John 6:1-14; John 6:30-45.

John 6:41. The Jews then murmured at him, —

That is, at the Christ, —

John 6:41-42. Because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

They did know his mother; but they made a mistake, which may have seemed a very slight one to them, when they said that they knew his father. Yet that is how nearly all great errors spring from some slight and apparently trivial addition to the truth. They did know Mary, but they did not know that Jehovah was the Father of the Christ.

John 6:43-44. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves, No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day,

Note the unflinching boldness of Christ. He did not say to these people, "Well, you have some cause for murmuring, and I will explain the matter to you." On the contrary, he faced them with the doctrine of sovereign grace, and told them that he did not expect them to understand him, for they could not do so except the Father, who had sent him, should draw their hearts towards him.

John 6:45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

So, in street, he said to them, "You have not been taught of God; the Father has never drawn you, else would you have received me." So does the brave Champion thrust the naked sword of truth into their very souls.

John 6:46-47. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Let me read those precious words again, catch at them, you timid and trembling ones: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath " — now, in present possession, — "everlasting life."

John 6:48-49. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

He does not say, "Our fathers." He comes out, as it were, as much from the Jews as from the Gentile ungodly world, and he says, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead."

John 6:50-51. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat there, and not die. I am the living bread —

Bread that contains life within itself, and is therefore most potent to sustain a life like itself: "I am the living bread" —

John 6:51-52. Which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

I wonder if they perceived that this declaration of Christ involved his death, for he did not speak of giving them his living body, but his "flesh." There are some who find their main comfort in the Incarnation of Christ; and,

certainly, that is a very comforting truth; but, without the death of Christ, it affords no nourishment for the soul. Atonement, atonement, — there is the kernel of the whole matter. Christ must die, and then he can give us his flesh to eat.

John 6:53-54. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

His soul shall live; his spirit shall never die; and though his body shall die, the force of the eternal life within the man shall quicken even his mortal body into an immortality like that of his spirit.

John 6:55-60. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

And a hard saying it really is until we are instructed of the Spirit of God to understand it. The Papist has made it into a gross and

carnal saying, teaching men that they really, and actually, and corporeally, eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, which is horrible blasphemy, and nothing less. But they who are taught of God see the inward meaning of the truth peeping up from behind the letter, and know what it is to receive into their hearts, though not into their bodies, — into their thoughts, though not into their months, — the very body and blood of Christ.

John 6:61-63. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; —

The inward, Spiritual meaning gives life to the Word, and life to us also: “It is the spirit that quickeneth;” —

John 6:63. The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

They are not carnal; they are not gross they have in them an inner sense which is full of life and spirit.

John 6:64-65. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

“No man “ — no, not even an apostle, — not the one who ate bread with Christ, and was his familiar friend, — not even he could come without being drawn by God. And he did not come to Christ; in the sense in which our Lord used the Word, Judas never really came to him, but perished in his sin. The Father must draw us with cords divine, or else to the Son we shall never come.

John 6:41-44. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Christ never retracted a truth or diminished its force because it was rejected, but he rather seemed to say, “You refused this truth. I knew you would. You need not murmur: you are none of mine. If you had been, the Father would have drawn you. You will not come. So are you set against truth that you cannot see it. So blind are your eyes that you do not behold it. No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.”

John 6:45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Beware, dear friends, of any learning Christ, except by divine teaching, for what we learn merely from the lips of our fellow-men will never be vitally learnt or really understood. We must be all taught of God; and so we shall be if, indeed, we be among these whom the Father draws towards Christ. All his teachings draw that way, and when they are taught into the inner man — not no much to the mind as to the soul and heart then do we know the truth indeed.

John 6:46-47. Not that any man hath seen the Father save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

One of the richest passages surely of all holy Scripture. It is all marrow and fatness, but here you seem to have the quintessence. We have eternal life if we are believers not shall have it, but have it now. We have a life which is eternal. It is idle to talk of our losing it, because it would not be eternal if we did. We have a life within us which can by no possibility ever die, but must live on for ever. “He that believeth on me though he hath many tremblings — though he may be the subject of many infirmities, yet he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” O my soul, exult in that glorious truth. Thou hast everlasting life as surely as thou hast faith in Christ.

John 6:48 I am that bread of life.



The food on which that everlasting life lives — living bread for living souls.

O brethren, the dead letter is of no use to us. All the truth in the world, unto - "it be quickening, cannot feed our quickened natures. It in incarnate truth, even Christ that we must feed upon. "I am that bread of life."

John 6:49-50 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

For that manna of theirs was corruptible. We read that it bred worms and stank, and though it was an angels' food for a time, yet it was but temporary. It only fed a temporary life, and, like that life, it passed away. But Jesus Christ is incorruptible, and they that live on him live on incorruptible food, which nourishes the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.

John 6:51-52. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

They misunderstood the Master. They tarried in the letter, and did not reach to the spirit — the meaning, and that letter killed them, for "the letter killeth: the spirit giveth life." The inward meaning is that on which the Soul feeds. And so the unhappy Humanist believes that he can literally eat the flesh of Christ, which, if it were true, were monstrous and could be of no service to him. Of what value is one flesh more than another flesh, if it is carnally to be considered? He loses the inner meaning. Blessed are they who are drawn of the Father and taught of the Lord — who spy out what is, after all, so little concealed beneath the thin veil of the metaphor.

John 6:53. Then Jesus said unto them,

What? Do you think he explained it? No, he did not explain to these Jews. They were given up to judicial blindness. They had so long refused to see, that now they must not see, for on them was come the curse that, seeing they should not see, and hearing they should not perceive. Oh! how terrible this is when this falls on a man, and I think I know some upon whom it must have fallen. They have indulged the philosophical vein, always spiritualizing and cutting out the soul of truth, and they are given up to spiritualizing as many of the great German philosophers evidently have been, who cannot now receive a plain statement, however simple be the words, but, from their natural habit of continually twisting and tearing to pieces, they do so with everything; and a man may be an unbeliever so long that it will never be given to him to be a believer again. God grant we may never make scales for our own eyes, and so plug up the soul's mental vision with the miry clay of sin, that henceforth, even though the eternal Christ flash the divine truth into our eyes, we shall only be dazzled by it into a greater darkness. So it was with these men. Jesus did not explain to them. He just repeated the truth more emphatically, and made it more offensive to them than before. May a preacher sometimes be offensive in his preaching? He must be. He must sometimes feel that such a truth will only move men's wrath if he preach it. Nevertheless, we are not to put truth to the verdict of a jury; neither is truth to be submitted to what is called the "inner consciousness" of a set of sinners whose consciousness is all defiled. As well make a company of highwaymen a jury about theft, as make unconverted men to be a jury about what is truth. It cannot be. Christ does not condescend to that. He tells them the truth more fully and more offensively than before.

John 6:53. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood,

Which he had not said before, and was more startling still.

John 6:53-57. Ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

You see here three living persons — the living Father, and the living Son, and the living believer, and, truly, these three live one life, which comes from the Father by the Son into us, and we are made partakers of the divine nature, according to the apostle's wondrous language, "having escaped the Corruption which is in the world through lust." This is a great mystery which only he understands who feels it within himself.

John 6:58-60. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying: who can hear it.

It was not merely the blinded Jews, but even his disciples who did not understand. Now, brethren, the test of a true disciple of Christ is that he is willing to believe what he does not understand. If you will only follow Christ's words as far as you can comprehend them, the spirit of discipleship is not in you. You are the disciple of your own understanding. Christ is not master, but your judgment is master. But he that submits himself to the words of Christ often finds it profitable not to understand. Say you so? How is that? It is profitable to feel that we have come to the end of our own understanding. I have no doubt that a wise father's talk is good to his children, even though the child does not as yet understand him. He will lay it up in his memory: he will understand one of these days, but the child — the true child heart — says, "I believe thee, father, though thou dost puzzle me. Thou hast given me a paradox which I cannot grasp, but I believe thee: thou art true." We do say that of Christ; and may we have evermore that spirit of a little child, without which we cannot receive the Kingdom of God. The other spirit is very rife in the world — the spirit that maketh man, virtually, his own teacher. And, truly, I wonder not at it, because there was originally so much of submission of the judgment to the dictum of the church, or the dictum of the Pope, which is degrading, but to submit to Jesus and to his teaching — that is ennobling. May we have the same sacredly blind faith with regard to Christ which some have had to human authority, believing everything he speaks. But some of these disciples did not so.

John 6:61-62. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

What will you say then?

John 6:63. It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

"You are not to take them as if they were flesh, and understand them carnally. They do but embody my words do but embody a living soul of meaning, which it will be for you to receive if you are indeed quickened, and then it will quicken you, and you will understand me, and live in me."

John 6:64. But there are some of you that believe not.

And if they do not believe, then they miss the whole soul of the thing.

John 6:64-65. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

No, not even though he were an apostle — though he came so near to Christ as to pray to him and hear his secret and most private communications, and to see his singular and special miracles yet he would not understand, except the Father gave it as a special act of grace.

John 6:66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Did he want them? I trow not He desired not to have around him a mass of chaff, but the pure winnowed corn. Consequently he used his own word as the winnowing fan. And I believe, brothers and sisters, that wherever Christ is faithfully preached, preaching is

the best form of church discipline.

Somehow or other, carnal minds get weary of it, and they go away, and those that have not a longing and a love for the truth drop off of themselves; so they walk no more with him.

We shall read tonight part of that blessed sixth chapter of John's Gospel, beginning at the forty-first verse.

John 6:41-42. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Familiarity breeds contempt. Because the Jews knew Jesus and his kindred after the flesh, therefore they would not believe that he came down from heaven. Let us beware of foolish prejudices, and let us not judge after the flesh. Why should Jesus not have come down from heaven even though these men knew his reputed father and mother?

John 6:43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

It was a muttering that was scarcely audible, but Jesus heard it, and he checked it. The Lord cannot take any delight in murmuring: "Murmur not among yourselves."

John 6:44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

You did not expect the Saviour to say just that, did you? He always speaks the truth, even though he has to lay the axe at the root of the tree of self-confidence. He does not seem to be encouraging his hearers, but rather to be repelling them. He was trying to show them the state in which they really were they had not been drawn to himself, they were alienated from him; and they would continue to be at a distance from him unless God should interpose, and draw them to him.

John 6:45. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

This was as much as to say, "The Father has never taught you. You have learned nothing from him, or you would come to me; but in your rejection of me you prove that you are strangers to the grace of God."

John 6:46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

Christ is "of God" in a very peculiar sense. He is not God's creature, but God's Son He is of the very essence of God, and therefore he knows what God is as we never can know.

John 6:47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

This is a grand saying, can you not catch the truth it reveals? Whatever deficiencies there may be in you, if you believe on Christ, you have everlasting life, — not a life which you can lose, or which will die out, but everlasting life; and we are not among those who clip the wings of that great word "everlasting." We take this verse to mean just what it says; that is, if you believe on Christ, you have within you a life which will last for ever and ever.

John 6:48-50. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

Christ is the Bread for the soul, the Bread of immortality, the Bread which will fit a man for heaven, and sustain him till he arrives

there. Oh, that we may all eat of this Bread of life, and so live for ever!

John 6:51-54. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, Now can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

How necessary it is to have a spiritual understanding of the Scriptures! These metaphors have a sort of cannibal meaning about them to a man who goes no further than the letter, but the spiritual man knows that the soul feeds upon the doctrine of Christ's incarnation, and drinks in the truth of Christ's atonement. This is feeding, this is drinking, this is being nourished upon Christ's flesh and Christ's blood.

John 6:55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

Meat and wine are, after all, only shadows; they feed the shadow-life of the flesh. Christ and his precious blood are the great realities, they nourish the true life of the spirit. Blessed are they who know what it is in spirit to feed upon these spiritual things!

John 6:56-58. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

The Saviour goes over the same ground several times, there is a variety in his utterances, but in essence the meaning is the same. He wants to get it into our minds that we are to live upon him; — that He, not self, He, not works, He, not our feelings, is the real food of the soul, by which that soul acquires and retains immortal life.

John 6:59-60. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

Preachers must not be astonished if they stagger their hearers when they proclaim the truth, they must not retract what they have said, nor tone it down, because so-and-so is offended by it. Truth is hard, especially to hard hearts. Every great truth is hard to a beginner in the school of Christ; but it is none the less to be taught, for that which is difficult today may become delightful tomorrow or whenever we are better educated in the things of God.

John 6:61-62. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

He that is offended at any gospel truth may expect to be still more offended, for there are higher and deeper doctrines than Jesus had then uttered. If you stagger under the elementary lessons, what will you do when you get into the grammar school of divinity, and begin to learn the loftier lessons of the truth of God? Oh, for a faith that never staggers when Christ speaks, and that believes whatever he reveals!

John 6:63. It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Do not look at them as dead words regard them as full of life, and understand them in their living spiritual sense.

John 6:64. But there are some of you that believe not.

Some of Christ's own disciples, some who had kept him company, believer! not This was a very sad statement for Jesus to be obliged to make; but it must be made today about many professed Christians: "There are some of you that believe not."

John 6:64. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

He is not deceived by hypocrites; if we have crept into the church unworthily, he knows all about us, he knows us better than we know ourselves. Oh, that we might be very careful, watchful, jealous! May we abhor hypocrisy of every sort! It is impossible to continue in it without being detected; if it were possible we ought not to practice it; but with such an eye as that which is in the Head of the Church, even Christ, we cannot deceive; therefore, let us not attempt it.

John 6:65-66. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

It often happens, in the ministry of a faithful preacher, that he has to say unpleasant things, and there are some who withdraw because of his preaching of the truth. Should he break his heart when they do so? Certainly not. They did the like with his Master, they acted the same with the apostle Paul. It will be so to the end of the chapter; and, indeed it is part of our work to separate between the precious and the vile. Truth is like the fan which drives away the chaff, and leaves the wheat the more pure. Yet it is sad to read that many of the disciples of Christ went back, and walked no more with him, because they could not endure the faithful words he spoke to them.

John 6:67-68. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter —

Who was always to the front, ever ready to speak, "Simon, Peter" —

John 6:68-70. Answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Our Lord often surprises us by the way in which he speaks; he does not say what we should have expected to hear from him, but he says something that is very startling, and even discouraging. It is the way of our Master, because he sees further than we do; and he often replies, not to the question as it lies in the words addressed to him, but to a belief in the heart at the back of the words. He did so here, Peter may have thought that "the twelve" were all steadfast and sincere, so Christ says to him, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

John 6:71. He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

John 6:41. The Jews then murmured at him, —

That is, at our blessed Lord: "The Jews then murmured at him," —

John 6:41-42. Because he said, I am the bread which came down from heavens. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven!

There are always some who complain that the gospel is "too commonplace, too well-known." They already know all that is to be known about it, just as these people knew the mother and father of our Lord Jesus. How could he, who was the son of the carpenter, have come down from heaven? But this ought to have commended him to them that though he was divine, he became so truly human, and so perfectly took upon himself our nature as to be the son of Joseph, — one whose father and mother they knew; and ought we not to be glad of a gospel plain enough for a child to grasp, simple enough for the most ignorant to be saved by it? Let us not seek after signs and mysteries, but graciously accept the gospel which the Lord himself gives us.

John 6:43-44. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and will raise him up at the last day.

This was high ground for Christ to take; it was as much as to say, "You need not murmur; I did not expect that you would believe in me. I know that human nature is such that, without a divine work upon the heart, man cannot come to me, and will not believe in me. I am not disappointed, or deceived, when you murmur among yourselves, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'";

John 6:45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Nobody else will come to Christ; there is no real Christian in the world but is of God's making. A Christian is a sacred thing, the Holy Ghost has made him so. It takes as much of God's omnipotence to make a believer as to make a world; and only he that created the heavens and the earth can create even as much as a grain of true faith in the heart of man.

John 6:46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

The Divine Son hath seen the Father; you and I are to believe, we cannot see as yet.

John 6:47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

He has it even now in possession; a life that can never die out is in the breast of every man who believes in Christ. Oh, what a joy is this!

John 6:48. I am that bread of life.

Jesus is that bread which feeds the spiritual life, and sustains the everlasting life.

John 6:49-50. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

The bread that feeds the undying life is Christ Jesus himself, whom we do spiritually feed upon, and who is the nourishment of our souls.

John 6:51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Christ — God incarnate — is the nourishment of faith, the spiritual food of the everlasting life. The new life which God puts into us is not natural, so as to be fed upon natural food, like bread and meat; but it is spiritual, and it must live upon spiritual food. That food is nothing less than Christ Jesus himself.

John 6:52-56. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

These Jews would not understand Christ when he spoke very plainly. He did not therefore retract a single word that he had said, but as the first light had dazzled them, — and willingly were they dazzled by it, — he turned the lantern full upon their faces, and made

them blind, for the excessive light of the explanation was too much for them. It was not Christ's intent to save them; he was making the light itself to be blindness to them, because they had already refused him, and now the time was come when the heart of these people must be made yet more gross, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears. May the Lord never give us up to such a fate as that! It is a dreadful thing when the light of the gospel becomes the instrument of blinding men, and it does so still. After a certain degree of willful rejection of it, that which would have been a savor of life unto life can be turned into a savor of death unto death by men's closing their hearts against it. Yet I wonder and am astonished at our Lord and Master's course of proceeding, that here, when the men do not and will not see, he does but speak the truth the more boldly. Let no man think that Jesus was here alluding to the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in the Lord's supper; that ordinance was not instituted at that time, and there could be no allusion to what did not then exist. It is quite in another sense, in a high spiritual sense, that our mind feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ. That is to say, the fact that God was made flesh, — the fact that Christ died for sin, — these are the food of our souls, and thereon our faith grows, and our spirit is strengthened.

John 6:57-58. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

This is spiritual feeding upon spiritual truth.

John 6:59-62. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

Let our Master teach us what he pleases, nothing ought to offend a disciple of Christ. It is ours to sit at his feet, and receive all his words without cavilling. But if we do not believe what he tells us upon some elementary points, what should we do if he were to reveal something more to us, and lead us into the higher and deeper doctrines of his Word?

John 6:63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:

That is to say, it is the meaning of Christ's words that gives life, not the words themselves; and if we stumble at the letter, and begin to ask, "How can we eat the flesh of Christ?" taking that expression literally, it will kill us. We need to get into the spirit of what he says, the true spiritual meaning of it, for that is where the life lies.

John 6:63-64. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.

Could that be truly said of any here? "There are some of you that believe not." If so, you know what becomes of unbelievers; you certainly cannot attain the blessings promised to faith. May God grant that, ere this day is quite over, there may not be left one among you that believes not!

John 6:64-66. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

So it seems that a man may be recognized as a disciple of Christ, and yet he may go back, and walk no more with him. Oh, that we may be real disciples — disciples indeed! Oh, that we may be part and parcel of Christ, true branches of the true Vine, living members of the living body of Christ!

John 6:67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, -The choice and pick of all his followers:

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve,"—

John 6:67-68. Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter —

Who was the ready tongue of the apostles: “Then Simon Peter” —

John 6:68. Answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

That was a very conclusive way of answering one question by another: “Will ye also go away?” “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Brother, sister, if we wandered from Christ, where could we go? And how can we leave him when he has the words of eternal life?

John 6:69-71. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon : for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

## John 7 Commentary

John 7:1-5. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him.

It is a very painful truth, that those who were the near relations of the Saviour were not believers in his divine mission; — at any rate, at first. He was truly a prophet who was without honour in his own country, and among his own kindred; and, on this occasion, they half taunted him concerning his claims. In effect, they said to him, “If indeed you are a prophet, get out into the world, and prove it. We hear that you profess to work miracles, then, why do you hide yourself away in this country place down here in Galilee? Begone to Jerusalem, and perform your wonders before the crowds in the capital;” — half hoping, perhaps, that his claims might prove to be true, yet not, at that time, at any rate, being themselves willing to become his disciples. See how perverse is the human heart. These men might even live in close companionship with Christ, and even be nearly related to him after the flesh, and yet not be converted to him. So the best of men need not wonder if they have unconverted relations, and we may not feel certain that there is any fault to be found in their example if others are not converted by it; for, certainly, there was no fault in the example of Christ, yet “neither did his brethren believe in him.” Mark, also, that no earthly relationship is of any avail in the kingdom of heaven: “for neither did his brethren believe in him.” So that, although I may be the child of godly parents, and one born of a long line of saints, yet I am, because of that, no nearer to the kingdom unless I become myself a believer in Christ. Remember what Peter said on the day of Pentecost; you have often heard that passage of Scripture half-quoted, let me quote the whole of it to you; “For the promise is unto you, and to your children.” If you stop there, you do not get the true sense of it. “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Therefore, that text teaches that there is no distinction between the children of believers and any other children. We must be called by the grace of God like the far-off ones, or else we shall not inherit eternal life.

John 7:6-8. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did everything, as it were, by the clock. His life was an orderly one; it was all arranged in the eternal purpose of God. The very day in which he should go up to Jerusalem was marked down, and he took care that he did not go before the right time. Now, half the power of: a Christian life depends upon its being timely. The bringing forth of fruit in due season is one of the marks of the tree planted by the rivers of water; and one of the signs of the Son of man, who delighted in the law of the Lord, was that he said, “My time is not yet full come.” When it did come, then he went.



John 7:9-10. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Not with the great caravan that traveled, sometimes, with tens of thousands of people together going up to the feast, but with his own disciples in a quieter way.

John 7:11-13. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews. There was a general fear of violence that would come upon any who professed themselves to be his followers.

Now turn to Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, the fifth chapter.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 7:1-13; and Hebrews 5.

John 7:14. Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

He was no coward, so he boldly showed himself in the midst of the throng in the temple.

John 7:15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Or, "How knoweth he the Scriptures? How has he come to be an instructed man, having never learned of the Rabbis? He has never passed through our schools of learning, so what can he know?"

John 7:16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"I am not the inventor of what I say; I am but a messenger, delivering the message of him that sent me."

John 7:17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Any man, who is seeking after that which is right, and labouring to do that which is right, is a good judge of the truth. A practical life of godliness makes a man a far better critic as to what truth is than all the learning of the schools can do.

John 7:18. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

If you ever hear a man speaking about the priesthood, meaning himself and his brethren; and about the Church, again meaning himself and his brethren; and about the sacraments, meaning certain performances by himself and his brethren; you may know at once that God did not send him. But he who speaks to the glory of God, and does not say, "Behold me; "but, "Behold the Lamb of God," he it is whom God has sent.

John 7:19. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

"Did not Moses say, 'Thou shalt not kill'? Then, you do not keep his law, though you profess such reverence for him, for, if you did, you would not go about to kill me."

John 7:20-21. The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.

“I did it on the Sabbath day, and you are all stumbling at that.”

John 7:22-23. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

Surely, there was never a more triumphant answer than that.

John 7:24-25. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?

Perhaps some of the same people who had asked Christ, “Who goeth about to kill thee?” now enquired, “Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?”

John 7:26-27. But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

They had a notion—perhaps derived from that passage in Isaiah, “who shall declare his generation?”—that the birth of Christ would be hidden in mystery. At any rate, there was some cloudy idea floating about that it would be concealed.

John 7:28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am:

“And yet you do not know me.”

John 7:28-30. And I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

Something seemed to hold them back. Enraged as they were against him, a mysterious and mighty awe was upon them, so that they dared not touch him.

John 7:31-33. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, —

As they came to take him;—perhaps to the very officers sent by the Pharisees, Jesus said,—

John 7:33. Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

“You may well let me alone now, for it will only be a little while, and then I shall be delivered into your hands, and you will no more be troubled with me.”

John 7:34-35. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

That was always their fear. "Is he going to the Greeks? Will he be a teacher to them? Will he try to introduce them into the mysteries of our faith?"

John 7:36-37. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried,—

I think I see him standing up in the midst of the great throng. That congregation would soon be scattered, never to come together again; so he stood up in the most prominent place he could find, and, notwithstanding all their anger, and their desire to kill him, he cried,—

John 7:37-38. Saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly—

Or, "out of the very midst of him"

John 7:38. Shall flow rivers of living water.

What a glorious gospel sermon that was! It comes to us down through the ages, and is as true now as when Jesus spake it. Ho, thirsty ones, come ye to him, and drink; and he will slake your thirst, and create in you a well of living water which shall bubble up for ever and ever.

John 7:39-40. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

The Prophet about whom Moses spoke.

John 7:41. Others said, This is the Christ.

The Messiah.

John 7:41-42. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?

This was blessed testimony even out of the mouth of Christ's enemies. They objected against Christ what was indeed the fact, for he did come of the seed of David, and from the town of Bethlehem. There was he born; and though they called him the Nazarene,—and he refused not the title,—though over his head Pilate wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," yet is he the Son of David, and his birthplace was at Bethlehem, though some of them knew it not.

John 7:43-44. So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

He was immortal till his work was done. The hour for his death had not yet struck, and he must live on till the appointed time.

John 7:45-46. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

The charm of his eloquence, the dignity of his person, his awe-inspiring demeanour, and a singular something,—they knew not what,—that Divinity that doth hedge about such a King as he was,—restrained their hands. They said, “Never man spake like this man.”

John 7:47. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?

“You sheriffs’ officers are generally hard-hearted enough; are you also deceived?”

John 7:48. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

This was as much as to say, “If we have not believed on him,—we who are the great dons of the nation,—the rulers and the Pharisees,—why, then, there cannot be anything in his claims. Just as some people seem to think that, unless there is a lord in a Society, unless there is an honourable somebody or other in the chair, there is nothing in it.

John 7:49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

They regarded the poor, common people as ignorant and accursed, whereas they, probably, knew as much about the law and the real spirit of it as these learned teachers did.

John 7:50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

Being a member of the council,—

John 7:51. Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

He only asked a question, that was all; and, timid Christian, if you are placed where you cannot say much for Christ, if you have too great a fear upon you to vindicate your Master at any considerable length, yet say what you can; and, perhaps, the simple asking of a question may suffice to defend him. Nicodemus did but rise, and ask, “Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?”

John 7:52. They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Which was a lie, for prophets had come out of Galilee. Still, they denied it; and they were indignant at having such a question put to them by Nicodemus.

John 7:53. And every man went unto his own house.

It was like a bombshell exploding in the midst of them; and often, a few brave words dropped into the midst of an assembly of bad men will explode among them, and scatter them hither and thither. Nicodemus had accomplished what, perhaps, he thought he should never do. He was indeed like his name on that occasion,—one of the conquering people,—for “every man went unto his own house.” Nicodemus had scattered them all by his startling question. May each of us as bravely witness for Christ as we have opportunity!

John 7:30-31. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

Well might they ask that question, for Jesus had wrought such marvellous miracles that they could not imagine anything greater. Surely this must be the Christ; or if he were not, when the Christ did come could he and would he do any greater miracles than this

man had done?

John 7:32. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; —

Whispered these things, afraid to speak out boldly because of the Pharisees, and therefore they quietly said it among themselves, and, after all, there is no fire more to be dreaded than a smouldering fire.

John 7:32-33. And the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

That was a blessed way for Christ to describe his return to the heavenly world: "I go unto him that sent me." Possibly he said this to the very men who were sent to take him.

John 7:34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

No officers can arrest him now that he has gone up into his Father's glory; there is no fear of any of them being there to catch him in his speech, or to drag him before the ecclesiastical and secular judges, as they did when he was here;

John 7:35-36. Then said the Jews among themselves, "Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this; that he said, Ye shall seek me and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?"

They appear to have had some intimation of that glorious love of Christ which was not to be confined within the bounds of the Jewish nation, yet they could not or would not understand his words.

John 7:37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, —

Shouted, spoke with all his might; and he stood, although he usually sat to deliver his message. But now, as if his whole being was roused to it utmost energy, on account of the last day of the gathering having come, when perhaps the people would go home, and he would be unable thus to speak with them again, "Jesus stood and cried," —

John 7:37. Saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

O blessed invitation, how sweet it should be to every thirsty soul! "If any man" — prince or pauper, "any man" — moral or utterly debauched, "if any man thirst, let him come unto me," — not to ordinances, nor to human priests, "let him come unto me, and drink," as much as he will "without money, and without price."

John 7:38. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

He will not only drink enough to satisfy his own thirst, but he will himself become a fountain, streams of grace shall be communicated to his fellow-men through him.

John 7:39. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

He was not given then; but later, on the day of Pentecost, he was given, and he has never been withdrawn.

John 7:40-43. Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him.

It is still true that Christ is a cause of division, as he himself foretold that he would be.

John 7:44. And some of them would have taken him but no man laid hands on him.

In the 30th verse of this chapter, and in the 20th verse of the next chapter, we are told why they did not take him: "His hour was not yet come." And, like their Lord, saints are immortal till their work is done.

John 7:45-48. Then came the officers to the chief priest and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

They professed to be the spiritual leaders of the nation, and expected all to follow them.

John 7:49-51. But the people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of those,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

Nicodemus asked a simple question, but they could not answer it without convicting themselves of disobeying that very law of which they pretended to be the exponents.

John 7:52-53. They answered and said unto him Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house.

## John 8 Commentary

John 8:1. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

That is, as every man went to his own house to rest, so Jesus found rest in secret prayer on the Mount of Olives. There is a very striking contrast here; it is a pity to have brought the dividing saw right through the middle of such charming consecutive sentences.

John 8:2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

That is always the posture in the East; the teachers sit, and the hearers stand. We may have to try that plan one of these days; it might be better for me, and also for you. There might be less drowsiness, perhaps, if the congregation had to stand to listen to the preacher's message.

John 8:3-4. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

They did this only to entangle the Saviour,— not because they wanted to learn anything of him, or to do this woman any good, or even to vindicate morality; but it was simply an effort to entrap him.

John 8:5-6. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.

They could accuse him either way. If he sanctioned their stoning the woman, they would charge him with violating the Roman law; but if he said that she should not be stoned, then they would say that he differed from Moses, and set aside the law of God.

John 8:6-7. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let Him first cast a stone at her.

That sentence must have flashed like a drawn sword, keen as a razor, through the very midst of them. Here were men who had probably been living in abominable sin, yet they had brought this poor sinful woman to Jesus, and laid this accusation against her.

John 8:8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

After he had fired that one red-hot shot, he waited until it had produced its due effect.

John 8:9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

They left her alone with Jesus in the midst of the place that the guilty crowd had forsaken in silent shame.

John 8:10-11. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

He condemned the sin, his own pure and holy life was the best condemnation of that; but, as for the sinner, he had not come to condemn, but to forgive. His own declaration was, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

This exposition consisted of readings from John 7:53; and John 8:1-11.

John 8:12-13. 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. The Pharisees —

These wasps were always stinging him; when he drove them away once, they quickly returned to attack him again: "The Pharisees" —

John 8:13-15. Therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them; Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

He did not come for that purpose the first time; he will come, a second time, to judge all mankind.

John 8:16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

You see, brethren, how our Lord Jesus claimed to be God, for he put himself here in such a connection with God as would be quite inconsistent for any mere man. This is what Paul meant when he said that Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," he thought it 'not a prize to be grasped, for it was already his.

John 8:17-18. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

He did that by the miracles which Christ wrought; and they proved that he was indeed sent of God.

John 8:19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

They thought they knew his reputed father Joseph; they thought they also knew all about Christ, the carpenter's Son; but there is more in Christ, than carnal eyes can ever see. There is more in Christ than the most enlightened understanding, if it be but natural understanding, can ever perceive. These blind bats, the Pharisees, neither knew Christ nor the Father. If they had known him, they would have known the Father, for Christ is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

John 8:20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

Like our Lord, every child of God is immortal till his work is done. This ought to divest us of every kind of fear. The enemy cannot lay hands upon a Christian until his Lord wills it: and when his hour has come, then it behoves not the child of God to resist the Father's will.

John 8:21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

Oh, what a terrible sentence is that! I pray that the Lord may never say that to any of us, "Whither I go, ye cannot come." That would be the death — knell of all our hopes, and would make our life one long banishment. Blessed be his name, we who have sought him, and have found him, know that; we shall not die in our sins; and whither he has gone, we shall go also.

John 8:22-23. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above:

You are of a groveling nature; your thoughts rise out of the abyss where every evil dwells.

John 8:23-24. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore, of you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

If ye have no faith in Christ as the Son of God, "ye shall die in your sins." What an awful thing it will be to die in your sins! What ceremonies for your eternal burial! What a robe of fire in which to lie down for your long sleep, and then to find no sleep because of it! "Ye shall die in your sins." I should like this short, stern sentence to ring in the ears of every unbeliever. This is not my word, but Christ's own word, — the word of the most loving and tender Saviour: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

John 8:25-29. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith, unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me:

This made Christ's life so calm, so deeply joyous amid all its sorrow. "He that sent me is with me." Servant of God, canst thou say the



same? If so, it is thy joy, thy confidence thy strength. God grant that we may each one of us realize that blessed presence of our Lord!

John 8:29. The Father hath not left me alone,' for I do always those things that please him.

Christ could truly say that. Oh, that it might be true of us, too!

John 8:30-31. As he spake these words, many believed on him, Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

“If you became my disciples because of what I said, will you believe what I shall yet say? Are you prepared to take in still further revelations, and to receive whatever I shall teach you? If so, ‘then are ye my disciples indeed’”

John 8:32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Some who heard this message of our Lord caught at it; they were always on the watch for anything to cavil at and contradict, and therefore —

John 8:33-34. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

Or, “the slave of sin.” There is the test of your position; if you do the devil's dirty work, you are his servant. If you delight in sin then you can hear your fetters clank if the ears of your conscience are But open: “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”

John 8:35-37. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed;

“I know what a boast you make of that.”

John 8:37-39. But ye seek to kill me, because, my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

Jesus had admitted that, as a matter of temporal descent; but he denied it as a matter of real fact.

John 8:28. Then said Jesus unto them; —

That is, to the Jews who were questioning and opposing him,-

John 8:28. When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Blessed be God, there were many, after the crucifixion of Christ, who did. believe in him! Yet, alas! in others, the blindness of heart continued, and they would not see the Messiah in him who was crucified. We, who believe in the uplifted Saviour, can see the Father in the Son; and to us, faith has become a most blessed thing; and we know that he does nothing of himself, and that, as the Father has taught him, so he speaks.

John 8:29. And he that sent me is with me:

I commend that short sentence to all my Master's servants, for there is great comfort in it, Your Lord could say this, and so can you if you are truly employed in his service: "He that sent me is with me?"

John 8:29. The Father hath not left me alone;

There is another precious motto for you. Jesus could truly say, "The Father hath not left me alone;" and, as he did not leave his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, so he will not leave any of his sons.

John 8:29. For I do always those things that please him.

Let us labour earnestly to be able to say that. If there is anything which would not please God, let us have nothing to do with it; if it would not please God, it ought not to please us. Blessed shall that servant of the Lord be, who can sincerely say, "I do always those things that please him."

John 8:30-32. As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

There is such a thing as a temporary faith; beware of it, I beseech you. Men appear to believe in Christ for a little while, like that seed which was sown upon the rock, which speedily sprang up, and just as quickly withered away. God-given faith is not temporary, but permanent: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." God gives us the faith which is able to endure the fire of persecution, and which continues steadfast even when exposed to the evil example of an ungodly world. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" but temporary faith brings only delusion, and ends in destruction.

John 8:33-34. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

Depend upon it, acts of sin breed habits of sin; and habits are the chains which slaves wear. How many there are who are bound to their lusts with many fetters! Once, they seemed to enjoy the sin, and to hold it in subjection; but now it has bound them, and they cannot escape from it.

John 8:35-36. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

If he sets you free from sin, you will never go back to its slavery again. There is no emancipation like that which Jesus brings, for it is eternal; when he snaps the fetter, he sets the believer free for ever.

John 8:37-38. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

It is a common characteristic of children to tell what they see; what they witness at home, they are sure to tell abroad. If you are a child of God, you will act and speak like your Father does; and if you are a child of the devil, you will act and speak like him. Our parentage may be discovered by our acts and our words: "I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

John 8:39. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

“That is, if you were the true spiritual children of faithful Abraham, you would act as he did.”

John 8:40-42. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

If any man has a right idea of God, and really loves God, if he will study the character of Christ, he will see that Christ is the very image of God in human flesh, and he will fall in love with Christ. That result is inevitable. Men form wrong ideas of God; and then, when they read the life of Christ,

they see no likeness between the Christ and their conception of God; nor is there any. But if they would take their idea of God from God's own Word, then they would see that, in the person of the Man of Nazareth, the Divine character truly shines out, but it is toned down so as to meet the human eye without the excessive glare that would blind it. But it is the same Light of Light, the same Love of Love, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” he is the express image of God, and he who truly knows God will know that Christ also is God, for Father and Son are one.

John 8:43-47. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin! And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

What a wonderful character was the character of Christ! We get a strange light cast upon it as we read this dialogue in which he endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. My brethren, in Christ there is all the tenderness of a woman; but do not think that he is effeminate, far from it. What masculine force, what vigor what power, there is in him! There are some people who, if we speak plainly against error, tell us that we are uncharitable, and that we have not the spirit of Christ. Is it so? Did there ever fall from any lips more burning words than those which we find here, when he is brought into conflict with his foes? The fact is, he is meek and lowly, but he is most courageous; he is genial and kind, but he is honest and true. He speaks with suavity and gentleness; but, at the same time, there is great force about every expression that he uses. He does not mince matters when he is dealing with sin. There is no velvet on his lips; he utters no honeyed phrases. Naked truth flashes, like a scimitar from its scabbard, when he has to deal with those who oppose the truth. “Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

John 8:48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

You know this form of answer; it is an old trick, when there is no case, abuse the plaintiff. So, when there is no answer to what Christ has said, call him a Samaritan, and say that he has a devil.

John 8:49-51. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

What glorious gospel brilliance Christ suddenly flashes upon these men! He promises even to them that, if they will keep his saying, they shall live for ever, they shall be partakers of an eternal, unquenchable life. It might have seemed to us to be like casting pearls before swine to proclaim that great truth to such hearers; but our Master's infinite wisdom does not permit us to think so.

John 8:52-56. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and

was glad.

He will not answer their questions, for they do not ask that they may learn. They ask that they may cavil; so he multiplies his riddles. He lets the light blind them yet more, Now he speaks, not so much of the undying life of believers, as of his own eternal existence, long before the prophets and Abraham of whom they had spoken.

John 8:57-58. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Before there was any Abraham, there was this glorious Christ of ours existing as the Eternal I AM, in all the infinity of his glory. Now comes a thoroughly characteristic Jewish answer, —

John 8:59. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them. and so passed by.

They believed that he claimed to be God, as he certainly did, and therefore they tried to stone him; and there is no foothold for those who say that Christ was a very good man, but only a man. If he was not the Son of God, he was not a good man, for no good man would have left upon his followers, and upon his foes, too, the impression that he claimed to be God, if he was not; and no good man could have claimed to be God if he was not really so. Rank him either amongst the grossest of impostors, or else as the Son of God, — one or the other. There is no halting-piece between the two. Blessed be thy name, O Son of Mary, thou art also the Son of the Highest, and as such we worship and adore thee!

Christ thus spake to his adversaries.

John 8:29. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone: for I do always those things that please him.

Brethren, what Christ could say, I trust many of his servants can also say in a like manner. "He that sent me is with me." What power, what pleasure, must the presence of God give to his servants! "The Father hath not left me alone." Oh! how blessed to feel that behind us is the sound of our Master's feet, and that in us is the temple of his presence! We cannot, however, say, as Christ did, "I do always those things that please him," for, alas! we have the remembrance of sin this morning, and have to confess it in his sight. But let us also remember that he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

John 8:30-31. As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

It is not a mere profession that makes a man a saint; there must be a continuance of well-doing. We bind lads apprentice for a little time, but no man belongs to Christ unless he belongeth to him for ever. There must be an entire giving up of one's self, in life and unto death, to the Lord's cause.

John 8:32-34. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

There is this in the original, "Whosoever maketh sin." It is not exactly, "Whosoever committeth it," because if so, all would be the servants of sin, and God would have no sons at all. But it says in the original "Whosoever maketh sin," that is, whosoever makes it his choice, and makes it the delight of his soul, whosoever doth this is the servant of sin, and is no son of God.

John 8:35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

He may be in the house, and have slender privileges for a time, but these soon go away.

John 8:36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

And give you the privileges of sons.

John 8:37-38. I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Men always act according to their natures. We shall find the polluted fountain sending forth filthy streams. We do not expect to hear sweet singing from a serpent, nor, on the other hand, do we expect hissing from the bird, but every creature is after its own kind. Christ, coming from the Father, reveals God: ungodly men, coming from the devil, reveal the devil.

John 8:39-42. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham but now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him. We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

You would see in me a brother; you would perceive in me the attributes of God, and, being made like unto God as his sons, would, love the God-head in me.

John 8:43-44. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

Christ doth not speak very gentle words at all times. A deeply-rooted disease needs a sharp medicine, and he gives it. He uses the knife sometimes, and if there be a deadly ulcer that must be cut away, he knoweth how to do it with all the sternness of which his loving heart is capable.

John 8:44. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him.

The first murder was committed by his suggestion. Cain was guilty of it, but Satan instigated it. He hath ever been a man-killer, and so Christ says that inasmuch as they sought to kill him, they were worthy sons of their parent. "There is no truth in him."

John 8:44. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own:

It is his own idiom. You may always know him by it.

John 8:44. For he is a liar, and the father of it.

The father of all liars, and of all lies.

John 8:45-46. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

Oh! matchless argument! Now were they silent indeed. His whole life was before them; he had not lived in secret and yet he could appeal to his whole life, from the first day even to this time, and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" It is this that weakens our

testimony for God that we are so imperfect and full of sin. Let us seek to imitate the Master, for the more clean we are from these imperfections, the more shall we be able to shut the mouths of our adversaries.

John 8:47-48. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.

Always abuse your adversary if you cannot answer him: this is always the devil's tactic. When he cannot overthrow religion, then he seeks to append opprobrious titles to those who profess it. It is an old and stale trick, and has lost much of its force. Our Saviour did not answer the accusation of his being a Samaritan, but inasmuch as what they said about his having a devil would touch his doctrine, he answered that.

John 8:49-51 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you. If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

The sting of it shall be taken away; he may fall asleep; he will do so, but he shall not see death.

John 8:52-56. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say that he is your God: yet ye have not know him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.

There is a great force in the original language here, "He was glad." There was an excessive joy which holy men had in looking forward to the coming of Christ. I do not think that we give ourselves enough room for joy in our religion. There are some persons who think it the right thing to restrain their emotions. They have no burstings forth of joy, and seldom a shout of sacred song. But oh! my brethren, if there is anything that deserves the flashing eye, and the leaping foot, and the bounding heart, it is the great truth that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners, even the chief. Let us be glad so often as we make mention of his name.

John 8:57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Why, he was hardly thirty, but sorrow had made him appear old.

John 8:58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am.

Here he claims his Deity to the fullest extent, and those who can read the New Testament, and profess to believe it, and yet not see Christ as a claimant of Deity, must be sinfully blind.

John 8:59. Then, took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

This is always the sinner's argument against the right: first, hard words, and then stones.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 8:29-59. Mar 14:1-9. John 12:1-7.

John 8:31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

For there were many, in Christ's day, coming to him for a while, and then going away from him; professing to believe, and then stumbling when Christ proclaimed some doctrine which struck them as being strange and hard to receive. Our Lord Jesus tells them

that constancy is necessary to true discipleship. It is of no use to start running in the race unless we continue in the course till the prize is won. We are not true pilgrims to heaven merely because we cross the threshold of our door; we must keep on, and on, and on, till we reach the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

John 8:32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

That is the result of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. With Christ, who is the truth, to be our Teacher, and the Holy Spirit to bless his words, we come to know the truth; and the operation of the truth upon the heart is to deliver us from the bondage of sin and of error.

John 8:33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

What a falsehood this was of theirs! They were at that very time in bondage to the Romans; they had been subdued and conquered: and, a little while after, they themselves confessed that they had no king but Cesar. Men are not very chary about telling falsehoods when they wish to resist Christ: they will do anything rather than believe on him.

John 8:34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

The man who habitually lives in sin is not a free man, for he is still a slave to sin. If he finds pleasure and delight in disobeying God, he has no right to talk about being a free man. His chains are rattling on his wrists; what can he know about freedom?

John 8:35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth even.

A servant may be dismissed from the household, but a son may not. If we were only servants of God, we might fall from grace, and perish; but if we are the sons of God, we never shall. If we ever did, in truth, call God "Father," we shall always be able to use that blessed title, for the relationship of fatherhood is not a temporary one, sad cannot come to an end.

John 8:36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

If you have the freedom of sonship, you are free indeed. There are none so free in our Father's house as his children are.

John 8:37-39. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

The real descendants of "the father of the faithful" are themselves faithful; that is, believers. The father of believers has believers for his children: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Our Lord had admitted that these Jews were Abraham's seed according to the flesh; but he proved that they were not Abraham's seed in the high and spiritual sense, since they were not like him whom they claimed for a father.

John 8:40-41. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.

He had not told them who that father was; but as it is a standing rule that men do the deeds of their father, the genuineness of the descent which they claimed could be tested by their likeness to their father.

John 8:41-42. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me:

Any man who is born of God must love Jesus Christ. The purity of his motives, the loveliness of his character, the charms of his person, would all be sure to win the heart of a man who was truly born of God.

John 8:42-43. For I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

"You are dull of comprehension, you are hardened in heart, you are proud in spirit, you are just the opposite of everything that is good, and therefore you cannot hear my word," saith Christ; "and this is proof positive that you do not love God, and that you are not the children of God."

John 8:44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

Remember from whose lips these words fell, even from the lips of the gentle Jesus. Honest speech is the surest token of a loving heart; but, nowadays, if a man preaches the truth plainly and faithfully, men say that he is hard and unkind; but if a man glosses over the truth, and alters it according to his own idea of what will please men, then they say, "He is a kindly-disposed and large-hearted man." I should be disposed to doubt whether he has any heart at all, if he will sooner see sinners damned than offend them by proclaiming the truth. I thank God that some of us care little about offending those who offend God. If men will not yield themselves unto the Lord, we want not their friendship, but we will strive to make them uneasy in their rebellion, and if they resolve to be lost, we will at least be clear of their blood.

John 8:44. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Falsehood is his natural element. When Satan deceives, he only acts according to his nature, which is blackened with falsehood through and through.

John 8:45-46. And because I tell you the truth, ye Believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin?

What a grand challenge! None of us can speak like that, except in a very modified sense; but Christ, standing before his enemies, who gnashed their teeth at him, and would have given their eyes to be able to fix some fault upon him, yet boldly says to them, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

John 8:46-51. And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

This statement quite staggered them; yet it is true. To believers,— It is not death to die; they simply pass out of this world into a larger and yet more glorious life. They descend not to death, but they rise to immortality.

John 8:52-53. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

"What dost thou pretend to be? Someone greater than Abraham and the prophets?"



John 8:54-56. Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is our God: yet ye have not knownt him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham —

“As ye call him “—

John 8:56-57. Rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

They allowed a wide margin in specking of our Saviour's age, for he was only thirty-three years old. It may be true that the sorrows of his life had so marred his countenance that he looked more like a man of fifty than one of three-and-thirty. I cannot tell, nor do I know whether that is what they meant; but it is singular that they should have said to him, “Thou art not yet fifty years old.”

John 8:58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

They had asked him, “Whom makest thou thyself?” and now they have his answer: “Before Abraham was, I am,” saith Christ. It is the very name by which God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush, “I AM.” Yet Jesus takes this title to himself: “Before Abraham was,” — not, “I was;” notice that; but, “I am;” as if his life was one continued present existence, as indeed it is, for with God there is no past or future, but all things are ever-present to his infinite mind. When Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” he claimed the Godhead, he declared that he was certainly God, self-existent from all eternity.

John 8:59. Then took they up stones to cast at him:

They counted him a blasphemer, and so he was if he was not all he claimed to be. I have heard of some who reverence Christ, but do not believe him to be God; but how can that be? He evidently made himself out to be God, and this was the great charge the Jews brought against him. For this, indeed, they put him to death, because he made himself equal with God. If he was not equal with God,— if he was not really God,— he led men to think that he was; and if this was false, it was a great sin not consistent with the holy character of Christ. If he was not God, he was the grossest impostor who ever visited this world. But he was God, and nothing less; yet because he claimed this, the Jews took up stones to cast at him.

John 8:59. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Glory be to his holy name for ever and ever!

We will read, from the Revised Version, two passages which record attempts made to kill our Lord before his time had come. You will see, from the sermon, why we read them. (See Luk 4:16-30)

John 8:37-59. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God. The Jews answered and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me. But I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death. The Jews said unto him,

Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me of whom ye say, that he is your God; and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:16-30; and John 8:37-59. (R.V.)

## John 9 Commentary

John 9:1-7. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way before, and washed, and came seeing.

I will not say anything now about this miracle, as it will form the subject of my discourse.

This exposition consisted of readings from Mar 10:46-52; and John 9:1-7.

John 9:1-3. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:

That is to say, their sin was not the cause of his blindness.

John 9:3-14. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

This gracious act of Christ was made another occasion of complaint on the part of the Pharisees, and it is the sixth instance in which we are very specially and definitely informed that our Lord Jesus Christ wrought miracles of healing on the Sabbath-day. Oh, that he would do similar works in our midst even now in a spiritual sense, if not literally!

This exposition consisted of readings from Luk 4:33-36; Luk 6:6-11; Luk 13:10-17; Luk 14:1-6; John 5:1-9; ND 9:1-14.

John 9:1-2. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind

Christ's disciples were often inquisitive even when their Master was bent upon giving proofs of his practical benevolence. Fools may sometimes ask questions which wise men may not think it proper to answer; but on this occasion, our Saviour gave an answer to

the enquiry which his disciples had put to him.

John 9:3-4. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents : but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Think of our Lord being under the necessity of working: "I must work." Men say that "Must is for the king;" but here is the King of kings declaring that work is, by the most urgent necessity, laid upon him; so will not you, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, come under this divine necessity? Will not you feel that you also must be doing all you can for your Divine Lord and Master?

John 9:5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

While Christ was here on earth, he was the great Light-Giver, and he is still the great Light-Giver; and now that his visible presence has been withdrawn from the world, his people are to be "the light of the world" by reflecting the light they have received from him. In such works as you will be unable to perform after death, you are now to give light to the sons of men.

John 9:6-9. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing. The neighbours therefore. and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged ? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

"There is no mistake about this; I know that I am that man."

John 9:10-11. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said,—

In his own quick, clear, intelligent way, for he was a man who evidently had twice as many eyes in his brain as other people had, even while he had none with which he could see: "He answered and said,"—

John 9:11-14. A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash : and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

You may be sure that the Pharisees would be in high dudgeon because Christ did that; for, according to their stupid superstition, to make clay with spittle was a kind of brick-making which must not be done on the Sabbath-day, and they would, for that reason, condemn Christ as a breaker of the Sabbath.

John 9:15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Now that he has to deal with Pharisees, he will not waste a word upon them. The more often he tells the story, the shorter it becomes. That is not the usual rule with stories; they generally grow like snowballs as they roll along until, at last, you would hardly recognize the original story. So much has been added to it as it has been told again and again. But this honest, straightforward man cuts the story down to the barest details, and yet tells it well.

John 9:16-17. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such Miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

He felt that he could safely go as far as that, for Jesus could not have wrought such a miracle as that if he had not been a prophet

sent by God.

John 9:18-21. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

These parents, though in humble life, were evidently, like their son, sharp and shrewd; so they referred the question to the one who knew how to answer it.

John 9:22-24. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him,—

They wanted to see if they could catch him in his talk; so they said to him, in a very pious fashion:—

John 9:24. Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

Dear me what wonderful “knowledge” those Pharisees had!

John 9:25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

There was no driving him out of that stronghold. That which is a matter of our own personal experience is a thing about which we may well feel positively certain. I wish we had more Christian people firmly established in their faith because it is a matter of deep, heartfelt, personal experience with them. I like to meet a man who can say, “I am willing to yield to opponents upon certain points concerning which I am not quite sure; but the fact of the efficacy of the gospel of God’s grace, the power of the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse the heart and conscience, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit within the soul,—all these are truths which I cannot and will not yield. Like this man, I can say, ‘One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.’”

John 9:26-27. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

He carried the war into the enemy’s camp, as well he might.

John 9:28. Then they reviled him,—

That is an unprincipled lawyer’s rule,—When you cannot answer the plaintiff’s argument, abuse him. This was the last resort of those who knew that they had a bad case, or no case at all: “Then they reviled him,”—

John 9:28-31. And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners:

The man meant, God does not open blind eyes by the hands of sinners. He does not work miracles to bear witness to the agency of ungodly men.

John 9:31-33. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

Bravo, you who used to be blind! What an irresistible thing truth is, whoever handles it! These Pharisees, keen of intellect, well instructed in the letter of the law, yet crafty, up to their eyes in self-conceit, are like chaff driven before the wind when a plain-speaking man does but handle the truth of the living God. Never be afraid or ashamed to spread the gospel of Christ, my brethren and sisters; nay,—

“Speak his Word, though kings should hear,

Nor yield to sinful shame.”

A beggar with the truth is mightier than priests and princes with a lie.

John 9:34. They answered and said unto him,

What could they say to him ? Nothing but more reviling and abuse.

John 9:34. Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

That is the last argument of all. “We cannot answer him, so let us turn him out!”

John 9:35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him,— Oh, how he

rejoices in finding those that are cast out by the world, or by the self-righteous: “When he had found him,”—

John 9:35-36. He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said,—

Note the humility of the man’s tone, how changed it is from that sharpness, that acerbity to which he had been driven by his enemies: “He answered and said,”—

John 9:36. Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

He is a lamb before Christ though he was a lion before the Pharisees. That is the true Christian character,—gentle, tender, humble, meek, in the presence of the God of mercy, but with no trembling, no giving way in the presence of the adversaries of Christ and his truth.

John 9:37-38. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

He was no Unitarian: “he worshipped him.” And you, beloved, cannot help worshipping him who has opened your eyes spiritually. It is those who are still blind who will not worship him; but once let us feel the touch of his light-giving finger, once let us know that he has shed his eternal light into the darkness of our souls, and we shall not be satisfied with the mere verbal avowal of our faith, we shall add to it our reverent adoration, as this man did when he first said, “Lord, I believe;” and then “worshipped him.”

John 9:1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

The man could not see Jesus, but sight came to the man from Jesus. If there are any here who cannot look to Christ as yet, our

prayer is that he may look on them as he looked on this blind man.

John 9:2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Beloved, if you had Christ with you, you could occupy your time better than in asking such questions as this; and I think that, when we go to Holy Scripture, we can do better than pry into things of small practical importance, or even into great mysteries. However, in this case, since the disciples were liable to fall into grave error, our Lord gave them instruction upon the matter that perplexed them.

John 9:3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

In other words, this man is not blind as the result of sin in himself, or in his parents. He is blind in order that God may have a platform for the display of his gracious power in healing him.

John 9:4-5. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Our Saviour felt that he was commissioned as a servant of his Father, sent here to do a certain work, and he must be doing it. It is well for God's servants to feel a holy compulsion. It does not take away from them the freedom of their action, and their delight in the service of God; but still it exercises a powerful influence over a man when he feels, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel;" or when, like the Lord Jesus, he says, "I must work the works of him that sent me." Did the Well-beloved, the Prince of Heaven, come under compulsion? Did he put himself under that "must" which is for the king? Then you and I may well put ourselves under holy bondage for the Lord. Then, do not hinder me; do not tell me that I am too feeble in health; "I must work the works of him that sent me."

John 9:6-7. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Our Lord often works miracles without means, and sometimes with means which appear to be quite inappropriate. It would seem to be more easy to blind a man with clay than to open his eyes with it; and there are some who assert that the gospel plainly spoken would lead men into sin, but it does not. It is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." If you go to work in the name of God, if you put the clay on the sinner's eyes, and bid him go and wash, you will see what will happen.

John 9:8-11. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A Man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Does he not tell his story well? If he had not been a blind man whose eyes had just been opened, he would have exaggerated somewhere or other. I never heard a man tell a tale with absolute correctness; it is not the way of people, they are sure to put in some little item by way of garnishing, for there is a bump of romance in most men's heads; but this shrewd, strictly honest man tells the story briefly, but leaves out no important particular.

John 9:12-15. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

That was short and sweet; and when you have to deal with Pharisees, do not give them much. They are not worth it, and they are sure to misuse it. When he spoke to the common people, he enlarged, and gave them details; but now that he comes to talk to these pragmatists, he cuts it down to as few words as possible.

John 9:16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Yes, and there is a division among the enemies of Christ always; they cannot agree among themselves. If they could always lay their heads together, and agree, they might have greater power; but the Edomites draw their swords against the children of Ammon, and they are sure to slay one another in the long run. There were also some among these Pharisees who had a conscience, men like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; and they asked, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

John 9:17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

He must be a prophet. He could not have worked such a miracle as that if he had been a common man: "He said, He is a prophet."

John 9:18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

You see, John gives to the Pharisees the name which they arrogated to themselves: "we are Jews." But they were not true Jews. They called themselves Jews, and so John speaks of them as "the Jews." It often happens that a certain clique or party will run away with a name which does not belong to them any more than it does to a great many who differ from them very widely. These Pharisees pretended that they would not believe the miracle. It was manifest before their eyes; but yet they would not believe it until they called his parents.

John 9:19-21. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

This was very shrewd on their part; but I think that I must add that it was very cowardly to throw all the testimony on their son. There are some parents who, if their children do right, if they follow Christ, seem to leave them to take care of themselves.

John 9:22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Excommunicated; and they could not bear to be cut off from the respectable society which they had hitherto enjoyed.

John 9:23-24. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

Does it not sound pretty from their Pharisaic lips? Arch hypocrites pretending to teach a man who knew much better than themselves! "We know that this man is a sinner. You did not know it, but we know it and as we know it, and we are doctors, you must believe it."

John 9:25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

He could not be beaten out of that. You cannot argue a man out of an experience of this kind; and if the Lord Jesus Christ has ever opened your eyes, dear friend, nobody can make you doubt that blessed fact.

John 9:26-27. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

He threw a little sarcasm into that last question. The man was a very remarkable person, a simple-hearted, honest man, but withal quite able to hold his own in any company.

John 9:28. Then they reviled him,

It is a bad case, so abuse the plaintiff. There is nothing to be said for our side, so let us abuse the man who has had his eyes opened.

John 9:28-30. And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Does not that manifestation of miraculous power show where he must have come from? Could he have come from anywhere but from God?

John 9:31-33. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

Well argued! The case is proven indeed.

John 9:34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?

Cannot you hear them say it? "A blind beggar, who has just begun to see, 'Dost thou teach us?' — D.D.'s, men who are learned in the law, 'Dost thou teach us?'" Well, brethren, if a man has only one eye, he may teach those who have not any, for the old proverb says, "In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye is king." Yet there is another proverb on this subject, and that is, "In the realm of the blind, the man with one eye gets hanged." That was likely to be the case here; the blind Pharisees could not bear the man who could see. He knew too much for them.

John 9:34-36. And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

He wanted instruction. Christ may have done much for a man, but he may not as yet fully know the Lord. There may be some here tonight upon whom Christ has wrought a great deal, and yet you do not know him as you will know him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

John 9:37-38. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

That is the way with a genuine believer, he worships Christ. Why? Because he believes him to be God. It would be idolatry to worship Christ if he were only man, and Christ would have been an impostor if he had allowed this man to worship him if he had not been God. But he was God; and we, believing him to be God, worship Christ as very God of very God, to whom be praise forever and ever! Amen.

We will first read about one of our Lord's miracles, and then, as many of us will be coming to the communion table, we will read about the Lord's supper.

John 9:1-3. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who



did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:

That is, the sin of the man or of his parents was not the cause of his being blind.

John 9:3. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

What a very blessed way of looking at evil,—as an opportunity for God to manifest the power of his works of grace by getting rid of it! I wish that everyone here would look upon the evil within his own heart in this very hopeful light, and say, “There is something in me for God to conquer. There is some spiritual disease in me for the great Physician to heal. There is space in my poor soul for the Lord himself to work some miracle of mercy.”

John 9:4-7. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when, no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

You notice, brethren, that the disciples wanted to know how the man became blind; but Christ removed his blindness, and gave him sight. I have known a great many puzzle themselves about the origin of evil. Christ did not come to explain that mystery; he came to put an end to evil. That, is an infinitely more practical object than that of speculating about how evil first entered the world, or how it entered any individual soul. He will tell you how to get rid of it. What a blessed way of healing Christ used! He could have spoken, and the man’s eyes would have opened at once. He who said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, in the first creation, could have said the same thing to this blind man, and light would at once have entered his eyes. Instead of that, he chose to use means, and the means did not appear to be very likely to effect the cure. Jesus covered the man’s eyes with clay, and bade him go and wash it off again. Is this the way to give him sight? Yes, Our Lord often uses means that seem to be very unlikely to accomplish his purpose, But he always uses the right means. Often, when he is going to open a man’s eyes spiritually, he first makes him feel more blind than ever he was before in all his life. A sense of deeper darkness hangs over him just before the dawn of eternal day. Perhaps, even this very hour some words of mine, human and imperfect as they must be, may, nevertheless, have the truth in them, just as the clay was made efficacious by the spittle from the Saviour’s blessed mouth; and if so, there will be healing Work wrought among blind hearts tonight. God grant that it may be so!

John 9:8-9. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

There is an end of all question about the matter; he says, “I am the very man.” No one knew this better than he did, and therefore he was the one to say it.

John 9:10-11. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

A very plain story, very well told. It is the story of every soul that gets the eternal light. “Christ told me to believe in him; I did believe in him; and. I received the blessing,” There are not many incidents in the narrative, and there is nothing very romantic; but it is a simple and plain declaration of what Christ had done for him; and, blessed be God, just as sight was given to the blind man, Christ still gives salvation to all who trust him.

“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;

There is life at this moment for thee;

Then look, sinner,—look unto him, and be saved,—

Unto him who was nail'd to the tree.

"It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,

But the blood that atones for the soul:

On him, then, who shed it, believing at once,

Thy weight of iniquities roll.

"But take, with rejoicing, from Jesus at once

The life everlasting he gives:

And know, with assurance, thou never canst die,

Since Jesus, thy righteousness, lives."

John 9:12-14. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Oh, that he would do the same thing, in a spiritual sense, this Sabbath day! On another occasion, when he had wrought a miracle on the Sabbath, and the Jews therefore sought to persecute him, and slay him, he said to them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Sabbath day was often Christ's chief working day; may he make it to be so again now!

John 9:15-17. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight, He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

There was no mistake about that matter in the mind of the man whom he had healed; none but a prophet, mighty in word and deed, could have wrought such a miracle as that.

John 9:18-21. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself.

And so he did. He was one of those people who can speak for themselves; and it is greatly to be wished that many more of those who have been cured by Christ could do the same. He was a conscientious man, who, without fear of offending or any desire to curry favor, spoke out honestly what he knew,—nothing more.

John 9:22-27. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had, agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would

ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

He was a sharp, ready-witted man, who was not to be enticed into making any rash and unguarded statements, he knew what he did know, and he kept to that; and whenever any of you are assailed by the enemies of Christ, you will do well to imitate this man, and neither be abashed by their frowns and sneers, nor yet be too ready to cast your pearls before swine.

John 9:28. Then they reviled him,—

That is the usual way with the men of the world; when they cannot beat a man in argument, they begin to call him bad names: “They reviled him,”—

John 9:28-31. And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners:

That is to say, he does not work miracles by them; he does not hear their prayers, and give them the power to open blind men’s eyes.

John 9:31-33. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

Christ could not have given sight to the blind man if he had not himself come from God. This was good reasoning, and it would have been convincing if the objectors had been willing to be convinced by the truth.

John 9:34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?

“Holy and learned people like us, Pharisees, do you set up to be our teacher?”

John 9:34-38. And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Then was his cure indeed complete. He had seen Christ spiritually as well as naturally, and fell at his feet, and worshipped him as the Son of God.

John 9:39-41. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, if ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 9, and 1Co 10:15-33, and 1Co 11:1.

John 9:1-3. And as Jesus passed by he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

We are not to look upon such afflictions as any indication of special sin on the part either of the person or the parent. Of course, sin

lies at the root of all our suffering as a grit generic fact, but not so that we may attribute such an affliction to any one sin. The disciples, you see, dear friends, are thinking about difficult problems. Their Master is thinking about how, practically, to meet the difficulty, and to this day there are a large number of Christians, professors, and even ministers, who occupy their time about questions which really are to no profit. If they could be answered, nobody would be the holier or the better. What does it matter to us what is the origin of evil? Far more important to turn the evil out than it is to find out how it came in. Very frequently, you know, after there is a terrible calamity or accident, we have an inquiry as to how it was done, and then we think the thing is all attended too. It would have been better, perhaps, to have an inquiry, before it was done, as to how it could be prevented. Our Lord has that wisdom — that practicalness. He begins to deal with the evil rather than to raise questions about it. Yes, and he sees in that evil a good coming out of it. He says that this man was blind, that the works of God might be made manifest in him

John 9:4-7. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto, him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Our Lord used instrumentality. It did not appear, however, to be very likely to achieve his purpose. The clay seemed more likely to blind than to give sight, yet if the Lord chooses to use the poor and weak instruments that seem nothing better than dust and spittle, he has the glory of the grand result. If he takes the humble ministry of his servants and uses it in the pulpit, or in the Sunday School, or anywhere else, he has all the more glory, and is the less likely to be robbed of it because he uses such unlikely means.

John 9:8-9. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was, blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he:

We are sure of it.

John 9:9. Others said, He is like him:

They were cautious bodies.

John 9:9. But he said, I am he.

He knew there was no mistaking his witness.

John 9:10-11. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Very straightforward, very concise, very accurate, and when we make answer about our conversion, it is always well to take this for a copy —not too many flourishes, no coloring. He even leaves out about the spittle, but he gives it all as he can recollect it; so when you are talking about the Lord's love to you, and his way of converting you, it is quite sufficiently remarkable, without any touch of rouge. Let it be given just as it is.

John 9:12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said I know not.

Enough for him to know what he did know — that his eyes were opened, and how it was done. So sometimes I have known persons come upon the new convert with a question which has rather baffled him, and he has been troubled, because he could not answer it. Do not let it trouble you. You are not expected to know everything. The very best and most honest thing is to say, "I know not"

John 9:13-14. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

So you may be sure that the Pharisees would be down upon him for that, because, according to the Rabbis, the making of the clay to put upon this man's eyes would be a kind of brick-making, and they would bring him in guilty of brick-making directly. So did these men pervert things and make men guilty where no offence had been committed whatsoever.

John 9:15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

He is shorter with them. Some tales grow in telling. His gets shorter.

Besides, he has to deal with captious people; and then the least said the soonest mended; and this shrewd man thought so.

John 9:16-17. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

He could see that.

John 9:18-24. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

How piously these Pharisees can talk; and generally in the name of God all sorts of mischief begin. When men are persecuting the Son of God, yet still they take the name of God upon their lips. Did they not burn the martyrs to the glory of God? Oh! yes, and so did these men thus slander Christ by saying, "We know that this man is a sinner," and yet they spoke about giving God praise.

John 9:25. He

Our shrewd friend of the opened eyes.

John 9:25-27. Answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them. I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

The man is sharp, acute, cutting.

John 9:28-29. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

The word "fellow" is supplied by the translators. There is no such word there, because they did not know a word bad enough with which to express their scorn.

John 9:30-33. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and

yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

He proves; he administrates. The thing is as clear as possible, and yet they refuse to see it.

John 9:34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins,

It is the old rule, "Abuse the plaintiff." Nothing could be said. Now abuse the man. He has answered you, and his arguments are too hard for you. Now throw hard words at him. "Thou wast altogether born in sins."

John 9:34. And dost thou teach us?

Wonderful, that "us." "Dost thou teach us?" Folly, ignorance, and pride go together. This man, in the simplest and most unaffected manner, had told his tale and urged his argument, and now they abuse him and exalt themselves. "Dost thou teach us?" No, great Pharisees, he does not teach you, for you will not learn.

John 9:34. And they cast him out.

That is the last argument. Out with him. Now we have defeated him.

John 9:35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him,

What a blessed thing to be cast out, if Christ finds us! Many and many have been put out of the synagogue and treated with contempt, but then outside Jerusalem they found their Lord, for there he died without the camp, and his people need not be ashamed to go after him bearing his reproach.

"When he had found him."

John 9:35-38. He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him. Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

He does not appear to have been a Unitarian, therefore; and if those persons had their eyes opened, they would do the same. "He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."

John 9:39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

Christ is the turner of the tables. Did not the virgin mother sing, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and he hath exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away"? So he ever does.

John 9:41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind,

Really could not see.

John 9:41. Ye should have no sin;

If you really did not know better, were totally and altogether without knowledge — then you would have no sin compared with what you now have.

John 9:41. But now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

You acknowledge that you have sinned with your eyes open, and,

therefore, your sin is all the greater.

John 9:1-2. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth, And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

The procedure of these disciples is very much like that of many people in these days; they are much more ready to ask questions about sufferers than they are to sympathize with them. If the hearts of the disciples had been in a right condition when they saw this blind man, they would have said, “Lord, cannot this poor man’s eyes be opened?” But, instead of risking like that, they were full of idle curiosity, which prompted them to raise metaphysical difficulties, and to ask foolish questions. So they wanted to know how it was that the man came to be born blind. Was it in consequence of some sin on the part of his parents, or through some sin of his own in a previous state of existence, (for some of them seem to have had even that foolish notion,) or was it because of some sin of his, which God foresaw that he would commit, and therefore laid this affliction upon him from the hour of his birth?

John 9:3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

That is to say, this blindness was not the result of special sin in any individual, but God intended that his works of mercy and of grace should be manifested through his affliction. It is a cruel thing when every form of malady or disease is traced to some fault in the person who has to suffer from it. This is infamous; I had almost said infernal; for Satan himself could hardly devise a more false and wicked thing than to say that, because a man is a special sufferer, therefore he must have been a special sinner. It is not so; for, often, some of God’s truest children — some of those who live nearest to him — are those who keep the night watches through pain, or they are bedridden from year to year, or are deprived of some of their limbs, or in some other way are full of suffering. This is in order that, in their case also, the works of God should be manifest in them as they were in this poor blind man.

John 9:4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:

“I have no time to go into these questions with you, merely to satisfy your curiosity. ‘While it is day,’ I must go on with the work which I was sent into the world to do.”

John 9:4-7. The night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

There was no long discourse to be delivered while this poor man was waiting to see what would happen to him. Our Lord spoke just a few words to his disciples, and then went at once to the miracle he intended to perform. “When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.” Our Saviour sometimes works without means, at other times by means, and occasionally he uses means which at first sight appear not to be the best to produce the designed result. To put clay on a blind man’s eyes, does not seem a very likely operation for giving him sight. And, oh! dear friends, when God uses us as his instruments, and makes us to be like this clay upon the poor blind man’s eyes, I am sure that there is much about us that might make us feel as if we should rather hinder than help; and when we do the best we can, what is there in us that is of any value? I think I once saw the pen with which Milton was said to have written part of Paradise Lost.

Poor pen! It could not remember the great poet, could it? Yet, he had used it to noble purpose. As I looked at it, I did not think of ascribing a single stanza of that matchless poem to the pen with which Milton wrote. So, beloved, we are the pens that the Lord uses when he means to write his messages of grace upon the hearts of saints and sinners; but we are such poor pens, such feeble instruments to be held in his hand, that we wonder he can ever make use of us. This blind man did exactly as he was bidden to do. What a blessing it was for him that he received the clay on his eyes, and simply went and washed it off again as the Saviour bade him! That was all he had to do, and then he came back seeing clearly. Oh, if sinners were only attentive to gospel directions, and then were obedient to them, without adding to them or taking from them, how many more blind eyes would be very speedily opened, and how greatly would Christ be glorified!

John 9:8-9. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

With that downright simplicity and shrewdness which marked his whole character, the man said, "I am he." He did not go beating about the bush at all, but he straightway acknowledged that he was the man of whom they were speaking.

John 9:10-11. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.

I admire the brevity of his statement, the boldness of it, and the simple naiveté of it. The way in which he told the story did not embellish it in the least degree; in fact, it could not have been embellished without spoiling it. And when you, dear friends, are giving an account of your own conversion, describing the way in which salvation became yours, tell it as simply and plainly as ever you can. It will never be so well adorned as when it appears in its own naked simplicity and beauty. I commend this man's example to all of you who have to give your testimony before you are admitted as members of the church; when speaking of your conversion, put the narrative in as plain and simple a form as this man adopted.

John 9:12-14. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

Therefore, this act of Christ would be something horrible in the eyes of the Pharisees. They would make out that Christ, when he made the clay, had turned brickmaker on the Sabbath day, thus violating the traditions of the fathers, just as, on another occasion, they said that he allowed his disciples to go threshing on the Sabbath, when they gathered ears of corn in the field, rubbed them between their hands, and ate the grain because they were hungry. The Rabbis regarded that as an act of threshing, and a very serious violation of the law; and now that Jesus had himself made clay, and opened a man's eyes with it, they held up their hands in holy horror, —nay, in impious horror, — that Christ should do such a thing on the Sabbath.

John 9:15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

He makes his story shorter as he goes on telling it. These people were unworthy of the words he spoke to them, and therefore he gave them as few as possible.

John 9:16-17. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

That was as much as he then knew. By thoughtful consideration, he had come as far as to know that Jesus must be a prophet.

John 9:18-21. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he



now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

They also were shrewd. They did not wish to get themselves into trouble, and therefore they said as little as they could, and referred the Pharisees to their son, who was quite able to answer them.

John 9:22-24. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

They thought that they could smooth the man over, so that he would say no more. "We know — we who know everything, we who are the rulers and teachers of the people, — we know that this man is a sinner." That might have closed the mouths of many men; but, on that occasion, they had before them a person who could not easily be made to believe all they chose to say, — a sharp, shrewd man, who had keener eyes in his head, even when he was blind, than they had while they could see.

John 9:25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

"About that point, I am perfectly certain, whatever question there may be concerning anything else."

John 9:26-28. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

Then they reviled him, —As they could not answer him, they reviled him. It is the old plan which is still followed by certain lawyers, "No case; therefore abuse the plaintiff." "They reviled him," —

John 9:28-29. And said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: As for this —

They did not say "fellow," because they meant something worse than that, something which they could not express: "As for this — "

John 9:29-30. We know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

They were the gentlemen who said, "We know," and they wanted, a little while before, to silence him by parading their superior knowledge; so now he turns upon them, and says, "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

John 9:31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners:

He meant men who are living in known sin, impostors and deceivers. Of course, God would not hear sinners of that stamp.

John 9:31-33. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

This was bravely spoken. The man did not, at that time, know the Godhead of the Saviour, but he felt that he must have come from God, that he was one of God's servants, or messengers, or prophets, therefore he avowed what he knew. Dear friends, always act up to the light you have enjoyed. If you have starlight, thank God for it, and own it before men, for then he will give you moonlight; and if you have moonlight, walk by it, thank God for it, and own it, and he will give you sunlight; and when you have sunlight, walk in it, and so, one of these days, you will come to that light which is as the light of seven days, the light of God himself.

John 9:34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?

Their dignity was touched; their superlative wisdom lifted them so much above this poor man that they said, with the utmost disdain, "Dost thou teach us?"

John 9:34-35. And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out;

Oh! if there are any of you who are suffering persecution for Christ's sake, who have been cast out of any company because of what he has done for you, I do not think you need any sweeter comfort than this one line: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out;"

John 9:35-37. And when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

I scarcely remember that, up to this time, the Lord Jesus had given such a manifestation of himself to anyone except to the Samaritan woman at the well. When she mentioned the Messiah, he said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he;" and here he reveals himself to this man as the Son of God, which was somewhat more than that woman probably meant by the term "Messias."

John 9:38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

Which proves that the man was not a Unitarian. "He worshipped him" who had opened his eyes, and we also will worship him for ever and ever, blessed be his holy name!

John 9:39-41. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth. It would have been better for them if they had known their blindness, and applied to him who could give them sight, and forgive their sin.

John 9:1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

Therefore the man could not see Jesus, but the more important matter was that Christ could see the blind man. And you, dear heart, may not yet have learned to look on Christ, but he can look on you in your blindness, and a look from him will speedily work a wondrous change in you.

John 9:2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Many of Christ's disciples are still occupied in asking questions that serve no practical purpose, like this one, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

John 9:3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:

That is to say, sin on their part was not the cause of his blindness.

John 9:3. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him

Human nature is a platform for the manifestation of divine work. The more in need you are, dear friend, the more room there is for God's mercy to operate upon you.

John 9:4-7. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

Christ used very simple means to cure this man's blindness, very unlikely means, apparently, to produce the desired effect. It might have seemed, indeed, that the man would have been worse in the dark than ever when his eyes were plastered over with clay, yet the Lord chose to work in that way.

And so, when the poor preacher feels as if he was nothing and nobody, and that his agency may rather hinder his Master's work than help him yet still his Lord can work through his weakness, and get to himself glory notwithstanding his servant's infirmities.

John 9:8-9. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

"There is no question about my identity, I am the same man whom you have seen sitting and begging, and I now come before you with my sight fully restored."

John 9:10-11. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, a man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

It was only a short story, but it was very sweet to him, and he told it with no excess of detail, but with all its salient points. He was a sharp, shrewd man of few words, but those few words were weighty. Friend when thou tellest the story of Christ and his love to thee, do not embellish it with flowers of speech. There is enough in what Christ has done to make it shine without any fine words of thine. The beauty of Christ's work is such that it is most adorned when unadorned.

John 9:12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

There are a good many things concerning Christ which you may not know, but if you know that he has opened your eyes, you may be well content with the knowledge of that until he shall be pleased to reveal more about himself to you.

John 9:13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

I am sure that this was a very distressing sight to them, for there was nothing that ever grieved their hearts more than for Christ's power to be displayed. They did not want to see the blind man whose eyes Christ had opened; if the miracle brought Christ any glory, it brought them just so much misery.

John 9:14-15. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight.

That seemed to be the principal question with them; they always wanted to know the manner in which Christ's cures were wrought.

John 9:15. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

That is shorter than his previous account of the miracle. When Pharisees ask a carping question, the shorter the answer the better; it

is a pity to cast pearls before swine.

John 9:16-17. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes! He said, He is a prophet.

He was a brave man, who dared to say what he believed whether he offended or pleased. He did not know much, but what he did know he did know, and he was quite certain about it. There are some men whose breadth of knowledge is as remarkable as its shallowness. It is like water upon the meadows when a river overflows its banks, and covers a wide area, but there is scarcely an inch of depth. Give us the narrower river that is deep, and that can bear onwards to the ocean a noble fleet, rather than the wide expanse of useless, shallow water.

John 9:18-21. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

They were timid, but they were also shrewd enough to let their son speak for himself, as he was quite able to do.

John 9:22-24. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

They thought they could get over him by giving him a little of what they called good advice: "Praise God, but be quiet concerning this man; depend upon it, he is a sinner."

John 9:25-28. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciple? Then they reviled him, —

Of course, that is the usual way with those who are in the wrong. Abuse the plaintiff when you cannot answer his case. "Then they reviled him," —

John 9:28-30. And said, Thou art his disciple but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Where could he have come from but from God? Who could have wrought such a miracle unless he had been sent from God?

John 9:31-33. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

That was very forcibly spoken. Oh, that all of us, whose eyes Christ has opened, would speak for him as bravely as this man did! Our cure has been quite as clear and quite as notable as his was, so let us not be ashamed to testify for him before gainsayers and opposers.

John 9:34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?

“Such learned men as we are, with such culture and such penetration as we have, ‘dost thou teach us?’”

John 9:34. And they cast him out.

It was a great mercy for him that they did excommunicate him, one of the greatest blessings that could come to him was that of being cast out of the synagogue, and being cast out of the society of such men as those Pharisees were.

John 9:35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; —

Jesus knew all that had happened to this man, but someone probably related the story to him; and our Lord knows all about each one of us, and he knows whether anyone here is suffering for his sake or for the truth’s sake. Jesus knew that they had cast him out; —

John 9:35. And when he had found him, —

For he always finds those whom the world or false professors have cast out, —

John 9:35-36. He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

He was a sensible man, and he had the sense to perceive that knowledge rightly used leads to faith. He desired to know in order that he might believe; and if you ever say that you cannot believe, but are anxious to do so, then make enquiry as to what is to be believed, examine the evidence concerning it, and so faith will come to you by the operation of God’s good Spirit.

John 9:37-40. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

“Are we blind?” It seemed impossible to them that it could be so. Jesus answered them with scathing words: —

John 9:41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

“If what you have done had been done in utter ignorance, you would have been comparatively guiltless; but you have sinned against light and knowledge, with a most determined antipathy to the grace of God, and therefore your sin remaineth in all its scarlet hue to condemn you.”

## John 10 Commentary

John 10:1-2. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

The true Shepherd cares for the flock, the false ones are thieves and robbers who only care for the flesh or the fleece.

John 10:3. To him the porter openeth and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

John the Baptist was the porter who opened the door of Christ's earthly ministry by bearing witness that he was the Son of God.

John 10:4-5. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Christ is the great Leader of his people, and they will never go astray so long as they follow him. The sheep of Christ recognize their Shepherd's voice, and come at his call; but "strangers" call to them in vain.

John 10:6-7. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

No one metaphor can fully describe our glorious Lord, for he is both Shepherd and Door to the sheep, and all else that they need.

"O my Saviour! Shield and Sun,

Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend, —

Every precious name in one,

I will love thee without end."

John 10:8-10. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

The thief came to take away life, but Christ came to give life, and that abundant life which shall last for ever and ever; but see what it cost him to give that life: —

John 10:11-13. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Just now the contrast was between the Shepherd and the thief. Here it is between the Shepherd and the hireling. The hireling cares for himself; the Shepherd cares for the sheep and provides for them and cares for them even at the cost of his life.

John 10:14-15. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

There is mutual knowledge between the Shepherd and the sheep, and between the Father and the Son.

John 10:16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Or, more correctly, "one flock, one Shepherd." The flock would never be complete without those "other sheep" which the Shepherd says he must bring into the fold, and which he says shall hear his voice. Not one of them will be missing in the day when they pass

again under the hand of him that telleth them.

John 10:17-18. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

The voluntariness of Christ's sacrifice is its glory, and well may his Father love him because of it; and well may we, who are eternally to benefit by his death, also love him.

John 10:1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

The positiveness of our Lord's teaching is noteworthy. Whatever may be said about dogmatical teaching now, it is certain that his teaching is of that character. He does not raise questions, but he solves them. He does not suggest probabilities, but he declares certainties. This might be taken as the key-word to all the Saviour's teaching, "Verily, verily." He makes a strong asseveration; he speaks as one having authority, not as the scribes who only claimed to have authority, but as the Sent One of the Father who really has it: "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Whatever comes to us with the imprimatur of the "Verily, verily," of the Son of God is not to be questioned or doubted by us for a single moment. "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Christ himself did enter by the door. He came according to the ancient types, and symbols, and prophecies. He came as God said that he would come. He entered by the door. There is no irregularity about Christ's office as the Shepherd of his sheep. It is confirmed to him by the sanction of the Holy Ghost. The witness of the Father is borne to him: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." We rejoice to think that Jesus our Saviour is also Christ the Anointed. He is Jesus to us, but he is the Anointed of the Father. He comes by right as the appointed Shepherd of the sheep entering in by the door.

John 10:2-3. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth;-To him

John the Baptist, as the porter, opened the door. He pointed to him, and said "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And every God-sent minister is a porter to Christ, opening the door to him; that is our office, — to stand and open the door that Christ may come forth among you, and that you may come in to him, and find the spiritual pasture on which your souls can feed. "To him the porter openeth;" —

John 10:3. And the sheep hear his voice:

Those who are really chosen of God hear and heed the voice of Christ but those who are not Christ's chosen ones will not heed his discourse, but will listen to the many voices which attract the ears and the hearts of sinful men. The elect of God are known by this mark, that they hear the voice of Christ. Just as you can find out, in a heap of ashes, whether there are any pieces of steel there by simply thrusting in a magnet so can you find out God's chosen people by the mighty magnet of Christ's voice.

John 10:3. And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Sometimes he leads them out from the midst of the world's flocks, and sometimes he calls them by name when they are in his fold, and leads them out to even higher and better pastures, calls them and leads them out to higher truths than they have before received.

John 10:4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, —

Christ never drives his sheep, he leads them. As the Eastern shepherd always goes before his sheep, so does the Saviour go before his flock: "He goeth before them," —

John 10:4. And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Christ's sheep are marked in various ways. They are marked on the foot:

"the sheep follow him." And they are marked in the ear, "for they know his voice." They follow the track of their Shepherd, and they give heed to the voice of their Shepherd; and by these tokens they are known to be his sheep.

John 10:5. And a stranger will they not follow, —

There are strangers constantly coming into our different churches. We know they are strangers, for they preach strange doctrines, and do not keep to the old paths. Those that are not Christ's sheep follow them directly. "Here is a very clever man," say they, and off they go after him; but of God's elect it is written, "A stranger will they not follow," —

John 10:5. But will flee from him: —

They are frightened at the very sight of him. They cannot tell what deadly pasture he is preparing for them, so they "flee from him," —

John 10:5. For they know not the voice of strangers.

They know the voice of their Shepherd, but they know not the voice of strangers, so they flee from them.

John 10:6. This parable spake Jesus unto them but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

They thus proved that they were not his sheep, for they did not understand his words.

John 10:7-8. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

There were many false christs that rose up before Jesus Christ appeared, and there were many persons who followed those false christs, "but the sheep did not hear them." They still waited with holy Anna, with patient Simeon, and the rest of the faithful who waited for the appearing of the true Shepherd, and were not misled by the pretenders who were only "thieves and robbers."

John 10:9. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Christ is the door just as truly as he is the shepherd, and as he is everything that is needful and good for his people. If I come to Christ, I must come to him by Christ. Any of us who will but enter in by Christ, who is the door of his Church, shall find salvation, and more than that, we shall find liberty, for we "shall go in and out." Our daily pathway shall be a safe one, and we shall have abundant supplies for all our daily needs. We "shall go in and out and find pasture."

John 10:10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I trust that the first purpose of Christ's coming has been fulfilled to many of us, for we "have life" through him, but ought we not to be encouraged to hope that we may reach a higher standard of that life, and so have it more abundantly? We do not want to have just enough life to enable us to breathe, but we want life enough for usefulness, for joy, for triumph, for likeness to Christ, for communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.



John 10:11-13. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Christ is the good Shepherd, and therefore he never fled as the hireling fleeth. He cared for the sheep, for they were his own. The wolf might come, but the good Shepherd was ready to meet him. He would not have his sheep scattered, but he would gather them in the cloudy and dark day, and in every time of danger he would be the center around which they might rally.

John 10:14-15. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Our translators have spoilt this passage by putting a full stop where there should not be one, and by breaking it into two verses. It should run thus: "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." Christ here sets forth the intimate knowledge that there is between himself and all his people, — as much as there is between the Father and the Son. It is wonderful teaching, full of depth and spiritual power. As the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father, so certainly does Christ know his Church, and his Church knows him, or shall do so in the future.

John 10:16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: —

They are of this flock, but they are not of this fold. The flock is divided, and lies down in different fields for the present: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold:" —

John 10:16-18. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.

Christ's death was to be the act of his own free will, as well as of the violence of wicked men.

John 10:18-21. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

Christ's sayings always cause a division between those who hear them. There must always be two opinions, just as there are some who are his sheep and some who are not. When you go and try to speak for Christ, do not be at all astonished if people ridicule you. What did they say of the Master himself? "He hath a devil, and is mad." They will not say any thing worse than that of you. And when they have said it, what does it matter? Hard words break no bones. So have courage enough to bear opposition, and you may, like your Master, yet find some who will defend you, for there may be those who will say, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil."

John 10:22-26. And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jesus round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

"You are not my chosen people; there has been no work of grace in your hearts, and therefore you do not believe." What a brave way that was of putting the truth." Some would have said, "Because you do not believe, you are not my sheep;" but Jesus puts it the other way, "Because you are not my sheep, therefore you do not believe."

John 10:27-30. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

This great truth angered the Jews so much that they "took up stones again to stone him." They proved, by thus treating the good Shepherd, that they were not his sheep.

John 10:1. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Now we may be absolutely certain that there is something of the utmost importance wherever Christ uses the solemn asseveration of "Verily, verily," — the same word is "Amen, amen" and it has been well observed that if it were not for Christ's "Amens," our "Amens" would be of little value. It is because he who is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, pleads in heaven that our "Amens" are accepted there. If, dear friends, Christ pays an earnest attention to our "Amens," how much more ought we to attend to his, specially when he doubles them — "Amen, amen, I say unto you."

John 10:1-3. He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Here the people of God are compared to sheep. Their harmlessness and gentle character, their feebleness and quiet in the fold, their profitable uses, their defenseless state, requiring some one always to watch over them, the patience with which they are led to the shearer or to the slaughter, and the constancy with which they are associated with sacrifice, render sheep a most excellent symbol of the people of God. Doubtless the fold is the Church, within this fold all the saints of God are gathered, not always in the visible, but always in the invisible and indivisible Church of Christ. None may set up to be shepherds of this fold except those who come in a proper and fitting way, and that is not by a pretended apostolical descent, that is, not by a commission which they have received from their own assumption, but by a commission direct from Christ — coming in through him as by the door. The great true Shepherd, the antitype of all shepherds is Christ himself. To him the porter openeth. All the prophecies, which, like porters, kept the gates, opened at once to Christ; all godly hearts, which, like the porters of the gate, were watching for the coming of the true Shepherd, opened at once to Jesus; whether it were Anna or Simeon, they at once confessed him. The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. We are told by Eastern travelers that in the large district folds into which the sheep-farmers put their different flocks, while they are all assembled in one common flock, the shepherd of any one flock has but to make his appearance and begin to speak, and his sheep at once recognize him. Though another person should dress up in his garments they would take no notice of him; they know their shepherd by his voice.

John 10:4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

The genius of the law is driving; the spirit of the Gospel is leading, and the joyful imitation follows.

John 10:5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Heretics attract their companies, but the faithful followers of Christ never go after them. They cleave to the truth, which is the voice of Christ, and they will not be persuaded by the most marvelous lying wonders, nor by the greatest arrogance, to depart from him who is their all.

John 10:6-8. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto ye, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

They made loud professions of being the true Messias, and some of them gathered great multitudes, and rebelled against the Roman power, but the true sheep, who waited for the true Shepherd, did not hear them.

John 10:9-14. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

This good Shepherd proves himself to be so by his actions. Remember, brethren, how carefully he watches his sheep from the tower of the flock, not one of them ever being absent from his eye for a single moment. How graciously he guides those sheep, leading them always by a right way that he may bring them to safety at the last. How plentifully doth he pasture his flock, making them to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. And oh! how gloriously doth he defend his flock, dashing into the thickest of their foes, snatching the lamb out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paw of the bear. And we must not conclude this list of his deeds without remembering how readily he hath bought that flock, and how well he hath washed that flock, in blood flowing from his own veins, that he might present them all at the last, not one of them being wanting, nor one of them impure, but each of them like sheep that come up fresh from the washing. "I know my sheep." It is not as if salvation was left to haphazard. He knew them before they were created. Having foreordained he did foreknow. He knew them when they did not know themselves, when they were wallowing in the mire like swine, he knew them still. He knows them now — unknown to fame, unregistered, perhaps, in the books of the visible Church "I know my sheep wherever they may be." Then notice the next sentence, for this is the practical way by which you may judge whether you are his or not: "I am known of mine." They know him as their only hope and trust, they know the sweetness of fellowship with him. They know the power of his arm, the efficacy of his blood, the faithfulness of his heart. They know the preciousness of his cross, and the glory of his crown.

John 10:15-16. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

No recognition of free-will here. Christ speaks as one who has the hearts of men in his control. He knows who are his that as yet are not called. He does not say he hopes they will yield to hear his voice, but they shall. Oh, irresistible grace, what can stand against thee? The blood-bought shall all be blood-washed; the foreordained and foreknown shall yet know him who hath saved them by his blood. In this we ought constantly to rejoice. The feebleness of the minister is no barrier to the carrying out of God's purpose, nor is the hardness of the human heart any impediment to the completion of the divine decree. "Them also must I bring." There is a heavenly necessity that all the chosen should be saved.

John 10:17; John 10:26. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the work that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

Believing does not make them sheep, but being sheep by divine election proves them to be such.

John 10:27-30. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

Happy are they, then, who have received the character of sheep, for thus they prove themselves to be the chosen of God, and in the hand of Christ, and in his Father's grasp, they are eternally secure.

"If in my Father's love,

I share a filial part.

Send down thy Spirit like a dove

To rest upon my heart."

This exposition consisted of readings from John 10:1-30 and Heb 1:1-14.

## John 11 Commentary

John 11:1. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

In God's book, towns are most remarkable for saints that dwell in them. "The town of Mary and her sister Martha." A day will come when a city shall be more illustrious for a saint than for a Caesar — be more renowned for deeds of faith than for deeds of battle. It was "the town of Mary and her sister Martha."

John 11:2-3. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick). Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

They did not say anymore. They felt that it was quite enough to tell him that Lazarus was sick, and they left it to the tender heart of Jesus to do whatever seemed good in his sight. Some prayers would be all the better if they were shorter — all the better if they did not so much declare our own will as declare our confidence in the good will of Christ. I like the omissions of Martha's and Mary's prayer.

John 11:4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Our Saviour sneaks in a different style from us. He should have said that the sickness was unto death, but, ultimately, to the glory of God. But he who sees the end from the beginning streaks with a grandeur of style which could not be imitated by us. So the Lord speaks of things, not as they seem to be, nor even as they are in the present moment, but as they shall be in the long run. "Not unto death, but that the Son of God might be glorified."

John 11:5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Yet Lazarus died. Jesus loved Lazarus, yet Lazarus was sick. Jesus was not of that cruel sort of people, of whom we have some in these days, who call themselves saints, and who attribute all sickness among God's people to their sin or to their want of faith. Not he. Here was one that was sick, but Jesus loved him just as much for all that.

John 11:6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Notice the connection. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"; and yet when he had heard that Lazarus was sick, "he abode two days still in the same place where he was." Sometimes true love may think fit to make us wait. It may be the truest love on God's part to let us lie sick, and not to come post-haste to us to make us well. Ay, the truest love may demand that the sickness should turn to death, for out of the death he may bring the greater glory. The Lord acts not upon the scale of man, for he sees not as man sees. He sees the end as well as the beginning.

John 11:7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

— and that because he loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. If that love in its wisdom made him tarry, yet that love in its sincerity at last moved him to seek the house of grief.

John 11:9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?

Is there not a time in which the sun will not go down — in which it is safe and right for men to work?

John 11:9-10. If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

There is a singular turn, is there not, in that expression? We expected it to be “Because he seeth not the light of the world,” instead of which the Saviour says, “Because there is no light in him” — because in spiritual things our light not only comes from above, but it shines within; and without that inner light we are sure to stumble.

John 11:11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

It is the Saviour’s way to use terms concerning his miracles, which, so far from exaggerating them, even appear to depreciate them. He is about to raise a man from the dead, but he says, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” I am afraid that our tendency is always to describe our actions in the largest possible terms consistent with truth; perhaps, sometimes forgetting those last words. But the Saviour describes truthfully what he does, but still in terms which, like his humanity, seem to veil the glory. Wonderfully condescending is it of him to speak thus: —

John 11:12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

It is considered to be a sign of getting better when a patient can sleep.

John 11:13-16. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

A singular mixture of faith and unbelief. He so believes his Master that he is willing to die with him. He so doubts him that, although the Saviour had plainly told him that he was immortal till his work was done, yet he is afraid that his Master and all of them will be put to death. Oh, the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves, and the Lord accepts us notwithstanding our infirmities.

John 11:17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

So that he was probably dead as soon as the messengers arrived to tell the Saviour that he was ill.

John 11:18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.

Just a nice little walk which our Saviour had often taken in the evening after the toils of the day in Jerusalem. He had loved to make Bethany his quiet resting-place. “Fifteen furlongs off.”

John 11:19-20. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

Because she had not heard that Jesus was come, or else, no doubt, she would have been there as soon as Martha.

John 11:21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

They had often said to one another, "Oh, we wish the Lord were come." They had sent for him. They felt sure that he would come. But, alas, their brother had died before the Master had arrived; and now this thought which was uppermost in their hearts is uppermost in their speech, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

John 11:22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

There is faith there, and there is unbelief too. She believes that Christ can have what he wills of God, but she does not recognize his own personal Godhead — his own power to work resurrection.

John 11:23-26. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

She looked upon the resurrection and the life as things that were to be in some dim and misty future. "No," says Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life. Not only do I get these things by prayer from God, but I am these things." And then he goes on to explain it. He says, "I am the resurrection. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. I am the life. Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" He has taken her out of the thought of this poor common animal-life into the thought of the spiritual and higher life, which is, indeed, to the soul what the resurrection is to the body. It was well for the Saviour thus to teach her higher truth than as yet she knew.

John 11:1. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

To many people, it may have seemed an event of no particular importance that "a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany," but great consequences often depend upon what appear to us to be very minor matters, and we must not despise the least of the Lord's people, nor think slightly of anything that concerns them. When a king or an emperor is ill, the news is published in all the papers; but when a friend of the Lord Jesus, a man "named Lazarus of Bethany," was sick, that event was recorded in the Bible because of something very remarkable which was to follow that sickness. Lazarus was a son of God, and grace makes greater distinctions than earthly rank and worldly honours ever can make.

John 11:2-3. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

So you see that those whom Jesus loves may be themselves ill, or may have dear ones who are ill; ay, and the illness may be sent by God as a token and testimony of his affection for them. Men polish gems, but they do not take the trouble to polish common pebbles, and God sends affliction to his own beloved ones for their good and for his own glory.

John 11:4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death,-

That was not to be the end of it; God had quite another purpose in view in allowing Lazarus to be sick: "This sickness is not unto death,"-

John 11:4. But for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Jesus knew that Lazarus would die, but he also knew that his death would only be a kind of interlude; the great design of God was not to take Lazarus home at that time, but to glorify his Son in the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Happy was the family at Bethany of which it could be said that all the members of it were dear to Christ. Is it so with your household, Martha? Or is it only Mary who is thus loved? Has Lazarus been left out? Then pray for your brother as these gracious sisters sent to tell Jesus about Lazarus.

John 11:6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

We cannot always understand what our Master does. It seemed a strange thing that, when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stopped where he was, yet there was a good reason for the delay, Christ was waiting in wisdom and in love. I think I see Mary and Martha, day after day wondering where Jesus could be; perhaps thinking hard thoughts of him, and saying, "He loved us, and he loved our brother, why did he not come directly we sent to him?"

John 11:7-10. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Christ felt that his day was not over, and that he could not die before his work was done, and therefore he did not fear the stones cast by unbelieving foes. So, my brother, at all risks go on with your God-given work; you will live through your twelve hours, and you will not live a moment longer. Be so much a believer in predestination that, even if duty calls you to risk your life, you will bravely do it, knowing that you are in the hands of God, and that your life cannot end until your appointed twelve hours have expired.

John 11:11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;-

"Our friend." Why, Lazarus was Christ's friend. Yes; but those who are Christ's friends are our friends too if we belong to Christ. I have recently met with a large number of persons from different countries; but, the moment we discovered that we loved the same Lord, we seemed to be as intimate as if we had been next-door neighbours for the last fifty years.

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;"-

John 11:11-14. But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

Let me remind you, my dear brethren who preach the gospel, that you will have to preach very plainly, for you see that even the apostles could not understand a figure of speech. When Christ said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," they mistook his meaning, so he had to say plainly, "Lazarus is dead." That is how we must preach the gospel; not only so that our hearers can understand it, but so that they cannot misunderstand it.

John 11:15-16. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe, nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Thomas always took a dark view of things, so he thought his Master was going to be killed; but he was a brave disciple, for he said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." There are still many very timid despondent disciples, but they cling to Christ, and, if necessary, they would die for him, as Thomas was willing to die with him. God bless you, Thomas! There are worse men than you, and not many better.

John 11:17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

You know that, in the East, they have to bury the dead almost immediately because of the heat of the climate; so that Lazarus was, not long after he was dead, put away in the family vault.

John 11:18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

An easy walk of somewhere about two miles.

John 11:19-20. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

You will often hear people praising Mary at the expense of Martha, but although Mary is commended for sitting at Christ's feet, Martha here was the first to meet her Lord. The varying characters of different persons come out best at different times. Mary is best at sermon-time, she forgets the cups and the platters, but Martha is the more practical in the time of grief. She is active, and does not give way as Mary does. She is not so contemplative, and not so crushed as Mary is, so she is the first to go to meet her Lord.

John 11:21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

There seems to have been just a tinge of reproach in Martha's words, and Mary said exactly the same words to their dear Master and Friend a little later; and I have often heard Martha and Mary talk in this fashion: "Oh, if we had only had another doctor!" or, "If our dear friend had not gone to the seaside;" or, possibly, "If he had gone to the seaside, he might not have died." Well now, beloved friends, you have grief enough in having lost your relative or friend without adding to it by these unwise suppositions about what might have happened if you had done something else. Do not fall into that mistake and wound yourselves and grieve your best friend by unnecessary and useless regrets.

John 11:22-24. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

She could not believe the joyful meaning that Christ meant to convey to her when he said, "Thy brother shall rise again."

John 11:25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection,-

Note that our Lord did not say, "I am he who raiseth the dead;" but, "I am the resurrection,"-

John 11:25-27. And the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Will not many of you make Martha's grand confession of faith your own? Believe in Jesus, and then you will be able to believe anything and every thing that he says.

John 11:28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and



calleth for thee.

Martha's title for Christ might be rendered, "The Teacher, The authoritative Teacher," yet I am glad our translators put it "The Master."

John 11:29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

The coming of Christ had such an effect upon her that she arose from amid the ashes of her sorrow, and went out to meet her dear Lord and Master.

John 11:30-31. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

It is significant that these mourners did not follow Martha when she went to meet Jesus, but they did follow Mary. Sometimes, sinners who are not converted by listening to one preacher, are blessed by the testimony of two. One sister may not be able to lead her brother to Christ yet God may enable two to do it. Jesus sent out his seventy disciples "two and two," and the apostles are usually mentioned in pairs,-Simon and Andrew, James and John, Phillip and Bartholomew and so on; and we shall find that two Christians can often accomplish what one alone could not do.

John 11:32-33. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

His heart was full of sympathy; he felt the grief of these mourners, and sorrowed with them.

John 11:34-35. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.

In the original, a very blessed and expressive word is used here concerning Christ's weeping; quite a different word from that used to describe the weeping of Mary and the Jews. It should be a constant comfort to the sorrowing Church of God that "Jesus wept."

John 11:36-39. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

"Wilt thou expose that corrupt corpse to the air? "Ah, me! what poor foul creatures we are through the Fall! See what we may, any of us, become in a few days, so that even the one who loves us best will have to say of us, "Bury my dead out of my sight."

John 11:40-41. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

That groaning in spirit was Christ's prayer to his Father, that inward tumult of his soul was his earnest supplication; and now he thanks his Father that he has heard him. Yet Lazarus was still dead, and lying, a mass of corruption, in the grave. Oh, for faith to bless God for the mercies that are on the way to us!

John 11:42; John 11:44. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was

dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

See what wonders our Lord can work, and ask him to work similar miracles in the spiritual realm, and to raise to life those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

Our Lord's greatest miracles were ever the reward of faith.

John 11:27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come unto the world.

By which she as good as said, "I believe that, and I believe everything else. I have an implicit faith in thee. Whatever thou sayest, whatever thou hast said or shalt say, I am prepared to believe it all. for I believe in thee. I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

John 11:28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly,

Because she knew that the Jews hated the Saviour, she could not tell what would come of it if they knew of his coming, so she whispers to her:

John 11:28-30. Saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was at that place where Martha met him.

Their cemeteries were outside the town, and probably the Saviour was near the very grave where Lazarus slept.

John 11:31-32. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died

Her thought was just the same as the thought of Martha, but she did not say so much as Martha. She never did. Martha had a dialogue with the Saviour, but Mary bowed at his feet.

John 11:33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord. come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave.

Many have asked why Christ groaned. Why, brethren, it is the way in which he gives life — by his own death. We say sometimes of one who does a great action, "It took so much out of him." So it did out of the Saviour. He must groan that Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus may rejoice. It is not without the stirring of his very life that he gives life to the dead.

John 11:38-39. It was a cave and the stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone, Martha, the sister of him that was dead, said unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

"It were a pity to roll away the stone."

John 11:40-41. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou has heard me.

That is grand praying, is it not? Sometimes we ought to say, "Just so." "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."

John 11:42-44. And I knew that thou hearest me always. but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he had thus spoken he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin.

He probably slipped himself off from the ledge in the tomb upon which he been laid, and there he appeared before them bound so that he could not move farther.

Lazarus had been publicly raised from the dead. A great number of persons saw the miracle, and there was never any question about its having been wrought.

John 11:45-46. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

We could hardly have conceived it possible that men would have been guilty of such conduct as this to post off to Christ's enemies, and lay it as an accusation against him, that he had raised a man from the dead.

John 11:47-48. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

They pretended that if Jesus Christ gathered to himself a great party, the Romans would take umbrage at it — pounce upon the whole nation and destroy it, for fear of its revolting from under their sway. A gross falsehood throughout.

John 11:49-50. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, And that the whole nation perish not.

That was his advice. You are, none of you, up to the mark. You do not handle this thing rightly. Let us kill this man. Let him be put to death — not that he deserves it, but that it is expedient that it should be, lest our nation should be destroyed; and this is the way that governors and kings have been accustomed to think — not "Is it right?" but "Is it expedient" "and we may always pray to God that we may have a Government that will do that which is right, and not be guided by the evil direction of that which is expedient. One has well said that if the death of a righteous man would save ten thousand, yet it would be an atrocious thing that he should be put to death unwillingly for the saving of any. The right is, after all, expedient. Yet Caiaphas did not know what he said. He was speaking a great truth.

John 11:51. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:

He did not understand his own words. He was saying a great deal more than he meant to say — for it was expedient — blessedly expedient — that Jesus should die willingly and of his own accord, giving himself up to death for the sake of his people.

John 11:52-53. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

One bold wicked man can often sway the counsels of men who are equally bad, but more cowardly. It had not yet come to this — that they would hurt him to the death; but now they take counsel to put him to death.

John 11:54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

We do not find that he wrought miracles there or preached, but in a holy and devout retirement, it may be, he prepared his mind for the last great week — the week of his passion and his death. It is generally best for us to imitate him in this; and when we have some great work to do — something that will need all the grace that we can get, it is well to make a retreat — get into retirement, and school the heart, and seek to drink in fresh strength that we may be prepared for that which lies before us.

John 11:55-56. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

They had heard much of him in the country. Country people coming to town want to hear the great minister — to see the great Prophet: so that is their question, "Will he come to the feast?"

John 11:57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him.

They could not deny the miracle: they could arrest and punish the miracle-worker.

## John 12 Commentary

John 12:1-2. Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper;

It was in the house of Simon the Leper; a near acquaintance, perhaps a relative of this beloved family, for we find that Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. The two families had coalesced for this festival, and well they might, for one case someone had been healed of leprosy, and in the other case Lazarus had been raised from the dead. It was a holy, happy feast.

John 12:2-3. And Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus.

The other evangelist said "anointed his head." And they are both right. She anointed his head and his feet.

John 12:3. And wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Everybody perceived and enjoyed it, and understood what costly ointment it must be which loads the air with so delicate a perfume.

John 12:4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him.

I wonder whether he was son of that Simon the Leper, and whether a spiritual leprosy did cleave to him. That, we know, was the case.

John 12:5-6. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Observe that the sharpest critics of the works of good men are very often no better than they should be. This Judas is indignant with

what Mary does, and claims that he cares for the poor, but all the while he is thief. Whenever a man is very quick, condemning gracious men and women, you may be quite as quick in condemning him. He is a Judas usually.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 8:29-59. Mar 14:1-9. John 12:1-7.

John 12:1-2. Then Jesus, six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Martha served: she had not given that up. She was a wondrous housewife, and she did well to keep to her occupation. Lazarus had been dead, and had been raised again. But he was not the center of interest: "He that raised him up was there."

John 12:3-7. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

Somebody or other always seemed to object to Mary. If Martha does not do it, Judas will. To be found guilty of excess of love to Christ is such a blessed criminality that I wish we might be executed for it. It were sweet to be put to death for such a crime. It was that that Christ died of. He was found guilty of excess of love.

John 12:8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

It is not every day that you can do something personally and distinctly for Christ himself, and therefore, whenever the occasion serves you be sure to be there to avail yourself of it. True, you can serve him indirectly by aiding his poor saints. Still, something for him — for him himself — should often be devised as Mary devised this service that day.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 63.; Luk 10:38-42; and John 12:1-8.

John 12:1. Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

The days Christ was to spend upon the earth were getting to be very few so he paid another visit to that Bethany home where he was always so welcome, and more so than ever since he had raised Lazarus from the dead.

John 12:2-3. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

All the members of the re-united family were present, Martha busy as usual with the domestic duties which fell to her share, Lazarus in close attendance upon the Master who had wrought so great a miracle upon him, and Mary in her own sweet and gracious way pouring out the wealth of her affection in honour of the Master.

John 12:4-6. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

The question of Judas was a most unworthy one, but the motive that prompted the question was worse still. Little did he care for the poor; but if he could have had the selling of that very costly ointment of spikenard, he would have made that an opportunity of enriching himself.

John 12:7-8. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you: but me ye have not always.

Christ was himself ever caring for the poor, so he would not discourage any effort on their behalf, but just then, one of his most devoted disciples desired to render to him special honour, and he would not let her be rebuked; but on the contrary, he pointed out the deep symbolical meaning of her loving action.

John 12:9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Their curiosity was but natural, for few of them could have seen anyone who had been raised from the dead. It is well when a saved soul, who has been spiritually raised from the dead, becomes a center of attraction together with the Lord who has wrought such a miracle of mercy upon him.

John 12:10-11. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

They would have committed a double murder if it had been possible, and would have put to death both Jesus and Lazarus, who was a living witness to the wonder-working power of the Christ whom they would not receive as the promised Messiah. When men hate Christ, they also hate those whom he has blessed, and will go to any lengths in seeking to silence their testimony.

John 12:12-13. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

It is significant that John is the only one of the four Evangelists who mentions the palm fronds that were carried by the people in this triumphal procession in honour of Christ, and it was to John that the vision was given of the "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," who "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

John 12:14-16. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

It is strange that Christ's own disciples did not at once remember this plain prophecy when it was so literally fulfilled, yet, before we condemn them, let us recollect how "slow of heart" we also have been "to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

John 12:17. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

They could not help testifying in his favor after they had seen him work such a notable miracle as the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

John 12:18-19. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.

When they saw our Lord riding in state through the streets, and the people waving palm branches and shouting in his honour, they

said, "The world is gone after him." That was only very partially true, and for a very short time; but the day will come when the whole world shall go after him Christ's divine attractions shall be felt throughout the earth, and all the Pharisees then in the world will not be able to prevent the people from going after him; and-

"Come what may To stand in the way That day the world shall see."

John 12:20-21. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

They were proselytes, who had learned to worship Jehovah. Something more than mere curiosity must have moved them to want to see Jesus. Having heard of his raising the dead, they had a desire, and a very proper desire, to know more of him, so they asked to be introduced to him by one who, though not a Greek, had a Greek name, and who may therefore have served as a kind of bridge for these Greeks to reach the Saviour.

John 12:22-23. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.

Christ's passion and death were getting very near when these Gentiles came to him, and he saw, in that company of Greeks, the vanguard of that great army that shall yet come to him out of every nation under heaven. In the prospect of that great ingathering, he looked beyond the impending shame and suffering, and spoke even of the hour of his death as the time when he should be glorified.

John 12:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

This was Christ's way to glory, and it must be our way to glory too. The grain of wheat must fall into the ground, and die, or else it cannot bring forth fruit. Just so must it be with you and with me, and in proportion as we learn to die to self we shall live to the glory of God.

John 12:25. He that loveth his life shall lose it.

If you keep yourself to yourself, you will lose yourself.

John 12:25. And he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Brethren and sisters in Christ, if we are really to glorify Christ on the earth, we must be willing to lose our reputation, our good name, our comfort, and indeed everything that we have, for Christ's sake. This is the only way truly to live. If, for your own sake, you begin to keep back anything from Christ, that is the way to die. You would then be like the grain of wheat that is laid by, and preserved, and which, therefore, can never grow or multiply. Surrender yourself; be willing to be nothing; be willing to die if only the truth may live. Care nothing about honour and glory for yourself; care only about the honour and glory of your Master. Learn the meaning of the Master's paradox. As you bury yourself, you will multiply yourself. As you are put out of sight, like a grain of wheat that is sown in the ground, you have your only opportunity of growth and increase; heavily-laden ears of corn shall spring up from the grain which has been buried in the earth.

John 12:26-28. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.

In the 27th verse, our Saviour asked himself the question, "What shall I say?" here he gives his own answer, "Father, glorify thy

name.” When you know not what to pray for, you can always safely pray, “Father, glorify thy name.” As you stand where the cross-roads meet, and you ask, “Which way shall I choose?” pray, “Father, glorify thy name.” This incident seems like a rehearsal of Christ’s passion. Here we see that natural fear of death which came across the Saviour’s mind because he was so really and truly man. If his pains had not been real pains, but had been pleasant and congenial to him, there would have been no self-sacrifice in his suffering; but the fact that they cast upon his spirit the dark shadow of death only proves to us what sharp pains they were; but instead of asking for a way of escape from them, he surrendered himself to them, gave himself up as a willing victim with this prayer upon his lips, “Father, glorify thy name.” And now see what happened.

John 12:28-29. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

This was one of the three occasions on which testimony was openly borne to Christ by his Father; first at his baptism, then at his transfiguration, and now here at the rehearsal of his great sacrifice. We learn, from this narrative, that the voice of God is not understood by everybody. Some of those that stood by said that it thundered, and others said that an angel spake to him. It is necessary that you should be a child of God if you are to know your Father’s voice. Though God is speaking, at this moment in the clearest tones, none will recognize his voice, or understand his words, but those who are taught by his Holy Spirit.

John 12:30-31. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

See how the eye of faith reads things differently from the eye of sense. You and I would have said, “Now is Christ coming to his lowest point. Now is his name to be cast out from among men, and his cause to be crushed as the result of his death.” But Christ reads the signs of the times very differently. “Now,” saith he, “in the hour of my shame, and suffering, and death, is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” It was only by Christ being apparently conquered that Satan could be really vanquished, and there is often no way of victory for a saint except through defeat. When self is slain, then do we truly live.

John 12:32-33. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

The Pharisees said, “The world is gone after him;” but Jesus says, “No not while I am riding in state through the streets of Jerusalem; but when I am lifted up, and hung upon the cross, then shall it indeed be true, ‘I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’” The crucified Christ of Calvary is the mighty magnet that is to attract multitudes of trembling, doubting, ruined sinners, who by grace shall be drawn unto him, and find eternal life in him.

John 12:34-35. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

What a sad condition to be in, not to know where you are going! Are there not some of you, whom I am now addressing, who do not know where you are going? Yet, if you would but take the trouble to look, you might easily know that, so long as you continue in the paths of sin, you are going down to the chambers of death. Oh, that God’s Holy Spirit would give you sufficient light to enable you to see where you are going! You surely do not want to take “a leap in the dark.” Oh, that you may have the grace to turn from the downward way, and to seek the heavenward road!

John 12:36-41. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

You know that wonderful sixth chapter of Isaiah’s prophecy, and you know how wonderfully he has spoken there of the glory of



Christ; but what a terrible thing it is that even Christ should be driven to blind men's eyes, to take the light away from them because they proved themselves unworthy of it! May that never be the case with any of us; but while we may see, let us see; and may God give us more light!

John 12:42-43. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

What a shameful thing that was! Yet you will still find that there are many persons who, even though they believe the truth, dare not own it, but must hide in obscurity until the times grow easier. However, Christ's death fetched out many who had been his disciples in secret. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus could not keep in the background any longer and, doubtless, the thoughts of many other hearts were then revealed.

John 12:12-15. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion · behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

Even in the little glory of a temporal kind, which was given to the Lord Jesus Christ when he was "here among men" as Mrs. Luke's hymn puts it, his humility and meekness were very manifest, thus fulfilling the prophecy recorded in Zec 9:9 : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Oh, that all his people would always be of such a lowly spirit, not seeking great things for themselves, but condescending to men of low estate, remembering that it was their Master who said to his disciples, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

John 12:16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

I wonder whether, when Christ comes back to earth, in the glory of his Father with the holy angels, we also shall not understand a great many things which are complete mysteries to us now. Peradventure, it will be said of us then, "These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." That first glory of his ascension to heaven shed a flood of light upon the life of Christ, as doubtless the greater glory of his second advent will shed a yet brighter light upon our understanding of the things of Christ which quite surpass our comprehension now.

John 12:17-19. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

No doubt many of his disciples thought so too, yet how mistaken were both the friends and the foes of Christ, for you recollect, brothers and sisters, that Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem was followed, within less than a week, by a far different scene, when the same crowd that cried "Hosanna!" shouted "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" The world, that was supposed to have gone after him, nailed him to the cross; so short-lived is human popularity. So short-lived also is the admiration of Christ by carnal minds, for they do admire him after a fashion, they cannot help doing so. There have been written lives of Christ, which have been full of admiration of him, yet equally full of opposition to his Deity. We must not always regard it as an encouraging sign when men praise Christ; for very soon, if the root of the matter be not in them, and they do not accept him as their Lord and Master, they will change their note, and instead of "Hosanna!" it will be "Away with him, crucify him!"

John 12:20-21. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir we would see Jesus.

I do not know why these Greeks went to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, unless it was because he had a Greek name. Yet

Andrew and Peter also had Greek names. If I went to Paris, and wanted to see the President, and knew that there was somebody in the cabinet who had an English name, I should probably say, "Well, either he is an Englishman, or he comes of English parentage, so he may take an interest in me, and get me the introduction I want." Perhaps that was the reason why these Greeks came to Philip. I cannot think of any other; but I know that, if you want to get to Christ, you will always find some way of doing it, and that the reason why so many people do not get to him, is because they do not want to do so. You may all come to Jesus Christ if you will. But, alas! until his grace controls it, and changes it, your will inclines you to stay further away from Christ rather than to come to him.

John 12:22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

Andrew and Philip appear to have been staunch friends and fellow-labourers; and it is always well when Christian men can work for Christ with congenial companions. My poor perplexed brother, if you cannot get to Jesus Christ by yourself, it will be a good thing for you to say to some Philip, "Sir, I would see Jesus." Perhaps Philip will tell his friend Andrew, and then Philip and Andrew will go together, and tell Jesus, and so you will get to him. It is a great help in prayer, when you are yourself unable to pray, to get someone, whom you know to be a Christian, and who has sympathy with you, to come and pray with you.

John 12:23-24. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, —

"Amen, amen," —

John 12:24-25. I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit He that loveth his life shall lose it;

Or, as it should be rendered, "He that loves his life loses it " That is not the true way to live; and in his selfish attempt to live to himself, he is losing his life.

John 12:25-26. And he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me;

The best service you can render to Christ is to imitate him. If you want to do what will please him do as he did.

John 12:26. And where I am, there shall also my servant be:

You cannot expect better lodgings than that; so, as Christ had to live here amid sorrow, and sin, and shame, you must be willing to do the same; but, as Christ was afterwards exalted to indescribable honour, so shall it be with you if you are his true servant

John 12:26. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

For such is the Father's love to his Son, that he delights to honour all those who become his Son's faithful servants.

John 12:27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

There was a conflict in the Saviour's heart, — the weakness of his true manhood — striving with the strength of his infinite affection to his people, and also to his Father. We must never forget that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." If it had been no pain to him to die as the Substitute for sinners, there would have been no atoning sacrifice in his death; and if no dread had overtaken him at the thought of death, it would have proved that he did not die as we do; and, therefore, he would not have been able to take our place as he did. Notice how the Saviour speaks of the struggle that was going on in his soul. "What shall I say?" Do you ever have to ask that question when you are trying to pray? If so, do not be astonished, for even your Lord and Master said the same. "What shall I say?" — as if he paused to consider what form his prayer should take, — "shall I say, Father save me from this hour? No; but I will say, For this cause came I unto this hour."

John 12:28. Father, glorify thy name.

That is a grand answer to the Saviour's question, "What shall I say?" And, when you do not know how to pray, you may always present that petition, "Father, glorify thy name." You have some dear one at home very ill; you would be glad if the precious life might be spared, yet you are not sure whether you may ask for it? Well then, say, "Father, glorify thy name." Possibly, you are passing through a great trial, and you would be glad to escape from it; yet you do not know whether it is the divine will that you should do so. Well then, you may, at any rate, put up this prayer, "'Father, glorify thy name.' Whatever is most for thy glory, let that be my will as it is thy will."

John 12:28 Then came there a voice from heaven, —

An audible voice, for those who stood by could hear it: "There came a voice from heaven," —

John 12:28-30. Saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

"You needed to be strengthened as to the divine character and authority of my mission; you required to be comforted with the full assurance that I shall indeed be glorifying my Father even when I die upon the cross of Calvary."

John 12:31. Now is the judgment of this world:

This is a wonderful sentence, — as if, in Christ's death, the world was judged, and condemned; and so it was; nothing ever so convicted the world of high treason against God as when men said of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's well-beloved Son, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." The shedding of the blood of Christ upon the cross is the crimson evidence of the deep transgression of human nature: "Now is the judgment of this world." There is another rendering of this text, retaining the Greek word, "Now is the crisis of this world"

John 12:31. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Thank God for that! His throne was shaken to its fall when Christ died on Calvary. All the powers of darkness suffered eternal defeat in the hour that men and devils fancied they had gained the victory.

John 12:32-33. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

Yet they did not understand it, even then, clear as it now appears to us that he spake concerning his lifting up upon the cross.

John 12:34-36. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Our Lord raised Lazarus from the dead; and this miracle made a great sensation among the people. They came to meet Jesus, waving palm branches before him, and all Jerusalem was on a stir.

John 12:19-22. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

These were probably Gentiles, who were staying at Jerusalem; perhaps, proselytes who had come up to the feast. They were touched by the common feeling; they desired to see this wonderful Man who had raised to life one who had been dead four days. They proceeded courteously; they went to one of Christ's disciples who, coming from Galilee of the Gentiles, would be likely to sympathize with them, and they sought an introduction to Jesus. This Philip obtained for them with the help of Andrew.

John 12:23. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

He knew that the hour was come when he must die. Looking through the dark glass of death, he saw what its result would be, and he called it glory. These few Greeks were the advance guard of the great Gentile army of the Lord; he regarded their coming in that sense.

John 12:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

Telling them that the source of his glory would be his death. The reason why the people would hear of him, and come to him, was that he would be hanged on the cross. The grain of wheat, when put into the ground, if it remains as it is, will never increase; it must die if it is to bring forth fruit. What is death? The end of existence? None but thoughtless persons imagine that. Death is the resolution of any living substance into its primary elements. It is the division of the soul from the body; originally, it was the division of the soul from God. In a grain of wheat, death is the separation of the particles of which it is composed, that the life-germ may feed upon that which was provided for it. "If it die," in the true sense of the word, in being separated into its constituent elements, then "it bringeth forth much fruit." Christ's way to glory was through the grave he must go down that he might mount to the throne.

John 12:25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Live for this world, and you shall lose this world and the next, too; live for the world to come, and you shall in the highest sense gain both worlds.

John 12:26. If any man serve me, let him follow me;

That is the best kind of service; to do what Christ did, and to do what Christ bids you do: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

John 12:26. And where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Follow Christ, then, to the cross; follow him to the grave; follow him in his humiliation; and then the Father will honour you even as he honoured his Son.

John 12:27. Now is my soul troubled;

Or, puzzled. This hour of his glory was the hour of his passion, too.

John 12:27. And what shall I say?

Such sorrow was in his heart that he asked, "What shall I say?" Great trouble brings astonishment, amazement, bewilderment with it; and the human soul of Christ felt as ours feels when in great agony.

John 12:27. Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Nature suggests the cry, "Father, save me from this hour." Grace comes behind the flesh, being a little slower to speak; but it corrects the errors of the flesh, and says, "For this cause came I unto this hour."

John 12:28. Father, glorify thy name.

What a prayer! Jesus swallows up his temptation to escape the cup by this all-absorbing petition, "Father, glorify thy name."

John 12:28-29. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered:

They only heard the sound, and it was like thunder in their ears.

John 12:29. Others said, An angel spoke to him.

They distinguished the sound of some one speaking; but they did not recognize the voice of God.

John 12:30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

"To make you believe that God is with me, and that I am his Son."

John 12:31-34. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

As if it could not be true that Christ, in his divine nature, abides for ever, and yet, as Man, could be lifted up to die. It was a sneering question, "Who is this Son of man?" Our Lord did not answer it, thus teaching us that some people are not worth answering. Instead of replying to their question, Jesus gave them a practical admonition.

John 12:35-36. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

When people determine to reject Christ, he leaves them; why should he tarry where he is rejected? He "departed, and did hide himself."

John 12:37-41. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Christ is in the Old Testament in many places where, as yet, even we have never seen him. I doubt not that he lies hidden away in many a Psalm, and many a prophetic utterance that has not yet been fully expounded, or even comprehended by our finite minds. Oh, for eyes to see him where he sits in his ancient state: What a solemn fact this is, though, that God does allow men to be given over to blindness of eyes and hardness of heart! I sometimes fear that it is so with this age. Men will not see; they will not believe; they are desperately set on skepticism. It has become a fashion with them. Like a torrent, it sweeps through the very churches that bear the name of Christ. My fear is God in his wrath may give up our land to this curse, and then where will our hope be?

John 12:42-43. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than, the praise of God.

I wonder whether in this throng there are any of this kind, who do believe in Christ, and yet never come out and confess him because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God. If so, I venture to say that they are found among what are called the more respectable people, the men of light and leading, the chief rulers. Among the common people there is very little of this evil. They will generally confess what they believe, and bravely come forward to declare that they belong to Christ. It is the chief rulers, the gentlemen of the Sanhedrim, who, if they believe in Christ in their hearts, do not confess him, lest they should be put out of society, for they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Our Lord had raised Lazarus from the dead, and this miracle had excited great attention in Jerusalem. In consequence of this, the people had led him in triumph through the streets, and everywhere there was great excitement. Everybody was speaking of the wonderful miracle which he had wrought.

John 12:20-21. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

There is no doubt that these men were Gentiles, — probably proselytes. They had come up to worship at the feast, and their curiosity had been excited, and their interest had been awakened, by what they had seen and heard about Jesus. There appears to have been at least some measure of reverence for him in their minds. Hence they addressed one of his disciples, whose purely Greek name may lead us to suppose that he had some Greek relatives. They said to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

John 12:22-23. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

They did not expect him to say that. Surely, the coming of a few Greeks to see him was not very much in the way of glorification. But, to him, the coming of these Greeks was a sort of prophecy of the myriads of other Gentiles who would, by-and-by, come to his feet; and, therefore, he looked forward to that death which should be the means of their salvation. Christ came into the world to preach the gospel, but he came on a greater errand than that, namely, to provide a gospel that could be preached; and he knew that the time was approaching when he must provide that gospel by dying upon the cross. See how he proceeds: —

John 12:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

The preservation of the corn is the prevention of its increase; but the putting of it into the ground, the losing of it, the burial of it, is the very means of its multiplication. So our Lord Jesus Christ must not care for himself, and he did not. He surrendered himself to all the ignominy of the death of the cross, he died, and was buried in the heart of the earth, but he sprang up again from the grave, and ever since then myriads have come to him through his death, even as these Greeks came to him in his life. Now, as it was with Christ, so is it to be with us; at least, in our measure.

John 12:26. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in, this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

His love is ruinous to his true life; but to destroy self-love, to make a sacrifice of ourselves, is the truest way really to preserve ourselves.

John 12:26-27. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

This seems to be a sort of rehearsal of the dread scene soon to be enacted in Gethsemane. At the sight of these Greeks, our Saviour seems to have been led specially to think, as we have already said, of that death by which they, and multitudes like them were to be redeemed. Thinking of it, he enters so fully into it, by a sort of foretaste, that he feels something of the same shiver and throes of anguish which came upon him in Gethsemane. He seems to say here, "Father, save me from this hour," just as he said there, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet he says here, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name," — just as he afterwards said in the garden, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

John 12:28-29. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, an angel spake to him.

This was the third time that mysterious voice had been heard; — first, at his baptism; the second time, on the Mount of Transfiguration; and, now a few days before he died upon the cross. The voice of God had been heard on a much earlier occasion, — at Sinai; and then it was attended with thunder, as it was here. Those who had not ears to understand the voice of God only perceived the loudness of its thunder peals; but there were others, like John himself, who understood what the Lord said: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

John 12:30-31. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

The old Roman empire seemed to stand as fast as the eternal hills, but God had come to judge the whole state of affairs as it was then in the world; and, inasmuch as Christ the pure and perfect Son of God was condemned to die, that action condemned the society of that period. Yea, the whole of the ungodly world, in taking its part in crucifying Christ, bore evidence against itself, and pronounced sentence upon itself as being guilty of the death of the Christ of God. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." The overthrow of the usurper began from that time, and that overthrow of the devil is still going on; and, blessed be God, it will reach its completion one of these days, and we shall yet rejoice in a new heaven, and a new earth, on which the trail of the serpent shall never be traced.

John 12:32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Christ on the cross draws all men up to himself. I have heard this text quoted as if it referred to Christ being extolled in preaching. Well, it is true that, when Christ is lifted up in the ministry, there is an attractive power; but that is not the first meaning of the text. Let us read on: —

John 12:33. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

He alluded to his crucifixion, which is the great attractive center of mankind.

John 12:34-35. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

It is always well to use the light that we already have. If any man will use the light he already has, God will be sure to give him more. That is a good saying of an old Puritan, "If thou hast starlight, thank God for it, and he will give thee moonlight; and when thou hast moonlight, give thanks to God for it, and he will give thee sunlight." And so it shall be. Nothing is worse than sinning against light. If it is only the light of conscience, even if you know it is not perfect, yet, nevertheless, never sin against it; for, if you do—you will quench it, and to quench the light you have, is the way to effectually prevent your having any more: "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

John 12:36-41. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles

before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

There is such a thing as judicial blindness. If men can see, and yet will not see, God is at last so provoked by their wickedness that he takes away the light altogether, and removes from them the very faculty of sight. It is not surprising that it should be so, for it was so with the generation in which Christ lived. They had so long rejected the true prophet, — so long refused to listen to the voice of God, that, at last, he abandoned them to their own ways; and nothing worse can happen to a man than to be abandoned of God. If God casts thee off, thou art lost indeed.

John 12:20-24. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

I think that our Saviour looked upon these Greeks as a sort of vanguard of the great army of Gentiles who would come to him as the result of his death; but he fixed his eye upon the cause rather than the result, and so he began to talk about that death of his, and how it was that it would work such glorious results. If you want a corn of wheat to grow, you must put it into the ground; it must be resolved into its primary particles, -for that is what "to die" means, -and then it must spring up again with newness of life, or else it can never be multiplied. It was so with the Lord Jesus himself; it is still so with us, it is in proportion as we ourselves shall be prepared to die that we shall be prepared to give life to others.

John 12:25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

To hoard your energies will be really to destroy them, like hoarded wheat which in the end becomes useless; but to give up your energies, to expend your life-forces, this is to sow the wheat, and this is the way to ensure the harvest.

John 12:26. If any man serve me, let him follow me;

Do not let him invent some new method of service: "Let him follow me." If you would do Christ a service, it cannot be by will-worship, or by any way of your own devising: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

John 12:26. And where I am, there shall also my servant be:

"He shall be with me in tribulation; he shall be with me in humiliation; but he shall ultimately be with me in triumph and in glory."

John 12:26. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Those servants of Christ who follow at their Master's heel, and do his bidding at all times, are the true knights of the King who win the honours that God alone can give.

John 12:27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

Often, my brethren, should we be checked in prayer if we would be as wise as our Lord. "What shall I say? Shall I ask to be delivered from sickness? Shall I ask that I may not endure the troubles, which are the common lot of men? Shall I pray to be screened from persecution?" You see, I am rendering our Lord's question into our language, bringing it down from the lofty height of his divine thought to the level of our poor humanity. We must often pause before we pray, and say with our Lord, "For this cause came I unto this hour. Have I not been brought here on purpose to suffer? Have I not been led to this place that I may glorify God by



submitting to all his will?" Therefore, sometimes let us check ourselves in prayer, lest we should ask what is not for our own good or for God's glory. The next word of the Saviour will give us liberty enough, for he went on to say,-

John 12:28. Father, glorify thy name.

When we are pleading about that glorious name of Jehovah, we may pray with vehemence and importunity: "Father, whatever I do or suffer, glorify thy name."

John 12:28-29. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Ah! they did not understand the voice of God, or the cause of the voice speaking to them. If the men of the world in our Saviour's day did not understand the Father's voice to the Only Begotten, do not expect that the men of the world today will understand the divine voice in your heart. They will reckon that you are in error, and that God has not spoken to you; it has only thundered. They will be ready to invent all kinds of stories of angels, and I know not what, so as to get rid of the voice of God to you. But you know it; if you are God's children, you know his voice, and you also know what he means when he speaks.

John 12:30-32. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This is the sermon, which has the Greeks for a text. They are already coming, being drawn to Christ: but when he dies, when he is lifted up upon the cross, instead of losing his attractive power, he will have greater drawing force than ever: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

John 12:33-34. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him,

As they were always doing, capaciously answering; not answering to him with sentiments that responded to his, but replying against him with their caviling.

John 12:34-41. We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

It is an awful thing to resist the Spirit of God, for if his softening influences are withdrawn, the heart grows hard; if his enlightening influences are taken away, the eyes of the understanding are darkened. I do believe there are many who have so long trifled with conscience and violated the best instincts of their nature that they are given up as those who are past hope. I pray God that it may not be so with any here; but it was so with many in the generation amongst which Christ laboured.

John 12:42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him;

Christ has his secret followers in the darkest days. There are men who believe in him even when the current of infidelity runs most strongly.

John 12:42-43. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved

the praise of men more than the praise of God.

For which they deserved great censure. Yet some of them cast away their cowardice at the last, for Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were among those who confessed their love to the crucified Christ.

John 12:44-49. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

Christ did not pride himself upon being a great original thinker. He took his word from his Father's mouth; and the preacher of the gospel is to be no inventor of new thoughts. The "thoughtful" man of whom we hear so much is just a man who is rebellious against God. The Lord's true servant is to repeat God's thoughts, not his own, to borrow from the Scriptures, to borrow from the teaching of the Holy Ghost, even as the Lord Jesus Christ did.

John 12:50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

If the great Head of the Church was thus only a messenger, the deliverer of a message from the Father, should not we, who at our best are such poor ministers of Christ, take heed to it that we also can say, "Even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"? God grant it! Amen.

Our Lord had gained a sudden popularity through raising Lazarus from the dead, and the people had attended him with great enthusiasm as he rode through the streets of Jerusalem. For the time, things looked very bright with him, but he knew that he was soon to suffer and to die, and the overshadowing of that great eclipse was already upon his heart. Note how he looked forward to it, and how he spake concerning it.

John 12:20-22 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

Probably these persons were proselytes to the Jewish faith. They had renounced their idols, and they had come to worship the only true God; and now they had a wish to see Jesus, -not out of idle curiosity, but because they felt a certain degree of respect for him. They wanted to know more of his teaching, and to learn whether he was indeed the promised Messiah. The disciples encouraged these seekers; they would not have brought mere curiosity-mongers to their Master, but they saw that there was something better in these Greeks; so they consulted together, and their opinion was that they must tell Jesus about them.

John 12:23. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come that the Son of man should be glorified.

He was about to die, yet he speaks of his death as being glorified. For the joy that was set before him, he seems to overlook the intervening humiliation in the prospect of the glory that would come of it through the salvation of multitudes of strangers from the very ends of the earth. He looks on these Greeks as the vanguard of a great army of Gentiles who would continue to come to him, and pay him homage. Hear what he says next:-

John 12:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He knew that he must die, for his living, and preaching, and miracle working would never produce such results as his death would accomplish. He must go down into the ground, out of sight, and there must lie like a buried grain of wheat, that out of him there might

spring a great harvest to the glory of God; and these Greeks were like a first handful, a wavesheaf unto God, a promise of the great harvest that would be the result of his death: "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

John 12:25-26. He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

It is an honour to be allowed to serve Christ, but God will bestow still further honour upon those who faithfully serve him.

John 12:27-29. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

How ready they were to find an explanation for that "voice from heaven" which they could not comprehend! Some "said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him." But here is Christ's own interpretation of the mystery:--

John 12:30-31. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Satan may have thought that he had triumphed when Christ was crucified, but that death upon the cross was the death-blow to the devil's usurpation.

John 12:32-33. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.

There is no magnet like the death of Christ. He is able still to draw men unto him because of the attractive force of his atoning sacrifice.

John 12:34-36. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

At first sight, this may not seem to have been an answer to their question, "Who is this Son of man?" Yet it was a very direct answer, for he was "the Light of the world;" and as the light was soon to be withdrawn from them, there was all the greater need of Christ's injunctions, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."

John 12:37-41. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Isaiah was sent upon a painful errand, to tell the people that they should hear, but they should not understand; that they should see, but they should not perceive; and so it happened to Israel as a nation, and to this day Israel rejects the true Messiah. Oh, that none of us may imitate their evil example by negligence and contempt of the revelation of God, lest after playing with Scripture, and trifling with the Christ of God, the Lord should at last in anger declare that we should see, but should not perceive, that we should hear, but should not understand.

John 12:42-43. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; because of the Pharisees they did not confess him,

lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Are there any here who believe in Christ, but who have never confessed him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, and lose the praise of men? Are you afraid of your family, your father, or your husband; or is there some friend who would be angry with you if you confessed Christ? If so, be no longer such a coward, I pray you, but come out boldly, and confess him who will not be ashamed to confess you before his Father and the holy angels.

John 12:44-50. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my word, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but thy Father which 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.

John 12:37. But though he had done so many miracles before then, yet they believed not on him.

They had an opportunity of seeing with their eyes; what the Christ could do. He had even raised the dead in the midst of them, and yet this is the sorrowful statement.

John 12:38-40. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

This passage is very frequently quoted in the Old Testament: it was so exceedingly apropos to the condition of the unbelieving Jews. They were wilfully blinded. They could see it; they were forced to hear it; there was much that even touched their hearts; but they hardened their heart against it, and to this day they remain the same.

John 12:41-43. These things said Esaias, when he was his glory, and spake of him. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

And this is a common disease to this day. There are many who know the truth, who, nevertheless, keep very quiet about it. They do not like to be despised; they cannot endure to seem to be separate from their fellowmen; it is not respectable to be decided for Christ, and to come out from among them, so they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John 12:44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

Faith in Christ is faith in God, he that trusts the Son hath accepted the witness of the Father.

John 12:45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

Wonderful expression. Perhaps, we never fully realize it. Christ is seeable. God is not, but when we see the Christ, we do virtually see all of God that we may desire to see: the Invisible hath made himself visible in Christ — in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

John 12:46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

True faith in Christ sheds light on everything concerning which light is desirable. You shall understand things when you have come

unto the right standpoint, when you have gotten to believe in Christ. I wonder not that those who doubt concerning him, doubt about everything; if they will not have this light, how shall they see?

John 12:47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Under this present dispensation, it is not the time of judgment. The Lord leaves you that are unbelievers to yourselves. He does not come as yet to judge you; there is a second coming, when he will be both judge and witness, and condemner, of those who have rejected him; but at present it is a dispensation of pure mercy. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him." There is a great God above who reckons this to be among the greatest of all human crimes, that they reject his Son. We speak of unbelief very lightly, and there are some who trifle with it as if it had no moral quality at all, but God doth not so.

John 12:48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Look, ye, to that, the gospel which you refuse will judge you at the last day. We know that the Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the world, saith Paul, "according to my gospel," and he that sins against the gospel of love will certainly involve himself in the most solemn condemnation. He perishes that sins against the law, he dieth without mercy at the mouth of one or two witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that sins against love, and rejects the Saviour?

John 12:49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

God at the back of Christ. Omnipotence supporting love. The expostulations of Christ, not left to our will to do as we like with them, but solemnly sanctioned by the royalties of God, so that to refute them is treason against the majesty of heaven.

John 12:50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

The eternal authority of God is at the back of the testimony of Christ. Oh! that men would not be so unwise as to reject it Now in our reading at the 41st verse we met with these words: "These things, said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him." Now let us read the passage which gives us an account of Isaiah's seeing the glory of Christ.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 12:37-50; Isaiah 6. John 12:37-50.

## John 13 Commentary

John 13:1. Now before the feast of the passover, —

Or, just as it was about to begin, —

John 13:1. When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

That is a very beautiful description of Christ's death: "His hour was that he should depart out of this world unto the Father," — just as though he was merely going on a journey, leaving one land for another; and if this be a fair description of such a stormy passage as that of our Lord Jesus, who died for our sins upon Calvary's cross, it must with equal truth describe the death of any of the children of God. There is also an appointed time for us to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better than remaining here. The loosing of the cable, the spreading of the sail, the crossing over the narrow sea, the coming to the eternal haven, and the abiding there, —

what Christian heart needs to dread this? How much better is it even to look forward to it with ardent anticipation! Think much of the abiding love of Christ: "Having loved his own" — his by election, his by redemption, for he regarded that as already done which was about to be accomplished, — "Having loved his own which were in the world," — not yet in heaven, but still in the midst of trial, still imperfect, even as you and I are, — "he loved them unto the end," or "unto the perfection," as it might be rendered. The Alpha of his love, which we find in eternity, bids us believe that we shall find the Omega of it nowhere but there.

John 13:2-4. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

Notice the wonderful contrast revealed to us in these verses. Our Lord Jesus Christ had a very vivid realization that he had come from God, and was going back to God, and that all things had been given into his hand; yet, while he knew that, and had a more than ordinary consciousness of his own dignified nature and position, he condescended to wash his disciples feet. Though many years elapsed between the event and the time when John recorded it, all the details seem to have been still present in his memory so that he distinctly mentions each separate act: "he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his upper garment, and taketh a towel, and girdeth himself."

John 13:5. After that he poureth water into a bason,

The one that ordinarily stood in the guest-chamber for the washing of the hands and feet of the guests.

John 13:5-6. And began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

You must lay the stress on the pronouns in order to get the full force of the original. "Lord, dost THOU wash my feet?" The contrast is between Peter's Master and himself.

John 13:7-8. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

That is, Never, as long as I live, shalt thou do such a thing as that."

John 13:8-10. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

We have often, in commenting, noticed Peter's fault; perhaps we have noticed that too much. Let us now notice Peter's excellence. I admire his humility in thinking it too mean an office for Christ to wash his feet; it seems to me to be a most proper feeling which prompted him to ask, "Dost thou wash my feet?" It seemed an overwhelming condescension of love which he could scarcely permit. No doubt he spoke too positively when he said to Christ "Thou shalt never wash my feet;" but, still, his motive in speaking thus was a good one. It was because he could not allow his Lord to stoop so low; he thought it ill manners to permit such an one as Christ to wash the feet of such an one as the poor fisherman, Peter. I have already said that there was something that was not right, and yet that was perfectly natural to this "rock" disciple, and this "dove" disciple, who was such a strange mixture of boastfulness and fickleness, yet do not forget how much good there was in him. I wish all of us were half as good as Peter. That was a grand utterance, "Wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." He meant, "Lord, let me have all the cleansing I can, not only such as the washing of my feet would bring, but such as the washing of my head and my hands also would bring. Let me be clear of everything which would prevent full fellowship with thee, for I long to be one with thee altogether." Then our Saviour meekly, gently, quietly explained that there was no need for the washing of his head and his hands, for his whole being had already been renewed by the one great act of regeneration; and as he had been cleansed from sin by the free gift of pardon at the time when he first believed, there was no need of any repetition of the spiritual bathing, all that was required was the washing of his feet, — a beautiful

distinction always to be observed. He that believeth in Christ is fully forgiven. He is like a man who has gone into the bath, and washed, but, when he steps out of the bath, and put his foot on the ground, he often soils it, so that, before he robes himself, he needs to wash his feet again. That is our condition as believers in Jesus; we are washed in his precious blood, and are whiter than snow; but these feet of ours constantly touch this defiling earth, so they need every day to be washed. Christ our Lord Jesus said to Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

John 13:11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

They were all washed so far as their feet were concerned, but not all of them had been cleansed in the saved bath which removes the stains of sin.

John 13:12-17. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know, ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, you Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Blessed are they who, when they understand the meaning of Christ's example, imitate it in their own lives.

John 13:1. Now 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, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had a clear foresight of all he had to endure. Future things are happily hidden from our eyes. We do not even know the moment when we shall die, nor how it will be. It is well that it is so but our Lord was able to anticipate his sufferings, by knowing all about them: "Jesus knew that his hour was come." It was all appointed, and nothing happens to any of us by accident, chance is banished from the believer's creed. There is an appointed "hour" for each one of us, and it will come in due season. "Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of the world unto the Father." What a beautiful way of describing death! Christ's death was certainly a more trying one than ours will be, so that this description may apply to ours as well as to his.

John 13:2. And supper being ended,

I suppose that was the Paschal supper.

John 13:2. The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

What a horrible purpose for Satan to put into the heart of Judas even in the presence of Jesus! I hope that the devil will not put any such purpose into your hearts or into mine while we are in this house of prayer, but no place is sacred from his intrusion, he will come in anywhere. Even where Christ himself is at the head of the table, Judas may be sitting at that same table, and Satan may then and there put into his heart the horrible purpose of betraying his Master.

John 13:3-4. Jesus knowing that the Father given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

Notice those words, "Jesus knowing,... he took a towel, and girded himself." If he had not known how great he was, there would not have been such condescension in his action, but he knew who he was, and what the Father had entrusted to him: "The Father had given all things into his hands." You might suppose that he would rise up, in a very dignified manner, and put on a purple robe and a golden girdle, but, instead of that, he rose from the supper table, laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. He knew that he had come forth from God, and that he was going back to God, and he performed this action on the way home to his Father. O dear brothers and sisters, if Christ thus stooped, how humble ought we to be! No office should be counted too lowly, no work for his servants should seem to be too humiliating, since Jesus "took a towel, and girded himself."

John 13:5. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

You see that Jesus does his work well. He omits none of the details of it. He puts himself in the place of a slave, and he performs a slave's duty very thoroughly. I am afraid that, sometimes, we do our work for him in a slovenly way, but Jesus was not satisfied with simply washing his disciples' feet, he must do the wiping, too. I do bless him that he did so for this is a picture of what he has done for us. He has washed our feet, and he often repeats the gracious act. The feet that Jesus washes he will wipe; he has not begun his task without intending to finish it. I know that he will complete in my soul the work which he has undertaken, for he fulfilled on the feet of his disciples the office he had undertaken: "He began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

John 13:6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

I do not wonder that he said that; would not you have been equally astonished had you been there? Peter had some faint idea who Christ was, he had confessed him in such a way that Jesus had said to him "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Knowing so much about Christ, Peter did marvel at his action; he felt so astonished that he asked "Dost thou wash my feet?"

John 13:7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do those knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

I have heard this saying of our Lord applied to affliction; and it is very true that what Jesus does we do not at present understand, but we shall know by-and-by. I do not think, however, that this sentence is very applicable that way, for there was no affliction in having the feet washed. The fact is, brethren, though it is a very humbling thing to say, we do not understand that which Jesus does, even his simplest actions are a mystery to us, we have never gone into the very depths of them so as to comprehend them. "What I do, — even though I only wash thy feet, plain and simple operation as that is, — thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Our knowing times, dear friends, are to come. We need not be so very anxious to know at present, this is the time of love. I would forego the filling of my head for a while if I could have my heart full; but, alas, we are generally so busy trying to attain merely head knowledge! My most intense longing is for a growing heart, a heart that truly loves the Saviour. That is the way for the head to learn, for knowledge that comes by the way of the heart, and so enters the head, is the best of knowledge. Jesus said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest, not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

John 13:8. Peter saith unto him, Those shalt never wash my feet.

That is just like Peter. If John had not told us who it was that said this, we should have known that it was Peter. He was always in such a hurry, and he spoke so quickly, that he made many mistakes, yet he was always so honest and so true that his Master forgave his faults, and helped him to correct them.

John 13:8. He answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

If Christ does not cleanse us, we do not belong to him. If he does not, day by day, exercise a purifying influence over us, we are not his.

John 13:9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

How that pendulum swings to and fro! It went this way just now: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Now it goes right away to the other extreme: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Go more gently, Peter, be more quiet. Why do you go so far in one direction and then rush off so far in another way? Thy Master knows better than thou knowest what is right for thee.



John 13:10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

Dear friends, when we believe in Christ, we are washed in the fountain filled with blood, and we are clean; but this world is such a sinful place that we cannot walk through it for even a day without some of its mire and dust clinging to us. Besides, God's lilies are so pure that they are hardly fit to bloom in such a defiling atmosphere. Oh, how we need that the dew should wash the lily when the night comes on! How greatly we need to have the foot-washing administered to us every day! We need not repeat the first great washing, the bath by which our sins were cleansed; when that was done, it was done once for all. Our sin was pardoned as before a Judge; but we want it to be taken away as before our Father, for we are now under his loving discipline. Christ further said to his disciples, "Ye are clean, but not all." Does he say that to us at this time? "Ye are clean, but not all." Where sits the man, in this house of prayer, who is not clean, the sinner who has not yet been washed by Jesus Christ? Where sits the woman who is not clean? The Lord have mercy upon you, dear friends! You know that, in the olden days, they put a red cross on the door of the house where the plague was. We cannot put a cross upon you; but I pray you to consider yourselves as marked men and marked women in the sight of God, and I pray the Lord to take that mark away by causing you to be washed, that you may be clean every whit. How quickly he can wash the foulest sinners! He that believeth in Jesus is washed in the precious blood, and he is clean. God cleanse us all for his great name's sake!

John 13:11-15. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Christ's actions are the pattern for us to imitate! Oh, that we followed them more closely!

John 13:16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

Sometimes, we think that we are a deal too great to wash anybody's feet; we should like to see a person propose it to us, such big people as we are! If we talk like that, there is great need that we should be taken down. That would be the true way to rise in the likeness of Jesus. Oh, that we were lowlier in humility! We should be higher in grace if we were.

John 13:17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Peter wanted to know them; Jesus would have us do them.

John 13:18. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen:

Christ has a chosen people, though some will not believe it. Yet it is so, for he says, "I know whom I have chosen."

John 13:18-19. But that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

"That I am." So, you see, even the great trouble of the early Church the betrayal by Judas, was used by Christ for the strengthening of his disciples' faith. He foretold that it would be as it came to pass. So, dear friends, in these latter days, many forsake the gospel, but Jesus told us that it would be so. He taught his servants to write that there would be a falling away, and that in these last days there would be scoffers; and as we read the prophecies, and compare them with the fulfillment, even the doleful fact itself confirms our faith in our Lord. God bless to us this brief reading of his own Word! Amen.

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled:

This is one of those verses that you may read as slowly as you like, and spell out every letter, and find honey in it all.

John 14:1. Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

As Jews, they had already known and seen the power of God. They were now to rise to the faith of Christians, and to believe in Jesus their Saviour.

Even though they should see him die, they were not to doubt him: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

John 14:2. In my Father's house are many mansions:

So there is room for many, there are homes for many, there is wealth for many; "In my Father's house are many mansions:"

John 14:2. If it were not so, I would have told you.

The Saviour seems to say to his disciples, "I keep nothing back from you; had there been some sorrowful fact to be revealed to you, I would at length have told you of it."

John 14:2. I go to prepare a place for you.

"There must be a heaven, for I am going there myself, and I am going on purpose to make it ready for you."

John 14:3. And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

That is the first and simplest idea of heaven, to be with Christ; and I think it is the last and sublimest idea of heaven, too,—to be with Christ: "that where I am, there ye may be also."

John 14:4-5. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

The apostles blundered, and lost themselves in the words of their Master, instead of entering into the spirit of what he said; so we must not wonder if we often do the same. Unless we wait upon God to be instructed by his Spirit, even the plainest passages of Scripture may be obscure to us.

John 14:6-7. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Jesus had been talking about the many mansions, and now he talks about the Father. Is the Father, then, the same as heaven? Ay, indeed; to come to the Father is to come to perfect blessedness, to know the fullness of his eternal love, and to enjoy it in face-to-face communion;—this is heaven.

What higher bliss can we desire?

John 14:8-9. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

Do we, then, see the Father when we see Christ? And is the Father's presence heaven? Then, Christ is heaven; and to be with him is heaven. It is even so. He is the way to heaven, the truth of heaven, the life of heaven. He is heaven's everything.

"His track I see, and I'll pursue

The narrow way, till him I view;"

And when I view him, shall I not have seen the Father, and have entered into the Father's rest?

John 14:10-12. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

In consequence of Christ's going to the Father, and the Spirit of God descending upon Christ's disciples, they are enabled to outdo their Master in some forms of holy service. For instance, some of them brought more to the faith than Christ himself had done during his lifetime, and so realized the fulfillment of this promise, "The works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

This exposition consisted of readings from John 14:1-12 : and Col 1:1-19.

This is a chapter which I suppose most of us know by heart, full of comfort, a very river of delight.

Remember that our Lord spoke this to his own beloved ones — to the inner circle. It was not addressed to the general public. It is not a sermon to the world. It is a discourse to those who had lived with him, and were now sorrowing because he was about to leave them by a cruel death. Thus he begins: —

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

"You have believed in God, whom you have never seen. Believe in me when you cannot see me. Believe that I still am — that I still am working for your good. You have believed in God, though he has not manifested himself to you in his person as I have done. Now when I am no longer seen of you, believe in me as you believe in the invisible God." It is well for us to have the same faith in Christ that we have in the everlasting God. This is the cure for the heart trouble. You are sure to be troubled in heart unless you have much faith in God. "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

John 14:2. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Our Lord was going away, but he was going away with a purpose, and a grand purpose too — a purpose which had to do with the everlasting future of his beloved ones. "I go to prepare a place for you."

John 14:3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

And he will come again, beloved. That is our grandest hope. We are looking for his coming. It is very sweet to know that we shall be for ever with the Lord if we die before his coming; but still the hope of God's people is the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead — his taking to himself all his redeemed to be for ever with him.

John 14:4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

We know where Christ has gone. Every step we can follow. The way we know. It always reconciles us to a friend's going away if we know where he has gone — know all about him. A mother tells me that she has missed her boy now for twelve months, and never heard from him. That is sorrow; but when we know that our son has gone to the other side of the world, and we know why he has gone, and where he has gone, and what is coming of it, we are greatly comforted. So Jesus says, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know."

John 14:5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

There is always somebody who has not learned the lesson. I am afraid that it is not one Thomas, but a great many Thomases that still have to say, "We know not." Although Christ himself be the teacher, we are always poor learners.

John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

There is nothing good except by Christ. They that hate Christ very soon hate God. They get rid of the Christ of the gospel, and they soon get rid of God out of creation too, and there is no coming to the Father in any way or fashion except by Christ. He has gone to the Father, but he is also the way to the Father.

John 14:7-8. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

There is a Philip as well as a Thomas. It does not seem that, even with Christ for a teacher, we should learn much without the Holy Ghost. The greatest blessing, after all, is not the bodily presence of the Saviour, though we learn something from that, but it is the indwelling and the teaching of the Holy Ghost which we most of all need.

John 14:9-11. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

The eternal union between Christ and the Father should never be forgotten by us. He seems to sink himself, but the well-beloved Son will have it that his words are not his own, but come from the Father. I cannot help remarking how different this is from some who profess to be the ministers of Christ. They must be original; they must be great thinkers. Every man nowadays makes his own gospel, but the Saviour was no original — the grandest of all intellects, and yet he says, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake."

John 14:12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

While the Master was here in his humiliation he healed a few poor Jews, and raised here and there a dead one, but he purposely veiled the splendor of his godhead. But now that he has gone up on high, he does greater wonders by his servants than he himself personally did, for he said to a few poor fishermen, "Go and break up the Roman Empire," and they did it. They preached the gospel, and the gods of the heathen that sat upon their thrones for ages were cast to the moles and the bats. And there are greater

victories yet before the Church of God. You ought not to measure our passage by the past, but believe that “greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto my Father.”

John 14:13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

We do not believe enough in the power of prayer. I sometimes feel staggered when I meet with good people, undoubtedly good people, who still look upon it as a new thing that we should believe that God hears our prayers. But this is the fundamental of Christian experience. How can we live without the mercy-seat? And if that mercy-seat be nothing but a vain show, and prayer be only a pious but useless exercise, what is there in the Christian religion at all? We have heard some very wise people say that prayer is no doubt beneficial to those who offer it; but to suppose that it has any effect upon the mind of God is absurd. Do you not see, brethren, that they think us all idiots. They must do so, for do you suppose that any but an idiot would go on praying at all if he did not believe that it had some effect upon the mind of God, and that it did prevail with God? I would as soon stand and whistle out of my bedroom window for half an hour, as I would kneel down and pray for half an hour, if there were to be no result coming from it, and so would every sensible man. But we know of a surety that God heareth prayer. We cannot imagine our Lord deceiving us, and he must have done so if it is not so, for he says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

John 14:14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

But there is a deal of praying that never reaches to the name of Christ. Even to pray for Christ's sake does not reach to the point of praying in Christ's name. If I go and transact business in the name of such a person, that is a different thing from merely asking to be allowed to do my own business for the sake of that person. But when you are authorized to use the name of Christ — as it were, to write his signature to your cheques — oh! what power there is in prayer at that time! “If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” But you cannot ask everything in that name. You are obliged to draw back from some prayers, and say, “No; Christ would never authorize me to put his name to that.” You see there is a blessed cheque upon the universality of prayer — a most necessary and useful cheque — for we would not dare to ask some things in that wondrous name.

John 14:15-17. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

He dwelt with the apostles, but was not in them until after Christ rose from the dead. But now you and I knew his indwelling. He has made our bodies to be the temples of the Holy Ghost.

John 14:18. I will not leave you comfortless:

Orphans.

John 14:18. I will come to you.

He does this by his Spirit, but still he means more than that. It is not a spiritual coming merely; it is a personal coming. “I will come to you.”

John 14:19-20. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Wondrous unity — Christ in the Father, we in him, and Christ in us. Who understands this? He only who is taught of the Holy Spirit.

We have often read this chapter, both in our private meditations, and at our public worship; but we cannot read it too often. It is sweet as honey and the honeycomb. It contains the very quintessence of consolation. Every word in the chapter is rich, and full of

meaning. Perhaps they understand it best who cannot read it quickly, but are obliged to spell over every word of it, and so are like those who feast upon marrow and fatness.

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

That is the cure for heart trouble, and all other trouble, too, — believing in God, and believing in his Son, Jesus Christ. Faith is the double cure of trouble, for it delivers us altogether from the trouble, and, at the same time, it helps us to find sweetness in it as long as we have to endure it. Notice that our Saviour says, “Let not your heart be troubled.” If your heart can be preserved from trouble, you will not be greatly tried by it. Trouble is in your house, perhaps; but, if so, let it not get into your heart. The waves beat all round your vessel, but let not the vessel itself leak, and take in the water: “Let not your heart be troubled.”

John 14:2. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

This was very largely the cause of their trouble; they were full of sorrow because their Lord and Master was going away from them; yet he was going for their good. It was with a set purpose that he was leaving them, and the same reason still keeps him away from us. We are not to mourn for him as we might for one slain in battle, who would never come back to us. He has gone for a little while to another country, to the great Father’s house, upon a most gracious and necessary errand: “I go to prepare a place for you.” The Spirit of God is down here to prepare us for the place; the Son of God is up yonder to prepare the place for us.

John 14:3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Do not tell us about a purgatory for Christ’s people, a limbo in which they are to be awhile to be prepared to share his glory. No, he will come at the right time, and take them to be where he is, and they shall have the very place that Jesus has: “I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Do you want a better rest than that after all your work and warfare here below? Does not this prospect cheer you while you are journeying down the hill of life?

John 14:5. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

“Ye know that I am going to the Father, and ye know that I am myself the way to the Father; I am going whence I came.”

John 14:6. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life:

“I am all that you want on your way to heaven, the truth that will make heaven for you, and the life which you will enjoy with me for ever in heaven. I give you all that while you are yet here below.”

John 14:6. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

There is no getting to God except through Christ. Those who say that we can go to heaven without a Mediator know not what they say, or say what they know to be false. There can be no acceptable approach to the Father except by Jesus Christ the Son.

John 14:7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also:

For Christ is also “the mighty God, the everlasting Father.” All the character of God is seen in the Christ of God, and he who truly comes to Christ has really come to the Father.

John 14:7. And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

I hope that this may be said of many of us, that we do truly know God; and, since we have seen Christ by faith, we have seen the Father also.

John 14:8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

What a comfort these questions and blunders of Thomas and Philip ought to be to us, for it is clear that we are not the only dolts in Christ's school; and if he could bear with them, he can bear with us also. Like them, how little do we retain of that which he teaches us! We are taught much, but we learn little, for we are such poor scholars. Our memory holds but little, and our understanding still less of what we have been taught, and we are all too apt to want something that we can see, just as Philip said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

John 14:9-11. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Note how the Master continued to urge his disciples to believe. Again and again he returned to that vital point: Believest thou? "Believe me...: believe me." This he did because there is no relief from heart-trouble but by believing the everlasting truth of God, and especially by believing him who is "the truth." The believer alone has true peace of heart; the unbeliever is tossed to and fro on the billows of the great ocean of doubt; how can he rest? There is nothing for him to rest upon. Happily, Christ is still saying, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest;" and they are truly wise who accept his gracious invitation.

John 14:12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

When Christ had gone back to the Father, he opened all heaven's treasures for his people; he bestowed the Spirit of all grace, and so his servants were helped to do even greater works than he himself did while he was upon the earth. We cannot add anything to his atonement; that work must for ever stand as complete and unique; but there are other forms of service, in which he engaged in his earthly ministry, in which his servants have gone far beyond him. The Lord Jesus Christ never preached a sermon after which three thousand were converted and baptized in one day; to a large extent he kept his personal ministry within the bounds of Palestine; but, after his resurrection, when the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, then, in the power of the Spirit, greater works than his were wrought the wide world over.

John 14:13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Is that promise true to every man? Certainly not. It was made by Christ to his own disciples, and not to all of them absolutely; but only to them as they believe in him, as they are filled with his Spirit, and as they keep his commandments. There are some of God's children who have little power with him in prayer, — some who walk so disorderly that, since they do not listen to God's words, he will not listen to theirs. Yet he will give them necessities, as you give even to your naughty and disobedient children; but he will not give them the luxury of prevailing prayer, and that full fellowship with him which comes through abiding in him. Such luxuries he saves for his obedient children, who are filled with his Spirit. Even under the old dispensation, David wrote, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart;" and in a very special sense, under the new dispensation, that spirituality of mind, which enables us to delight in God, is a necessary antecedent to our obtaining the desires of our heart in the high and spiritual sphere of prayer.

John 14:15-17. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:

The world is carnal, it is unspiritual; therefore, it is unable to see or to know the Spirit of God. A man without a spiritual nature cannot recognize the Holy Spirit; he must be born again before he can do so. You who are only soul and body need to receive that third and loftier principle — the spirit which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Until you have it, this verse applies to you: “The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.”

John 14:17. But ye know him;

Christ’s own disciples know him.

John 14:17-19. For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

Oh, what a rich promise! How, then, can Christ’s people ever perish? Until Christ himself perishes, no child of his can ever be lost.

John 14:20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Three wondrous mysteries of union, — Christ in the Father, the Church in Christ, and Christ in his Church.

John 14:21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

May we be such lovers of Christ that he may love us, and manifest himself unto us, for his name’s sake! Amen.

I suppose that many of you know this chapter by heart. I notice that, in all old Christians’ Bibles, this leaf is well worn, — sometimes worn out. We have here our Lord’s homely talk to his disciples; it is full of sublimity, yet it is blessedly simple. There is a sort of unveiling of himself in this chapter. It is not so much like a public discourse as a private conversation and this tends to make the Saviour’s speech appear the more condescending, and yet also the more sublime.

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

There is no cure for heart-trouble but heart-trust. “Ye believe in God,” —you do trust in Divine Providence, now trust in the Saviour’s great atonement. You have come close to God already, come closer still to the Incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ; hear him say to you, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Your faith already deals with some things; now let it deal with more things. Your past troubles have been endured by faith; now endure the present in the same way.

John 14:2. In my Father’s house are many mansions:

You are at home in Christ even now if you are a believer in him. Wherever you are, you are your Heavenly Father’s own child; and you have realized the truth of what David wrote in the twenty-third Psalm, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Usually, when we are singing that sweetly-solemn hymn, beginning — “For ever with the Lord,” we are thinking about heaven. That is quite right; but “for ever” means now as well as the future, it covers time here as well as eternity in glory. We are with the Lord even now; whether we are down here or up there.

John 14:2. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

So that, when you go from this earth, you need not fear that you will be launched into space, or that you will have to plunge into the great unknown,



John 14:3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

“I will come to you by my Spirit. I will come to you by-and-by, if my Father shall purpose it, in the hour of death; or if not, I will come in person at my second advent; but, in any case, I will be sure to come. My dear children, I am going away, but it is only for a little while. I am coming again, so be not troubled as though you had said ‘Good-bye’ to me forever. ‘I will come again,’ and when I do come, I shall never go from you again.”

John 14:4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Yes, we do know where Christ has gone, and we also know the way.

John 14:5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

I like to hear Thomas talk, even though his is a very unwise speech; I wonder when you and I ever made wise ones. We never do unless we borrow them, for all that comes of us naturally is childish and foolish, “for we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” When the child becomes a man, he will put away childish things; but meanwhile our speech betrayeth us. We seldom speak even of any of the great mysteries of the gospel without uttering some words of our own which show that we have understood them yet. I think the Lord likes us to display our ignorance, first that we may know it, and then that he may remove it.

John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Christ has gone to the Father’s upper house to make it ready for all the redeemed family. We could never have entered there if he had not gone in first; and even now, there is no coming to the Father in faith or in prayer except by Christ, we must not even dream of communion with God except through our Lord Jesus Christ. Luther used to say — and to say very wisely, too, — “I will have nothing to do with an absolute God; I must come to God by Christ Jesus.” “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

John 14:7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

All of the Father that we can know is visible in Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” And if we truly know Christ, we also know the Father. Christ always seems to be knowable, for he brings himself down to such a nearness to us that it seems easy to know him. Well, then, knowing Christ, we also know the Father, and have seen him.

John 14:8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Thomas spoke just now like a babe in grace, now here is Philip talking like another baby; yet how bold his speech is! “Lord, shew us the Father.” Why, no man can see the Father’s face, and live! Yet here is a child of God apparently forgetful of that fact.

John 14:9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Is not this a homely talk between the Master and his disciples? Said I not rightly that Christ here seems to unveil and unbosom himself? He lets these children of his talk away much at their ease; and I think we ought to be at ease when we are talking with Christ. Some like a very stately service in their worship, something very grand, that makes ordinary worshippers stand afar off. Let them enjoy it if they can; but as for us, we prefer something which permits us to come very near to our Lord.

John 14:10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?

Yes, Lord, we do believe that; thine eternal and inseparable union with the Father is a doctrine about which we have no question whatsoever.

John 14:10. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Notice, dear friends, that even the Lord Jesus Christ did not profess to teach doctrines out of his own mind. He says, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." Now, if it is so with the Master, how much more ought it to be so with the servants! But have you not noticed how it is with the great men of the pulpit in these days? It is, "What I have thought out, I make known to you." It is, "What has come to me by the spirit of the age, the culture of the period, I tell you." God save us from this kind of talk! It is no business of mine, I know, ever to come to you merely with a message of my own; for if the Lord Jesus Christ did not do so, what a feel his servant must be if he pretends to do it! No; if it is not revealed in this Book, neither shall it be taught by us, nor ought it to be received by you. So Jesus says to his disciples, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." He glories in his union with the Father, and in the fact that he does not come as an independent teacher of thoughts of his own inventing, but he tells out to us what is in his Father's heart.

John 14:11-12. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

We cannot do Christ's redeeming work; it would be blasphemy to suppose that we could, for he said of it, "It is finished." But we can do the kind of work that Christ did in instructing men, and in being the means of blessing men. Many of the apostles brought to a knowledge of the truth more souls than their Lord did by his personal ministry. He was pleased, after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, to bring great multitudes to the faith by some of his servants, while he himself preached, comparatively speaking, to but few, only journeying up and down that little land of Palestine, and scarcely traversing all of it. And if we will but trust him, and seek to imitate his wondrous life, we also shall do the works that he did, and do them on an even larger scale, and do them with even greater results.

John 14:13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Observe the breadth of prayer: "If ye shall ask any thing." Yet observe also the limit of prayer: "If ye shall ask any thing in my name." There are some things which we should not ask in Christ's name, as we have no promise about them, or because we have indications that they would be contrary to God's usual method of procedure. We must not ask, in the name of Christ, for what would be absurd or outrageous for us to expect God to grant, neither dare we use that sacred name in pleading for things which would only be for the satisfaction of our own will. We must let the will of God rise above all; but, subject to that will, we may ask anything in Christ's name, and he will do it.

John 14:15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Obedience is the truest proof of love. Some, out of supposed love to Christ, have attempted or committed acts of fanaticism; they have been enthusiastic, and, in many cases, doubtless, very sincere; but they have also been very unwise. Here is the best thing that you can do out of love for Christ: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; —

"One who will not need to die, and so to be separated from you; but who, once coming to you, shall tarry with you throughout the ages;" —

John 14:17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Do you not notice how this verse contradicts the current thought of the period about “the spirit of the age” being so much in advance of the Spirit of all past ages? Listen again to these words of our Lord: “The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive.” The world is always receiving one form of falsehood or another; tossed to and fro, and never abiding long in one stay, it cries, “This is the truth,” or “That is the truth,” or “Now we have it; this is the truth.” But Christ says, “The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

John 14:18. I will not leave you comfortless:

Or, “orphans,” for that is the meaning of the original: “I will not leave you orphans.”

John 14:18-20. I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

This is all very simple; the words are nearly all words of one syllable, yet there are depths here in which a leviathan might plunge, and lose himself.

John 14:21-23. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Only holy men can see the holy Christ, and it is only as we walk in obedience to him that we can have the Son of God walking with us, and the Father and the Son dwelling with us.

John 14:24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.

Notice that important truth again, and observe what weight and what stress Christ lays upon it.

John 14:25-26. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Brethren, ought we not to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, since the Father himself does everything in that name? Even concerning the sending of the Comforter, Christ says, “whom the Father will send in my name.” Then, he would certainly have the Father and the children acting upon the same principles; the Father glorifying Christ by sending the Spirit in his name, and ourselves glorifying Christ by presenting our prayers and praises in that one adorable name.

John 14:27. Peace I leave with you, —

“I told you not to let your heart be troubled; now I go further, and I leave you this precious legacy of peace: ‘Peace I leave with you,’ “  
—

John 14:27. My peace I give unto you: —

“My own deep peace, which even my sufferings and death cannot disturb:” —

John 14:27-29. Not as the world giveth, give 1 unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Oh, what numbers of things which Christ foretold have come to pass already! Have you, dear friends, believed all the more because of them? How many answers to prayer, how many deliverances out of trouble, how many helps in the time of need, have you had! Surely, when all this has come to pass, you ought to believe.

John 14:30-31. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do, Arise, let us go hence.

So the Saviour went forth to his passion and his death, that all might know the supremacy of his love to the Father and his love to his people. And so let us, in our measure, be ever ready to say, Arise, let us go hence, service or to suffering, since our Saviour leads the way.

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Here is a troubled company of disciples, very much cast down, so their Divine Master, full of infinite tenderness, talks to them in this gentle manner, "Let not your heart be troubled." He does not like to see them troubled; and when they are, he is troubled also. Our Lord here prescribes faith as the only remedy for heart trouble. If you, poor troubled soul, can believe, you will leave off fretting. Twice our Lord uses the word "believe." He seems to say to his disciples, "Take another dose of faith; it will take away from you this faintness of heart from which you are suffering: 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.'" And then he seeks to make them forget their heart trouble by talking most sweetly to them about his Father, and his Father's dwelling-place. It is a great thing to divert the mind, when it is troubled, from that which bores into it, and threatens to destroy it.

John 14:2. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.

"You have all my heart, so I have no secrets from you. 'If it were not so, I would have told you;' even in going away from you, I am going away for your good."

John 14:2. I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself;

"I will not send an angel to fetch you, but I will myself come for you. If you die, I will come for you in that way; but if you live on until my Second Advent, 'I will come again, and receive you unto myself.'"

John 14:3. That where I am, there ye may be also.

"So do not be troubled because I am going away from you. I am going first in order that you may follow afterwards, I am going as the Pioneer into that blessed state where you shall dwell with me for ever; so do not be troubled at my departure." How tenderly and lovingly this is all put!

John 14:4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

"I am not going to take a leap into the dark; you know where I am going, and you also know the road along which I am going." Ah! but sometimes sorrow forgets what it knows, and thus creates a cloud of unnecessary ignorance which darkens and increases the sorrow.

John 14:5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

It was a pity that Thomas had such a thought as this in his mind, but as it was there, it is a great mercy that he told his Lord of it. Sometimes to put your trouble down in black and white is a quick way to get rid of it; but to bring it to your Lord in prayer is a still better plan.

John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

How impossible it is fully to describe our Lord in human language! He is going away, yet he is himself the way; and he is himself the beginning and the end, he is everything to his people: "the way, the truth, and the life." We are obliged to have mixed metaphors when we talk of Christ, for he is the mixture of everything that is delightful and precious. All over glorious is our Lord; there is no way of setting him forth to the full in our poor halting speech.

John 14:7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from, henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

It cheers the children of God to talk to them about their Father, and about their Father's house, so that is what the Elder Brother did in his great kindness to his disciples, he talked to them about their Father and his heaven.

John 14:8-10. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Christ and the Father are indissolubly one. Even when he was here in his humiliation, he was not separated from his Father, except in that dread hour when he was bearing his people's sins upon the cross. Now he is visibly one with his Father on the throne of glory.

John 14:11-12. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also;

"I am going away from you; but be not dismayed, for I shall not take away my power from you; that will still remain with you."

John 14:12. And greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

"My very absence will let loose a greater power than you could have experienced while I was here. You will need more power when I am gone from you, and you shall have more. Therefore, 'let not your heart be troubled.' Besides, you will be able still to pray, and prayer will bring you greater blessings than any that I ever gave you."

John 14:13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Every word in this address of Christ was full of comfort to his disciples.

John 14:15-16. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;-

There was the One who would enable the disciples to meet every trial, —that other Comforter. "Intimate Knowledge of the Holy

Spirit.” whom Christ promised to them. Their trouble was that their Lord was going away from them; that other Comforter made amends for that, and he will make amends to you, believer, for every form of trial to which you may be exposed. Is it bodily weakness? Is it the infirmity of old age? Is it depression of spirit? Is it losses and crosses at home? Is it crooked things that cannot be made straight? Well Christ’s promise still stands good, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;” —

John 14:17. Even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him;-

“You are on familiar terms with him, you are intimate with him, you know him;” —

John 14:17-20. For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

These are the three wonderful mysteries of the union between God, and Christ, and his people: “I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

John 14:21-22. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

“Peradventure, if thou didst manifest thyself to the world, the world would bow down before thee, and worship thee.” But Christ’s plan was to manifest himself to the inner circle of his own chosen ones.

John 14:23-27. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.

He had given them peace while he was with them. His divine presence had been their continual comfort; but now, although he was going away from them, he would leave his peace behind him as the most precious legacy that he could bequeath to them: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”

John 14:27-28. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice,-

“ I know that you do love me; but if you really acted as if you loved me, you would rejoice,” —

John 14:28. Because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

The Lord Jesus, though equal with the Father, had voluntarily laid aside his glory and taken the form and place of a man, making himself of no reputation, so his disciples ought to have rejoiced that he was going back to his primitive glory.

John 14:29-30. And now I have told you, before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

Still Christ would have enough to do to meet that arch-enemy, and to endure all that would come upon him during that dread encounter.

John 14:31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Let us read that well-known and most blessed chapter, John 14, which so clearly shows our Saviour's tender consideration for the comfort of his people, lest the great grief excited in them by his impending death should altogether break their hearts.

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

I think our Saviour meant to say, and really did say. "If ye believe in God, ye are believing in me; and if ye believe in me, ye are believing in God; for there is such a perfect unity between us that you need not, when I die make any distinction between me and God, but still believe in me as ye believe in the Father."

John 14:2. In my Father's house are many mansion: if it were not so, I would have told you.

"Wicked men will shut you out of my Father's house below: the temple at Jerusalem, though being still used for Jewish worship after all its ritual and ceremonialism have been abolished, will cease to be my Father's house to you; but there is a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and there is room for all of you there. When this country gets to be a desert to you, remember that there is the home country, the blessed glory land, on the other side of the river, and the Father's house there with its many mansions."

John 14:2-3. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you, unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Jesus often keeps this promise in many senses. By his gracious spirit, he has come again, by his divine presence in the means of grace, he often comes again. By-and-by, if we die, he will come again to meet us; and if we do not die, then will the promise be fulfilled to the greatest possible extent, for Jesus will come again, and receive in his own proper person those who are alive and remain unto his coming. Anyhow, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself," remains one of the sweetest promises that was ever given to believers by the Lord Jesus Christ. He did not say, "I will receive you to heaven;" he promised something far better than that: "I will receive you unto myself." Oh, what bliss it will be to get to Christ, to be with him for ever and ever!

John 14:4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

"At least, I have taught it to you; I have explained it to you; I have told you that I am the goal of your way, and the way to your goal; that I am the end, and also the way to that end."

John 14:5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Oh, how much ignorance there may be where there ought to be much knowledge. It is not always the man who lives in the sunlight who sees the most. Thomas had been one of the twelve apostles for years, he had during all that time had Christ for his Teacher, yet he had learned very little. With such poor teachers as we are, it is no wonder if our hearers and scholars learn but little from us, yet they ought to learn much from Christ, although I think that we learn nothing even from Jesus Christ himself except under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

"I am going to the Father, — that is where I am going, Thomas, and you can only come to the Father by me; do you not know that?"

John 14:7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also:

For Christ is the express image of his Father's person, so that you always see the Father when you see the Son.

John 14:7. And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Thomas had made an advance in heavenly knowledge; he had taken a higher degree in divinity now that the Master had taught him so much upon this most important point: "from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."

John 14:8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

It was not merely one of Christ's scholars, you see, who was so dull of comprehension, here is another of the dunces, Philip.

John 14:9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet had thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

He who really knows Christ, and understands Christ's character, understands, so far as it can be understood by man, the character of God. We know more of God from the life of Christ than we can learn from any other source.

John 14:10-12. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

The Lord Jesus Christ, after he had gone back to heaven gave to his servants the power to do these "greater works" — the Holy spirit resting upon them, — in the gathering in of the nations unto their Lord. Whereas Christ kept to one little country, he sent his first disciples, and he sends us still to preach the gospel to every creature in the whole world, and he clothes his servants with all needful authority and power to do the work he has committed to their charge.

John 14:13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

There is the only limit to true believing prayer. There are some things which we could not ask in Christ's name; that is, using his authority in asking for them. There are some wishes and whims that we may cherish, not that we think we may pray about; but we have not Christ's name or authority to warrant us in expecting that we shall realize them, and therefore we cannot ask for them in his name. To say, "For Christ's sake," is one thing; but to say, "I ask this in Christ's name," is quite another matter. He never authorized you to make use of his name about everything. There are only certain things about which you can pray in his name, such as are the express subject of a divine promise, and when you pray for one of those things, you shall prove Christ's words to be true, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

John 14:15-16. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,

The Paraclete, the Succored, the Helper. The word "Comforter" has lost its old meaning; you get it in certain old writings, when you read of such-and-such a man that he gave to someone else succor and comfort. There is more here than merely giving us consolation. It means Helper: "He shall give you another Helper." Advocatus is the Latin, and that too is the correct word: "He shall give you another advocate," —



John 14:16-17. That he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Worldly men are not cognizant of the existence of the Holy Spirit. They do not believe in him; they say that there may or may not be such a Divine Being in the world as the Holy Spirit, but they have never come across his path. This then is one of the tests of true believers, the twice-born, they have received a new nature which enables them to recognize the existence of the Spirit of God and to feel the influence of his work: "Ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

John 14:18-19. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me:

"Your spiritual sight, which discerns the presence with you of the Holy Spirit, will show my continued existence when I am gone away from you."

John 14:19-20. Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my father, and ye in me, and I in you.

This is something more for us to know. To know that Christ is in the Father, is of a thing; but it is still more for us to understand the next mystic unity, "ye in me, and I in you." Oh, wondrous combination of the Father and the Son, and of Immanuel, God with us, and ourselves!

John 14:21-22. He that hath my commandment, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Large-hearted Judas, very different from Judas Iscariot! He wants Christ to manifest himself to all the world; he seems to have been a man of very broad views. He does not comprehend discriminating love and electing grace; he wants all the privileges of the children of God to be the privileges of the King's enemies, but that cannot be.

John 14:23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Christ is sure to manifest himself to those who love him, but how can he manifest himself to those who love him not? They cannot see him; they would not appreciate him if they could see him, they have no spiritual taste with which to enjoy him.

John 14:24-26. He that loveth me not keepeth not my saying: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Do we sufficiently look to the Holy Spirit for divine teaching? We read our Bibles, I trust, with diligence, and also any explanatory books by which we may better understand our Bibles, but do we look up to the Holy Spirit, and ask him distinctly and immediately to teach us what is the meaning of Christ's words, and to bring them to our remembrance? I wish we did this more than we do.

John 14:27. Peace I leave with you,

"That is my legacy to you."

John 14:27. My peace I give unto you: —

My own deep calm of spirit, which is not ruffled or broken though the contradiction of sinners continually annoys me: "My peace I

give unto you.” Christ puts his hand into his heart, and takes out of that priceless casket the choicest jewel it contains, — his own peace, and he says, “Wear that on your finger, the seal and token of my love.” “My peace I give unto you:” —

John 14:27. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

“With an expectation of getting a reward for it; neither do I give it to take it back again; nor do I give it in mere presence; I give it in reality, sincerely, disinterestedly, as your freehold possession for ever.”

John 14:27-28. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Christ as man had condescended to become less than the Father; he had taken upon himself the form of a servant, but now he was going back to take his own natural dignity again. We ought to rejoice in his gain. Though you may think it a loss not to have his corporeal presence, yet would you like to call him away from yonder harps that ring out his praises, and the perfect love of the Father with whom he reigns supreme? Oh, no, blessed Master, stay where thou art!

John 14:29-31. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

John 14:1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

You will be troubled; that cannot be helped. But let not your heart be troubled. You are like a ship, and all the water in the sea cannot hurt a ship, if it is kept outside of her. Let not your heart be troubled. How are you to prevent it? Faith is the remedy. Ye believe already; believe more. “Ye believe in God; believe also in me.” “You have a trust in the infinite power of God; believe in me as the incarnation of his infinite love.”

John 14:2. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

There is no room for you on earth; there will be in heaven. If troubles should so multiply that it seems impossible to live in them, you shall be carried away where you shall live above them “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” You may depend upon the love of Christ beloved, for if there were anything dark, mysterious, distressing, which would lead you to despair, he would not have kept it back. He treats you frankly. “If it were not so I would have told you. I go, and you are sorry that I go. It is the source of your sorrow. But I go to prepare place for you.”

John 14:3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Oh! this is ground for sweet comfort, and it ought to yield it to us tonight. He has gone, but he will come again; he has not left us for ever. Space divides us for awhile; but, skipping over the mountains like a roe and a young hart, he will come again, even to this poor world, and to us, his waiting church, he will come again. Therefore, have patience. Let not your heart be troubled. Jesus Christ will come very soon.

John 14:4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Ye know where Christ is gone. Ye know how to get at him. The throne on which he sits is the throne of grace. He is gone to the Father, and your prayers will find the Father. You know the way. Then frequent it; and though as yet in your bodies you cannot reach to him, yet in spirit you can. “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”

John 14:5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

Which was a contradiction of his Master, which Thomas ought not to have uttered. He should have put it much rather in the form of a question for explanation, than of such a fiat denial. His Master said, "Whither I go ye know." He said, "We know not whither thou goest." But we must take care that we do not contradict Christ. Our unbelief would be shamed out of us, if we were to look at it and examine it. I am persuaded that your faith will be justified the more you examine it, till you will discover that faith in God is nothing, after all, but sanctified common sense. So unbelief will appear to be more shameful the more you examine it, till you discover at length that it is nothing but garish folly. An outrage upon the first principles of wisdom is distrust of God.

John 14:6-7. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

This, then, is the main point of knowledge with us, to know Christ. All the studies in the world are vain, compared with the study of Christ crucified. This is the most excellent of all the sciences. He that knoweth Christ knoweth the way, the truth, the life, yea, and God himself.

John 14:8-9. Philip saith unto him, Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

The best view of God we can ever have is Christ in the person of his Son. There is more seen of God than in all nature; aye and in all history added to nature. God hath given us a full-length portrait of himself in Jesus; while in all his works, we have no more than a mere miniature of him. Oh! that we knew Christ more; then should we know the Father.

John 14:10-12. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Oh! what strength there is in faith. These are the same people who are not to be troubled. They are to rise so much above trouble of heart, that they are to become performers of works like to Christ. Yea, and since Christ has gone, and he has endowed us with the Holy Spirit, we are to do yet greater works than he did. Oh! to know the possibilities of our nature; to know what God can do by us. What appears to us as we are, as unable to be done, we may be enabled to do through the spirit of God which is in Christ Jesus.

John 14:13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

It does not mean that every prayer will be answered. The power to ask a thing in Christ's name is not given to everybody. It is not merely to say at the end of your prayer, "for Christ's sake." It is another thing; it is to be able to feel that, as Christ stood in your place, so you dare stand in Christ's place; and what you have asked, you have asked in his name, feeling that what you have asked is such that Christ would have asked it. Now, when you can feel that, and can feel that Christ puts his seal on what you have asked, then, you ask in his name. A person cannot always speak in the name of another; cannot do it at all unless he has received an authorization so to do. Then he stands as that person's deputy; stands in his place; speaks in his name. I am sure that nine out of ten of the prayers of Christians are not offered in the name of Christ, and could not be. It would be a sin against Christ for such prayers to be supposed to be the prayers of Christ. But when we talk of the Spirit of God, and we dare ask in the name and use the seal of Christ to set his signature at the bottom of our petition, then, brethren, depend upon it Christ will do it.

John 14:15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Oh! some of us would have liked him to have said, "If ye love me, give all your money; go into a convent. If ye love me, perform

some wonderful action. Go into the streets and preach; where you would be hooted. Go to some foreign country and get yourself made a martyr of." No, no; "If ye love me, keep my commandments. Stop at home near your father and mother. If ye love me, love my disciples. Let love rule you. And in that place in life in which I have set you, try to honour my name by exhibiting my character. If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:16-19. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him: for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

"Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me." Now, when the world does not see him, we still see him. He is present to our faith, though passing from our sight. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Is he a dead Christ? Then he has a dead people for his church. He is a living Saviour: he has a living people; and they shall no more die than he shall die; "for he, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." "Because I live, ye shall live also."

John 14:20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in You.

What a wonderful union this is — Christ in the Father; the saints in Christ, and Christ in the saints. These be riddles which are not meant for the children of this world; but they who are the children of God shall understand them, shall live upon them.

John 14:21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:

Not he that preaches about them, talks much about them; boasts about a higher life and all sorts of things; but "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

John 14:21-22. And he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

If thou dost manifest thyself to us, who are only a few poor fishermen, thou does not extend thy kingdom so; but if thou wouldest manifest thyself to the world in all thy glory, surely they would be surprised and overwhelmed, and thy kingdom would thus come. But that is not Christ's way. His manifestations are for his own: not for glitter, but for edification. He comes to bless them; not that he may be ostentatious among men.

John 14:23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Oh! what an honoured man that — for the Father and the Son to be his guests, to make an abode in his heart.

John 14:24-28. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Christ had stooped to take a lower place for our sakes.

John 14:29-31. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not

talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father gave me commandment, even so do, Arise, let us go hence.

John 14:15-16. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Is it not very sweet to think that the Spirit of God is given to the Church in answer to the prayer of Christ? Prayer is a holy exercise, for Jesus prayed; and what a powerful influence prayer has, for his prayer has brought to us “another Comforter,” —

John 14:17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:

This poor world will not receive anything which it cannot see. It is ruled by its senses; it is carnal and fleshly, and mindeth not the things that are unseen. It cannot discern them.

John 14:17-18. But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

That expression, “I will not leave you comfortless,” might be rendered, “I will not leave you orphans.”

John 14:19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

What a wealth of meaning these words contain! The sentences are very simple, but they are also sublime. The gorgeous language, in which some orators indulge, is, when the meaning of it is condensed, like great clouds of steam which produce but a few drops of water. But, here, you have vast baths pressed into a small compass, and those that seem most plain are really the most deep. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” As surely as Christ lives, so must his people. They cannot die, for he lives, to die no more, and they live in him.

John 14:20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Mysterious triple union, — Christ in the Father, we in Christ, and Christ in us. This is a complete riddle to all who have never been taught of the Spirit of God.

John 14:21-22. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world ?

He did really answer the question, though perhaps not directly. This is the process by which he manifests himself unto his people, and not unto the world: —

John 14:23-24. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

There is Divine authority at the back of every word uttered by the Man Christ Jesus. His message comes not from himself alone, but from the Eternal Father as well.

John 14:25-28. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice,

because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And truly so he was, for Christ had, for a while, laid aside his own greatness, and taken the position of a servant.

John 14:29-30. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

His words must come to an end, for he vies going to perform his mightiest deeds. He could converse no longer, for he was going from converse to conflict. He must meet his great enemy now and leave his dearest friends.

John 14:31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

And so he went to the garden of Gethsemane, — a brave, gentle, confident, victorious spirit, “straitened” till he had accomplished the great work of our redemption.

John 14:15-17. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

“I am going away from you, you will not have my personal presence much longer; but I will send you One who will never go away from you, for whom there is no death and no departure: ‘another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth,’ — who knows the truth, who can teach the truth, and who applies the truth to the hearts and consciences of men, — ‘whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.’” Let us not imagine that the world ever will receive the Spirit of God. It is supposed by some, that the world gets more enlightened from age to age, but that is a supposition for which there is not the slightest foundation. The death of human nature never develops into life; the darkness brought by the Fall never becomes light without the operation of a supernatural power. It is the Spirit of God that worketh this change in God’s own children: “but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” He was with them in a certain sense, even while Christ was here; else they would have learned nothing; and he was more fully in them when Christ had gone back to heaven; hence they learned, after Pentecost, more of the meaning of the gospel than they had ever gathered from the teaching of their Master.

John 14:18-19. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

There is a continuous sight of Christ even as there is a continuous life in Christ. They who have not received the life of Christ cannot see Christ. How can there be eyes without life, and how can there be the spiritual sight of Christ without the spiritual life in him?

John 14:20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

This is a wonderful trinity of unities, each one a mystery, but each one to be known by the believer when he is instructed of the Spirit of God: Christ in the Father, the saints in Christ, and Christ in them. He that experimentally knoweth what it is to be in Christ knoweth more than all the secular philosophers who have ever lived.

John 14:21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Oh, what privileges are enjoyed by those who love the Lord Jesus Christ! We cannot help loving him, and by that love we are assured that the Father himself loves us, and we have the promise that Christ will yet more and more manifest himself to us.

John 14:22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

“Why are we the subjects of this election, this selection, this gracious manifestation?”

John 14:23. Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Just as the angels came to believing Abraham, and sojourned for a little while with him, so will Jesus and the Father, strangers in this world, become sojourners with us. Jesus says of the man who loves him, “My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” This is not a mere call, it is an abiding: “we will make our abode with him.” God, whom the heavens cannot contain yet comes and dwells in a lowly heart, and abides with a loving spirit: “We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” There is an aroma about these words which I cannot convey to you; but if you have the spiritual nostril, you will perceive their fragrance for yourselves.

John 14:24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.

You see that the Lord Jesus Christ does not profess to be a great original thinker, but he speaks as the Messenger sent by the Father, and unless we also are commissioned and taught by the Father, of what value will our poor feeble thoughts be? Our only power lies in the fact that we do not utter our own thoughts, but the truths which have been taught to us by the Holy Spirit. To some, this may look like weakness, but it is real strength.

John 14:25-27. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, —

When men in the East met one another, they usually gave the salutation, “Peace be unto you,” “Peace be to this house;” but Christ says: —

John 14:27. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

“I do not say, ‘Peace, Peace,’ where there is no peace. It is not a mere formal salutation, but there is a real, true peace communicated to you when I thus speak.”

John 14:28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Love makes us rejoice in the prosperity of the one we love. The Lord Jesus Christ in coming to this earth, had taken upon himself a subordinate position: he had become the stepping-stone between man and God; but now that he was returning to his glory, returning to his Father, it was the bounder duty of those who loved him to rejoice, and we should do the same now. He has left behind him the humiliation, the scorn, the spitting, the crucifixion, and who among us, who truly loves him, would wish to bring him back to this poor earth as he came at first? Ah, no! It is well that all that is over, there is sweetest music to our ears in our Lord’s declaration, “It is finished;” and our soul swims in a sea of light as we think of the ineffable glory with the father to which he has returned for ever.

John 14:29-31. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

“Let us go to Gethsemane and to the Passion; let us go to fulfill the Father’s will.” It was a sure proof of Christ’s love when he went forward from speaking to suffering that he might save his own forever.

John 14:15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to dwell with us unless we are obedient to the commands of Christ. Our Saviour here tells us much about the spirit of truth, but he begins with this test of our love to him, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

John 14:16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Not a different Comforter, but the Comforter who is now with us, is of the same nature, and works after the same manner, as the Lord Jesus himself, who was our first Advocate, Helper, Paraclete, Comforter: I give you these four words instead of one, because they are all wrapped up in the original word 'Paraclete'—"that he may abide with you for ever and ever." The Lord Jesus could not abide with us for ever, it was expedient for him that he should go to heaven to prepare a place for us. But the Holy Spirit will not go; he will remain in this dispensation, even to the end of it,—“that he may abide with you for ever.”

John 14:17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The world knows nothing about the Holy Spirit; it can hear the gospel, it can hear the outward word, but the living, mystic, inward Spirit the world knows nothing of.

John 14:18-19. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

“While I am away the Holy Spirit shall be your Comforter, you shall not be like orphans without father or friend.” Jesus will come a second time. This is our joyful hope, but meanwhile, while he is away, we are not without a Comforter. “Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more.” What a wonderful thing! The children of God always see Jesus spiritually. “But ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also.” There is life in a look, and our continued sight of Christ brings us continued life through Christ. Because he lives, there is a loving, living, lasting union between us and Christ.

John 14:20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Three wonderful unions, Christ in the Father, his people in Christ, Christ in his people. If you are instructed of the Lord, you will understand this text. This is such knowledge as the universities cannot teach; it is such knowledge as the most-learned doctors cannot attain to by themselves.

Only the Spirit of God can teach us these things.

John 14:21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

He must have obedience. Christ cannot come and comfortably manifest himself to those who are living out of order and disregarding his words. Take heed, children of God, of disobedience; it is a discipline of the divine family that if we disobey we should lose the comfortable presence of our Lord. “I will manifest myself to him.”

John 14:22-23. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Christ and his Father dwell with obedient people: “We will dwell with him, and make our abode with him.” Oh, that we might carefully



watch our thoughts, our words, our acts, lest we grieve our Lord. He will manifest himself to us when we yield ourselves to him. When we obey his will, it will be his will to honour us with his constant presence.

John 14:24. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings:

There is much talk of loyalty to Christ, but the teachings of Christ are despised. The teachings of his apostles are the teachings of Christ they are but a prolongation and exposition of what Christ taught. In rejecting them we reject Christ. He will not have it that we can be loyal to him and yet refuse his teaching.

John 14:24. And the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

It is a wonderful denial of originality on the part of Christ. If anybody could have spoken his own word, it was surely the Christ of God. But he was a messenger, and he delivered his message. Now, if it be so with Christ, how much more so with us who are very inferior messengers. We ought to be very careful that we do not deliver our own thoughts, or suggestions, excogitations and philosophies. "The word which ye hear is not mine," (that I can most emphatically say,) "but the Father's which sent me." You see, when we deliver a message which is not ours but the Father's, we feel safe about it; we feel sure of its success, whereas, if we were the makers of it, we should often question whether we had not told you falsely: but if we can fall back upon the Word of God, and prove it from what the Father has said, then do we feel we are no longer responsible.

John 14:25-26. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

That is the teaching. The Holy Spirit does not reveal anything fresh to us. He brings to our remembrance what has already been said and written in the inspired Word. Whereas the Book conveys to us the outward sense, the Holy Ghost conveys to us the inner meaning. The embodiment of truth you have in this Book, but the truth itself, dealing with the conscience, and heart, and spirit must be led home by the Author of the Book, by the Holy Ghost himself.

John 14:27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:

Have you got it, brothers and sisters? Are you at peace at this moment? "I am very much troubled," says one. Well, you are to have tribulation here; but you are to have peace with it. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Christ you shall have peace. If you have got the bitter herbs, do not be satisfied with bitter herbs, ask for the Paschal Lamb.

John 14:27. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Come, tell your trouble to your Lord, ask the Holy Spirit to exercise the office of Comforter upon you now at this very moment.

John 14:28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

The Lord Jesus had taken a subordinate place, he had become the servant of the Father, the messenger for the Father, but he was going back to reassume his glory. That ought to be a subject of joy to us. Let us bless Jesus that he is not here. If he were here in his former state he would be in his humiliation; but now he has gone to his glory. Let us rejoice in this.

John 14:29. And now I have told you before it came to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

Jesus warned his disciples of all that was to happen in his death and in his departure. I believe that the Spirit of God often gives

inward warnings to God's people of troubles that are to come, -monitions, so that they may be prepared for the trouble when it comes, and may feel as if he had told them before it came to pass.

John 14:30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

He would have very few words, for he was going to the bloody sweat and scourging and death: his words might well be few, for his actions would speak more loudly than words.

John 14:31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

And they left the supper-table to go to the garden, the garden of his agony. Let us be willing to go wherever God calls us.

In this "sacred farewell" talk of our Lord's, he gives us many a revelation of the soul's way of intercourse with him.

John 14:21-22. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them. he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Many a time have we asked that question with great admiration of the special sovereign grace of God, that he should manifest himself to us, and not to the world. It is an unanswerable question. It is "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

John 14:23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Where the grace of God has created love between us and Christ, there is a window through which Christ can manifest himself to us. Why he gave us that love we do not know, but when he has given us that love he will not deny us communion with himself.

John 14:24-26. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Spirit does not teach us any new doctrine. Fix that in your minds, for in the present age we have numbers of persons who talk about being inspired with the Holy Ghost, and who come with all kinds of crudities and fooleries. Believe them not. The Holy Ghost says no other and no more than the Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you." The canon of revelation is closed. None can add to it without a curse. Do not accept any testimony that would add to it. Keep you to what is here found, and pray the Holy Spirit to lead you into the clear understanding of it.

John 14:27-28. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Christ had himself less than the Father in his state of humiliation, and now he is returning to the Father to be re-clothed with honour and majesty. Should we not rejoice in that?

John 14:29-31. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so do I. Arise, let us go hence.

And he went; to his death bravely determined, to do the Father's will, though it meant the drinking up of that bitter cup, which made his very soul to tremble within him. God give us such love to Christ as Christ had to the Father.

## John 15 Commentary

John 15:1. I am the true vine,

Now we know where to find the true Church. It is to be found only in Christ and in those who are joined to him in mystical but real union: "I am the true vine,"

John 15:1. And my Father is the husbandman.

Now we know who is the true Guardian of the Church. Not the so-called "holy father" at Rome, but that Father above, who is the true Guardian, Ruler, Keeper, Preserver, Purifier, Husbandman of the one Church, the vine.

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

There are many such branches, in Christ's visible Church, which are not fruit-bearing branches, and consequently are not partakers of the sap of life and grace which flows into the branches that are vitally joined to the central stem. These fruitless branches are to be taken away.

John 15:2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

There is some work, then, for the knife upon all the branches; cutting off for those that are fruitless, cutting for those that are bearing some fruit, that they may bring forth yet more.

John 15:3. Now ye are clean [purged] through the word which I have spoken unto you.

The Word is often the knife with which the great Husbandman prunes the vine; and, brothers and sisters, if we were more willing to feel the edge of the Word, and to let it cut away even something that may be very dear to us, we should not need so much pruning by affliction. It is because that first knife does not always produce the desired result that another sharp tool is used by which we are effectually pruned.

John 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you.

"Do not merely find a temporary shelter in me, as a ship runs into harbour in stormy weather, and then comes out again when the gale is over; but cast anchor in me, as the vessel does when it reaches its desired haven. Be not as branches that are tied on, and so can be taken off, but be livingly joined to me. 'Abide in me.'"

John 15:4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

You must bear fruit, or else be cast away; but you cannot bear any fruit except by real union and constant communion with Jesus Christ your Lord

John 15:5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me

ye can do nothing.

Not merely will you do very little, but you can do nothing at all if you are severed from Christ. You are absolutely and entirely dependent upon Christ both for your life and for your fruit-bearing. Do we not wish to have it so, beloved?. It is the incipient principle of apostasy when a man wishes to be independent of Christ in any degree, when he says, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me that I may have something in hand, some spending money of my own." No; you must, from day to day, from hour to hour, and even from moment to moment, derive life, light, love, everything that is good, from Christ. What a blessing that it is so!

John 15:6. If a man, abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

There is a sad future in store for tares, according to another parable; but, somehow, there is a much sadder lot reserved for those that were, in some sense, branches of the vine,— those who made a profession of faith in Christ, though they were never vitally united to him; those who for a while did run well, yet were hindered. What was it that hindered them that they should not obey the truth? Oh, it is sad indeed that any should have had any sort of connection with that divine stem, and yet should be cast into the fire!

John 15:7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Do not think that all men can pray alike effectually, for it is not so. There are some whom God will hear, and some whom God will not hear. And there are some even of his own children, whom he will hear in things absolutely vital and essential, to whom he never gave carte blanche after this fashion: "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." No, if you will not hear God's words, he will not hear yours; and if his words do not abide in you, your words shall not have power with him. They may be directed to heaven, but the Lord will not listen to them so as to have regard unto them. Oh, it needs very tender walking for one who would be mighty in prayer! You shall find that those who have had their will at the throne of grace are men who have done God's will in other places; it must be so. The greatest favourite at court will have a double portion of the jealousy of his monarch, and he must be specially careful that he orders his steps aright, or else the king will not continue to favor him as he was wont to do. There is a sacred discipline in Christ's house, a part of which consists in this, that, as our obedience to our God declines, so will our power in prayer decrease at the same time.

John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

If we are his true disciples, we also shall bring forth much fruit.

On the way from the supper table to the garden of Gethsemane, or while still lingering in the upper room, our Lord spoke this wondrous parable.

John 15:1. I am the true vine,-

All other vines are but shadows of Christ. They represent Christ, but he is himself the substance. the essence, the one great reality. He is the truth of all things that exist: "I am the true Vine." Does anybody ask which is the true Church? All who are vitally joined to Christ are in the true Church, for he says, "I am the true Vine,"-

John 15:1. And my Father is the husbandman.

He cares for the Church with infinite wisdom and love. No one else can care for that true Vine as the Father-the Husbandman-does.

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

If there be any, who are only nominally in Christ, and who therefore bear no fruit, their doom is to be taken away; for, in order to final

perseverance and eternal safety, there must be fruit-bearing.

John 15:2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Pruning, then, is for fruit-bearers. If the branch were dead, what would be the good of pruning it? Say not, dear friends that your afflictions must be caused by your sins; nay, rather they may come in consequence of your virtues. Because you do bear fruit, it is worth while for the Husbandman to use his knife upon you, that you may bring forth more fruit.

John 15:3-4. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you.

Give good heed to that sweet word, beloved brethren, "Abide in me." Do not seem to get into Christ, and then depart from him. Add constancy to all your other graces.

John 15:4-5. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing.

You know how the branch is in the vine, it is a component part of the vine; but do not forget that the vine is also in the branch, -that the sap, which is the very life of the vine, flows into every living branch. So we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, and he says to us, as the marginal reading has it, "Severed from me, ye can do nothing." What! not even a little, Lord? Can we not do something good, something acceptable apart from thee? No; "Without me, ye can do nothing."

John 15:6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

That is all that can be done with fruitless vine-branches. You cannot make anything of them. Other trees yield timber, and are useful for various purposes; but, with the vine, it is as the prophet Ezekiel says, "Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?" It is useless if it is fruitless; and so is it with us, if we do not bear fruit unto God, we are of no service to him whatsoever.

John 15:7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Here is the secret of prevailing prayer. It is not every man who chooses to pray, who shall have whatever he asks of God; but the successful pleader is the man who abides in Christ, and in whom Christ's words abide. God will not hear our words if we disregard his words. We cannot expect our prayers to be prevalent if we are severed from our Lord.

John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

"Much fruit" should be produced by the disciples of the much-doing Christ.

The true Vine was full of fruit, and it scarcely can be believed that we are branches of that Vine if we exhibit only a little fruit. It is "much fruit" that proves our union to this Vine.

John 15:1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

All other vines were but types and shadows; Christ is the substance; God's ideal vine; "the true vine." Israel was a vine; — the figure is a common one throughout the Old Testament; — but it was a false vine, and it bore bitter grapes.

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

The true description of a real saint is that he is in Christ, that he abides in Christ, and that he bears fruit unto Christ. Where there are not these three things, there is no real saintship, and so the man is taken away. Whatever he seemeth to be, and seemeth to have, he is taken away. Oh, the sad loss of many professors in being taken away! What a terrible doom, to have had a name to live, and then to be taken away!

John 15:2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

The vine is very apt to become unclean and unhealthy; there are all sorts of creatures that love to suck its juices, so that even the most fruitful bough needs to be cleansed. Besides, the vine has a great tendency to run to wood, so the pruning-knife must be used very sharply. It will be used upon all who are really in Christ, and who are abiding in Christ.

John 15:3. Now ye are clean —

Those to whom the Saviour spoke: "Now ye are clean" —

John 15:3. Through the word which I have spoken unto you.

That is the great purger. Affliction is used, but it is rather the handle of the knife than the knife itself.

John 15:4. Abide in me, —

"Now that ye are clean, do not imagine that you can do without me: Abide in me," —

John 15:4. And I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

It is not a transient faith, it is not saying, "I was converted so many years ago;" but it is a living faith, an abiding faith, a constant vital union with Christ that marks the true heir of heaven.

John 15:5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

"Severed from me, ye can bear no fruit whatever. Not only can ye not do much, but ye can do nothing apart from me."

John 15:6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered;

As I have already reminded you, it is only an abiding faith that is a real faith, the faith that remains fixed in Christ the vital union with Christ maintained day by day.

John 15:6-11. And men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciple. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

If you are Christ's disciples now, you are to keep on being his disciples,

and to grow more and more so as the years advance.

John 15:1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

If you want to know where the true Church is, Christ here tells you: "I am the true vine." All who are in Christ are in the true Church. If you want to know who is the Father of the Church, its Keeper and Guardian, Christ here tells you: "My Father is the husbandman." Hence, I feel persuaded that the true vine, the Church, will never die, for it is Christ; and I am also persuaded that it will never be uprooted, for Jesus says, "My Father is the husbandman;" and that fact is a guarantee that he will take care of it.

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

In some sense, men and women may be in Christ by a mere outward profession; but if they have no evidence of a real union to Christ, if they produce no fruit, they will be taken away, some by death, and others by apostasy; but they will be taken away.

John 15:2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit!

From these words, it is clear that, many of the afflictions which we have to endure are not brought upon us because we are unfruitful, but because we are bearing fruit.

John 15:3-4. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Dear friends, beware of a Christless Christianity. Beware of trying to be Christians without living daily upon Christ. The branch may just as well try to bear fruit apart from the vine as for you to hope to maintain the reality of Christian life without continual fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 15:5-6. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

The vine must either bear fruit or be good for nothing; and you, believer, must be vitally united to Christ, and bear fruit in consequence of that union or else you will be like those fruitless vine-branches, of which our Lord said that "men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned,"

John 15:7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.

Do not take that verse as a promise of unlimited answers to prayer, for it is nothing of the kind. Remember the "if" that qualifies it: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," for a man who is truly in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, and who is feeding upon Christ's words, will be so influenced by the Holy Spirit that he will not ask anything which is contrary to the mind of God. Consequently, his prayers, though in one sense unrestricted, are really restricted by the tenderness of his conscience, and the sensitiveness of his spirit to the influence of the mind of God. There are some Christians who do not get their prayers answered, and who never will as long as they do not comply with this condition, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." If you do not take notice of Christ's words, he will not take notice of your words. He is not going to open his door to every stranger who chooses to give a runaway knock at it, but he will pay attention to his own children who pay attention to him.

John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

“Ye shall be known to be my disciples.” Everybody will perceive that you must be branches of that fruitful vine, Christ Jesus, if ye bear much fruit.

John 15:9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

How wondrously Jesus loves those who are truly, his! As the Father loved him, so does he love us: that is, without beginning, without measure, without variation, without end. “Continue ye in my love;” that is, live in it, enjoy it, drink it in, be influenced by it.

John 15:10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;

“You shall live in the realization of my love if you live in obedience to me.”

John 15:10-11. Even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

For, when Christ is not pleased with us, we are not likely to have joy in ourselves, Oh, that we may so live as to please Christ!

Thus speaks the Lord Jesus: —

John 15:1. I am the true vine,

Many questions have been raised about which is the true Church; the Saviour answers them, “I am the true vine.” All who are united, really united, to the ever-living Saviour are members of the true Church. Find ye them where ye may, if they are one with Christ, they are his — they are parts of the divine vine; they are belonging to his Church.

John 15:1. And my Father is the husbandman.

It is the Father’s province, by the Holy Spirit and by the works of Providence, to see to the prosperity of the Church. “My Father is the husbandman.” All preachers, all teachers, are but, so to speak, the pruning tool in the hand of the great vine-dresser. “My Father is the husbandman.”

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

It is a necessary part of vine-dressing to remove the superfluous shoots. Too much wood-making, which does not lead to fruit-bearing, is but a waste of strength. And so in the Church there are those that bear no fruit, and for a while they appear to be fresh and green, and they who are the under-vine-dressers dare not take them away. But the Father does it —sometimes by removing them by death; at other times by permitting them openly to expose their own character, until they are then amenable to the discipline of the Church, and are removed.

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit —

What of that? “He purgeth it (pruneth it) that it may bring forth more fruit.” “I cannot understand,” said one to me the other day, “why I am so very sorely afflicted. I have been searching myself to discover what sin can have been the cause of it.” Now, beloved, if that be your question tonight, there may be a sin to be put away, and, if so, God forbid that I should prevent your searching; but remember, on the other hand, affliction is no evidence of sin, but oftentimes of the very contrary, It is the fruit-bearing branch that gets the pruning. You are so good a branch that God would fain have you better. You have such capacities for bearing fruit, that he wants to see those capacities developed. The lapidary does not chase upon the wheel the stone that is not precious, but that which



is, and so real affliction is no mark, therefore, of your want of grace, but of your having it. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

John 15:3. Now ye are clean--

For so it should be.

John 15:3. Through the word which I have spoken unto you.

While Christ was with his disciples he kept his vine continually pruned by the word which he spoke. That word cut off the non-fruit-bearing-branches, for we read that after that saying there were some that went back, and walked no more with him, for they said, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?" That was the word pruning off the useless branches. And there were others who were grieved by his Word. These, were good people, and it did them good. It was a godly sorrow that led to bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

John 15:4. Abide in me and I in you.

There is the great canon of the Christian life. Hold fast to Christ. Not only live with him, but live in him. "Abide in me." And on! let Jesus not be merely your companion now and then, on holy occasions, but let him abide in you; make your heart a temple; let him find his sweetest rest his home in you.

John 15:4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

It is keeping in Christ, then, that is the vital relater. There is the root of the whole business, to be still one with Jesus by vital union, deriving the sap of our life entirely from him.

John 15:5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:

This double abiding gives a double harvest. Christ in me, and I in Christ — I must be fruitful. Oh! beloved, look well to this. I am afraid we get at a distance from Christ. There is more danger of this in old professors than there is in young beginners. The young beginner is warm of heart. The very novelty of the thing keeps him near his Master, but oh! take care of slackening; you that have been long pilgrims, take care of slackening. It is so easy to grow cold in this cold world, and it is so hard to maintain the holy spiritual fervent, without which there is no spiritual health.

John 15:5. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Not "ye will do less," or "ye will do least," but ye can do nothing —nothing good, nothing spiritual, nothing acceptable, if severed from Jesus.

John 15:6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

And oh! how many come to this end! They did seem to be all that the fruit-bearing branches are, but they were never saved souls, for saved souls always bring forth fruits of righteousness. Their salvation is proved by their fruitfulness. But these appeared to be all that the others were, and after a while they were discovered, and cast into the fire and burned.

John 15:7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,

My very words. You must treasure up Christ's teaching; you must obey his precepts. If ye do this, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." In this chapter we are taught once or twice that the power of prayer depends very much upon the closeness of our communion with Christ, and the completeness of our obedience to him. We are saved by faith in the Redeemer, but the joy of salvation, the very dignity and glory of it, will only come to those men who jealously watch themselves, and zealously obey their Lord and Master.

John 15:8-9. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:

What a glorious word! I scarcely know a text more deep, more full than this. After the same manner as God the Father loves the Son — after that same sort does the Son love us. Hear ye the words again, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." He confirms us in it, and bids us live in the enjoyment of it.

John 15:10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.

Ye shall know it; ye shall live in it; it shall be the atmosphere you breathe.

John 15:10-11. Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.

Christ would have his people happy; happy, however, with a holy joy, which is not, therefore, a dim and second-rate joy. It is the very joy of Christ, God's people are to enjoy.

John 15:11-16. That my joy might remain in you. and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

A second time he puts this remarkable prevalence of prayer side by side with walking in the Lord's commandments. Oh! ye that miss success in your life and work, may you not trace your failure to your forgetfulness of God. Shall God do your will, if you will not do his will? Shall he wait on you, if you will not wait on him? Will he not (must you not expect that he will) walk contrary to you if you walk contrary to him? May Spirit make you pure in life, for then shall you be successful at the mercy-seat!

John 15:17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Jesus! send us this spirit of love, we pray thee. Amen.

John 15:1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Not only the Mosaic law, but the whole creation is full of types of Christ. All the vines that we see in this world are only as it were typical; but Christ is the substance, -the substance of nature as well as of grace: "I am the true vine," and the real Husbandman, who watches over everything, who has the whole Church, yea, the whole universe, under his care, is the great Father: "My Father is the husbandman."

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

It has no right to be there, for it is not there by a vital union; it will only harbor mischief if it is allowed to remain, therefore let it be taken away; and taken away it certainly will be by the Husbandman who makes no mistakes.

John 15:2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

So there is taking away for the fruitless branches, and pruning for the fruit-bearing branches. Are you suffering under the pruning knife just now? Accept it joyfully. How much better that the knife should cut off your superfluities than that it should cut you off! The mercy is that, although God will purge and prune his vine-branches, he will not destroy them.

John 15:3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Christ had so dealt with his disciples that he left them like a pruned vine, ready and prepared for fruitfulness.

John 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you.

The pruning is nothing without the abiding in Christ. You may suffer again and again; but no good can come of it except you have vital, continuous, everlasting union with Christ. You cannot take a branch away from the vine for a little while, and then put it back again; its life depends upon the perfect continuity of its union. So is it with us and Christ: the branch is in the vine, and the vine is in the branch. The very essence and sap of the vine are in the branch even as the branch is part and parcel of the vine.

John 15:4-5. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches:

You are not the vine; do not think that you are; and if God blesses you, and makes you of some importance in the Church, yet do not dream that you are the Church, that you are the very root and stein of it. Ah, no! at the utmost, "ye are the branches."

John 15:5. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:

Oh, what a searching word is this! Are we bringing forth much fruit? I trust, dear brethren, that we are bringing forth some fruit; but, oh! what a test is this, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Christ expects much from those who have this doubly high privilege of having him in them, and of being themselves in him.

John 15:5-6. For without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

And are there sufficient of them for that? It is enough to bring tears into one's eyes to think that there should be enough fruitless, unabiding, merely nominal members of Christ to pay for gathering up to make a fire. Oh, sad, sad thing is this! It is the grief of the Church, it is the sorrow of God's ministers, it ought to call for great self-examination in our own hearts that mere professors, those who apostatize after having made a profession of religion, do not seem to have been thought by the Saviour to be here and there one, but to be so many that "men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

John 15:7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Power in prayer is dependent upon full enjoyment of union and communion with Christ. It is not every man who can ask of God what he wills, and get it; but it is such a man, and such a man only, as shall be found abiding in Christ, and having Christ's words abiding in him. If we do not take notice of what Christ says, can we expect that he will take notice of what we say? If we do not obey him when he asks this and that of us, how can we reckon that he will give us this and that when we ask it of him? No, this is the condition of power in prayer, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

You shall be known to be the disciples of the much fruit-bearing Saviour. He was no moderately good man, he was not one who was only a little useful in the world; but our blessed Master was perfectly consecrated, he abounded in every good word and work; and unless we are the same, how shall men think that we are his disciples?

John 15:9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:

Matchless, matchless word! The love of God the Father to the Son is the immeasurable measure of the love of Christ to his people,- without beginning, without end, without change, without bounds. As the Father loved Christ, so has Christ loved us.

John 15:9. Continue ye in my love.

Abide in it, live in it as the fish lives in the stream, enjoy it, do nothing contrary to it.

John 15:10-11. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

When Christ cannot rejoice in us, you may rest assured that we cannot rejoice in ourselves; but when his grace so operates upon us that he sees that in us which gives him content, then it is that we shall feel a blessed content ourselves.

John 15:12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

I am sure you will never love each other too much. You cannot go beyond this rule: "Love one another, as I have loved you."

John 15:13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

What more has he that he can lay down when, having given up all else, he gives life itself for them?

John 15:14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

You cannot be his friends if you are disobedient to his commands. An act of disobedience is unfriendliness; ay, and the omission of obedience is unfriendliness to Christ. I wish we would always remember that every sin either of omission or of commission, is an unfriendly act towards our best Friend.

John 15:15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

The law made man do this and that, but it communicated very little of the secret counsels of God; but there is a holy familiarity between Christ and his people, a sacred confidence which Christ has manifested towards us in revealing the very heart of God to us, and therefore we are put upon a very high standing, not as servants now, but as friends. O friends of Christ, show yourselves friendly by your entire obedience to his gracious will!

John 15:16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Fruitfulness, perseverance, and power in prayer, these are the priceless boons that come to us through our being one with Christ.

John 15:17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

As if there were many things in one in that command; It is but one command, but it is so comprehensive that all the commandments are fulfilled in this one: "that ye love one another."

John 15:18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

So you need not be at all surprised if the world hates you.

John 15:19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Therefore expect it, in some form or other, for you will be sure to meet with it. The seed of the serpent never will love the seed of the woman.

John 15:20-21. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,"-as if all the rest would scarcely have been sin at all in comparison with that sin against the light which men committed after Christ had spoken to them. What a wonderful thing it is that the very word which is the creation of all good should, through the perversity of men's will, become also the creation of evil!

John 15:22-23. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

There is a hatred of God in all hatred of the Mediator. Men may say that they love God, and yet despise Christ, but it cannot be so. Christ is so truly God, and so clear a manifestation of God, that, if men knew God, they would certainly hate him if they hate Christ.

John 15:24-27, If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shalt bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Many of you know the words of this chapter by heart; you could repeat them without a mistake. May the savor of them abide in your hearts even as the letter of them abides in your memory!

John 15:1. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

We thank thee, O Saviour, for this blessed answer to the oft-repeated question, "Which is the true Church?" "Are you one with Christ?" Then are you a part of the true vine. If we have but real, vital personal, having connection with Christ, to whatever section of the visible Church we may belong, we are part of "the true vine." And we are told, in the next sentence, who is the great Caretaker of the Church? Some of us are much occupied in Christ's service, and there is a tendency with all of us to get, like Martha, "numbered" even in serving for him. We are apt to fancy that the burden of all the churches lies upon our shoulders, but, beloved, this is a great mistake. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," or vine-dresser. He will take the utmost possible care of

it, for it is very dear to him. There is not a branch in that vine which the Father does not love with infinite affection; and as for the majestic stem, even Jesus, he loves him beyond measure.

John 15:2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

This operation is always going on. God is continually taking away from the Church, in some way or other, non-fruit-bearers. We know that these do not truly belong to Christ, for fruit must come from vital union to him but it is a trial to the Church to have non-fruit-bearing branches. These are taken away, sometimes by death, sometimes by judgment, sometimes by the open discovery of their secret sin, the culmination of their backslides in overt acts of transgression. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:" but side by side with this action another process is constantly going on: —

John 15:2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Is this, then, dear friend, one reason why you are being chastened, —because you are a fruit-bearing branch? If you bore no fruit, you would be left unpruned, because the knife would do its sterner work upon you by taking you altogether away. If you really do bring forth fruit to God, you must expect to have trial, trouble, affliction, and that full often.

John 15:3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

That was a "word" which had sorely grieved them, and cut them to the quick, so that the Saviour had to say to them, more than once, "Let not your heart be troubled." (See the 1st, and the 27th, verses of the preceding chapter.) They had felt the sharp edge of the pruning-knife, so Jesus said to them, "Now ye are clean (purged or pruned) through the word which I have spoken unto you."

John 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you.

The main thing is not restless activity, running here and there, and doing this, and that, and the other thing; it is abiding in Christ, persevering, constant cleaving to Christ, by virtue of a vital union with him: "Abide in me, and I in you."

John 15:4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

You may hurry, and flurry, and worry; but you will lose by it. Keep close to Christ. Never let your heart be dissociated from intimate communion with him. So shall you bring forth fruit, but not else.

John 15:5-6. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

The vine is of use for nothing but fruit-bearing; and if it does not bear fruit, it is good for nothing except to be burned. In the social economy of life, a man may be of some use however bad he may be; but a man who is in the nominal Church of Christ, and yet does not bring forth fruit unto God, is of no use whatsoever. There is nothing to be done with him but to gather him up with the sere autumn leaves, and the decaying stalks of vegetation, to be burned in the corner outside the wall. How trying is the smoke that comes from such a burning as that! We pastors sometimes get it into our eyes, and it fills them with bitter tears. I know of nothing that is more grievous to us than this putting out of the unworthy, this casting the fruitless vine branches into the fire that they may be burned.

John 15:7. Ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, —

You see that doctrinal vitality is necessary to true union to Christ. Some, in these days, talk about a spiritual attachment to the

person of Christ, while they shoot their envenomed darts against the dogmas of Christ; but that will not do. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," — my words of doctrine, precept, or promise, then—

John 15:7. Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

This is the secret of successful prayer. Christ listens to your words because you listen to his words. If you are conformed to his will, he will grant you your will. Disobedient children, when they pray, may expect to get the rod for an answer. In true kindness, God may refuse to listen to them until they are willing to listen to him.

John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;

What a wonderful vine that must be whose branches glorify God! Who ever heard of such a thing? The very branches do this, and they do it by bearing fruit. How this ought to excite us to desire to bear Christian graces, and to do Christian service, and to endure with resignation the Lord's will, for those are the clusters that hang upon this vine.

John 15:8. So shall ye be my disciples.

For Christ is not merely a fruit-bearer, but a bearer of much fruit. If we are to be Christ's disciples indeed, we must not be content with doing something for him, but we must do everything that is possible to us; and God can strengthen us till we shall get beyond our natural possibilities into a still loftier realm.

John 15:9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

As truly as the Father loves the Son, so truly does Jesus love us; nay, more than that, in the same manner as the Father loved the Son, — that is, without beginning, without cessation, without change, without end, without measure, — so does Jesus love us. There are many vast texts in the Bible, but I have often questioned whether there is a bigger text than this, — a vaster abyss of meaning shall not be found in these few words, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." "Continue ye in my love." Recognize it, enjoy it, walk in consistency with it, reflect it: "Continue ye in my love."

John 15:10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

I said just now that the doctrinal words of Christ were to be regarded by us. So, dearly-beloved, the precepts or commands of God must ever be regarded. It is an idle tale for men to talk of a mythical visionary love to Christ which does not result in obedience to his will. We must keep his commandments, or we cannot truly say to him, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

John 15:11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Good children are truly happy when their parents are happy in them. When they, through the good teaching and example of their parents, bring honour and joy to their parents, then they are sure to be themselves joyful. Oh, that we might so live that Christ's joy might abide in us, for then our joy would be full.

John 15:12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another as I have loved you.

Are you doing this, brethren and sisters in Christ, really loving one another? Do you never pick holes in each other's character? Do you never judge a fellow-Christian harshly? If you do these things, chide yourself, and cease from this evil habit at once, for your Lord says to you, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

John 15:13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” I lift you above the rank of servant, and make you my table companions, privileged to sit at the table with me in communion. I put you down on my list of associates and familiars, with whom I take sweet counsel, and in company with whom I walk to the house of God. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” This condition applies to the whole range of Christ’s commands. We are not to omit any one of them, nor to make a little nick in our conscience as some do, nor to neglect what seems to be a comparatively small duty; for neglected duties, even of the lesser kind, often set upon us as little stones in a boot do upon a traveler. They lame him, they may not prevent him from traveling, but they mar his comfort on the road. Be scrupulous, brethren, lest, through the neglect of what some regard as scruples, you should bring upon yourselves great sorrows.

John 15:14-16. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,

“That is where the love began, — not with you, but with me.”

John 15:16. And ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:

There are some people who are very fond of quoting the first part of this verse, they are very glad to hear a sermon upon the free, sovereign grace of God. They cannot too often repeat the words, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;” but they do not talk so much about the next clause: “and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Let us accept all God’s words as he has given them to us, and keep up the due proportion of the whole. Note that Christ is not speaking here of spasmodic piety, the religion that can only be kept up by popular preaching, and great meetings, and much excitement, and all that sort of thing; but of the religion of principle that bears its clusters tomorrow as well as today, and even months and years hence, — the religion that bears its fruit every month, and the leaf whereof doth not wither. May we be such branches in the true vine that our fruit shall thus remain.

John 15:16. That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

For, where the fruit remains, power in prayer will remain. If we are constantly living unto God, we shall find ourselves privileged to have the ear of God; and when we pray to him, he will grant us the desire of our hearts.

John 15:17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Our Lord repeated the command, for he knew how prone even his disciples would be to disobey it.

John 15:18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

It is no new thing for the ungodly to hate the godly, so let us not be surprised if that is our portion.

John 15:19-20. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

It ought to be quite sufficient for the servant if he is treated as his Lord was; what higher honour than that could he wish to have?

John 15:21. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sale, because they know not him that sent me.



They professed to know God, and some of them even thought that they were rendering acceptable service to God when they rejected his Son, whom he had sent unto them.

John 15:22-24. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

Our Lord did not mean that they would have been sinless if he had not come to them, but that his coming, and their rejection of him, had enormously increased and intensified their sinfulness.

John 15:25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

They fulfilled what had been written long before, even as they afterwards did when they put Christ to death.

John 15:26-27. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

The witness of the Spirit of truth still continues, and Christ's disciples are still privileged to be co-witnesses, even wilt the Holy Spirit himself; let us take care to avail ourselves of this privilege whenever we can.

John 15:9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:

Oh, drink this nectar down! It is as when Cleopatra dissolved the pearl into a single draught; for here is the choicest pearl of truth that ever was dissolved into a single verse to be a delicious draught for his people to drink: "As the Father hath loved me," — as surely as the Father hath loved me; and, then, "as"— that is,— in the same manner "as the Father hath loved me," — without beginning, without ending, Without measure, without change, "so have I loved you."

John 15:9-10. Continue ye in my love. If ye keep any commandments, ye shall abide in my love;

Note this point of the Lord's discipline; — not that Christ ever casts away his people, but that he does take from them the sweet sense of his love, the realization of it, if they are disobedient to him, and keep not his commandments.

John 15:10-11. Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you,

That he might joy in us,— feel a sacred delight in thinking of us as he does when he sees us keeping his commandments, and treasuring up his words, and so living in his love, and being mighty in prayer.

John 15:11. And that your joy might be full.

If Christ is not pleased with us, we cannot be glad; and if he has no joy in us, we cannot have joy in him. These two things rise and fall together. When the father of the family looks with joy upon his boy, then the boy is happy; but when the father has no joy in his son, then be sure of this, the son has no joy in his father, but he is sad at heart. O God, may we never grieve thee, for if we do, we shall be ourselves grieved; at least, I trust that we shall, we would not have it otherwise. But, oh! that we might have the testimony that Enoch had before his translation, that we have pleased God!

Then shall we have true pleasure in ourselves.

John 15:12-14. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Obedience, then, is rewarded with a holy friendship, for Christ becomes in the highest sense our Friend; but we are not his friends till we cease to delight in sin, and turn away from it into the paths of holiness.

John 15:15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

The servant works in a building, and it is enough for him that he is laying part of a line of brick or stone. Perhaps he has never seen the design of the structure, nor had a wish to do so. But you and I have the great Architect constantly coming to us to tell us what the building is to be, and to explain to us his plans, and so we work with greater pleasure and joy than a mere labourer might. The very heart of Christ is laid bare to his people: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Happy are his people; glad to be his servants,—gladder still to be his friends.

John 15:16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

There you see divine election leading on to fruit-bearing, and perpetuated in perseverance: "that your fruit should remain." It brings also to every one of its objects this conspicuous favor, prevailing power in prayer: "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

John 15:17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

O you professors, who have no love to one another, you are breaking the King's commandment! You are living in direct violation of a plain command that is most dear to his heart. Oh, that we might constantly hear it and obey it! "These things I command you, that ye love one another."

John 15:18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

That is what you have reason to expect, and you may feel honoured if they treat you as they have treated your Lord.

John 15:19-22. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

There is an awful increase of sin produced by Christ speaking to a man; and if any of you have been very near to the Kingdom, and your conscience has been aroused, and your mind has been impressed by the truth, and yet you have gone back to your sin, you have multiplied that sin a thousandfold. The times of your ignorance God may have winked at; but now you are sinning against light and knowledge; and unless you repent, terrible will be your doom.

John 15:23-26. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come,

And he has come; he is here, he has never been taken away; he still abides with and in the Church.

John 15:26. Whom I'll send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

By this mark you may know whether that which has been taught you is of the Spirit of God. If it does not testify of Christ, if he is not the head and front of it all, there is nothing in it for you to accept. If any man comes to you with what he calls a revelation, if it is not all concerning Christ, by this shall you judge it; it is not of the Spirit of God if it does not testify of Christ.

John 15:27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

May we all bear witness according as we have been with Christ, for there is no bearing witness to Christ unless we have first been with him.

John 15:12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

O beloved, do keep this commandment! Overlook each other's infirmities. Bear with each other's faults. Love one another as Christ has loved us.

John 15:13-15. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

"I have explained myself to you in such a way that I have proved that you are my friends. A master sets his servant to work without explaining what his object is in that work, but I have explained to you what my Father's design is. Therefore, you are my friends."

John 15:16-21. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. We cannot expect, therefore, to receive honour, and to wear a crown of gold where Jesus wore a crown of thorns.

John 15:22-24. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin:

They would have been comparatively free from sin.

John 15:24-26. But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

Notice that blessed truth,—that even that Divine Person, the Holy Ghost, when he comes to visit us, has nothing better to speak of than our Lord Jesus Christ: “He shall testify of me.” Even the Holy Spirit, when he exercises the function of the Comforter, testifies of Christ. Is he not the consolation of Israel? Well did the poet write

“Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,

We love to hear of thee;

No music’s like thy charming name,

Nor half so sweet can be.”

John 15:27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning

## John 16 Commentary

John 16:1-3. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

True followers of Christ must not reckon upon having the world’s commendation. At first, the Jews persecuted the Christians; then the Romans took up the cruel work, and others have continued it, in some form or other, even to this day, for the persecution of the saints has not yet ceased. There are many who still have hard times, and have to endure trials of cruel mockings for Christ’s sake. If you resolve to follow Christ men will be sure to call you old-fashioned, ridiculous, Puritanic, and I know not what besides, yet what does it matter to you if they do? Your Master foretold that it would be so.

John 16:4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was with you.

Christ did not deceive his disciples concerning the treatment that would be meted out to them. He did not promise that the road to heaven would be an easy path, or flatter his followers with the notion that the cross, which they had to carry after him, had no weight in it; “These things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.”

John 16:5-6. But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

They were thinking more of their loss by his going away from them than of his gain in going back to his Father. If they had thought of the glory into which he was so soon to enter, they would have ceased to sorrow, and would have rejoiced with exceeding joy, but they seem to have loved themselves better than they loved their Lord; hence his absence, which ought to have given them many reasons for rejoicing, became to them a cause for grief.

John 16:7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:

“It is not merely for my own glory that I am going away, but my absence from you will be better for you than my continued bodily presence with you could possibly be.”

John 16:7. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

“And he will be of more service to you than I could be even if I were to remain with you.” The presence of the Spirit of God in the Church is better for the present dispensation than even the bodily presence of Christ would be.

John 16:8-12. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

“You have not yet received the Spirit of God as you shall do after my departure, and then your capacities shall be enlarged, so that you shall be able to understand deep truths which are altogether beyond your comprehension at present.”

John 16:13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Is not that wonderful? As Jesus Christ said that he did not bear witness to himself, but spoke the words which his Father had given him, so the Spirit of God does not speak of himself, but he bears witness to the truth which Christ has revealed, and also makes known “things to come.” But he will never reveal anything contrary to that which Christ has revealed in his Word. That which is to be revealed is that truth which was from the beginning. As we are taught it by the Divine Spirit, it becomes fresh truth to us, though it was ever in Christ’s eternal mind.

John 16:14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Oh, that this blessed Spirit may continually show the things of Christ to us!

John 16:1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

Or, “made to stumble.” Christ would not have you who are his people caused to stumble by anything that happens to you. He wants you to walk without tripping; his angels bear you up in their hands lest at any time you should dash your foot against a stone. He himself, as your Guardian, comes and speaks beforehand to let you know what is to occur to you, that you may not be caused to stumble by any fresh trial that may assail you.

John 16:2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Christ’s disciples were to expect opposition of the most cruel kind. They were to be put away from those with whom they had long worshipped; they were even to run the risk of losing their lives; but Jesus foretold what would happen to them, that they might not be stumbled at it. Such was their Lord’s love to them that he would not have them attacked unawares; by his grace, they would hold on, and hold out, they would persevere to the end; but there would have to be a struggle, and to help them in the fight, Jesus tells them all about it before it begins. We say, “Forewarned, forearmed.” So the disciples were; and so are you. Your Lord tells you that you will not get to heaven without trials: “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” And he tells you this that it may not surprise you when it comes, that it may not act upon you like a sudden gust of wind that would upset a little ship; but that you may just keep everything in trim looking for the storm to come: “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble.”

John 16:3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

The persecuting Jews professed to be worshippers of Jehovah; but they did not know the Christ, whom he sent, and, therefore, in very truth they did not know the Father either. How can you expect that those who do not know the Father will know the Son, or any of the other children of the divine family? As they rejected the Elder Brother, will they not also reject the younger ones? Is the disciple to be above his Master, or the servant to be treated better than his Lord? Think not so; and therefore expect that you will not be known, even as the Father and the Son were not known.

"Tis no surprising thing,

That we should be unknown:

The Jewish world knew not their King,

God's everlasting Son."

John 16:4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Our Lord did tell his disciples something about "these things." He did warn them to expect opposition, but he did not dwell upon that theme, he did not expatiate upon it. He did not at first give that prominence to it which he was about to do, and he explains to his disciples why he had not talked much upon that topic: "because I was with you." It did not matter how they were opposed so long as he was with them; his society more than made up for anything they might have to suffer; and, dear child of God, if you now enjoy the presence of Christ, and the power of his Spirit, you need not mind what happens to you.

John 16:5-6. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

They were cast down because he was going away from them. Love awoke fear. It was a hard thing for them to have to miss him; they could not tell what might happen to them when their Leader was gone from their midst. Do you wonder that they were filled with sorrow? Yet there was no real cause for grief; there was rather reason for rejoicing when they understood the true lesson of Christ's departure. There is no real cause for your sorrow, dear friends. If you knew all things, you would rejoice exceedingly in that very thing that now most troubles you.

John 16:7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And the Comforter is better for us than the personal presence of Christ. We do not always think so; but it is true. It is better for the Church to have the Holy Spirit in the midst of her, than for Christ to be here in the bodily presence on the earth.

John 16:8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The world is not as yet convinced, but it is convicted; though it does not own its guilt, there is more than sufficient evidence to prove it guilty in the sight of God.

John 16:9. Of sin, because they believe not on me;

What must be the depth of human wickedness that sinners will not accept a Divine Saviour! This is the crowning, crushing proof of human guilt: "They believe not on me."

John 16:10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

Christ was righteous, the righteous One, whom men rejected, for he has gone up to the Father's side, where he could not have been if he had not perfected righteousness. The very going back of Christ to the Father's throne proves that righteousness does exist, and

convicts men of sinning against it.

John 16:11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

The gospel judges him, and dethrones him; and as there has been a judgment of the world's king, so there will be a judgment of the world itself.

John 16:12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Some teachers overload their hearers with truth till I might truly say that they pile on the agony. Truth which cannot be received is often most irksome and burdensome to the hearer; when the mind is not in a fit condition to bear any more instruction, it is cruel work to impose it. Our Lord Jesus did not so overburden his disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

John 16:13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;

This is a very wonderful expression: "He shall not speak of himself." We have plenty of men, nowadays, who boast that they do speak of or from themselves; that is to say, they profess to borrow from no one, not even from God. They are original thinkers, inventors; they bring forth fresh things out of the depth of their wonderful minds; but even the Holy Ghost is here said not to "speak of himself."

John 16:13. But whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak;

That is just our business, to hear God's message, and then to speak it; and if the Holy Ghost does this, and if Jesus did it, we also may be glad to do the same. We are no inventors of great novelties; we are simply the message-bearers of the Most High, the declarers of the old truths which God has revealed to us.

John 16:13-16. And he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

How wonderful this is! We are to see Jesus because he has gone to the Father. It looks as if that were a reason why we should not see him; but we see him better by faith, now that he has gone to the Father, than we could have seen him while he was here below covered with the veil of his humiliation. Yet it is hardly surprising that the disciples were puzzled by their Lord's words: "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me:" and, "Because I go to the Father."

This chapter contains some of the most precious words that the Lord Jesus uttered before he died upon the cross.

John 16:1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

Or, as the Revised Version translates it, "be made to stumble." Christ would not have his children stumble. There is an offence of the cross, but he would not have us needlessly offended. How careful is our dear Saviour not to give us offence! We ought to be very careful not to offend him; but what condescension it is on his part that he should be careful of offending us, or of permitting us to be offended, or made to stumble.

John 16:2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Can you remain faithful to your Master then, when you lose your position, or your character, or men put you out of the synagogue?

When you nearly lose life itself, and when they shall think they are doing God's service by seeking to kill you, can you stand true to Christ then? The Master knew that days of bitter persecution would soon come upon his followers, so he strengthened them against those evil times that were approaching.

John 16:3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

It is ignorance that makes men hate God's people and his Son: "They have not known the Father, nor me." Truly did Paul say, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief;" and for such persecutors there is full and free forgiveness. When they turn unto the Lord, even this sin shall be forgiven them; but they will not forgive themselves for having committed it; and, like Paul, they will count themselves the chief of sinners because they persecuted the Church of God.

John 16:4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

"You will then see my foresight, my care for you, my prophetic power. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. You will not be taken by surprise." If any of you who have lately been converted should meet with great opposition, do not be surprised; Jesus has told you to expect it; and if the fire should get seven times hotter, count it no strange thing that the fiery trial has happened unto you. It has happened unto others before you, and will happen to others after you; therefore be prepared for it.

John 16:4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

"While I was with you, you could run to me, and tell me all about your trials and difficulties. If anybody was hard with you, I could come to your help, and comfort you. You did not need to know these things before, so I did not tell you of them. You do need to know them now, and now I tell you of them."

John 16:5. But now I go my way to him that sent me;

Christ was going to the cross, and to the grave, and afterwards to heaven.

John 16:5. And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

For want of asking that question, Christ's disciples were full of grief.

Sometimes we do not ask enough questions. We ask too many questions of doubt; it would be well if we were to ask a few more questions of believing curiosity. There are some things that we ought to wish to know; and Christ encourages his people to come to him for information.

John 16:6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

When a poor Christian friend is dying, you are full of sorrow because he is going away from you. Why do you not ask whither he is going? If he is going home to heaven and to glory, why, then be comforted about him; you have no cause for distress on his account.

John 16:7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away.

"It is better for you that I should be absent than that I should be present." Their Lord was their joy, their Leader, their Teacher, their Comforter. He is going away, and he tells them that his absence will be a gain to them. "It is expedient for you that I go away."

John 16:7. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him, unto you.



Now, it is better for us to have the Comforter than to have Christ here in bodily presence; for if Christ were here tonight, in this Tabernacle, where could we put him so as to be equally near each one of us? I should certainly want him up here on the platform; and you, up there in the top gallery, would say, "Well, we are a long way off; why should he not come up here?" You see, if it is bodily presence that is enjoyed, some must be near, and some must be far off; but now that Christ has gone up to heaven, his Spirit is here. Where is that Spirit? On the platform, I hope, and everywhere else. Any of you who desire it may have the Holy Spirit's presence. The Lord says, "I will put my Spirit within you." Better than the bodily presence of Christ is the real, though spiritual, presence of the Holy Ghost.

John 16:8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

What, a Comforter reprove? Yes. The Holy Spirit never comforts till he has reproved. There must be a reproof of sin before there can be comfort in Christ. And while the Spirit comforts saints, he reproves the world.

John 16:9. Of sin, because they believe not on me;

The greatest sin in all the world is, not believing on Jesus. Our Lord did not say, "Of sin, because of the evil of drunkenness." That is a great sin, a cursed sin, and there are other great sins; but Christ said, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." That is the root sin, the foundation sin, the sin that keeps a man in his sin.

John 16:10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

It is God's righteousness that takes Christ up to heaven. He has been here; he has lived a perfect life; he has died a sacrificial death; and God has shown his acceptance of him, for he has gone to his reward.

John 16:11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

When Christ came here, there was a crisis, a judgment; and sin was judged and condemned; and the prince of the world, the chief sinner in the world, received his death-blow: "the prince of this world is judged."

John 16:12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

See how Christ teaches us slowly, wisely, prudently. There are some things which some of you young Christians do not know; you could not bear them if you did know them. You shall know them when you can bear them. A man with a doctrine that he cannot handle is often like a child with a tough piece of meat which he cannot bite. Give the child milk, or the crumb of the loaf. Do not put crusts into his mouth till he has teeth to bite them; do not give him meat till he can digest it. See the gentle Saviour's way of imparting instruction. He teaches us much, but not too much at a time.

John 16:13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

See, my dear brethren in the ministry, how little store the Holy Ghost sets by originality. We have men nowadays straining to be original. Strain the other way, for listen, "He shall not speak of himself," — not even the Holy Ghost, — "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." He is the Repeater of the Father's message, not the inventor of his own. So let it be with us ministers. We are not to make up a gospel as we go along, as I have heard some say. We are not to shape it to the times in which we live, and suit it to the congregations to which we speak. God forbid! Let this be true of every one of us, "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak"

John 16:14. He shall glorify me

The Holy Ghost does that; therefore, surely we, who are the preachers of the gospel, should aim at the same object: "He shall glorify me." It should be our one desire to magnify and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 16:14-16. For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

That was a very simple statement, every Sunday-scholar understands it now; but the twelve apostles did not understand it when they heard it.

John 16:17-18. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

They said this "among themselves." This was not a wise course, for what can ignorance learn of ignorance? Here were disciples questioning one another; none of them knew anything, and yet they were trying to teach one another. If they had all gone to their Master, how much more quickly would they have understood his words! Take everything to Jesus. Try everything by the Word of God. Do not believe what you hear because I say it, or because somebody else says it. Go to the Word of God to learn what you need to know, and to the Spirit of God to teach you the meaning of what you read.

John 16:19-20. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament,

Christ would die; he would go away and be unseen. On the cross he would depart out of this life; in the tomb he would be hidden from his disciples: "Ye shall weep and lament."

John 16:20. But the world shall rejoice:

But not for long; the world's joy at Christ's death was soon over.

John 16:20. And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

I think we may leave off our reading at this verse, with these words to flavor our mouth all this week: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." God grant that it may be so with many here present, for Christ's sake! Amen.

John 16:1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

"That you should not be scandalized when you see me put to death, and when you miss my bodily presence from your midst. I want to prepare you for the shame and death that lie before me, and also to prepare you for all that lies before you, for many of you will have to drink of my cup, and to be baptized with my baptism. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended," or ashamed, or scandalized, or caused to stumble, when they come to pass."

John 16:2. They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

That terrible "time" did come very soon, and the Jewish and other persecutors hunted down the Christians in almost every place

where they could be found. Nothing would satisfy their cruel foes but the blood of multitudes of martyrs, and many of the persecutors actually thought that they were doing God service while they were putting his children to torture and death.

John 16:3-4. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed, especially when the Lord Jesus Christ gives the forewarning; and his disciples were thus to be forearmed and braced up for the coming conflict.

John 16:4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

"I needed not, at the beginning of my ministry, to trouble you about these things. Even then, you and I were hated by evil men, but I was with you, so I was able to protect you from them." The persecutors could not slay Christ's sheep, as they desired to do, as long as their Shepherd was still with them, so his warning words were not needed while he was in their midst. Christ does not teach us everything at once; if he did, we might be so confused that we should not learn anything. Perhaps we have sometimes wished that our ears could hear more than they now do; but it is most probable that, if we could hear more, we should really understand less than we now do. Have you, at any time, had your hearing more than usually acute? If so, you must then have heard a thousand sounds which it would have been better for you not to have heard; for they so confused and confounded one another that you did not hear anything distinctly. It is just so with the mind; it is capable of receiving a certain quantity of truth; but if too much truth be placed before it at once, it produces confusion in the mind's ear and in the mind's eye, and we really hear less, see less, and understand less than we should do if less truth were set before us. The Master knew that his disciples were like narrow-necked bottles, which must be gradually filled, so he only revealed the truth to them as they were able to receive it.

John 16:5-6. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Sorrow sometimes prevents us from learning the lessons that Christ wishes to teach us. You remember that, in the garden of Gethsemane, Christ's disciples were "sleeping for sorrow," and so they lost some of the lessons that they might otherwise have learnt. Those who are in great trouble are often in that dazed condition in which half-awakened persons are; and there is a measure of sleepiness about us all in times of sorrow. It was so with the disciples on this occasion, and therefore they did not ask their Lord what they might have asked him if sorrow had not filled their hearts: "None of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?"

John 16:7-9. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me;

Which is the head of all sin, the root of all sin, the sin which lieth in front of the door of mercy, and blocks the sinner's way. Oh, that the Spirit of God would convince all here, who are not believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are living in the greatest of all sins "because they believe not on Christ"!

John 16:10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

Of course, Christ would not have been received back by his Father if he had not completed the work of righteousness which his Father gave him the commission to perform. The risen and glorified Saviour is the great testimony to the righteousness both of Christ and of his gospel.

John 16:11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Christ has already judged the prince of the powers of evil, so you may depend upon it that he will also judge all those who are under

the dominion of the traitor prince who has usurped his Master's position and authority. Christ has summoned the dread lord of evil to his bar, and judged him. Think not, O ye who are his servants, that any of you will be able to elude the vigilance of the great Judge of all! Judgment will assuredly come to the common soldiers of the prince of darkness since their captain himself has been judged and condemned.

John 16:12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Here again observe the reticence of the Saviour for his disciples' good, still graciously keeping from them what they could not bear to hear; and are not you, beloved, thankful that you do not, at this moment, know what is to happen to you in the future? It is wise for each one of us to say, —

“My God, I would not wish to read

My fate with curious eyes; —

What gloomy lines are writ for me,

Or what bright scenes arise.”

It is best for you, at present, to know but little. Prize what you do know, and be content to leave all that is not yet revealed, for “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever.”

John 16:13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:

All that you need to know, and may know, he will teach you. If you cannot find your way into the heart of any truth, the Spirit of God has the clue to it, so ask him to guide you into it. There is such a thing as seeing the outside of a truth; that is good as far as it goes, but the blessedness lies in getting to the inside of the truth, the very kernel and core of it.

John 16:13-14. For he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me:

That is the distinctive mark of the Spirit of God. If any man says that he speaks by the Spirit, you can test him in this way, — does what he says glorify Christ? If not, away with him, for he is not speaking as the Holy Spirit speaks.

John 16:14-18. For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

These disciples of Christ were almost as ignorant as the rank outsiders were. Though they had been with Jesus for three years, they had not learnt what is clear enough to every Sunday-school child today, and what is certainly perfectly understood by all who are taught of God. They said, “What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.”

John 16:19-22. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall

rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

John 16:1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

That you should not be scandalized when you are put to suffering on any account — that you should not dread the offence of the cross, and turn aside because of it. How considerate our Master is! It seems as if he might be angry at us if he suspected that we could be offended by anything that he did or suffered, or that we had to suffer for him; but he knows the weakness of our flesh, and, therefore, he speaks with so much elaboration of comfort.

John 16:2-4. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them.

When you meet with rebuke, and slander, and jesting, and jeering against you for Christ's sake, he has told you of them.

“Temptation or pain — he has told you no less;

The heirs of salvation, you know from his word,

Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.”

John 16:4. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

While they had his presence, he was like a wall of fire round about them. They did not want to be protected then from dangers not come. And the Lord has not told us yet some of the things which he will reveal to us by and by, because the trial has not come. You feel as if you could not die at peace just now. You dread death. You shall have dying grace in dying moments. Do not be questioning yourself as to whether you have got dying grace now. You do not want it yet. You shall have it when the time comes.

John 16:5-6. But now I go my way to him that sent me: and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

It often happens, that if we were to inquire a little more into the sorrow, it would vanish. They did not ask him why he went away. They fretted because he was going. Now he tells them where he was going.

John 16:7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

It is a better thing for us in this world to have the Holy Spirit in us than to have the corporeal presence of Christ with us. We are better helped by the Holy Spirit than we should have been if Jesus had remained on earth.

John 16:8-12. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.

Partly because their sorrow incapacitated them for hearing any more; partly because their spiritual infancy did not permit them as yet to learn the deeper doctrines which are rather meat for men than milk for babes. O you that are teachers of others, imitate the prudence of Jesus. Do not teach people too much at once. Do not try to make a little child understand all that an advanced and experienced saint knows. Say, as your Master did, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”

John 16:13-14. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me:

Now that is a sure mark of the Holy Spirit. If there be any spirit, which does not glorify Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit; it is not the Comforter. If you hear any doctrine which detracts from the dignity of Christ's nature, from the glory of Christ's person, from the perfection and the necessity of Christ's sacrifice, you may depend upon it that it is not the doctrine of God. Reject it at once. It may poison you. It cannot build you up. "He shall glorify me."

John 16:14-15. For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

The things of the Father are Christ's. We learn them as Christ's. The Spirit brings them to us as Christ's, and so Christ is glorified, and we are comforted.

John 16:16-19. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him.

And that is a very sweet thing. Sometimes we are afraid to pray; sometimes we feel as if we could not bring ourselves to the prayer. But it is so sweet. "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him." There is the essence of prayer in the desire to pray. There is really a request which Jesus Christ can read in the heart that longs to make a request and scarcely dares do it.

John 16:19-20. And said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Not merely shall your sorrow be taken away, but it shall be transformed. As the alchemist thought that he turned baser metal into gold, so in very truth by a heavenly alchemy does Christ turn the sorrow of his people not in this case only, but in many others, into joy.

John 16:21-24. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.

They had asked so little that it came to nothing, and they had not yet learned the art of using his name in prayer; and a great many Christians have not learned it yet. Often they say, and they say very properly, "for Jesus Christ's, sake." That is good, but there is something better than to ask in his name. Suppose a person calls at any door and asks me to relieve him, out of love to some friend of mine. That is very well; but suppose he says, "I come from that friend of yours, and he told me to use his name, and to put whatever you did for me to his account. Why, that is a stronger plea altogether. Happy are they who know how to use the name, the authority, the claims, the rights of Jesus as an argument with which to back their prayers.

John 16:24. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

You have got some joy, but there is room for more. Brethren, has your joy ever been full yet? Full? Could not you be more joyous? Oh! there have been times with some of us when we could not be more joyous than we were. We have asked, and we have received, and we have been so glad, that we hardly knew how to live under the blessed delirium of gladness. We have seemed to be carried away with an intense delight because God has heard our prayers. "That your joy may be full."

John 16:25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs:

In short, parabolic sentences.

John 16:25-27. But the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

That is a very precious truth. While Jesus does pray the Father for us, yet we are not to look upon that as if Christ's prayer made the Father love us. No. Not only is it not Christ's prayer that makes the Father love us. It is not even Christ's death that makes the Father love us. Often do we repeat that verse: —

“Twas not to make the Father's love  
Towards his people flame,  
That Jesus, from the realms above,  
On the kind errand came.  
'Twas not the pangs that he endured,  
Nor all the woes he bore,  
That God's eternal love procured,  
For God was love before.”

It is an exposition and display of the Father's love; and the prayer of Christ, though blessedly useful, does not make the Father love us, or willing to grant the request. “For the Father himself loveth you.” Notice the blessed condescension of Christ that he should mention his people's virtues. He says to these men that had been with him, who really do not seem as if they had loved him very much, and certainly were not very strong in faith, but were often in such a state of unbelief that he had to say, “Where is your faith?” Yet he says, “The Father himself loveth you because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.”

John 16:28-31. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

Are you at this moment full of faith? Do not trust yourselves. Do not begin to glory in the strength of your faith.

John 16:32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

Oh! you that say you believe tonight, beware lest tomorrow you should be scattered in unbelief and fear. Whatever faith we have is God's giving, and if it remain with us, it will be because God keeps it there. But there is not one among us that has any faith to spare. We do not know but that the very hour is come, even now, that will try us and make us ask whether we have any faith at all.

John 16:33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.

There is a blessed word of good cheer for us, everyone!

John 16:1. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

The temptation is, when Christ is despised and rejected, for our hearts to begin to sink, and for our faith to fail. Therefore did Christ warn his disciples that they “should not be offended.”

John 16:2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

The best of men are but men at the best, and they are very apt to fail when they find persecution hot against them, especially when even religious men, of a certain kind, count it to be a religious duty to persecute the people of God.

John 16:3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

This verse reminds us of our Lord’s prayer on the cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Persecution of God’s people usually arises from ignorance of God the Father and God the Son.

John 16:4. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

“I was your Protector; by my personal presence, I so sustained your hearts that it did not matter what trouble you fell into; but now I am going away, and therefore I give you this warning.”

John 16:5-6. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

We sometimes endure a needless sorrow, for the asking of a single question might remove it. Our Lord says to his disciples, “If you knew where I was going, and understood my motive in going, your sorrow at my departure would be assuaged.”

John 16:7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:

“It is for your profit to lose my personal presence, precious as that has been to you.”

John 16:7. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

The word “Comforter” might just as well have been translated “Advocate.” The Holy Spirit is that Divine Advocate who pleads the cause of God in us, and for us, and so comforts us. He it is who is now with Us. If Jesus Christ were still upon earth in the flesh, he could only be in one place at one time. If he were in this assembly, he could not also be in Jerusalem or in New York; but the Comforter can be in all the gatherings of the Lord’s people, and with each individual believer, the wide world over.

John 16:8-12. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Teachers, learn wisdom from Christ. He did not try to teach his disciples everything at once; but, by teaching them one truth, he prepared them for another truth. Let us do the same with those whom we try to teach, let us dispense to them the simpler truths first, and afterwards those that are deeper and more mysterious.



John 16:13-14. Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

That spirit, which does not glorify Christ, is not the spirit of God. Hereby shall ye discern between the spirit of error and the Spirit of truth.

John 16:15-16. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

This is what our whole life is: "a little while." But in that little while there are little whiles of sadness, and little whiles of gladness, — little whiles in which we have Christ with us, and little whiles in which we see him, but find him not. Blessed be God, we are going away from the land of these changing little whiles up to the place where the sun shineth in its strength for ever and ever.

John 16:17-18. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and, again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Sometimes, when you are reading the Bible, you will come across a text of which you will say to yourselves, "What is this? We cannot tell what he saith." But do not give up reading the Bible because you cannot understand it. There is a great deal that a father says which his child cannot comprehend, yet it is a part of the child's education to be with his father, and to hear some things that he does not at first understand; but by-and-by, it all becomes clear. So, believer, what thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter.

John 16:19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him

They did not ask him, but they desired to do so, and a desire is a prayer. Where our blessed Master is present, the very desires of his people are prayers, even though their lips remain closed.

John 16:19-20. And said unto them, Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

Oh, what a blessed promise!

John 16:21-24. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall, receive, that your joy may be full.

They had asked very little, and they had never asked even that little in Christ's name; and there are but few Christians who do so even now. They ask for Christ's sake, which is a good plea, but to ask in Christ's name is better still, — when you feel conscious that you have Christ's authority to use his name, and so can put the King's own signature at the bottom of your petitions. There are some prayers to which a man dares not to set Christ's seal; but when the prayer is such that Christ himself might have offered it, then we may present it in his name, and we may be certain that we shall receive what we have asked.

John 16:25-28. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the

Father for you: For the Father himself teacheth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

Here are four unfathomable depths: "I came forth from the Father," —there is Christ's eternal pre-existence. "And am come into the world," —there is his incarnation. "Again, I leave the world," — there is his death, resurrection, and ascension into the glory of God. "And go to the Father," — there is his exaltation to the Father's right hand.

John 16:29. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

Did you never, when reading the Bible, come across a text, that was opened up to you so sweetly that you vied out just as these disciples did "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb."

John 16:30-31. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

Listen, you who imagine that you are so strong in faith, and every grace, that you think you are almost perfect: "Do ye now believe?"

John 16:32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone:

Ah, me! these were the men who said they believed in him; yet, in his time of trial, they fled like cowardly unbelievers. God help us, and sustain us, or we shall do as they did!

John 16:32-33. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Our Lord is speaking to his disciples before his departure from them to be crucified, and he says:

John 16:16. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

It is wonderful how he could talk thus calmly about his death, knowing that it would be a death of bitter shame and terrible agony. Yet he does, as it were, pass over that view of it as he says, "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me," — "because I die?" No. "Because I am crucified?" No; but, "because I go to the Father." Beloved, always think of your departure out of the world in the same light: "I go to the Father." Do not say, "I die; I languish upon the bed of pain; I expire." No; but, "I go to the Father."

John 16:17-18. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Then why not ask him? But are not you and I often very slow to ask the meaning of the Master's words? You read in Scripture something that you cannot understand, and you say to yourself, "I cannot make out the meaning of that chapter;" but do you always pray over it, and ask the Writer to tell you what he intended when he wrote it? It is a grand thing to have this Inspired Book, and it is a grander thing still to have the Spirit of God, who inspired it, abiding with his people for ever; but we fail to learn many a secret from the Word because we do not pray our way into it. He who does not know can scarcely have his ignorance pitied when it remains willful; if you can know for the asking, why not ask?

John 16:19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?

They might have inquired a long while among themselves, and all in vain; but to go to their Lord was the short way out of the difficulty, for he could explain it. See how ready he is to explain, for he expounds the truth even to those who had not asked for an exposition. In this matter, he was found of them that sought him not. Knowing that they were desirous to ask, he accepted the will for the deed, the wish for the prayer; and he answered the secret longing of their heart.

John 16:20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:

“I am going away from you, and while I am gone, it will be all weeping and lamenting with you; but while I am gone, the world shall have its hour of triumph, it shall think that I am slain, and that my cause is defeated.”

John 16:20-21. And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

So, when Christ came back again, they would remember no more the sorrow of their travail hour in which they saw him bound, and spat upon, and taken off to execution, and mocked upon the tree. The joy that would come of it all would obliterate the remembrance of the sorrow.

John 16:22-23. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.

“Ye shall not need to make anymore inquiries of me, for everything shall then be explained to you by the Spirit.”

John 16:23. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

“This shall be one fruit; of my passion, that, henceforth, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father, in my name, shall be given to you; and though you may not, perhaps, address your prayers to me personally, yet addressed to the Father, in my name, they shall succeed.”

John 16:24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name:

“Ye have not yet learnt how to use my name in prayer.” Our Lord had not yet taught them so to pray; but now we know what it is to ask in the name of Christ, it is to pray with the authority of the risen and glorified Son of God.

John 16:24. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

See how our Lord continues to drive at that point, for he would have his people happy. He wants you, beloved, to be ‘joy-full’ — full of joy; not merely to have a little joy hidden away in a corner somewhere, but “that your joy may be full.”

John 16:25-26. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

Though that is, indeed, what our Lord does.

John 16:27. For the Father himself loveth you,-

“The Father, whom you are so apt to think of as sterner than myself, and farther off than I, the Son of man am, ‘the Father himself loveth you,’—

John 16:27. Because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

Have you, dear friends, love to Christ? Do you believe that Christ came forth from God? Then does the Father give his special love to you.

John 16:28. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

Had he not clearly explained what he meant by being absent a little while, and then coming back again?

John 16:29-30. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure-

Now they can give reasons for the hope that is in them. “Now are we sure”—

John 16:30. That thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

They are very positive; but notice the check that our Lord put upon all this confident assurance.

John 16:31-32. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.

Whenever there is any boasting upon your lips, even though you may think that you can rightly say, “Now we are sure,” stop a bit, dear friends, stop a bit. We have not any of us all the good we think we have; nay, they who think themselves perfect think the most amiss. They are altogether mistaken, and there is some latent unbelief even where faith is strongest. Christ still asks, “Do ye now believe?” You have only to be sufficiently tried, and to be tempted long enough, and in that very point where you think you are strongest you will fail. “Now are we sure,” say the confident disciples. “Ah!” says Christ, “do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.”

John 16:32. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

How gloriously is that blessed truth put in just here! The awful solitude that Christ was about to pass through can hardly be understood by us. It was not only that every friend forsook him, but that there was not under heaven a single person who could sympathize with him. He was going through deeps that no other could ever fathom, he was to bear griefs which no other could ever bear. Ye may indeed sip of his cup, but ye can never drink it to its dregs as he did. Ye may be baptized with his baptism; but into the depths of the abyss of woe into which he was immersed, ye cannot come. Alone! Alone! Never was there a human being so much alone as was the man Christ Jesus in that dread hour; and yet he says, “I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” O brave Master, make us also brave! May we be willing to stand alone for thy sake, and to feel that we are never so little alone as when we are alone with thee!

John 16:33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.

Your Lord wants you to have peace. Come, then, ye tried ones, ye who are tossed about with a thousand troublous thoughts, it is your Master’s wish and will that ye should have peace.

John 16:33. In the world ye shall have tribulation:

You have found that true, have you not? Perhaps you are finding it true just now: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."

John 16:33. But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

And in that overcoming he has conquered for you also, and he guarantees to you the victory in his name.

John 16:16. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

Remember that the disciples were on the verge of great trouble. Their Leader and Friend was about to be taken away from them by a cruel death. They were to be tried as they had never been tried before. The Saviour therefore prepared their minds for the trial. I have often noticed that, before a great trouble comes, the Spirit of God secretly comforts in a very remarkable manner those who are to be tried. Perhaps, tonight, without knowing it, we may be near some great affliction or sorrow. If so, may the Lord store us with comfort and strength for the coming hour of need!

John 16:17-18. There said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

It was only too plain. We often do not understand our Master because we imagine that there is some deep significance in his words when their meaning lies upon the very surface. If you would understand the gospel as you understand the common talk of life, it would be wise. If we could but bring men to believe God as a child believes its mother, practically and really, then their salvation would be a very simple and speedy matter.

John 16:19-20. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice:

Sometimes the world appears to have the best of it. Its mouth is full of laughter while the child of God cannot speak for sorrow. Ah! well, there is time enough for a change. We may very well let those laugh today who will have to gnash their teeth for ever. Judge not God by your present circumstances. Take the rough with the smooth. Be willing to go to heaven up the bleak side of the hill.

John 16:20. And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

So, the more of it the better. If your sorrow is to be turned into joy, then the more sorrow, the more joy. Happy is he who endureth trial, since his trial is to be turned into happiness.

John 16:21-22. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow:

But your sorrow is the pang of life.

John 16:22. But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

The joy that comes by sorrow in connection with Christ is the joy of which we shall never be bereaved. Let us thank God that there is a joy which no man can take away. Happy are they who have it.

John 16:23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. This is a grand promise. If we dare ask in the name of Christ, and it is not everything that we could ask for in his name <sup>3</sup>4if our petition is such that we honestly judge that we may put Christ's name to it; if it is a thing that Christ would have asked; if it is a thing that Christ could have asked, let us ask in Christ's name, and the Father will give it.

John 16:24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name:

You have not been bold enough. You have asked a few petty things, but you have never fully made use of Christ's name. How many Christians have never learned to pray in the name of Christ! They say at the end of their petition, "For Christ's sake." That is good as far as it goes. I may ask a man to give me such and such a thing for the sake of another; that is good pleading so far as it goes. But if I dare to use the authority that my friend gives me to put his name at the bottom of my request, that is another and a higher thing. To ask in the name of Christ, to plead under his authority, this is to pray indeed.

John 16:24. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

"That your joy may be full," a ripe joy, a joy that fills your being, that sparkles in your eye, dances in your feet, leaps in your heart, an unutterable, inexpressible joy: "That your joy may be full."

John 16:25-26. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

Though that be true,

John 16:27. For the Father himself loveth you,

What a delightful little sentence! "The Father himself loveth you."

John 16:27. Because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

God's first love to us is from himself alone. Then there is another love that grows in his heart because of our love to his Son. You love your child. The reason lies in your own heart. After a while, that dear, loving, affectionate child has won a farther place in your affection, and you love him because of his choice and special love to you. Remember that Psalm, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name." Our love of God wins from him another love, of a different sort, although it comes from the same fountain as the first: "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

John 16:28-30. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

One does not see any reason why they should have been made so strong in faith just then. But we were not there to hear Christ's words. There is many a message, which depends upon the tone and manner of the speaker for its influence over the people who hear it. When you read the story afterwards, without the earnest manner and the living tone of the speaker, you do not see why it had such a strange effect upon his hearers. So we do not quite see here, by the calm reading of this narrative, why the disciples leaped all of a sudden into such confidence.

John 16:31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

He did not feel so sure of their faith as they did. We often think we have great heaps of the gold of faith; and it glitters very brightly, but it is not the precious metal after all. So Jesus said, "Do ye now believe?"

John 16:32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

These poor creatures, who were so bold and so oversure, would all be runaways. If persecution were to arise in our day, I wonder how many of us would be found true men. Ah! you think you are true blue; but you would run at the first touch of water, not to mention fire. Are there not many of us who are but poor believers? If our faith were sharply tried, would it stand the test?

John 16:33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Christ wants his disciples to have peace. Are you fretting tonight? Are you afraid of Monday? Are you fearful about the trials of the week? Christ wants you to be at peace. Be quiet. Be quiet. Let all be still within your heart, and wait your Father's will. "In the world ye shall have tribulation:" on God's threshing-floor the flail will be kept going. If you are a child of God, you will have to suffer. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings; and good soldiers of Jesus Christ must expect to pass through the same experience. As long as you are here, you will be tried: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Think of that; the Christ who is about to sweat great drops of blood, and to die on the cross of Calvary, says, "I have overcome." It is not Julius Caesar's "Veni, vidi, vici;" but it is Christ's "Veni, vidi, vici;" <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"I came, I saw, I conquered:" "I have overcome." And as he has overcome, so shall you, if you be his true follower.

## John 17 Commentary

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;

This is in a very special sense our Lord's prayer. What a word that is from the lips of Jesus, "Father"! This was the night of his deepest sorrow and his heaviest woe, but he begins his prayer with this tender expression, "Father, the hour is come;" the hour of darkness, the hour of his passion and death, had now arrived.

John 17:1. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

Did Jesus look upon his suffering as his glory? He does not merely pray, "Sustain thy Son," but, "Glorify thy Son." In truth, our Lord's lowest stoop was his highest glory. He was never more resplendent than when he hung upon the cross, that was his true spiritual throne, so he prayed, "Glorify thy Son," — Enable him to bear the agony, and to pass through it to the glory." "That thy Son also may glorify thee." The death of Christ was a great glorifying of God. We see his love and his justice rendered more glorious in the death of Christ than they would have been by any other method.

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

In this verse you get the doctrines of general and particular redemption blended. By his death, Christ obtained power over all flesh; his death had some relation to every man, but the special object of it was the salvation of the elect. The purpose of the shower is to water one particular field; but the rain falls everywhere, so plenteous is the bounty of God. The object of Christ's atonement is to purchase eternal life for those who were given to him by his Father; but he has also obtained power over all flesh.

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

To know God, is eternal life. If you know God, if you know Jesus Christ whom he has sent, you are spiritually quickened. That knowledge has brought to you, nay, it is, in itself, the new life: "This is life eternal," — not life for a few years but life eternal. Mark the final perseverance of the saints, how they shall hold on and hold out for ever.

John 17:4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Jesus regards his work as already done, although he had yet to die, to pay the ransom price for his people, yet by a leap of holy faith he says, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

John 17:5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Jesus had laid aside his glory for our sakes, now he asks that, his work being regarded as done, his glory may be given to him again.

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and they have kept thy word.

God's people belong to him, he gives them to his Son, Christ gives them his word, and they keep it: "They have kept thy word." Do we keep God's word? Do we hold to it? Do we make it the guide of our whole life? Do we seek to obey it? This is the token of God's chosen people.

John 17:7-12. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Christ always has kept his people, he still keeps his people, and he will keep his people for ever. The sheep shall be delivered into the hand of the Father in full number, there shall not be one of them missing in that day when they shall pass under the rod of the great Shepherd.

We cannot read all this prayer of our Lord tonight; we must now go, in the language of the next chapter, with the Master into the garden of his grief.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17:1-12; John 18:1-14.

John 17:1-2. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Here the doctrines of a general and a particular redemption sweetly blend "As thou hast given him power over all flesh," they are all under Christ's mediatorial government by virtue of his matchless sacrifice; but the object in view is specially the gift of everlasting life to the chosen people: "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.



No man has life eternal, then, who is in ignorance of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ; but once to know God, and to know Christ, is sure evidence that we possess a life that can never die: "This is life eternal."

John 17:4-6. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

Is not that sweetly put on the part of our divine Lord? These chosen men had been poor creatures at the very best; very forgetful and very erring; yet their Lord brings no charges against them but he says to his Father, "They have kept thy word."

John 17:7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

"They have learnt to link the Father and the Son; they know that though I am the channel of all blessing, yet thou, O my Father, art the fountain from which it flows."

"Jesus, we bless thy Father's name

Thy God and ours are both the same;

What heavenly blessings from his throne

Flow down to sinners through his Son!"

John 17:8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

He is looking at them in contrast with the world which utterly rejected him; in contrast with that world, the disciples had received and known Christ. Oh, what a blessed distinction does the grace of God make between men! We were all blind by nature; and now that we see, it is because the sacred finger of Christ hath touched our eyes, and opened them. Let him have all the glory of it; yet let us note how well he speaks of his people For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

John 17:9-10. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Oh, the blessed union of interests between Christ and the Father! How surely do we belong to the Father if we in very deed belong to Christ, and what a holy unity is thus established!

John 17:11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Here is a prayer, then, for the preservation and the unity of the people of God; two very necessary petitions. Would God that they might be fulfilled in us, that we might be kept, and kept even to the end, and then kept in living union with all the people of God, and with the Father and with the Son!

John 17:12-13. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

In this wondrous prayer, note the special design of the words of Christ; not only that we might have joy, but that we might have Christ's joy, and not merely have a little of it, but might have it fulfilled in ourselves.

John 17:14-16. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Jesus puts twice over this most special and important fact, which we must never forget: "They are not of the world." Let us never live as if we were of the world; but where such a vivid distinction has been made, God grant that there may be an equal distinction in our lives! Now comes the prayer for sanctification.

John 17:17-18. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Christ was the great Missionary, the Messiah, the Sent One; we are the minor missionaries, Sent out into the world to accomplish the Father's will and purpose.

John 17:19-20. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That shows that Christ's prayer embraces us also who have been brought to believe on him through the word which the apostles declared. Christ, with prescient eye, looked on every one of us who believe on him, and prayed for each one of us as much as he did for John, and Peter, and James.

John 17:21-22. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: Unity is the glory of the Church of Christ. It shall be the very crown of the Church of the living God; and when she puts it on, then will the wondering world acknowledge and accept her Lord.

John 17:23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

Wonderful words! How shall we dive into their depths? To think that the Father should have loved us even as he loved his only-begotten Son; oh, the heights and depths of this wondrous love!

John 17:24-25. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

You notice the division that there is here. There are two parties; there is the world, and there is the Church; what is it that divides them? Read these two clauses: "The world hath not known thee:" "These have known that thou hast sent me." What stands between? "But I have known thee." It is Christ himself, coming in between the two parties, like the cloudy-fiery pillar, black with darkness to the Egyptians, but bright with light to the Israelites. Oh, to have Christ between you and the world! It is the best form of separation: "I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me."

John 17:26. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it

I read it to you as it stands. Our good translators were always afraid of using a word too often, for fear of falling into tautology; so for what they considered the beauty of the language they used the word "declared instead of I made known"; but why should they have

done so? Who were they that they should have wanted to improve on Christ's words? It should be the same word right on: "The world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known unto them thy name, and will make it known:"

John 17:26. That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Oh, that this love may be in us, for Christ's sake! Amen.

This chapter contains the marvellous prayer of our Great High Priest. May the Holy Spirit apply its teaching to our hearts as we read it!

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

The great design of Christ, all through his life on earth, was to glorify the Father. He came to save his people, but that was not his first or his chief aim. It was his object, through the salvation of myriads of the sons of men, to glorify the Father.

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him

Here we have both the universality and the speciality of the work of divine mercy. Christ has power over all flesh, men are in the power of the one Mediator, but there is this special object ever before him: "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

This does not mean mere head-knowledge; but to know in the heart and soul the one only true God, and Jesus Christ who was sent of him to the sons of men, "this is life eternal." God without Christ brings not eternal life, and Christ, if he were not sent of God, would not bring eternal life to us, but knowing God in Christ Jesus is eternal life.

John 17:4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Here our Saviour speaks by anticipation. He foresaw that he would pass through his passion, that all the work of his people's redemption would be fully accomplished, and in this his final prayer on earth to the Father he could truly say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." May you and I be able to say the same when we depart out of this world! Not boastingly, — there was no boasting in our Lord, — but truthfully conscientiously, from the bottom of our heart may each one of us be able to say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"!

John 17:5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

After the finished work, Christ was to have the glory. O worker for God, seek not glory before thy work is done! Expect not honour among men because thou hast begun the work so earnestly; plod on until it is finished, then shall the glory come. "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward," said our Lord concerning the scribes and Pharisees who sought the praise of men; but you have not your reward at present, it is yet to come. Wait for it, for it is sure to come.

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

How tenderly he speaks about them! He says the best he can of them; they were faulty, feeble folk, but he says, "They have kept

thy word." So they did. Oh, that you and I may do the same, and not be swept away by the drift of the current of unbelief! If we are not perfect, if we fail in some respects, yet may the Master be able to say of us to God, "They have kept thy word!"

John 17:7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

How the blessed Christ loves to lay aside all honour to himself even in his own gospel! He said that the things which he had taught to his disciples were not his own, they were the Father's. The Father always honours the Son, and the Son takes care always to honour the Father.

John 17:8-10. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Every true child of God glorifies Christ; and if you cannot say that you are glorifying Christ, you should question whether you really belong to him. If you are his, it is true of you, "I am glorified in them," —not only by them, but in them, — "their suffering with patience, in their labouring with diligence, in their faith, in their trustfulness in me, 'I am glorified in them.'"

John 17:11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, —

We also know that we, too, are in the world; we have good reason to feel it, and sometimes to mourn it.

John 17:11. And I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

When God keeps us, he keeps us in unity, our divisions are not the result of his work. When we get away from his keeping, and get away from his Word, then we are sundered in heart from him and from one another; but by his keeping he keeps his children one.

John 17:12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The Scripture was fulfilled in the preservation of his own, and also fulfilled in the destruction of the traitor. God's Word will be fulfilled anyhow. Oh, that it may be to us a savor of life unto life, that we may be kept by it, and not a savor of death unto death, as it was to Judas, who was blinded by the very light that shone upon him! That fierce light that beat about the King of kings fell on him, and it blinded him eternally. God save us from such an awful doom as that!

John 17:13. And now come I to thee;

I can only read you this wonderful chapter, but what must it have been to have heard it! I think I see the look on the Saviour's face as he says to his Father, "And now come I to thee." May something like that look be on your faces, my beloved, when your last moments come! Looking away from your dear ones whom you must leave as Jesus left his disciples, may you each one be able to say, "And now come I to thee!"

John 17:13. And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

While he drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs, and went forward to all the agonies of the cruel cross, he wanted his disciples to have his joy fulfilled in them, that they might be filled full with his joy.

John 17:14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the

world.

This does not look like trying to please the world, to adapt our method to the spirit of the age, to come as near to the world as ever we can, to dabble in its politics, and join in its schemes. This has to me a very different tone in it from all that.

John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, —

Christ and his people did not go together out of the world all at once that would have been to leave the world in an utterly forlorn condition, without any help whatever, so he says to his Father, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world,” —

John 17:15-16. But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

You cannot make Christ a worldling; do what you will with his character; twist it as you like, you must see that there is something unworldly, otherworldly, about him. So let it always be with his people.

John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word in truth.

Thank God for that: “Thy word is truth.” Not, “Thy word contains the truth with an admixture of error;” or, “Thy word has some truth in it;” no, but, “Thy word is truth.” Not only is it true, but it is truth, the very essential truth.

John 17:18-19. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, —

“I separate myself to this work, I dedicate, devote, consecrate myself wholly for their sakes,” —

John 17:19-20. That they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, —

This little handful of disciples who had been gathered to his name, —

John 17:20. But for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

Thank God that he will bless our word as well as his own Word! When our word is based upon his Word, when we do but expound what Christ has given us to say, then men shall believe on him through our word.

John 17:21-23. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

This is a wonderful expression. Does the Father love his people as he loves Christ? Then his love to them must be without beginning, without change, without measure, without end. Oh, it would ravish your heart, it would carry you away to the very heaven of heavens, if you could get the full meaning of this expression, “and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me”!

John 17:24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.

This is Christ's last will and testament: "Father, I will." It is not merely his prayer, but he makes this as one clause in his will, that all whom the Father gave him should be with him to behold his glory. And it will be so, beloved. He will not lose one of his own. He will never drop from that dear pierced hand any portion of the eternal gift of his Father.

John 17:25-26. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here the doctrine becomes a matter of experience. May we never rest till we get the full experience of it, that the very love which God gives to Christ may be found in our hearts shed abroad by the Holy Ghost! Amen.

This matchless chapter contains that great intercessory prayer of Christ for his people which may most properly be called "the Lord's prayer."

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

What a sight it must have been to see the Divine Intercessor in this his last great prayer before he poured out his soul unto death! We can never read this chapter so as fully to enter into its meaning, for there must always be in it a depth far greater than our experience can fathom. A man must die, and enter heaven, before he can fully realize all that Christ meant when he said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Notice the doctrine of this verse. Here is the mention both of a general and a particular relation to Christ. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh." Never think of setting a limit to the value of Christ's atoning sacrifice, never dream that you can understand all its influences and all its bearings; by his death, Christ has power over all flesh. But notice also the special purpose and object of redemption, observe how it applies particularly to the elect of God. The motive for the Father's giving to Christ power over all flesh is this, "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

The knowledge of God, and the knowledge of the Messiah, the Sent One, — this is not only life, but it is life that can never die: "This is life eternal." Have you, dear friend, received this eternal life? Do you know the only true God? Do you know Jesus Christ whom he has sent? Then, at this very moment, you possess eternal life, and you shall never perish, for eternal life is a life that cannot possibly die.

John 17:4-5. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

This is such a prayer as never could have been prayed by a mere man and you cannot understand this prayer at all apart from the manhood and the Deity of Christ combined. No human being could have written such a prayer as this even if it had been proposed to him to write a prayer that should be equally suitable to God and man. It is only suitable to Christ, the God-man, and it is in itself one of the best evidences of the inspiration of Scripture. I dare take my stand upon this chapter alone, and say that here we have the finger of God, the writing of the Holy Ghost, and here we have the very words of him who was God and man in one person.

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

How gracious it was on our Lord's part to say the best he could of his disciples! These twelve men had learned but little of the Divine

Word, but they had believed what they had been taught; so Jesus could say of them to his Father, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."

John 17:7-8. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

I want you to notice how the Lord Jesus Christ makes no boast of being "an original thinker." On the contrary, he says to his Father concerning his disciples, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." I would rather repeat the Word of God, syllable by syllable, than I would dare to think for myself apart from the revealed will of God. What are men's thoughts, after all, but vanity educed from vanity? But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever; it shall abide when even heaven and earth shall pass away. Hence our Saviour lays great stress upon this fact, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." Brother minister, may you and I, when we come to die, be able to say to the Lord concerning our people, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me."

John 17:9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

In this, our Lord's last great intercessory prayer, he was especially engaged in petitions for his own people. There is a sense in which he intercedes for all mankind; but in the higher and more special sense referred to in this verse, Christ's own chosen ones occupied all his thoughts: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

John 17:10-11. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

Christ is God, and therefore, looking into the future, he can speak of his approaching departure as though it had already happened.

John 17:11. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

See the plaintive power of this prayer of a tender heart. First, our Lord shows his love by praying for us, and then by dying for us. Notice what importance he attaches to the unity of his people: "that they may be one, as we are." Let us all try to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of piece." I suppose that, while we are in this world, we shall never all think alike; but let us all think alike about our Lord, and gather to his name, and feel a holy unity through his Spirit. When shall it be again said that all Christ's disciples have "one lord, one faith, one baptism"? Alas! they rent his seamless robe, and it still remains torn through the schisms and errors which divide his people one from another.

John 17:12-13. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee;

These are sweet words with which to die. Oh, that you and I might have them in our hearts if not on our lips in our expiring moments! "And now come I to thee." Our Lord thinks nothing of the bloody way by which he was to go to the Father. What though the cross, and nails, and spear, are in the road? He thinks comparatively little of all those terrible things, for he looks beyond them, and he says, "Now come I to thee."

John 17:13. And those things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Have you ever obtained this blessing, brethren, — Christ's joy in you, — what is more, Christ's joy fulfilled in you? God grant to all of us to know by happy experience the meaning of this wondrous expression!

John 17:14-15. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

“Do not let the world so besmear and defile them as to do them mischief. Let them keep on as lamps burning in dark places. Take them not out of the world, but keep them from the evil.”

John 17:16-18. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

As the Father took Jesus out of the bosom of his love, and bade him go as his missionary to men, so does Jesus keep us for a while away from the bosom of his glory that we may stop here to be missionaries amongst our fellow-men. Are we fulfilling our calling? Are we justifying the commission which Christ has laid upon us? Oh, that we were doing so to the fullest extent that is possible to us!

John 17:19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, —

“For their sakes I set myself apart,” —

John 17:19-20. That they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, —

This little handful of followers gathered about me, —

John 17:20. But for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

In the glass of prevision, Christ saw us, my brethren, and he saw all the myriads, yet unborn, who are to be gathered to his cross, and to bow before his feet, and he prayed for them all: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.”

John 17:21-22. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Let us more and more lay aside everything that divides, especially that evil heart of unbelief, and pride, and self-seeking, which is the great sect making faculty. May we get rid of that evil, and come more and more to realize that all men who are really in Christ are of God and must be one. If we are members of one body, one blood courses through our veins, and gives us life. One Spirit is in the one body of Christ. There cannot be two lives, there cannot be two beings within the one body of Christ. All true believers must be one, and truly, if we speak truth to one another concerning our Lord, and especially if we speak much to God together in prayer, we straightway perceive that we are one.

John 17:23-26. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have-known thee, and those have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here the Master ended his sweet prayer, and went off to his terrible passion in Gethsemane.

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; —

That tremendous hour which was the very hinge of history, — that hour in which he must suffer, and bleed, and die, to pay up the ransom price for his people: “Father, the hour is come;” —



John 17:1. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

In the endurance of the cross, there was a mutual glorification. It was the time of the Saviour's humiliation, and yet, in a certain sense, he was never so glorious as when he died upon the tree. Then, too, he glorified his Father, vindicating divine justice, and manifesting divine love.

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou, hast given him.

Christ, by his death, had power given him over all flesh; — that is the universal aspect of it; but there was a special purpose hidden within it: "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Dost thou really know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, his Son? Hast thou been brought into such familiar acquaintance with God as to accept Jesus Christ as thy Saviour? Then, thou hast eternal life, and thou mayest rejoice that thou hast a life like that of God himself, which can never die.

John 17:4. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

What a blessed thing that our Saviour was able to say this just before his death! Oh, that you and I may be able to utter some humble echo of this speech when we come to the end of our lives! This is indeed a life worth living.

John 17:5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

"Take me up from earth again, reclothe me with that glory which, for a while, I have laid aside,"

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

What high praise this was of Christ's disciples! "They have kept thy word." Poor creatures that they were, they often turned aside from the right path, they were oftentimes very ignorant, and very willful, yet the Lord knew that their hearts were right towards him, and that they willed to learn, and desired to believe. So he saw in them what was often hidden even from themselves, and he testified to his Father, "They have kept thy word."

John 17:7-8. How they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;

Every preacher of the gospel should ask is it that this is true concerning himself. When we pass on to the people the words which God has given to us, we supply them with real spiritual food, and so we glorify God; but if we only give them our own words, we do but mock their hunger, and we dishonour God. Our blessed Master, though quite able to speak his own original thoughts, kept to the words of his Father; let us be careful to imitate his example.

John 17:8-9. And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

There was a specialty in Christ's prayer now that he was nearing the end of his earthly life. He concentrated his intercessions upon

the chosen people for whom he was about to shed his blood.

John 17:10-11. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

The disciples were going to be left alone, and Christ's tender heart made him lessen the pain of the separation by offering this great petition on their behalf: —

John 17:11. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

This was as though he had said, "Thou hast given them to me, my Father, to become my bride; and now I am about to die, and to return to thee, I give back this bride of mine into thy charge. Take care of her, I pray thee, till I can come back again, and receive her unto myself." There is such holy unity between these Divine Persons of the Godhead that the Father first gives the elect to Christ, and then Christ commits the elect into the Father's keeping.

John 17:12-13. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Are you dull and sad today? Does anything depress your spirits? It is not according to your Saviour's mind that you should be unhappy; it is his will and purpose that the joy should be fulfilled in you. Ask for a sip from his cup of joy at this moment, one drop of his joy will make the dullest to be bright, and the saddest to be glad.

John 17:14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. He was a stranger here, and his people are also strangers and foreigners.

We are not so much to be unworldly as to be other-worldly. We belong to another world, to another kingdom, even the kingdom of heaven.

John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

"Keep them in the world to battle with the evil; make them the salt that prevents putrefaction, and let them not lose their savor, let them not be contaminated by the evil in the midst of which they dwell."

John 17:16-17. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

It almost looks as though our Lord anticipated that question of Pilate, "What is truth?" Here is his answer: "thy word is truth."

John 17:18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Christ was the sent One, and every Christian is also sent. All believers should be missionaries, sent forth upon a mission to bless the sons of men.

John 17:19-20. And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

Christ knew that his Church would grow. He did not merely pray for the little handful of disciples who were with him there, but he

preyed for all who, in after years, should believe on him.

John 17:21. That they all may be one, —

That is the great prayer of Christ. There are not two churches, but one Church. Christ is not the Head of two bodies, he hath but one mystical body. There is but one Bridegroom, and there is but one bride, — that bride is his indivisible Church. Hence his prayer, “That they all may be one;” —

John 17:21. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Can the world believe in Christ till his Church becomes more manifestly one? I fear not, so let us each one aim at the true unity of the one Church of Jesus Christ. There are some who aim at this by separating themselves from everybody else, but I do not see how they promote unity in that way, I clearly and painfully see how they increase divisions and multiply strife wherever they go. But let us, beloved, to the utmost of our power, promote the unity of the body of Christ.

John 17:22-23. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, —

Do you understand this wonderful union? Jesus Christ in you: “I in them,” and then the Father in Christ: “and thou in me,” —

John 17:23. That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me,

This is a wonderful truth, — that the Father loves the Church even as he loves Jesus Christ his Son. When shall the world ever know this till the unity of the Church is more clearly seen?

John 17:24-26. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Oh, for a blessed fulfillment of that prayer in our experience this very moment, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Can there be found, in all the records of mankind, in all the documents that have ever been preserved, anything that can match this record of our Saviour's great intercessory prayer? He seems to pray here as if he stood already within the veil; not pleading in agony as he did in the garden of Gethsemane, but speaking with that authority with which he is clothed now that his work on earth is done. There is as much of the divine as of the human in this prayer, and it is remarkable that in it our Lord does not make any confession of sin on account of his people. He does not come before God here, as it were in form a pauper is, with many pleas, but the burden of his prayer is that he may be glorified, and that his Father may be glorified in him. The words of the prayer are amongst the most simple that could have been selected, but oh, the depths that lie hidden beneath them! I do not think that, this side of heaven, any of us can know to the full the meaning of this wondrous chapter. May the Holy Spirit graciously grant us a glimpse of the glorious truths that are here revealed!

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven,-

Not his hands, as we do who are poor suppliants; but his eyes, indicating whither his thoughts went. He “lifted up his eyes to heaven,”-

John 17:1. And said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

No mere man would have dared to pray such a prayer as this. Jesus asks that he may be gloried by his Father that he also may glorify his Father, he put the two things together: "Father, glorify thy Son that thy Son may also glorify thee." This is not a plea that is fit for merely human lips. It is Jesus the Son of God who, in receiving glory from his Father, is also able to return it to his Father.

John 17:2-3. As thou has given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou has given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

See how he puts himself side by side with God as no mere man might dare to do. Only he who was equal with the Father could venture to plead thus, claiming power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. Here we learn that it is eternal life to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

John 17:4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

"My teaching is all done, my ministry is finished; and though there are still some arrears of suffering, yet those shall be fully discharged in due time. 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'"

John 17:5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

You must try and think of who it is that is thus pleading, for so you will get at least some faint idea of the intercession of our great High Priest in heaven, for after this fashion he still prays to his Father before the eternal throne.

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

"They were thine, my Father, under thy direct government, but thou hast transferred them to my mediatorial sovereignty, and thou hast given them up to be mine, in a very special sense, beyond all the rest of mankind and this is one of their distinguishing characteristics, that they have kept thy word."

John 17:7-8. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them. Is it so with you, dear friend? Have you received Christ's words the very words which the Father gave to him, and which he has in his turn given to you? O soul, thou art indeed happy if this is the case with thee! "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them," —

John 17:9. And have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world," —

That is, not in the same special sense as he prays for his people, not with that personal pleading which he offers on behalf of his own chosen ones: "I pray not for the world," —

John 17:9. But for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine

In the 6th verse, Jesus had said to his Father, "Thine they were; " and here, in this 9th verse, he says, "They are thine." They still belonged to the Father, the transference of them mediatorially to the Son having made no change in the Father's relation to them.

John 17:10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

I can understand a man saying to God, "All mine are thine;" but no man, unless he is something more than man, dares to say to God, "Thine are mine." But Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, gives all that he has to God, and all that God has belongs to him, so that he can truly say, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."

John 17:11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

It has been well said that this expression, "My Father," is a binding up of the Old and New Testaments in one. The Old Testament reveals the holiness of God, but it is the New Testament that is peculiarly the revelation of God as the Father. We put the two together, as Jesus does, and thus he speaks, "Holy Father, make my people one, and keep them one." Let us close up our ranks, brethren. Let us love each other more; and as Christ has prayed that we may be one, let us constantly seek to manifest our oneness among the sons of men,

John 17:12-17. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth:

How wondrously our Saviour's prayer advances! He asks for his people's unity; he asks for their joy, he asks for their preservation, and now he asks for their purification, their sanctification: "Sanctify them through thy truth:"

John 17:17-20. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone,

"For these who are already converted, I pray also for those who are not yet called by grace."

John 17:20-22. But for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: —

Who amongst us knoweth the full meaning of that wondrous declaration?

"The glory which thou gavest me I have given them:" —

John 17:22-23. That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, and thou hast loved me.

What a glorious assurance is that! It amazes us to know that the Father has loved us even as he loved his Son.

John 17:24-26. Father, I will that they also, whom thou had given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

Jesus is going forth to die, and he knows it; yet he prays to his Father, "Glorify thy Son." There was no way of his coming to that glory except by passing through tears, and blood, and agony, and death. He only asks that he may be glorified in what he is about to do, and to suffer, and he is ready for it all: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

In that saying of our Lord we have an explanation of what he did by his redemption. There was a universal aspect of it: "Thou hast given him power over all flesh." There was a special design in it: "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Sometimes, two views of the same thing may appear to contradict each other; but when we are taught of God, we soon discover that they do not really do so, and that a grand truth may be contained in the two descriptions of it. Christ had, by virtue of his death, power over all flesh; but it was for a distinct purpose: "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

By this, then, dear friends, we can know whether we have eternal life or not. Do we know the Father? Do we know Jesus Christ as the Messiah the Sent One? Are we resting in that blessed knowledge? If so, he has given to us eternal life.

John 17:4-5. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

In deep humility, Jesus had laid that glory aside for a while. He had tabernacled in human flesh; and when he spoke these words, the time was approaching when, All his world and warfare done, he should go back to his pristine glory with something more added to it.

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:

They had not all of them clearly seen that manifestation. Jesus had to ask the question, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Still, that was not the fault of the manifestation; Christ had manifested the name — that is, the character — of God unto those who had been given to him out of the world.

John 17:6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

We might have expected that the verse would end, "and I have kept them." But their keeping God's Word is the evidence that Christ has kept them. Whenever a soul loves the Word of God, delights in the teaching of Christ, glories in those things which the world called dogmas,— as if they were so much dog's meat,— when you and I can feed upon these things,— when every utterance of Christ is dear and precious to us,— that is good evidence of our being called out of the world, and separated unto Christ; it is one of the marks of divine grace which Jesus works in those whom the Father has given him: "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy Word."

John 17:7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

The Father gives Christ the truth which Christ gives to us. The Father gives Christ the souls which Jesus keeps until the day of his power. There is mutual communion between God the Father and his blessed Son; let us never say a word that might look as if we did not understand the oneness the everlasting and infinite oneness — which there is between the sacred persons of the Divine Unity.

John 17:8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;

You know how men talk against “verbal inspiration.” Yet Christ says, “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.” Many are trifling with the teaching of God’s Word, as if it were of no importance at all. Not so did Christ: “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.”

John 17:8. And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou, didst send me.

Firmly do we believe this, and in our heart of hearts we do accept every part of the teaching of Christ, no matter what it is. I hear people say, sometimes, “Oh, but that is not essential!” There is a great deal of mischief hatched out of that egg. O friends, it is essential that Christ’s disciples should treasure whatever he has said! Never trifle with that part of the Word of God which seems to be less essential to salvation than another portion; for if it is not essential to salvation, it may be essential to your comfort, or your holiness, or your strength, or your usefulness; and if it be essential to God’s glory, let us never trample it in the mire, or in any way dishonour it. Who am I that I should say, “This which God has spoken is important, but that other is not”? It does not do for us to presume to judge the Word of God; we should rather let the Word of God judge us.

John 17:9. I pray for them: —

Blessed word! Christ prays for his own people: “I pray for them:”

John 17:9. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me,

In that last hour, just before his Passion, his thoughts were separating the precious from the vile; and his prayer ascended for his own people: “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;

John 17:9-10. for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them

It is a wonderful thing that Christ should be glorified in his people. Can it be that he shall be glorified in me? Dear child of God, you sometimes sit in the corner, and think to yourself, “How insignificant I am! The church on earth would not miss me if I were taken away; and the choirs of heaven cannot need me.” Oh, but your Lord is glorified in you! If you are one of his chosen and redeemed people, in your very weakness and need he finds opportunity to glorify his strength and his fullness. He knows the truth about this matter, and he says, “I am glorified in them.”

John 17:11. And now I am no more in the world,—

He was going away; he has gone now.

John 17:11. But these are in the world,—

We know we are; do we not, brethren? We have a thousand things some of them very painful and humiliating to us,— to remind us that we are still in the world.

John 17:11. And I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Oh, what blessed keeping is that; to be kept in spiritual oneness! I do not expect to see the people of God in visible oneness; but as there was a secret, invisible union, most real and most true, between the Father and the Son, so there is, at this time, a secret union in the hearts of all believers, most deep, most real, most true. I may never have seen that good friend before; but as soon as ever we begin to talk of Jesus and his love, if we are the living children of the living God, the bond of unity is felt at once by both of us.

“One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.”

John 17:12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

What a blessed Shepherd is this who never lost a sheep! Judas crept in among the flock, but he never was truly one of the flock. He was never a son of God, he was “the son of perdition” all along. Christ has kept all his sheep, and all his lambs; and he will do the same, dear friends, even to the end.

John 17:13. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

What an unselfish Saviour! His heart is ready to break with his impending sufferings, and yet he prays for us, that we may be filled with his joy. I suppose that it is true that the Man of sorrows was the happiest man who ever lived. “For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame;” and, notwithstanding his boundless and bottomless grief, yet there was within him such communion with God, and love to men, and the certainty of his ultimate triumph, that kept him still joyous above the seas of tribulation. He prays that that same joy may be fulfilled in us; may God graciously grant it to all of us who believe in Jesus!

John 17:14-15. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

There is a reason for God’s elect being allowed to remain in the world. They are never left, like wheat in the field, to perish through the damp and cold, or to be devoured by the birds of the air. Oh, no! We are left for God’s glory, that men may see what the grace of God can do in poor frail bodies; for the service of Christ’s Church, that we may be here for a while to carry on the cause of God, to be the means of comforting the little ones, and to seek the conversion of sinners. We are to be like salt to prevent putrefaction. We are God’s preventive men, to prevent as much of the evil as we can; and we are to fight with the evil that cannot be prevented, and to seek to overthrow it in Christ’s name.

John 17:16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Many, nowadays, say that we ought to blend the church with the community, and that it is a great pity to have any division between them. A great many good people are outside the church; therefore try to make the church as much like the world as ever you can! That is a silly trick of the devil which the wise servants of God will answer by saying, “To whom we give place by subjection, no, not for an hour.” There must ever be a broad line of demarcation between the Church of Christ and the world, and it will be an evil day when that line is abolished. The sons of God took to themselves wives of the daughters of men, but that kind of union brought mischief with it, and it will ever do so.

John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

We cannot afford to give up God’s inspired Word, because it is a means of our sanctification; and if this be taken away, it is not such-and-such a dogma, as they call it, put into the background, but it is truth that would sanctify us which is discarded, it is God’s own Word that is flung to the dogs; and that must never be.

John 17:18-19. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. “I set myself apart unto holiness, that they also might be set apart unto holy uses through the truth.”

John 17:20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;



Our Lord knew that the little circle around him would grow into a multitude that no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; so he prayed for all whom his Father had given him,

John 17:21-22. That they all may be one; as thou. Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

The Church will never know her true glory till she knows her perfect oneness; the One Church will be the glorious Church.

John 17:23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

That is a grand expression: "Thou has; loved them, as thou hast loved me." What ! with the same love? It is even so; — a love without beginning, a love without change, a love without bounds, a love without end: "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

John 17:24-26. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

This blessed prayer was heard by the Father; all of it must be fulfilled, and untold blessings do and shall come to us through this intercession of our Lord, blessed be his holy name!

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17.; and John 18:1-9.

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted Up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son; that thy Son also may glorify thee:

Christ's great intercessory prayer begins with his appeal to his Father to glorify his Son. Christ knew all that he would have to suffer during that "hour" to which he had looked forward from eternity, but his eye could see, beyond the cross with all its shame, the crown with all its glory. The Son being glorified, he would also glorify his Father, and there is a wondrous glory that comes to the Father through the death of his Son upon the cross.

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Some people seem unable to see that there is perfect harmony between the general and the particular aspects of Christ's atonement. As the one Mediator between God and men, he has absolute power over all men, to do with them as he wills, yet that power has a special relation to those whom his Father gave him before the foundation of the world, and they are those who come to him in accordance with his declaration, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

So that the only way to obtain eternal life is to know God the Father and God the Son, and the best way to know them is to ask God the Holy Spirit to teach us what is revealed concerning them in the Sacred Scriptures which he inspired holy men of old to write.

John 17:4-5. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which had with thee before the world was.

As Christ had carried out his Father's will, and done the work he had been sent to do, he was but right that he should go back to the glory which he had for a season voluntarily laid aside. You notice that, although he had not then died upon the cross, he was certain that he would there complete his great mediatorial work that he spoke of it as being already "finished."

John 17:6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

No one but Christ could or would have borne such a testimony concerning his fickle, feeble followers, happy will it be for us if he can say also concerning us who profess to be his disciples, "They have kept thy word."

John 17:7-8. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

You see how the truth reached these disciples. The Father gave the words to his Son in his mediatorial capacity, and he gave those words to his disciples, and they received them, and believed that Christ was indeed the Sent One from the Father.

John 17:9-10. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

See what perfect union there is between the Father and the Son, and note their mutual relationship to the chosen people, "They are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine."

John 17:11-12. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of Perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

So it is clear that Judas was not amongst those who were given to Christ by his Father; if he had been, he also would have been "kept."

John 17:13. And now come I to thee;

Christ looked beyond all that was to happen to him before he could return to his glory, and as he saw his Father waiting to welcome him, he cried "And now come I to thee." These might be appropriate words in the mouth of a dying believer: "And now come I to thee."

John 17:13-14. And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Never did anyone more thoroughly mix with men than Christ did, and never had anyone greater sympathy with human beings than he had, yet everyone knows that he never was "of the world." He was distinct from all who were round about him, and he says that his disciples were as he was: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world "Christ's people have a life that others have not; they have a relationship to God that others have not, they are swayed by motives which others understand not; and they are journeying onward toward a perfection to which others do not even desire to attain. So they are not of the world, and the world treats them as speckled birds, and hates them even as it hated their Lord and Master.

John 17:10. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil.

Christ did not pray that there might be monasteries and nunneries where his servants might be shut away from the world, nor even that his followers might die in early youth, and go home to heaven; but he prayed that, remaining in the world for gracious purposes, —to be its salt and its light—, they might themselves be kept from the evil that is in the world. It would be a dreadful thing indeed if the chosen people of God were to be overcome by the world; so Christ prayed that his Father would keep them from the evil, for he well knew that they could not be kept from it by any power that was not divine. There is no less power needed for the preservation of a believer than for his regeneration. The sustentation of a Saint is a constant miracle, which can only be wrought by God himself.

John 17:16-17. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Some men tell us that the truth is in the Word, but that the Word is not the truth. I read, the other day, that we might regard the Bible as a casket which contained the jewel of the truth, but was not itself the jewel. Christ did not talk in that fashion, for he said to his Father, "Thy word is truth." This shows that God's Word is not merely the casket of truth, but is the truth itself.

John 17:18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

They are sent ones, even as Christ was the Sent One. As he is the Christ, they are Christians, anointed with the same anointing as he himself is, and they should endeavor to be in all respects missionaries to the world, even as Christ was God's great Missionary to the lost.

John 17:19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

"I set myself apart wholly for them, that they also may be set apart for holy uses."

John 17:20. Neither pray I for these alone,—

For these who are already saved by my word,—

John 17:20. But for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

And so his blessed arm encircled not only the converts gathered to him by his own personal ministry, but also those who should, in after days, be converted under his servants' ministry; and it always seems to me to have been great condescension on his part to have said, "I pray for them also which shall believe on me through their word." We should have expected that he would have said, "through my word;" and, indeed, it is his Word that leads sinners to repent and to believe; yet Christ puts this honour upon those who speak his Word out of the fullness of their hearts. They have by experience made it their own, so he calls it theirs, and gives them this honourable position as the messengers of the gospel of salvation.

John 17:21. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

I wish that we could see more of this blessed unity, yet it does exist, even if we cannot see it. Wherever there is any true spiritual life, —it matters not how much it may be marred by denominational divisions, —there is and there always must be, an essential unity. All Christians are one family in Christ. I do not mean all who call themselves Christians, but all who really are believers in Christ. The inner life is one, the source of that life is one, the nourishment of that life is one, and the end of that life is one, so that all who possess it must be one, —one in Christ, and one with one another, even as Christ is one with the Father.

John 17:22-23. And the glory which thou givest me I have given them; that they maybe one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; —

That is the real secret of the saints' unity: "I in them," together with the everlasting union of Christ Jesus with the Father: "and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;" —

John 17:23. And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me

This is a great deep, the words are very simple and clear, but their meaning is unfathomable. Is it really true that the Father has loved his chosen ones as he has loved his only-begotten Son? It is such a wondrous thing that one might be willing to lie awake at night to meditate upon the amazing truth here revealed in our Saviour's words: "Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Some foolish folk talk about the saints being put away for a while into some purgatorial "limbo" in order that they may be made ready for heaven but Christ speaks not so, he says, "I will that they be with me where I am." We care not to answer curious questions about the disembodied state, it is enough for us that Christ knows all, and that we shall be with him for ever.

What shall be the occupation of those who are with Christ? "That they may behold my glory." There will be something worth looking at, something to be delighted with for ever and ever: "the glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." So God must have loved his people before the foundation of the world, for he hast loved them as he has loved his Son. There was no beginning and there shall be no end to the Father's love to his people; he says to each one of them, "I have loved thee, with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Here are waters to swim in, plunge into them, and revel in the bliss they are meant to convey to all who are in Christ Jesus.

John 17:25-26. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

How rich is this language! How musical! Surely, never did any human poem match this peerless prose of the Divine Teacher. And now, what a descent it is as we pass on to the next scene in his life!

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17, and John 18:1-9.

John 17:1-2. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Here we have the two doctrines of a general and a particular redemption. Through his death, Christ has power given him over all flesh, but the distinct, especial object is the salvation of his own — "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

To know God in the sense of being acquainted with him — loving him —abiding in fellowship with him — this is life eternal. To know God in Christ Jesus is to be saved indeed.

John 17:4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Which no other man could ever have said — not even Adam in his perfection, for his work was not finished; and, alas! how marred it was before it came near to finishing! And the most gracious man that ever died could not, in his last moments, say, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,” for it was still imperfect. There were many things which he would wish to have done, and many error which he would wish to have rectified; but our Lord is more than man, and rises to this point — “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

John 17:5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

“I have disrobed myself to be thy servant. Clothe me again with the garments of my majesty. Let me come back to the palace when I shall have passed through the stream of death.” So far is the prayer for himself. Now he prays for his people.

John 17:6-7. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

“They have not accepted me as a human teacher on my own account, unsent and uncommissioned, but they perfectly understand that there is a union between the Father and the Son. The things that thou hast given me are of thee.”

John 17:8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

There are great depths in these words. One of the greatest of German divines always refused to preach from this chapter, for he said he felt that few of God's people had a sufficient measure of faith to understand it; and when he came to die, he had this read to him three times before he fell asleep. There is a world of wonderful mystery. Though the words are short and plain, yet the sense is fathomless.

John 17:9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me; for they are thine.

There is an intercession of Christ which is for all the world, but his choicest intercession — his effectual prayer — is for his own. Nothing, perhaps, makes men so angry as this statement. They cannot endure that God should dispense his gifts according to his own will; but so it standeth true. There is an intercession in which none have a part but his own. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.”

John 17:10-11. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

They will be left therefore. The shepherd will be gone. They will seem to be like orphans with their best friend departed.

John 17:11-13. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with therein the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

He asks not only that they may be kept and so unharmed, but that they may be comforted, and so made glad. O sad hearts, hear your Redeemer's prayer for you — and do not doubt that it is answered — “that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

John 17:14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

If nobody hates you for being a Christian, are you a Christian at all? If you find that you run with the general herd, and swim with the current, can you be a follower of that Christ who was despised and rejected of men?

John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Not that they should shut themselves up in monasteries and convents. That is not the prayer of Christ. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

John 17:16-19. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Sanctify myself — consecrate myself — set myself apart — for their salvation that they also might be sanctified, consecrated, set apart through the truth. Now comes a third part of the prayer, in which he pleads for the whole church — for that part of it at that time not saved — for the unborn ones — for us.

John 17:20-21. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Our Saviour knew how apt we should be to split up into sects, and to be divided into parties, and so he prays again and again that we may be one. Cultivate the spirit of Christian affection. If there be divisions, let them not come through you. Contend earnestly for the faith, but also let us love one another.

John 17:22-23. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Surely the passage seems to culminate here. These words rise like the peak of a mighty Alp almost out of our sight into the clear brightness of heaven — "hast loved them as thou has loved me." Now, believer, thou canst not fully comprehend this, but believe it — that as surely as the Father loves the Son, as and after the same manner also he loves you — without beginning, without measure, without change, without end "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

John 17:24-26. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,

Let us read that wonderful passage again — "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them."

John 17:26. And I in them.

Sacred, mystical union! May our souls enjoy it day by day.

This exposition consisted of readings from Psalms 32; John 17.

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, thee hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

The hour has come. The most important, the darkest, the most dreadful hour of Christ's life was come. But he had only one thought

in his mind. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Beloved, when our hour comes — and we shall have hours of darkness — may we have nothing on our mind but that, — that God would help us to glorify his name. We shall not dread suffering if that be our one desire, because we shall see that suffering often gives opportunities to God for manifesting his own glory in the patience of his people.

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

I think this verse is a solution of the problem about general redemption and particular redemption. Christ, by his death, has obtained power over all flesh. There is a universality about his redemption, but the object of it still was that he should give eternal life to "as many as thou hast given me." There is a specialty and peculiarity about the grand ultimate result and design of the death of our Lord. Let us believe both truths.

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Is the knowledge of God life? Is the knowledge of Jesus Christ life? It is even so. But what a blessed form of knowledge this is! It is taught to us by the Spirit of God in a special and remarkable way. This is life eternal.

John 17:4-6. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou invest me to do And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:

The best the clearest manifestation of the name or character of God is to be found in the person, the life, the work, the love of Jesus Christ. Well did he say in another place, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world."

John 17:6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

It has been their treasure. They have preserved it as a priceless blessing. They would never let it go.

John 17:7-8. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou invest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

Now that description of the people of God in Christ's day is true of us today. We have received the words which the Father has given the Son, and we believe of a surety that the Father has sent Jesus Christ into the world.

John 17:9. I pray for them:

Oh! how emphatically true this is! Christ always prays for them — for them, one by one — with most effectual prevalence. It is because- he prays that any of us are preserved. "I pray for them."

John 17:9. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me:

There is a specialty in intercession, as well as in redemption. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."

John 17:9-11. For they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

And now they are left. Their great guardian and protector has gone. They have no visible Head left. "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world." You and I know that we are in the world. The world makes us know that. We are in an enemy's country. We are in a land which is not our rest; and however happy our portion may be, as Christ the world takes care that we should understand that we are aliens and foreigners in it; hurrying through it towards our abiding home.

John 17:11. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one as we are.

Do all that you can, beloved, to promote the unity of the people of God, not only on the larger scale, wherein all churches shall be brought together in loving accord, but also on the smaller scale among your own friends, and those Christian brethren who are in your own church. Let none of us break the concord. Oh! may we always be of a gentle, generous, Christlike spirit, that we may be one, as the Father is one with the Son.

John 17:12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

It is, perhaps, more wonderful that there were not more like Judas than that there should have been one like him. I wonder whether we can hope that in our churches there would be found as few as one in twelve who are not in heart with Christ. It is very wonderful that the rest should have been kept, and that this son of perdition should have been left to perish.

John 17:13-15. And now come I to thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Either by death, or by shutting them up in monasteries, or causing them to dwell in caverns alone. "I do not pray for that." Do not take them out of the battle, but save them from the deadly arrow.

Help them to play the man, and win the victory, and not desert the colors.

John 17:16-18. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Do you recognize your mission, dear friends? Do we all catch it? — that, as truly as Christ was the messenger of the Father, so every believer is the messenger of Christ. You are sent into this world to do an errand, not for yourselves, but for your Master. Are you doing it?

John 17:19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Christ sets himself apart for us, that they may set us apart for him. Have you realized this, my brother — that you are dedicated to Christ — that every breath you breathe, and thought you think, and word you speak, and act you do, should all be done as unto him? He lived alone for you.

Live alone for him.

John 17:20. Neither pray I for these alone.

These saved ones.



John 17:20-22. But for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one;

Christ prays for us before we believe, and we believe in answer to his prayer. Oh! what glorious words. The very glory which the Father gave to the Only-begotten has that Only-begotten handed over to his people. "that they may be one, even as we are one."

John 17:23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Now drink that in — all the sweetness of it — that the Father has loved his people even as he loved his Only-begotten.

John 17:24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory. which thou hast given me: for then lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

He will not be in glory, and leave me behind him. He is a bridegroom that cannot be satisfied unless his bride be a partaker of all his joy. He is so one with us, that as the head can never be content to be crowned, and the rest of the body be disgraced, so neither could Christ. We must be, if he wills it, where he is. We must behold his glory; we must share it.

John 17:25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

It is delightful to hear Jesus praying in this way for us, side by side with himself, though we are unworthy of so unspeakable an honour; praying for us as if his own self, his own glory, depended upon our safety. If Christ prayed thus for us, how ought we to pray for one another!

John 17:26. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it:

As long as the Christ lived, he showed forth his Father's glory, and so should we. If we have declared it, we should say, "And will declare it." "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Thus the glorious union stands. May we always rejoice in it.

John 17:26. That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

John 17:1. These words spake Jesus, and, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;

The hour to which he had so long looked forward, the hour which he had anticipated with ardent desire: "The hour is come." On the very night that Jesus prayed this prayer, Luke's record tells us, "When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them,

With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer;" So he began his great intercessory prayer, "Father, the hour is come, —

John 17:1-2. Glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

In these words we have both the general and the special aspects of redemption. Christ has received power over all flesh, but with this peculiar design, that he should give eternal life to as many as his Father has given him. Who are they who have been given to

him by his Father? All who come to him by faith, even as he said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." To all of these Jesus gives eternal life.

John 17:3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Do you know God? Do you know Jesus Christ? Are you on speaking terms, on loving terms, with them? Are they your friends? Then, you have eternal life; for "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

John 17:4-6. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

What a sweet thing for the Lord Jesus to say of that poor, much-erring company of disciples, "They have kept thy word"! "They have not been all they might have been, nor all they ought to have been, but, O my Father, they have kept thy word!" I trust that we may be found faithful to the truth that the Holy Spirit has taught us, and obedient to its precepts, that our Lord may be able to say to his Father concerning us also, "They have kept thy word."

John 17:7-8. Now they have known that all things to whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

See how the Lord Jesus himself takes all his teaching from the Father. You never hear from him any boast about being the originator of profound thoughts. No, he just repeated to his disciples the words he had received from the Father: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." If Jesus acted thus, how much more must the messengers of God receive the word from the Lord's mouth, and speak it as they receive it!

John 17:9-10. I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.

Is not this a wonderful prayer? If anybody, possessing the greatest possible inventive faculty, were asked to produce a prayer which could be fitly prayed by a person who was both God and man, it would be an impossible task. This chapter has about it all the air of truthfulness, it ought to be sufficient to convince any man that Christ was God and man. There is such a wonderful mixing of the two natures, without any confusion of ideas, so manifestly does he plead as man, and yet so clearly does he also pray as none but the Son of God could pray, that he must be the God-man, the one mediator between God and man.

John 17:11-12. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

It was known and foretold that Judas would be lost; therefore, the Saviour, the great Keeper of the sheep, is not to be held responsible for the loss of "the son of perdition", who was never committed to his charge.

John 17:13-17. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Our Divine Lord seems to think nothing about his own sufferings; all his thoughts are occupied with that which concerns his people. All his prayers are for them, that they may be made holy, and that so God may be glorified in them.

John 17:18-19. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself,

Or, "I set myself apart."

John 17:19-20. That they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

They were only a handful of disciples, but you cannot tell what a multitude will believe on Christ through their word. There were but twelve apostles; yet John beheld a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel, and after that he beheld a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands. The Saviour doubtless linked his little band of disciples with the ancient promise, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." What great events from little causes spring! Whenever you are doing good, remember not only those who are immediately saved, but the others who will be blessed through them, even as our Saviour said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." We who have believed on Jesus, through the word preached or written by the apostles, are also included in this prayer of their Lord and ours. Notice what our Saviour asked of his Father for them and for us: —

John 17:21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And when Christians, being one in Christ, and one in the truth, shall become more manifestly one in heart, and life, and faith, what glad days we may hope to see!

John 17:22-23. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and them in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

This is a wonderful expression, where will you find anything like it! It is indeed marvellous that God should have loved his people even as he loved Christ his Son, yet that is what the Lord Jesus here says: "Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:24-26. Father. I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name,

"Thy character, thy work," —

John 17:26. And will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

This prayer is for you, and for me, as much as for the twelve apostles. May the Lord fulfill it in all of us as well as in them, for his dear name's sake!

Amen.

We will read this evening a portion of two prayers offered by our Divine Lord and Master on that night in which he was betrayed. The first is that memorable intercessory prayer of his recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to John.

John 17:15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil.

Christ did not pray that his disciples should be taken out of the world. It is very seldom that we ought to present such a petition. If that had been a proper prayer for us to offer, it would have been authorized by the Master. There are times when, in great pain of body, or in deep depression of spirit, the believer, like Elijah under the juniper tree, requests for himself that he may die. If you ever do pray such a prayer, utter it very softly, for the Master does not authorize it, and that is a matter that must be left to the Lord of life and death. Jesus says here, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Sin is the real evil of the world; the danger of our being entangled in worldly customs, or dropping into the evil ways of an ungodly generation. Christ does pray that we may be kept from the evil that is in the world; and we also may and must pray that the Lord will keep us from the evil by which we are surrounded, and especially from the evil one who seeks our destruction.

John 17:16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

"They are of another race: they are swayed by other motives, they have another life; they have another destiny; 'They are not of the world.'" Is that true of you, dear hearer? We are reading out of God's Book, remember. This is the description of Christ's people; does it describe you? "They are not of the world: 'they are not worldly, they are other-worldly; their thoughts and hearts are set upon the world to come'".

John 17:17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

What! Do they need to be sanctified? They are not of the world, and are kept from the evil in the world; do they need to be sanctified? Yes we shall always need sanctifying until we reach our heavenly home, where sin cannot enter. Every day we need the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit to lead us unto holiness. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." It is only the truth of God that can beget holiness; false doctrine is never the medium of sanctification. You can tell which are false doctrines, and which are the true, by our Lord's own test: "By their fruits ye shall know them." The same men who reject the old-fashioned doctrines also rebel against the old-fashioned style of living; loose living generally goes with loose doctrine. There never was an age in which the doctrines of grace were despised but, sooner or later, licentiousness prevailed. On the other hand, when we had Puritan teaching, we had also pure and holy living. This prayer is still needed for all Christ's disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

John 17:18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

This is the original Missionary Society, and the model for all others; Christ sent, missioned, of the Father, and every saint missioned of Christ. Are you carrying out your mission, O ye people of God? How dare you call yourselves by that name if you have no mission to anybody? If you are living here for yourself alone, how can you belong to Christ, who never lived a moment for himself, but always lived wholly for others?

John 17:19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself,

"I set myself apart, as one who is consecrated, dedicated, devoted to a grand design."

John 17:19. That they also might be sanctified through the truth.

This is our Lord's prayer for his disciples. In the ninth verse we read, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."

Now our Lord Jesus prays for those who are to be his people. I wonder whether there are any of them here tonight.

John 17:20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word;

There is a great company of people who are not at present believers, but who shall yet believe on Christ through the testimony of those who are already believers on him. O God, call out many such through our word I pray.

John 17:21. That they all may be one;

This is Christ's prayer for all those who shall believe on him, that they may be converted, and brought into the one Church together with those who are already there:" that they all may be one."

John 17:21. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Christ would have all his people joined in communion with himself, and with his Father; and when that is the case, then will men know that Christ came into the world for a definite purpose: "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

John 17:22-23. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;

Christ is the incarnation of God, and the Church should be the incarnation of Christ. Oh, when shall this great prayer be answered?

John 17:23-26. And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for those lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

A very short time after our Divine Lord offered this intercessory supplication, he prayed a very different prayer, in a strangely-altered style. You will find it in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter twenty-six. Remember that there was a very short interval between the utterance of the majestic prayer I have been reading, and the presentation of the cries and tears of which we are now to read.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17:15-26; And Mat 26:36-46.

John 18

John 18:1-2. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place:

He was familiar with the Master's place of retirement for private prayer and he had, doubtless, heard the Master pray there. Yes, and many a Judas knows the place where the saints meet for worship, and knows the communion table too, and knows some of the most hallowed gatherings of God's people where they pour out their hearts in private prayer; and the pity is that, knowing all that, too, the ancient Judas and the modern one do not savingly know the Master himself.

John 18:2. For Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

If ever any man might have lived without prayer, it was our Lord Jesus Christ. His humanity was perfect, yet he abounded in prayer; and the nearer we grow to Christian perfection the more shall we pray. I heard of one who said that she was so perfectly acquiescent in the will of God that she had left off praying, she had got beyond that! What a fearful delusion! God save all of us from ever falling into it! Here is One who could say from his heart, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will,

but as thou wilt.” He expressed in prayer his perfect acquiescence in his Father’s will, Did Christ, our Lord and Master pray so, and will any who profess to be his followers speak so presumptuously as to say that they can live without prayer? God forbid!

John 18:3. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

What strange paraphernalia they brought with them to the garden of Gethsemane,- “lanterns” to show them the way to the Sun of righteousness, “torches” with which to find out the bright and morning Star and “weapons” with which to overcome the Lamb of God, who had nothing to oppose to them but his own innocence.

John 18:4. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

It is a wonderfully suggestive thought that Jesus knew everything that would happen to him. Martyrs and other sufferers for Christ’s sake have had some measure of foresight of what they had to endure; but none of them could have so exquisite a foretaste of everything as our blessed Lord had. He knew it all, —every single atom of pain, and anguish, and heartbreak. He knew it all, yet he calmly “went forth” to meet it, and said to those who came to drag him away to his death, “Whom seek ye?”

John 18:5-6. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

“Jesus saith unto them, I am;” as though appropriating to himself the name of Jehovah, and “they went backward, and fell to the ground,” astounded and confounded. Even though he restrained his omnipotence, he claimed the omnipotent name I AM, and before the majesty of that name they prostrated themselves upon the ground.

John 18:7-9. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

That was a very gracious saying of Christ’s, “If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.” This is what Christ says on his people’s behalf to death, and to the law and the justice of God, and though this saying does not excuse the disciples’ flight, it does make some sort of apology for their going away every man to his own home. Christ knew that they would be safer there. One of them followed him afar off instead of going his way, and you know what came of it. There is a time for openly following Christ, and there is a time when Jesus says, “Let these go their way.” So, right to the end he takes care of his sheep and bids them scatter for a while now that the sword is about to enter their Shepherd’s heart.

This exposition consisted of readings from John 17, and John 18:1-9.

## John 18 Commentary

**John 18:1.** When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

Our Lord could not cross that “brook Cedron” without being reminded of the time when David went that way in the hour of his sorrow, though he knew that he had to face a far greater trial than that of David. The very brook would remind him of his approaching sacrifice, for through it flowed the blood and refuse from the temple.

A dark, foul brook, through which flowed the blood and refuse from the temple. King David crossed that brook one night in bitter sorrow; and now the Saviour crossed it when it was near to midnight: “He went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron.”

From our Lord’s example, we should learn, when trouble is near, to meet it with composure. Our Saviour did not sit still; but, as the

hour approached for his betrayal and death, “he went forth with his disciples.” The passing over the black brook of Cedron, through which flowed the filth of the temple, was very significant. King David had crossed that brook long before when he had been driven from his home by Absalom’s rebellion, and now the greater David went “over the brook Cedron, where was a garden.” He specially wanted solitude just then, for one of the best preparations for suffering is to get alone with God. Learn this lesson also from your Lord’s example, and as he put Gethsemane before Calvary, if you can put an hour of prayerful contemplation before your expected suffering, it will be a great help to you.

#### **John 18:1-2.**

Our Lord went there to pray, and Judas knew that this was his custom. Are we such men of prayer that others know where we pray? Have you some familiar place where you go to meet your Lord? I am afraid that many know where we trade, and many know where we preach, but perhaps, few know where we pray. God grant that we may be often at the mercy-seat! We should be better men and women if we were more frequently at the throne of grace.

**John 18:2.** And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

The place of our Lord’s frequent retirement for private prayer was well known to Judas, who had often gone there with his Lord and his fellow disciples.

That dark and gloomy olive garden was no pleasure garden that night. It had often been a place of retirement and of prayer for the Master. What happy memories his disciples must have had of being with him there for a season of prayer! It was a very choice privilege for them to be with him when he preached, but it must have been, if possible, a still greater privilege to be with him when he prayed. It is not recorded that his disciples ever said to him, “Lord, teach us how to preach;” but at least one of them was so struck with his prayers that he said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” We may well ask him to do that for us now. Perhaps some of you would like to be taught how you can become great; it is much more important for you to be taught to become prayerful.

#### **John 18:3.**

How completely the traitor must have been in the power of Satan, and how hardened and callous he must have grown, that he could lead “thither” the men who were going to arrest the Saviour! Truly it was by wicked hands that Christ was taken, and crucified, and slain; yet, unconsciously, these evil men were carrying out “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” How strangely were they equipped for their deed of darkness! “With lanterns and torches and weapons.” They were coming to the Light of the world bearing “lanterns and torches”; and armed with “weapons” that they might use against “the Lamb of God.” If he had wished to deliver himself, all their “weapons” would have been in vain, and their “lanterns and torches” would not have revealed him, even with the help of the full moon, which was probably shining at the time.

It does not matter much about the band of men and officers with lanterns and torches and weapons, but the dreadful part of the narrative is that they were led by one who had been a disciple of Christ, one who had been numbered with the apostles. Is Christ still betrayed by his professed friends? Yes, it is so, but may you and I never be guilty of that terrible crime! Yet why should we not unless the grace of God should prevent it? We are of the same flesh and blood as Judas; and although we might not be tempted by a sum of money, we may be tempted by a sinful pleasure or by a sinful shame. Lest we should be led astray, let us pray that we may not enter into temptation, and especially ask that we may be preserved from betraying our Lord, as Judas did.

“Lanterns” to give light to the Sun, “torches” to find out the Light of the world; “Weapons” with which to fight with the Lamb of God, the unarmed Sufferer. Strange treatment this for him who came to save and bless!

#### **John 18:4**

Because of his divinity, he knew all that would come upon him, but what a wondrous manhood his was that, although he knew all that would befall him, he went forth calm and composed, resigned to his Father’s will and said to those who had come to seize him, “Whom seek ye?” I think he is saying to some of us, “whom seek ye?” We have not come here to slay him; we have not come here to fight against him, and lead him away to crucify him; yet I hope that we can truly say that we have come seeking Jesus. If this be really your heart’s desire, it shall surely be fulfilled to you.

#### **John 18:4-5.**

Or, “I am.” It is remarkable that Jesus should, in his betrayal, twice use this expression, thus uttering the very name of Jehovah.

Notice, dear friends, that the word “he” is in italics, showing that it is not in the original. Our Lord here twice used the name of Jehovah, I AM,— as he did on certain other memorable occasions. It was most fitting that, as he was going out to die, he should declare that it was no mere man who was about to suffer on the cross, but that, while he was truly man, he was also “very God of very God.”

**John 18:5.**

What a hardened wretch he must have been to be able to stand with them! One would have thought that, having betrayed his Master, he would have hidden himself away for shame, but no, "Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them." His heart must have been steeled.

Or, rather, "I Am," pronouncing the words with a divine dignity which had a startling effect upon them.

**John 18:5-6**

It seems as if our Lord intended to let them realize something of his divine power and glory, for the utterance of that august expression, I am which is his Father's name, staggered them, and they fell to the ground. Do you not wonder that they did not rise up, and go away and leave him after they had fallen at his feet and asked his forgiveness? They did not so act, for the power of fear when it is not accompanied by love is very small. There was enough power in it to make them fall down to the ground, but there was not power enough in it to make them fall at Christ's feet confessing their sin.

**John 18:6.**

The simple utterance of his name drove them from him, and smote them to the earth; what would have happened if he had put forth his almighty power?

Christ's almighty power cast them down at once. He needed not to lift his hand or even his finger; he only said, "I am," and "they went backward, and fell to the ground."

**John 18:7**

Do they return again to the fray? Having once felt Christ's divine power, do they summon courage enough to attack him again? Yes, for there is no limit to the malice and impudence of the human heart.

**John 18:7-8.**

It is very cheering to us to think of our Lord meeting all the enemies of his people, gathering up all their weapons into his own heart that his people might go free. You and I, if we had been in such a case, would have been hurried and worried, and our fears would have made us selfish. We should have forgotten our poor friends who were with us; but Jesus thought not of himself, he thought of his poor trembling disciples, and therefore he said, "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

**John 18:9.**

He had only said that just a little while before, but this verse shows us that the New Testament is as sure to be fulfilled as the Old Testament. It was a new saying, not then written, yet it had all the life and power of God in it; so it must live, and must be fulfilled.

**John 18:8-10.**

Always ready to boil over, ever full of zeal and rash impetuosity, Peter —

**John 18:10.**

Peter struck at his head; he was not content with trying to wound, he meant to kill Malchus, and he did "cut off his right ear."

Here is every prospect of a fight. Simon Peter has begun it, and the armed men will be eager to continue it. We always have our Simon Peters about, — men of emotion, men of impulse, men of impetuosity. They are not a bad sort of Christians, and I do not know what we should do without them. Our cold, frozen thinkers would not do much without our warmhearted Peters to help to thaw them. Still, Peter was only one of the twelve apostles; and though they call him the head of the church, he made a very poor head of the church just then. He drew a sword, and began to use that carnal weapon by cutting off the right ear of Malchus. It was a great mercy that the Lord was there to heal the ear, and to forbid the use of the sword in his defense.

**John 18:11-14**

Saying a great deal more than he thought he was saying, for he uttered a great Gospel truth when he said, "It was expedient that one man should die for the people."

**John 18:11**

Here is another helpful lesson for any of you who have a trial before you. Do not seek to set the trial aside, use no wrong means to escape from affliction; drink your ordained cup. Though Peter's sword is handy, put it up into its sheath, and do not use it. Bear and



forbear, on and on and on to the end of the chapter. Drink the cup that your Father gives you. However bitter it is, it is sweetened by the fact that he gives it to you. Shall not a true son of God drink the cup that his Father presents to him? There can be no harm in it, and it must work you some real good; so put up your sword, and lift the cup to your lips, and drink it to the dregs.

#### **John 18:12.**

When you are bound with sickness, or bound with weakness, or bound in any other way, do not complain. Your Master was bound, and I think we ought to be willing to be anything that Christ was. What was good enough for him is good enough for us. "They took Jesus, and bound him," —

Annas had been high priest before, and he seems to have been regarded still as high priest and to have been a leading spirit amongst the adversaries of Christ. The old sinner would not go to bed that night until he had seen the man whom he hated brought bound before him. Sometimes hatred becomes a more powerful passion than even love; and here, while the disciples of Jesus all fled in terror, Annas, the Saviour's bitter foe, was wide awake, and awaiting his arrival with those who had taken him captive.

#### **John 18:13-14.**

Christ could not die without the question of expediency turning up. I never knew any great sin in the world, nor any great heresy, nor any great combination of men to maintain it without the question of expediency coming under consideration. Expediency is the great Christ-killer. Many nowadays say to us, "Do not preach against error; it is not expedient to do so. Do not break away from evil associations; it is not expedient." How many there are of even good men who do certain thing, not because they are right, but because they are expedient! But, believers in Jesus, in the name of your Lord I implore you to hate expediency, since it put Christ to death. It was a wicked expediency that would murder Christ in order to save a nation; but it did not really do so after all, for the guilt of slaying Christ brought upon the nation the glaring crime of deicide.

#### **John 8:14**

Therein uttering a prophecy which he did not himself fully understand, speaking like another Balaam, through whom God spoke the truth, as once he did through the ass that Balaam rode. Sometimes, God makes the basest men the unconscious utterers of truth which they do not themselves comprehend.

#### **John 18:15**

Here is John's usual modesty, he will not mention his own name, but simply speaks of "another disciple."

That is John, of course; he never mentions his own name if he can help it.

#### **John 18:15-16.**

John boldly followed Jesus, and so was safe, Peter stood at a distance from his Lord, and so was in danger.

I always fancy that John had a greater tenderness for Peter because he was the means of getting him into the palace of the high priest. Peter could not have got in if he had been alone, but John was known to the high priest, and so secured his admission. He must always have felt sorry that he took Peter into a place where he was so strongly tried. Hence John sought him out after his great fall; when perhaps the other apostles were inclined to leave him by himself, John cheered him up, and brought him back to the faith.

#### **John 18:16.**

It would have been better for him if he had kept there, he would probably have been more out of the way of temptation than he was inside the palace of the high priest.

John doubtless acted thus out of kindness to Peter, but he was the means of bringing his friend into a place where he was not strong enough to keep his feet. You and may act like that, perhaps, in perfect innocence, and even with commendable kindness; yet we may be unintentionally doing our friends a great wrong. I notice that John seems to have been the first of the apostles to associate with Peter after that terrible fall of his; and in his record of Peter's denial of his Lord he does not mention his cursing and swearing as Matthew and Mark do. He appears to have felt great tenderness towards Peter; perhaps all the more so because he had been the innocent means of getting him into the place of temptation.

#### **John 18:16-18.**

Peter was in bad company; while he was warming his body, his soul was growing cold to his Master. Men cannot go into bad company without getting some hurt. It is said by a quaint old writer that, if men go to Ethiopia, they may not become Ethiopians, but by the scorching of the sun they will grow blacker than they were before. It is always better to keep out of harm's way if we can. He that would not fall into a ditch should take care not to walk near the edge of it; so, if Peter wanted to stand fast, he should not have

gone where he would be sure to be tempted.

#### **John 18:17.**

As, Peter! Ah, myself! If anyone is trusting in himself, he may soon utter a falsehood concerning his Lord, as Peter did. Keep us, O God, by thy grace, or else it will be so with us. It was nothing but a poor maidservant that cowed this brave Peter; the man whose sword was drawn just now in his Master's defense is not able truthfully to answer the maid's question, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not."

That was a very dangerous place for Peter to be in; he would have been safer out in the cold.

#### **John 18:18.**

While his Lord and Master was being maltreated and abused over yonder at the end of the hall, Peter was warming himself at the servant's fire. Ah! he was getting cold spiritually while warming himself physically; and it sometimes happens that, when men are warming their bodies, they are at the same time cooling their hearts. I have known a man warm himself at a very big fire through coming into possession of a large amount of property, but he has also grown very cold spiritually for these coals of fire do not warm the heart.

#### **John 18:19.**

This was a sort of preliminary examination before the Sanhedrin should try him officially.

#### **John 18:19-21.**

Our Lord's teaching was never deceptive, he did not say one thing and mean another. He could truly appeal to his hearers concerning his teaching. It is a great thing for a preacher to be able to feel that his hearers know what he has said to them. We cannot always say that, for some of them forget, and some of them do not understand what we say. Some of them do not give sufficient attention to know what it is that is said, but Christ's preaching was so clear and plain that he could truly say, "Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

What an admirable answer that was! Whatever he might have said about his doctrine, they would have twisted into a ground of accusation against him, so he simply said, "Mine has been public teaching, open to all. I was not found in holes and corners, secretly fomenting sedition. I spoke in the streets; I spoke in the synagogue; I spoke in the temple; ask those who heard me to tell you what I said." What more convincing answer could he have given?

#### **John 18:20-22.**

Here we get an exposition of one of Christ's own sayings. You know that he said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Of course, Christ would carry out his own precept, so we see that he did not mean that his disciples were literally to turn the other cheek to those who struck them, but that they were to bear such treatment patiently, and not to give a railing answer. See how Jesus himself turned the other cheek.

#### **John 18:22-23.**

Jesus answered him, Not as Paul did, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." The Master is superior to the disciple at all points. Jesus said: —

#### **John 18:23.**

Let us pray that, whenever we are despitefully treated, we may keep our temper, and be as composed as our Lord was; and if we must make an answer to our accusers, let it be as discreet and as justifiable as this answer of our Lord was.

Nothing could have been more calm or more dignified, and, at the same time, more full of the spirit of forgiveness.

#### **John 18:24; John 18:26.**

John thus resumes the narrative concerning Peter from the 17th verse:

"Simon Peter stood and warmed himself."

#### **John 18:24-27**

We know that the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. He did not speak a word, perhaps lest Peter should fall into the hands of those who were round about him; but his look was sufficient to kindle in Peter the fires of repentance, and he went out to weep

bitterly over his shameful denial of his Lord.

**John 18:25.**

Two or three or more of them speaking at a time said to him: —

Twice over, we are told that, while his Master was being buffeted, Peter stood in the midst of the ribald throng, and warmed himself.

**John 18:26-27.**

Ah, me! they who lie once will be all too apt to lie again; those who deny Christ once will be apt to go to still greater lengths in their denial of him. May they be stopped as Peter was!

**John 18:27.**

May the cock crow for some who have been asleep up till now, and warn them that the night is far spent, and that it is time for them to awake out of sleep, and wash their eyes with tears, and repent of having denied their Lord!

The passages, which we are about to read from three of the Evangelists, make up a continuous narrative of our Lord's trial before the high priest. First, John gives us an account of our Saviour's appearance before Annas, of which I need not say much, as I recently preached upon it.

Thus was Christ's prediction literally fulfilled, and thus, by what seems the humble instrumentality of a cock crowing, was Peter brought to repentance. There is many an eloquent divine who has missed the mark when he has been preaching, but God has spoken by a very humble voice. You, dear friend, though you have no gifts of speech, may go and tell the story of Jesus Christ to someone, and God may bring him to repentance through you, as he brought Peter back to himself through the agency of this bird. May God make us all useful, and keep us from falling into transgression as Peter did! Amen.

**John 18:28**

They were very eager to prove their enmity to Christ; they had spent the night, and the earliest moments of the dawn, in examining their illustrious prisoner, condemning him, and abusing him, and now they were off to Pilate.

What could defile such wretches at these? Yet they were afraid of ceremonial defilement, though neither afraid nor ashamed to imbrue their hands in the blood of Jesus.

**John 18:29.**

Pilate then went out unto them, He loathed and detested them, yet, for his own evil purposes, he would yield to their wishes and whims.

**John 18:29-30.**

As much as to say, "You may take that for granted. We would not have brought him if he had not done wrong. You need not examine into the matter, we have already heard the evidence, and convicted him, and so saved you all the trouble of trying him; we only bring him here for you to condemn him."

**John 18:31.** Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.

"That is your way of doing such things, but it is not a method into which we shall fall. Our law does not condemn a man before it hears the evidence against him. I am not going to be your tool, to put this man to death without hearing what is laid to his charge, and the proofs of his guilt. If you want that done, you must do it yourselves."

"You Romans have taken from us the power of life and death, and we want him put to death." There was a clear confession that nothing short of Christ's death would satisfy them.

**John 18:32.** That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

Crucifixion was a Roman, not a Jewish method of capital punishment, so God overruled the wanton wickedness of the worst of men for the accomplishment of his own eternal purposes, without, however, diminishing their responsibility and guilt in the least degree. It was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" that Christ was put to death, yet it was "with wicked hands" that they took him, and crucified him.

**John 18:33.** Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

He did not look much like it. There was little enough about his appearance or his apparel to suggest the idea of royalty.

**John 18:34-35.** Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?

I can imagine him throwing all the scorn and contempt possible into the question. It was characteristic of the Romans, as we learn from the works of their great writers, that they utterly despised and detested the Jews.

**John 18:35-37.** Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee, unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

We might have expected that he would have said, "I came into the world that I might be a king." But he explains that, as a Witness to the truth, he was a King.

**John 18:38.** Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

He did not want an answer. He merely thought it such an unnecessary piece of trifling to talk about truth, he himself had so slight an idea of what the word might mean, that when he had said, "What is truth?" "he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." That was the truth about the Truth, from the lips of a man who cared nothing about truth, yet who was compelled to bear this testimony, "I find in him no fault at all."

**John 18:39.** But we have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Now, Pilate may have thought, if Christ was their King, they would certainly prefer him to a thief and a robber; so he was putting before himself an opportunity of escaping from judging Christ, and before them a test as to whether there really was in them any liking for the Christ, or any possibility of his becoming their King.

## John 19 Commentary

Note there may be some repetition as this is simply a collection of all his thoughts on a given passage or section.

**John 19:1-3 - Just as they were gathered to say, "Ave Imperator" — "Hail emperor" —so imitating that word which they applied to Caesar. and applying it to Jesus in mockery. "King of the Jews," the utmost scorn was thrown into the last word, "of the Jews." There had been a general tradition that there should arise among the Jews a king who would subdue the nations, and the Romans jested at the very thought that they should be conquered by the leader of such a despised race as the Jews, and so they said, "King of the Jews."**

John 19:1. Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. - This was one of the most terrible punishments to which a man could be sentenced. The Roman scourge was no trifle. It tore off the quivering flesh of the agonized sufferer for it was constructed on purpose to do so. It was generally made of the sinews of oxen, intertwined with the knuckle bones of sheep, and small slivers of bone. This torture our blessed Saviour endured. These are the stripes with which we are healed.

**John 19:2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,**

Mockery was blended with cruelty. They might have made him a crown, yet surely it need not have been one of thorns unless they intended to put him to the utmost torment that they could conceive. By this crown of thorns our blessed Lord was crowned King of the curse, for the earth was cursed through Adam's sin, and part of the sentence pronounced by God in the garden of Eden was, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." So Christ wore the mark of the curse which man's sin had brought upon the world.

**John 19:3-4. And they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.**

That is the second time he said it. He had declared it before; in the 38th verse of the previous chapter we read, "I find in him no fault at all." And now again, "That ye may know that I find no fault in him." "Then came Jesus forth" — you can see him going down the steps out of Pilate's hall into that same courtyard — "wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them" —

“Ecce Homo” — “behold the man.” He does not call him king; he only gives him the title of man. As if to say, “How foolish are you to think there is any danger from him; look at him in all his suffering and shame.”

**John 19:3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.**

This was the homage which the Son of God received from men; harmless and gentle, he came here with no purpose but that of doing good, and this is how mankind treated him.

**John 19:4-5. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!**

Was there ever such a sight of majesty in misery before or since? Yet he needed not to endure all that ignominy, he was no vanquished monarch unable to maintain his own rights. He was still “over all, God blessed for ever,” and he could have smitten everyone there to death if he had pleased to do so. But he was the Lamb of God’s passover, so he meekly suffered.

**John 19:5-6. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.**

That is the third time. It was well that he who had the principal hand in the slaughter of the Lamb of God should make his report that he was “a Lamb without blemish and without spot”; and, therefore, fit to be presented in sacrifice before God. For the third time he doth acquit him. The Jews answered him, “We have a law” — it may not be your law — “and by our law he ought to die because he made himself the son of God.” This is a reviving of the charge of blasphemy which they had brought against him in the palace of the high priest.

**John 19:6-7. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him. We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.**

They no doubt understood that he claimed to be divine, and so he did. I have heard some say that he was a good man, but not God. If he was not God, he was certainly not a good man, for no good man, who was only a man, would claim to be God, or lead others to believe that he was divine. If he was not actually divine, he was a rank impostor; but he was divine, and therefore we worship and adore him equally with the Father and the Spirit.

**John 19:7-8. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid:**

It shows he was afraid all along — the coward — the vacillating coward — and now a fresh superstition seizes upon him. He believed, as a Roman in gods many. “What?” said he to himself. “What if, after all, I should have been torturing a divine Being, a God who has come among men in their likeness?”

**John 19:8-10. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?**

Pilate talks like some great one, yet how contemptibly little he was, vacillating, cowardly, unable to do what he knew was right. His poor Victim who stood before him was infinitely greater in character than he was.

**John 19:9-10. And went again, into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. The, saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, And have power to release thee?**

And he trembled with fear, “and went again into the judgment, hall,” taking his prisoner with him — you can see the two sitting there alone — “and saith unto Jesus, ‘Whence art thou? Tell me now, what is thy character, thine origin, thy rank? ‘But Jesus gave him no answer.” Pilate’s day of grace was over; he had had his opportunity, but that was now ended; there was no answer. It is a very solemn thing when God gives no answer to a man; when a man turns to Scripture, but there is no answer; when he goes to hear the voice, but there is no voice from the oracle for him; when he even bows the knee in prayer, but gets no answer. The silence of the Christ of God is very terrible. “Then saith Pilate unto him,” with all the pride of a Roman in his face, “Speakest thou not unto me Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?”

**John 19:11. Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above:**

**therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.**

“Thou hast the power to execute the sentence, lent to thee from heaven: but he that brought me here, and laid the charge against me, even Caiaphas, as the representative of the Jews, hath the greater sin.” And then the Blessed One closed his lips, never to open them again until on the cross. From this time, “like a sheep before her shearers,” he is dumb. Notice that even though that word is the word of the Judge who judges Pilate, who judges the Jews, yet there is a strain of the gentleness of his character about it, for though he does virtually declare Pilate guilty of great sin, yet he says there is a greater, and while there is no apology for Pilate, yet he puts it softly.

**John 19:11. Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.**

Christ referred to Judas, and through him to the Jews who had conspired to put him to death; but what tenderness it was, on the part of Jesus, to make an excuse as it were even for Pilate! He was notable for making excuses for the guilty. That was a remarkable excuse that he pleaded for his murderers, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” There was never another such a tender heart as his; he was so gentle and so kind that all their cruelty only moved him to pity them, and pray for them.

**John 19:12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out. saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.**

One of the Herods had put upon his coins the name, “Caesar’s friend.” and so they quoted the title which one of their kings had taken, and they tell Pilate that he will not be the friend of Tiberius. Here was a sore point with Pilate; he knew that just then Tiberius was gloomy and morose, too ready to catch anything against his servants; and the man by whose influence Pilate had come into power had just then lost all influence at court. So he was afraid it would be his disgrace and discharge as governor if the Jews brought a charge against him to Tiberius. Therefore he trembled.

**John 19:12-14. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that crying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!**

What mockery there was in Pilate’s use of this title, and yet how true it was! They asked to have Christ put to death, yet he was their King. Their accusation was transparently false, and Pilate made them see that it was so.

**John 19:12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out. saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.**

One of the Herods had put upon his coins the name, “Caesar’s friend.” and so they quoted the title which one of their kings had taken, and they tell Pilate that he will not be the friend of Tiberius. Here was a sore point with Pilate; he knew that just then Tiberius was gloomy and morose, too ready to catch anything against his servants; and the man by whose influence Pilate had come into power had just then lost all influence at court. So he was afraid it would be his disgrace and discharge as governor if the Jews brought a charge against him to Tiberius. Therefore he trembled.

**John 19:13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.**

The usual form of the Roman judgment-place, in the open air, with a stone pavement, and a raised throne.

**John 19:14-15. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.**

“To crucify your king.” In bitter sarcasm: “You call him king, and ask to have him crucified.” “The Chief Priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’” Verily they thus proved the truth of that word, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come.” And here he was sent, of God. He has come at last, for the scepter has evidently departed from Judah; and these men are crying, We have no king but the alien monarch, the all-conquering Caesar.”

They had accused him of being a King, or of pretending to be one. Pilate had scourged him, the soldiers had mocked him, and there he stood piteous spectacle of woe. What cruel sarcasm there was in the tones of the Governor when he said to the Jews, “Behold your King.”

**John 19:15. But they cried out, away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?**

“How could you call him King, and bring against him a charge of setting up a rival kingdom when you, who would be his subjects, are all crying out, ‘Crucify him’? ‘Shall I crucify your King?’” How false they were their own actions proved.

**John 19:15. The chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar.**

They said this with all the coolness in the world. The mob had been stirred up and excited, but the chief priests, the principal ecclesiastics of the day, coolly said, “ We have no king but Caesar.” Did they not recollect that the scepter was not to pass away from Judah until Shiloh came, so that, as it had evidently passed away, Shiloh must have come? After all their Bible-reading, did they not know that? Oh, how easy it is to read much of Scripture and yet to know little about its teaching! Dear friends, let us not join the Jews in refusing to have Christ as King. They cried, “ Away with him, away with him,” when he was set before them as King. Let us not do that, but let us rather accept the Crucified as our Master and Lord, and cheerfully bow at his feet.

**John 19:15-17. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. 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 the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:**

The inspired writers seem to delight to give us the Hebrew names of these notable places that are linked with Christ’s last agonies, and they are still very precious to Christians, Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha<sup>¾</sup>, three names never to be forgotten by those who were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

**John 19:16. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.**

So was he led as a sheep to the slaughter, as Isaiah had long before foretold that he would be.

**John 19:17. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha:**

Probably a knoll of rock which today stands outside the city gate looking wonderfully like a skull, with two depressions in the rock which at distance appear like eyes. This was the common place of execution, the Tyburn, the Old Bailey of Jerusalem.

**John 19:18. Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.**

As if to show that they thought him the worst of the three, and therefore gave him <sup>¾</sup>shall I call it the place of chief dishonour?

**John 19:18-19. Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus Of Nazareth The King Of The Jews.**

What could have moved Pilate to write that title? Perhaps he did it just to let the Jews know that they had forced him to put the Christ to death; he would put over him their accusation without any endorsement of his own: “ JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS; “ and so he is, and King of the Gentiles, too.

**John 19:19-20. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.**

So that all who gathered around the cross might read it.

**John 19:20. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.**

So that everybody could read it, for some one or other of these languages would be known to everybody in the crowd; they were not dead languages then as they are now.

**John 19:21-22. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.**

He could sometimes be firm; perhaps when there was least excuse for it but when there was need of firmness, this vacillating Governor was swayed by the will of cruel men.

He could be stubborn about some things which shows that he had strength of mind if he had chosen to use it; yet he was beaten to and fro like a shuttlecock by these wicked men, and seemed to have no power to resist them.

**John 19:23. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments,<sup>¾</sup>**

For they had stripped him. He must be naked, because sin makes us naked, and his garments must be a covering for us. They “took his garments,” —

The common robe of the country, for Christ assumed no garment or vesture that would make him seem great. He was too great to need the adornment of any special style of clothes.

It was the custom with executioners to take the garments of the criminal.

They knew nothing about that ancient prophecy, yet God ordained that they should act thus “that the Scripture might be fulfilled,” —

They had already stripped him, no element of shame was wanting in his substitution for us. He stooped as low as our sins could have thrust us, that he might bring us up from the very depths of degradation and shame.

Quite unaware of the ancient prophecy, yet in complete accord with divine predestination these soldiers did exactly according to the eternal purposes of God. It is very wonderful how, in practice, the free agency of man tallies exactly with the predestination of God. We need not enquire how it is, but we may admire that so it is. “These things therefore the soldiers did,” yet the motive which swayed them was not the fulfillment of the divine will, but simply the commonsense thought that it would be a pity to spoil such a garment by rending it apart ¾also by that innate love of gambling which is found everywhere, in every age, so that often men would sooner run the hazard of winning all than take the safe one fourth which might fall to their lot. Let us reverently adore the whole scheme of providence by which God’s determinate purpose is carried out in every jot and little, while the free agency of man is left unfettered.

**John 19:24. Which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.**

Doubtless, on the dice there fell the blood of Christ, yet they still gambled there. There is, perhaps, no sin which so effectually hardens the heart as that of gambling; it is a sin with which Christians should not have even the reluctant connection.

Those rough Roman soldiers knew nothing about the ancient prophecy, yet a divine destiny guided them. God’s Word must be fulfilled; and they, in the freedom of their will, did exactly what God had ordained, and the Spirit had long before prophesied. There are two things that are true; that men act freely and are therefore responsible when they sin, but that there is a divine predestination that rules all things according to the purpose and will of God. It would have puzzled us to explain how such a prophecy could be fulfilled at all, ¾parting Christ’s raiment among them, and then casting lots for his vesture; yet so it was, they divided what could be divided, and they cast lots upon what would have been spoilt if they had rent it. I think that no Christian man will ever like the rattle of dice when he remembers that they were used at the cross; all games of chance should be put away from us, for we can, as it were, see our Master’s blood bespattered upon them.

**John 19:25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.**

These gracious women stood by the cross: we call them the feeble sex; but we must grant that they are the stronger of the two in anything which has to do with pure disinterested love. Yield the first place to them.

Last at the cross, first at the sepulcher. No woman’s lip betrayed her Lord; no woman’s hand ever smote him; their eyes wept for him; they gazed upon him with pitying awe and love. God bless the Marys! When we see so many of them about the cross, we feel that we honour the very name of Mary.

**John 19:26-27. And the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother. Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.**

Here was another pang for him: he could not be spared anywhere. He must recollect in his death everything that would cause him grief: “When Jesus therefore saw his mother,” —

Sad, sad spectacle! Now was fulfilled the word of Simeon, “Yes, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” Did the Saviour mean, as he gave a glance to John, “Woman, thou art losing one Son; but yonder stands another, who will be a son to thee in my absence”? “Woman, behold thy son!”

**John 19:27. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!**

“John, take her home, and treat her as a mother should be treated.”

“Take her as thy mother, stand thou in my place, care for her as I have cared for her.” Those who love Christ best shall have the honour of taking care of his church and of his poor. Never say of any poor relative or friend, the widow or the fatherless, “They are a



great burden to me.” Oh, no! Say, “They are a great honour to me; my Lord has entrusted them to my care.” John thought so; let us think so. Jesus selected the disciple he loved best to take his mother under his care. He selects those whom he loves best today, and puts his poor people under their wing. Take them gladly, and treat them well.

He was the disciple whom Jesus specially loved, so as a token of Christ’s great love to him, he left his mother to his charge. Have you any poor folk dependent upon you? Do you know any of God’s very poor people? Take care of them, and do not think the charge a burden; but do it for the sake of him who loves you so much that he entrusts his poor ones to

There was no specific direction given to John to entertain Mary. It was quite enough for the Lord to call his attention to her by saying “Behold thy mother.” How I wish we were always in such a state of heart that we did not need specific precepts, a hint would suffice. Dear friends, do not need pressing or driving to holy duty; be not as bullocks that must be goaded, but rather have within you such a spring of love that it shall be a delight to do anything that may give joy to the heart of the Well-beloved. When you see him on the cross, is there anything you can deny him? Will you not think spontaneously of what you can do to please him?

You expected him to do it, did you not? He loved his Lord so well.

**John 19:28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst!**

It seems a strange thing that Jesus should have said, “ I thirst,” because, out of all the pains that he endured upon the cross, and they were very many and very sharp, he never mentions one except thirst. A person in such terrible agony as he was enduring might have mentioned fifty things, but he singles out this one because there was a prophecy concerning it.

There was a prophecy to that effect in the Psalms, and he must needs fulfill that. Think of a dying man prayerfully going through the whole of the Scriptures and carefully fulfilling all that is there written concerning him: “That the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus saith, I thirst.”

It seems a strange thing that Jesus should have said, “ I thirst,” because, out of all the pains that he endured upon the cross, and they were very many and very sharp, he never mentions one except thirst. A person in such terrible agony as he was enduring might have mentioned fifty things, but he singles out this one because there was a prophecy concerning it.

**John 19:29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.**

He did receive that; he had refused the drugged draught which they had first offered to him to lull his pain, but he accepted this, which was simply weak wine, no doubt a little sour, possibly bitter. When he “had received the vinegar,” —

For he did receive it. It was a weak kind of wine, commonly drunk by the soldiery. This is not that mixed potion which he refused, wine mingled with myrrh, which was intended to stupefy the dying in their pains: “When he had tasted thereof, he would not drink;” for he would not be stupefied. He came to suffer to the bitter end the penalty of sin; and he would not have his sorrow mitigated; but when this slight refreshment was offered to him, he received it. Having just expressed his human weakness by saying, “I thirst,” he now manifests his all-sufficient strength by crying, with a loud voice as Matthew, Mark, and Luke all testify.

Why is hyssop mentioned here? You remember that the hyssop was used in the cleansing of the leper, and that David prayed, “ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” The hyssop was also used in the sprinkling of blood under the law, so it is introduced here with a set purpose. The sponge is introduced here too; it always seems to me very remarkable that, in the death of Christ the circle of life was completed. The sponge is the very lowest form of animal life, and Christ is the very highest type of life of any kind. The sponge was lifted to the lip of the King of glory, and carried refreshment to him; and you and I, like the sponge, the very least of God’s living ones, may yet bring refreshment to our Saviour’s lips.

**John 19:30. It is finished;**

Consummatum est. “The work is done, redemption is accomplished; the salvation of my people is forever secured.”

What “it” was it that was finished? I will not attempt to expound it. It is the biggest “it” that ever was. Turn it over and you will see that it will grow, and grow, and grow, and grow, till it fills the whole earth: “It is finished.”

Incarnate love has fulfilled its self-imposed task. Jesus, as the substitute for sinners, was condemned to die, and he died that he might finish the work of our redemption.

It is not that he died, and that then his head fell forward; but while he yet lived, having before maintained an erect, noble bearing even in the pangs of death, he now, to show his perfect resignation to his Father’s will bows his head, and yields up that saved spirit of his which dwelt within his body.

He did not give up the ghost, and then bow his head, because he was dead; but he bowed his head as though in the act of worship, or as leaning it down upon his Father's bosom, and then gave up the ghost. Thus have we had two gospel pictures of our dying Lord. May we remember them, and learn the lessons they are intended to teach.

**John 19:31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.**

The breaking of the legs was intended to hasten death, %a very cruel method, but a very effectual one. Passing by Christ hanging in the center it was a strange thing for them to do, yet it had to be done, although they were quite unconscious of the reason why they so acted.

To prevent a ceremonial error, they are willing to commit brutal cruelty; indeed, they had already committed the more brutal cruelty of putting Christ to death. How particular some men are about some merely human rubric, yet the divine precepts of the law they violate with impunity. God save us from a conscience which will stick at home minute point which is of no consequence, but will allow us to commit great sin! We have heard of a Spanish bandit who confessed to his priest, after having murdered a great many persons, not his robberies and his murders, but the fact that a drop of blood had spurted on to his lips on a Friday, and thus he had defiled the feast day by taking animal food! Ah me! Conscience is a strange thing, yet some call it "the vicegerent of God." I believe it is no such thing, but that it very soon becomes as depraved as any other power of the human mind: we have need of far more than conscience to keep us right.

**John 19:32. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.**

With a huge iron bar smashing the great bones of their legs. To make sure that he should not survive,

**John 19:34-37. And forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."**

So his side must be pierced, but his bones must not be broken. See how the hand of God carries out the Word of God, and value every line of Scripture. Our Lord Jesus Christ seemed to go out of his way so as to ensure that every single word in the Old Testament in reference to himself should be fulfilled, so mind that you do not think little of the Old Testament which he so highly prized.

**John 19:38-40. And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus,**

Oh, how tenderly, and with how many tears, did they take their Lord's body from the cross!

**John 19:40-42. And wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.**

John's Gospel contains some particulars not mentioned by Mark; and the same may be said of Matthew's account, and Luke's. Read them all when you are at home, and ponder the wonderful story. The apostle Paul, speaking of our Lord's resurrection, mentions his burial. We will now read in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, just a few verses from the fifteenth chapter.

## John 20 Commentary

John 20:1. The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

Her love for her Lord made her rise early, and helped her to overcome the fear which would have prevented many from going out "when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher." There are fears which some cannot shake off in the dark, and those fears would be apt to become intensified in going to a sepulcher in the dark; but love wakes early to try to find Christ, and love can see in the dark when looking for Jesus. Mary little expected to find the tomb of Jesus rifled, and the stone rolled away; she was so surprised at what she saw that she hurried away to tell the story to other friends of her Lord.

John 20:2. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.

This was the language of ignorance and unbelief. She had forgotten that the Lord had said that he would rise again, the third day; or else she had never understood the meaning of his words; so, instead of saying "He is risen," she said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." Unbelief often reads things wrongly; it reads sorrow into facts that should create joy. Nothing could have made Mary happier than to believe that her Lord had risen from the dead, and nothing ever made her more sorrowful than feeling that she must say, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him."

John 20:3-4. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher.

They wanted to know what had really happened, so they resolved that they would go and see. The woman's message surprised them, and troubled them: "So they ran both together." A good many people seemed to be running that morning. Had the disciples known the whole truth, they might have taken to dancing for joy, but their fears quickened their footsteps.

John 20:5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; —

So that he knew that they had not taken away the body of Jesus; for, if they had, they certainly would not have taken off the linen clothes. It would have been very difficult, and would have taken considerable time to unwrap the cold grave-clothes when they were bound to the body by the unguents that had been used: "He saw the linen clothes lying; " —

John 20:5. Yet went he not in.

Perhaps, out of reverence; or, possibly, out of deference to the older man, he would give him the preference, and let him enter first.

John 20:6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

They were evidently both struck with that sight. It indicated that there had been no haste, no hurry by thieves, but deliberate action of quite another kind.

John 20:7. And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

As one has well said, there were the grave-clothes left as the furniture for the believer's last bed, and there was the napkin, "in a place by itself," to wipe away the tears of mourners. The chief lesson is that this act had been done at leisure by someone who was in no hurry whatever. He had put together the linen clothes, and wrapped up the napkin, and laid it "in a place by itself."

John 20:8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.

That is a great deal for John to be able to say concerning himself, for Mary had not yet believed. Possibly, Peter had scarcely believed, but John had. He felt certain that the Lord had risen. He remembered his words, and he correctly interpreted the fact now before him: "he saw, and believed."

John 20:9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

They did not understand it; even John himself did not until then. The rest of the disciples had never put that interpretation upon our Lord's words which was the clear and simple meaning of them, namely, that he would rise from the dead. I should not wonder if there are other words of Scripture, with regard to the future, which we should comprehend if we took them exactly as they stand in the Word; but we have put other meanings upon them, and consequently see no further into them.

John 20:10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Having ascertained that the body of Jesus was not there, and John having come to the conclusion that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead, he and Peter went away home prayerfully to wait and see what next would happen.

John 20:11. But Mary stood, —

She was not going away home. Love cannot leave the place where it lost its object; it will continue to search there: "But Mary stood" —

John 20:11. Without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked —

Some can weep, but never look. Do not act so, beloved, but look for comfort even when your heart is breaking: "As she wept, she stooped down, and looked " —

John 20:11-12. into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white —

The resurrection color, the color of joy and gladness: "two angels in white"—

John 20:12. Sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

I have no doubt that the angel who sat at the feet was quite as content to sit there as the other was to sit at the head. If any two of you are sent upon the Lord's business, do not pick and choose as to where you shall be, or what you shall do. "One at the head, and the other at the feet." I am afraid that, if they had been men instead of angels, both would have wanted to sit at the head, and the feet would have been neglected. This sight seems to remind one of the mercy-seat, where the cherubim stood facing each other, and covering the mercy-seat with their outspread wings.

John 20:13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

Grief has not many words. It is apt to repeat itself, as the Lord himself did in Gethsemane when he prayed three times, using the same words.

John 20:14-15. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?

Christ often repeats the words of his messengers, as if to endorse them. The angels said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" The angels' Master says the same. I pray him, tonight, not only to give me the right word to say, but also to say it himself to your hearts. But Jesus added another question to the angels' "Woman, why weepest thou?"

John 20:15. Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Did it occur to her that, possibly, the gardener objected to having a corpse in the garden, and that, therefore, he had come early in the morning, and taken it away? We can hardly imagine what she did think; but when people are in great grief, they often think a great many things which they would not think if they were quite in their right minds. What strange delusions, what singular chimeras of monstrous shape will pass through the heart of grief! God help us to be clear-minded, and not to think what we should not like to say! Still, Mary was a brave woman, for she said to the gardener, "Tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

John 20:16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

She said, "My Master, my Rabbi, my Teacher, my Leader, my dear Master;" and I expect she said it with great exultation. She delighted to have her Master again, to have her Teacher again; for, to be without her Teacher, and without her Lord, was a terrible bereavement to that gentle, teachable heart. I suppose she was about to lay hold upon Christ, to grasp him by the feet, lest he should again go away from her.

John 20:17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; —

Or, as the words may be read, "Hold me not; detain me not; " —

John 20:17. For I am not yet ascended to my Father:

"I have to go away from you, so do not imagine that you can hold me back. Nay, the time for such communications with me is past, for I am now in another condition. I will communicate with you spiritually; but, for that, you must wait a little: 'I am not yet ascended to my Father.'"

John 20:17. But go to my brethren, —

He had never called them that before. "Brethren" he had called them, but not with the emphatic "my." "Go to my brethren," —

John 20:17. And say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Thus Christ explained to them that the Father, who is God, was God to Christ, and God to them; the Father of Christ, and their Father also.

John 20:18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord,

That was a very different message from her first one. Then she came and said, "He is gone; the tomb is empty; the stone is rolled away;" now she comes with the joyful tidings, "I have seen our risen Lord."

John 20:18. And that he had spoken these things unto her.

Sometimes, we have to deliver the message of stern justice, which is one of doom to the guilty; but, oh, how sweet it is to be able to come with the message of the gospel!

'He lives; the great Redeemer lives.'

He lives to plead for sinners; so, sinners: come and trust him, for he will manifest himself to you as surely as he did to these disciples, though not in exactly the same form.

John 20:11-12. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

You see, dear friends, love is very patient and persevering. The other disciples had gone away home, but not so Mary, she stands outside the sepulcher, and still waits, for she cannot go till she has seen her Lord. Love, however, has many sorrows for, as Mary stood without the sepulcher, she was weeping. Oftentimes your love to Christ will make you sorrowful when you for a while lose his presence; it will be a great sorrow to you if your Lord should seem to have hidden himself from you. But see how quick-sighted love is; Mary saw the angels, whom the other disciples might have seen if they had not gone home. One of the beatitudes is, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;" and love is one of the most eminent signs of purity. I do not wonder, therefore, that love saw angels, since love sees God himself.

John 20:13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?

They could not understand Mary's tears, their question seemed to say "Christ the Lord is risen from the dead, and all the streets of heaven are ringing with hallelujahs because the great Conqueror has returned bearing the spoils of his victory. Why weepest thou? Art not thou one of those for whom this redeeming work was done? 'Woman, why weepest thou?'"

John 20:13. She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

That was enough to make any of Christ's loved ones weep, and if ever you hear a sermon which has not Christ in it, you may well go down the aisle weeping, and if any ask why you weep, you may reply, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

John 20:14. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

A strange and sad unbelief had taken possession of her, and there is nothing that blinds the eye so quickly as unbelief. Christ is near thee, poor soul, near thee in thy trouble, but thou dost not know that it is Jesus. Open thine eyes, may God the Holy Spirit touch them with his heavenly eye-salve, that thou mayest see that it is Christ himself who is close beside thee!

John 20:15. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Her supposition was wrong in one way, but right in another, for Jesus is the Gardener, and his Church is his garden. There was one gardener in whom we fell; here is another and a better Gardener in whom we rise. It is he, and he alone, who can properly tend all the plants of his Father's right-hand planting. He is the Gardener, though not the one that Mary supposed, but what a strange request this was for her to make: "If thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Could she have carried away the body of Jesus if it had been there? If so, what a ghastly load for her tender frame to bear! Ay, but she would have done it somehow or other; for, if faith laughs at impossibilities, and cries, "It shall be done," it is love that actually does the deed of holy daring. The task that seems well-nigh impossible is readily performed when the spirit is invigorated by love.

John 20:16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

In the simple utterance of her name, there were tones which she could not mistake, it was the sweetest music she had heard since her Lord's last message from the cross: "Mary." "Why, surely," she must have thought, "it was the Master's voice calling me by name!"

John 20:16. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Or, "My Master!" The word "Rabboni" means something more than "Master." Mary seems to say, "Greatest and best of all teachers, I know thy voice; now that thou hast called me by my name, I recognize thee, and I wait to listen to the instruction thou art ready to impart to me."

John 20:17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father:

"There will be time enough for the fellowship your heart craves:" —

John 20:17. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Practical service is better than personal rapture. Mary would fain have held her Lord, but he says to her, "Go to my brethren." You will always find that it is best and safest to do what Jesus tells you, when he tells you, and as he tells you. What a delightful message is this from the risen Christ! "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

John 20:18-19. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

If they had possessed more faith, they would have left a door open for Jesus to come in, however anxious they might have been to shut out the Jews. I am afraid, dear brethren and sisters, that we also are sometimes more anxious about shutting out the Jews than we are about letting in Christ. I mean, we are very particular in trying to keep out our own troubles and cares, but if we get Jesus within, we shall not think of the Jews, nor of our troubles and cares; they will all disappear as soon as he appears.

John 20:20. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

That was enough to make them glad. The gladdest sight out of heaven, and the gladdest sight in heaven itself, is to see the Lord.

John 20:21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

"I am the Messiah, the sent One; you, too, shall be my missionaries, my sent ones;" it is but another form of the same word.

John 20:22-23. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

That is to say, "As you proclaim my gospel, I will back up your message; when you preach of pardoning blood, I will make it efficacious. When you declare to penitent sinners that their sins are remitted, it shall be so; and when you tell those who believe not that they are condemned already, and that except they repent they shall abide in condemnation, their sins shall still be retained." The true minister of God speaketh not apart from the Word of God, and when he speaks the Word of God, the God of the Word is himself there to make it effectual. It shall be no brutum fulmen, no wasted thunderbolt; it shall fall in reality, and what the servant of Christ declares, according to the Scriptures, shall really be proved to be true.

John 20:24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Possibly he did not go out of an evening; it may be that he was a half-dead sort of Christian, like a great many people are in London. They think they have done finely if they go out on the Sabbath morning, but the evening, — well, it is too cold for them, or they must find some other excuse for keeping indoors: "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."

That was a great pity, because Thomas would not only be a loser by his absence, but he would be sure to influence others, for he was an apostle. Surely, whenever it is possible, we who are leaders in the church, ministers, deacons, and elders, should take care that we are not absent from the house of the Lord.

John 20:25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.

But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. There is something good about that declaration of Thomas, for a man is not bound to believe merely on the testimony of others. He should, if he can, endeavor to get evidence for himself, and as Christ is still alive, the very best thing is to go to him. But there was also much that Thomas said which was very wrong, he had no right to demand that he should see the nail prints in Christ's hands, and, worse still, that he should be permitted to put his finger into them, and to thrust his hand into his Lord's side. There was more than a little impertinence about that utterance, and something more even than an ordinary unbelief; and when we ask for signs and wonders from God, and say that we will not believe except we have them, we are guilty of very presumptuous conduct. We are bound to look for evidence concerning Christ; but when the evidence is sufficient, we ought not out of curiosity to crave for more.

John 20:26. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them.

That was an improvement upon the meeting of the previous Lord's-day evening; Thomas had learnt by this time what he had lost the week before, so he was present on this occasion.

John 20:26-27. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas,

Picking out the one who most needed to be addressed, like the Good Shepherd seeking out the sick sheep first: "Then saith he to Thomas," —

John 20:27-28. Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

It has been well observed that Thomas was the first person who ever proved to himself the Deity of Christ from the exhibition of his wounds. There is a good argument in it, which we cannot stay to explain at this time; but the very humanity of Christ has in it the doctrine of his Deity; you can easily argue from the one to the other. How divine must he be who, in his condescension, took upon himself our nature!

John 20:29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

That blessedness can be reached by all of us who believe in Christ. Those who lived in this world before Christ came, saw his day by faith, and they were blessed; those who lived in his day, and saw him in the flesh, and trusted him, were blessed; but we who cannot see him, yet believe in him,

are the most blessed of them all.

John 20:18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

She was a true woman — one whom they had known well enough to be quite able to trust her, and her witness ought to have been believed, but there were some that doubted.



John 20:19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

How he came there we do not know, but doors cannot shut him out. Is there any door between my soul and Christ tonight then? Have I shut myself up in the chamber of doubt, despondency, unbelief? He can come to me. While the doors are yet shut, he can appear within my spirit, and say, "Peace be to you. "Oh! that he would do so! Do we not cry to him to come and breathe peace upon us?

John 20:20. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side.

That they might be sure it was he — the same who had died by crucifixion — that they might see how intimate he was with them — familiar — that his scarcely healed wounds should be seen by them.

John 20:20. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Oh! for such a sight! There is a depth of gladness in a risen Christ. Those wounds preach peace and joy.

John 20:21-23. Then said Jesus to them again. Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Thus did Jesus Christ support and make for ever true the probing of his word. Do we declare that the sins of penitents are remitted? They are remitted. Are we, in his name, bidden to declare that "he that believeth not shall be condemned"? So shall it be. He will make the word which is uttered to be true. We shall not speak without our Master making the utterance of his word to be readier of fact.

John 20:24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Perhaps he lived a long way off, or else, being rather slow, he had stayed away, doubting, and fearing, and questioning, and he had not got there in time; anyhow, he was not there. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is," for it will be a loss to you, as it was to him.

John 20:25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Dogged, obstinate unbelief. Some have said he was a large-hearted man, who investigated truth. I do not see it. He had not gone to the tomb, like Peter and John, to look at the grave-clothes, and to discover that Christ was not there. He does not appear to have investigated the testimony of Mary Magdalene and of the others. He was just as narrow-minded as he very well could be, as I believe modern doubters are with all their boast of their wonderful thoughtfulness and liberality. We have only their own opinion, I am sure, upon that matter; and when a man sounds his own trumpet, there is not much in it.

John 20:26-27. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas.

For our Lord has a way of making personal application of his word. He looks after the sheep that is sick, and severs it from the flock, that he may deal with it in his wisdom. "Then saith he to Thomas."

John 20:27-28. Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not

faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

And whether Thomas did put his finger into the print of his nails or not, we cannot tell. Everyone may think as he likes about that. He may have done so, or he may not, but this one thing happened, that he “answered and said unto him, ‘My Lord and my God.’” He made a splendid leap from the depths of doubt to the firm rock of confidence. With two blessed “mys” he seems to grasp Christ with both hands, and in two grand words he pictures him, “My Lord and my God.”

John 20:29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

That is the faith — the true faith — that wants no buttressing and props, but believes the testimony of God.

John 20:30-31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these 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.

God grant that the object of writing the New Testament may be answered in each one of us.

John 20:19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

He has not risen from the tomb many hours before we find him thus coming to his disciples. His love to them was too great to permit him to be long absent from them. He had said to them, “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me;” so he kept his word. He stood in their midst, and said unto them, “Peace be unto you.” He is the Lord and Giver of peace just as much now as he was then. Oh, that he would speak peace to the hearts of all his people now! May each believing soul among you have a deep peace! May all your troublous thoughts come to an end, and every anxious mind be calmed! Peace! Blessed peace. Oh, that the Spirit of peace would breathe it upon us all! “Peace be unto you.”

John 20:20. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side.

These were the marks to help their recognition of him. These were the memorials to excite their gratitude. These, too, were the tokens of his condescension; for a man does not show his wounds to any but to those whom he loves; “He showed unto them his hands and his side.” You cannot see that sight, brethren, but you can meditate upon it. Think how he gave those blessed hands to the nails, and that precious side to the soldier’s spear; and, as you think of them, let your love flow forth unto him who suffered thus for you.

John 20:20. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

I should think they were glad. They had been afraid of the Jews; but they forgot that fear when they saw the Lord. I suppose that, at first, when he suddenly appeared in their midst, they were afraid of him; but now there was first a sacred calm, and then there was a ripple of holy gladness on the surface of the still waters of their souls. We cannot see him, brethren, with these eyes of ours; but by faith we can behold him, so we may have gladness even as the disciples had. We ought to be the gladdest people in all the world, because Christ is ours, and is spiritually with us as he promised that he would be.

John 20:21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

“You are to go forth and to bless the world, even as I have done. My Father hath sent me; and ‘even so send I you.’ You are to be my delegates, to carry on my service; my commissioned officers, to go forth to conflict and to conquest in my name.”

John 20:22-23. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever

sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

This is as much as for Christ to say, "I will back up your ministry. When you preach that men are condemned for sin of which they have not repented, I will make it to be so as a matter of fact. When you declare pardon to all who trust in my precious blood, I will make it so. That truth, which you preach, shall have my seal of approval set upon it. My power shall go forth with your proclamation of the truth, so that it shall be seen that you are not proclaiming a fiction. When you preach my gospel, I will remit the sins of all who believe it; and when you pronounce sentence of condemnation on such as remain in unbelief, I will confirm your declaration!"

John 20:24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came."

Very likely, loving Jesus, as he evidently did, very much, Thomas was broken-hearted when he found that his Master was dead; so, when his fellow-disciples told him that Jesus was alive again, he could not believe it, he felt that the news was too good to be true. He had fallen into a fit of despondency, and got away, as broken-hearted, depressed people often do, trying to get quite alone, when Christian company would be one of the best ways of finding comfort and solace. So, "Thomas was not with them when Jesus came."

John 20:25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.

"We have seen the Lord; there is no mistake about the matter, for we have all seen him." And thus, with loving, anxious desire, they tried to cheer him, and to make him participate in the gladness which they themselves had enjoyed. Dear friends, always look after your weak brethren. If there is a Thomas, who is depressed and sad, and who therefore shuns you, do not you shun him; but find him out, and try to tell him what you have learned by way of comfort for your own heart. Mayhap, God will use it to comfort him also.

John 20:25. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas should not have said that, because, after all, it was not true. I do not suppose that he did put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into Christ's side, yet he did believe. We sometimes say a great deal that would have been far better left unsaid; and, especially, when our spirit is depressed, it is a token of wisdom to feel, "We are hardly in a condition of mind in which we can speak as we ought, so we had better remain silent."

John 20:26. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them:

That is better. His love brought him out, you see, away from himself; and it often happens that, by getting a man away from himself, we get him away from his worst enemy.

John 20:26. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

His first salutation, after his resurrection, was such a choice one that there could not be a better, so he repeated it when he appeared the second time. Peace is so rich a blessing that even the Divine Master can say nothing sweeter to his faithful followers; so again he says to them, "Peace be unto you."

John 20:27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Our dear and condescending Master would give to his feeble, and somewhat petulant disciple, all the proofs he had himself asked to have. He shall have evidence clear as noonday if he must have it; Thomas, however, as I suppose, was wise enough not to accept the gracious offer of his Lord. Sometimes, it is wise not to take what God himself may put in our way. You remember how Balaam was allowed to go with the men sent to him by Balak, and he did so; yet it would have been much wiser of him if he had not gone. I do not think that Thomas did put his finger into the print of the nails, or thrust his hand into his Master's side. On the contrary, we

read: —

John 20:28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Leaping out of the slough of doubt, on to the rock of confidence, by a single spring, and getting further, perhaps, than others had done who had before outstripped him. He inferred the Deity of Christ from his wounds and his resurrection, — a grand chain of argument of which we have not the intervening links. His thoughtful mind made him feel that, if Christ was indeed risen, — the same Christ who had died, — it was proved, by those death-wounds, that he was both Lord and God; while his personal, appropriating faith, realizing the identity of the Saviour's person, made him say, "My Lord and my God."

John 20:29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:

That is well.

John 20:29. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

That is better.

John 20:30-31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these 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.

Now, dear friends, has the purpose, for which this Book was written, been answered in your case? Have you been led to "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and so to believe that you "have life through his name"? If not, why not? May you have grace to answer that question, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## John 21 Commentary

John 21:1. After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself.

Jesus loved to show himself to his people. Of old, his delights were with the sons of men; so, now that he had risen from the dead, he was not ashamed to visit his brethren, and he did not disdain to make himself known to them, and he will still show himself to us after a spiritual fashion, if we sincerely desire to see him.

John 21:2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

As John was the writer of this record, he did not put his own name there, but merely mentioned "the sons of Zebedee."

John 21:3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.

Men who are in a right state of heart cannot willingly be idle; so, if these apostles cannot preach for a time, they will go back to their old employment, and seek to catch fish.

John 21:3. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Brethren, without Christ's presence, that is what always happens: "they caught nothing." But notice what the next verse says: —

John 21:4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

We must remember that a great change had taken place in him, and that the disciples were at some distance from the shore. They saw a person standing there, but they were not sure who it was.

John 21:5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?

This is not an exact translation of our Saviour's words; he might too readily have revealed his identity if he had spoken like that. His question was more like a common fisherman's salutation, "Lads, have you any food?"

John 21:5. They answered him, No.

Jesus likes us to admit that we do not possess anything of our own before he gives us the blessing he is waiting to bestow. He lets us see that the table is bare before he loads it with his bounty, so that he may have all the praise and glory for what he gives us.

John 21:6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

This is another proof of the difference between Christ's presence and Christ's absence.

John 21:7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved (again John does not mention his own name,) saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.

"It is only he who could spy out the fish, and only he who could fill the net with them; it is just his way of acting, 'It is the Lord.'"  
The eyes of true love are very quick. Peter was not the first to recognize Jesus; John was, for he loved him most.

John 21:7. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

He had such reverence for his Master that he would not appear before him without a sufficient covering, yet he was in a hurry to get to him. Peter always was in a hurry; yet he was grandly impetuous as a rule. I wish that some "slow-coaches" had a little of his pace.

John 21:8-9. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

How that fire must have reminded Peter of his denial of his Lord! He saw his Master by the light of the charcoal fire, and that is how he saw him on the night when he denied him.

John 21:10-11. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

On the previous occasion when Peter's net was miraculously filled by Christ, we read that the net brake. That was Peter's own net, but this time I suppose it was not Peter's, but one that he had borrowed, and probably he had no time to mend it, so the Master took care that it should not break.

He always has his own ways of working, and they always fit the circumstances of the case, and show his thoughtful care of his people.

John 21:12. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.

The Revised Version is more correct: "Come and break your fast," — "Come and have your breakfast."

John 21:12-15. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, —

When they had broken their fast, — but not until then, for Christ does not talk to men when their hunger might make them inattentive, —

John 21:15. Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?

He had talked as if he did: "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I."

John 21:15. He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He was wise in not measuring his love in comparison with that of his fellow-disciples, or in speaking of the quantity of it, but he affirmed that even Christ knew that he did really love him.

John 21:15-17. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?

Here is a lesson for all who would be pastors of Christ's flock. The first necessity of a true pastor is love to Christ, the second necessity of a true pastor is love to Christ, and the third necessity of a true pastor is love to Christ. A man who does not love the great Shepherd cannot properly feed either his sheep or lambs. If his own heart is not right towards the divine Owner of the sheep, he cannot be a true under-shepherd to Christ's flock.

John 21:17-19. Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.

Peter was to stretch out his hands, and be nailed to a cross, as his Lord was.

John 21:19. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

"That is to be your rule, whether you feed my sheep or lambs, or whether you stretch out your hands upon a cross, and die as a martyr, — 'Follow me.'" That is also the rule for all of us who love the Lord. O Lord, help us to obey it!

John 21:20-25. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto

him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things. and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

John 21:1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

May every one of you, my fellow-disciples, realize that Jesus is showing himself to you! He is only to be seen in his own light; he must show himself to us, or else we shall never see him.

John 21:2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

He had told them to go into Galilee, and given them the promise, "There shall ye see me." So now they were by the Galilean lake they were keeping their tryst with Christ, and as he always keeps his tryst with his people, he was there to meet them, as he had promised.

John 21:3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.

Their Master had told them to wait, but they could not wait. Surely when they were in Galilee by his command, they might have trusted him to supply their needs; but their faith was slack, so Peter said, "I go a fishing," and the others were much of the same mind; waiting had become weary work, as it often does with our faint hearts, so they said, "We also go with thee."

John 21:3. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

As is generally the case with us in our will-work and will-worship When we are not guided of God, but go entirely according to our own mind and will it will be thus with us also. Men attempt some business speculation without asking guidance of God, and they make a miserable failure of it, so that it might be written of them as of the disciples, "That night they caught nothing."

John 21:4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

They were thinking of fishing, so they saw boats, and nets, and the sea; if they had been thinking of Jesus, they would have looked for him, and when he came, they would have known him.

John 21:5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?

"Have ye anything to eat?"

John 21:5. They answered him, No.

But that was not his fault.

John 21:6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

He testified his presence by crowning their exertions with his blessing, and soon they had a great catch of great fishes, — a great

contrast to their night of fruitless toil.

John 21:7-8. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

We often come very slowly to Christ because we will drag that net with fishes; we have such a deal of care, anxiety, and trouble, when we need not have any at all, and so we come slowly, "dragging the net with fishes."

John 21:9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Why did they want to go fishing on their own account? Christ had all that they needed ready for them, there was the fire, and there were the fish cooking on it ready for their breakfast. It was the Lord Jesus Christ's business to provide for them, and he did so.

John 21:10-11. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

And there lay those hundred and fifty and three big fishes on the beach. Christ had no need of them but perhaps he condescended to use some of them for that morning meal, as he said to Peter, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught."

John 21:12. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.

Or, "Come and break your fast after your long night's toil." How they must have opened their eyes to see the fish ready cooked for them to eat!

John 21:12. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

"It was the Lord," — "the Lord" who had asked them if they had any food, "the Lord" who had filled the net which had previously been empty, "the Lord" who had given them his own fish from his own fire, that they might have breakfast with him. O good Master, if we have been toiling all the week, and have caught nothing, call us now to come and eat of that which thou hast thyself prepared!

John 21:13-15. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?

"More than this lot of fish, these boats, these nets? You gave them all up for me once, but now you have taken to them again; do you really love me better than your fishing and your fish?"

John 21:15. He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

"Feed My Lambs: A Sabbath-school Sermon." "Do not go after fish any more, but attend to my business: 'feed my lambs.' The proof of your greater love to me than to all worldly things will be found in your doing of the work which I have committed to your charge."

John 21:16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

"Quit the sea; I am giving you no more business there: come now, and be a pastor to my blood-bought sheep."



John 21:17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.

Thrice he had denied his Lord, so thrice he must be questioned concerning his love to the Lord whom he said he did not even know, and then for the third time he was re-commissioned by his Lord: —

John 21:17-19. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou willest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And When he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Peter's death was to glorify God, so he might well be content, painful though it was to be.

John 21:20-21. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, lord, and what shall this man do?

Our Lord never answered such a foolish, inquisitive question as this, and therefore —

John 21:22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

That is how Christ would answer any similar questions that we might put to him. We need not concern ourselves so much about what is to happen to others until we have made our own calling and election sure. "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

John 21:23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

This is only one of many instances in which Christ's words have been twisted and made to mean something quite different from what he intended.

John 21:24-25. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

John 21:1-3. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee. and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.

They could not do better. Idleness is the most injurious condition in which a man can be found. A preacher is much better occupied fishing than doing nothing.

John 21:3. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

Even apostles may fish and catch nothing. Do not be discouraged, you who, when you are endeavoring to fish for souls, for many a day catch nothing.

John 21:4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Yet he was their old familiar friend. Was it their unbelief? Let us hope not. Was it that a remarkable change had passed over the Master — that, after his resurrection from the dead, there was a glory about him quite unusual, such as they had never seen before, except when they were with him on the holy mount? Perhaps so.

John 21:5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?

Just the kind of language you would expect from him — to call them children, and to inquire even about their temporal wants. For evermore the Lord had an eye to the temporal condition of the twelve, as well as to their spiritual. "Have ye any meat?"

John 21:5-6. They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

Christ knows where fishes are. He knows where you are then, my friend, though you do not, perhaps, know where you are yourself. You have got out of your own latitude, mentally and spiritually. You could not describe yourself, but Christ knows every minnow in the brook, and every fish in the lake, and knows where you are. Christ can bring fish where he wants them to be. He brought them into the net. Christ can bring souls into his net tonight. At his will, their will shall sweetly yield itself up, and they shall come into the net.

John 21:7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,)

He was in his undress.

John 21:7-8. And did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

It is all very well of Peter to be in such a hurry, but somebody must keep hold of the net. It is not always the most venturesome that is the most practical. We are glad to have some splendidly rash brethren, but we are equally glad that the rest are not quite so rash and are a little more prudent.

John 21:9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon and bread.

Christ had provided this. We are to catch fish as if we should have nothing to eat if we did not, but yet we are to depend upon him as if we never caught a fish ourselves. Do everything as if you had to do everything; trust in God as if you had to do nothing. The blending of these two will make a wise believer. "They saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread."

John 21:10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

"I do not need it in order to entertain you, for I have fish here already; still, bring it." Nothing is given in vain; use it.

John 21:11-12. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. And Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Inwardly conscious that it was Christ's habit to speak as he had spoken. Nobody could have caught his manner, and besides, what secret instinct enabled them to discern their meek and lowly Lord, even through the glory which surrounded him?

John 21:13-14. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them. and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

Count the visits of Christ. "This is now the third time." We ought to remember Christ's visits to us so well and so thoroughly that we could tell how many times he has been with us. "This is now the third time."

John 21:15-17. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Nobody can feed Christ's sheep unless they love him, and when we love Christ the most practical way of showing it is by taking care of his lambs — his little ones — and of all those that are his — his sheep. Love will teach us how to do it. Love will sign our commission, and ordain us to the work. The Master went on to say: —

John 21:18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shall be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

Peter, thou wilt have to be girded with an iron chain, and taken off to prison, and taken off to the cross to die.

John 21:19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

That is your life business. Follow me, even though you end, as I did, on a cross. Follow me. I am a shepherd; you must be a shepherd too; and as the sheep follow you, so do you follow me.

John 21:20-21. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

What about this man?

John 21:22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

We ought not to be curious about the future of anybody. We must not be inquiring into what is not revealed; and what the Saviour said on this occasion was misunderstood; and if the words of Jesus, even when he spoke them, were misunderstood so as to become the foundation of a false tradition, you may judge how little value can ever be put upon tradition in the Church.

John 21:23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

The Word of God is to be trusted, and not tradition, for in the handing of a message from mouth to mouth it generally varies. It sometimes loses its very essential spirit, and sometimes may be made to say the very reverse of what was said. Stick to the word, and leave the traditions alone.

John 21:24-25. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world

itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Such a full life — so pregnant with meaning — so active, and all its activity so intensely real and spiritual, that to write a life of Christ is an impossibility: and though there have been many very admirable “lives of Christ” in our time, I recommend you to keep to one which is the best of them all, and that one is written by four. The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the best life of Christ out of sight. All others must be but mere helps to the understanding of these four.